

They do not appear in scenes of riot and dissipation.

They are not drunkards.

They are not swearers.

They do not bring up their children without some regard to religion.

They do not cast off the fear of God.

BUT

They do not love him.

They do not experience his love shed abroad in the heart.

They do not enjoy vital, heart-felt religion.

They do not give God their hearts.

AN EARLY TESTIMONY FOR FREE COMMUNION.

With the name of John Bunyan, the Baptist Church of Bedford, of which for seventeen years he was pastor, is intimately associated. But Bunyan was not its first pastor. It was founded in the year 1650, twenty-one years before Bunyan's connection with it, by Mr. John Gifford, and "eleven other grave serious Christians, who appointed a day for this solemn transaction, when they met together, and after fervent prayer, they first gave themselves up to the Lord, and then to one another, according to the Will of God." Mr. Gifford's life was a somewhat remarkable one. At one time an ardent Royalist and a major in the King's army, he was distinguished by all the vices fashionable among the Puritan-hating cavaliers, being addicted to drinking, swearing, gaming &c. But the grace of God found him at last, as it did Paul the blasphemer, and like Paul he sought to join himself to the people of God. For a time they naturally distrusted one who had been a notorious enemy of the godly, and when like Paul "he assayed to join himself to the disciples, they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." The sincerity of his conversion, however, was not long in manifesting itself, and for six years, the former drinking, swearing Major Gifford, changed by the power of divine grace, laboured as the untiring, ever-vigilant, and successful pastor of the Church in Bedford which he had assisted in founding. Shortly before his death in September 1656, Mr. Gifford prepared an epistle to the Bedford church, to be read after his departure, in which he gave them much weighty and valuable counsel as to the way in which their church affairs should be managed, so as to prevent divisions, distractions, and the loss of that gospel-order and fellowship which then they happily enjoyed. The following sentences deserve to be quoted, not only on account of their historical interest as shewing the identity of Bunyan's liberal sentiments with those of his predecessor's, but on account of their own intrinsic excellence and cogency:—

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"Concerning your admission of members, I shall leave you to the Lord for counsel, who hath hitherto been with you. Only thus much I think expedient to stir up your remembrance in; that after you are satisfied about the work of grace in the party you are to join with, the said party do solemnly declare—before some of the church at least—that *Union with Christ is the foundation of all saints' communion*; and not

merely your agreement concerning any ordinances of Christ, or any judgment or opinion about externals; and the said party ought to declare, whether a brother or sister, that through grace they will walk in love with the church, *though there should happen any difference in judgment about other things*.

"Concerning separation from the Church about Baptism, laying on of hands, anointing with oil, psalms, or any externals, I charge every one of you respectively, as ye will give an account of it to our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both quick and dead at his coming, that none of you be found guilty of this great evil; which while some have committed, and that through a zeal for God yet not according to knowledge, *they have erred from the law of the love of Christ, and have made a rent from the true church, which is but one*.

"Finally, Brethren, be all of one mind; walk in love one to another, even as Christ Jesus hath loved you, and given himself for you. And the God of peace, who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, multiply his peace upon you, and preserve you to his everlasting kingdom, by Jesus Christ. Stand fast, the Lord is at hand.

WRONG MEDICINE.

Early one morning, while it was yet dark, a poor man came to my door, and informed me that he had an infant child very sick, which he was afraid would die. He desired me to go to his house, and if possible prescribe some medicine to relieve it; "for," said he, "I want to save its life if possible." As he spoke this the tears ran down his face. He then added:

"I am a poor man, but, doctor, I will pay you in work as much as you ask if you will go."

I said, "Yes, I will go with you as soon as I take a little refreshment."

"O, sir," said he, "I was going to try to get a bushel of corn, and get it ground to carry, and I am afraid the child will die before I get home. I wish you would not wait for me," and then added, "We want to save the child's life if we can."

It being some miles to his house, I did not arrive there until the sun was two hours' high in the morning, where I found the mother holding her sick child, and six or seven little ragged boys and girls around her, with clean hands and face, looking as their mother did, lean and poor. On examining the sick child, I discovered it was starving to death! I said to the mother—

"You don't give milk enough for this child."

She said, "I suppose I don't."

"Well," said I, "you must feed it with milk."

She said, "I would, sir, but I can't get any to feed it with."

I then said, "It will be well then for you to make a little water gruel and feed your child."

To this she said, "I was thinking I would if my husband brings home some Indian meal. He has gone to try and get some, and I am in hopes he will make out."

She said all this with a very sad countenance. I asked with surprise—

"Why, madam, have you nothing to eat?"

She strove to suppress a tear, and answered, sorrowfully—

"No, sir, we had but little these some days."

I said, "What are your neighbours, that you should suffer among them?"

She said, "I suppose they are good people, but we are strangers in this place, and don't wish to trouble any of them, if we can get along without."