

Original Contributions.

ABOUNDING MORE AND MORE.

Phil. i. 9.

PETRP.

In reviewing the causes that seem to affect adversely the progress of the gospel of Christ and retard the union of the church of God, we find one more prominent than all others—it is “head and shoulders above its brethren.” This cause is a lack of scriptural knowledge. No man can succeed in any calling in life without knowing the principles of the business in which he is engaged; we think it equally true that no one can succeed in the Christian life without knowing Christ and the principles of his Kingdom. The church of Christ cannot be a united church so long as its individual members are ignorant of its founder. It matters not how ardent their love may be for things divine, for if one is ignorant of the true object of a Christian’s love it may be widely mis-placed; instead of Christ being its object, our best love may be spent on creed; instead of the ordinances of Christ we may love the commandments of men; instead of all humanity being the recipients of the Christian’s most tender affection, they are lavished on the faithful few, who by the decree of circumstances, have “fallen in with our crowd.”

The Apostle, knowing the blindness of human love, prays God that the Phillipians “may abound yet more and more in knowledge.” Peter seeing the same tendency of the human heart, urges those who had “obtained a like precious faith,” “to add to their faith knowledge. Again in exhorting the same people, he urges them “to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Christians are still further urged to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” The scriptures abound in such exhortations, yet we stop our ears and walk proudly by, and when we are beyond the reach of the warning voice, we supinely rest trusting in our ignorance as a sufficient excuse for the special exercise of God’s mercy.

With what assurance the apostle could make these exhortations being cognizant of the fact that the Spirit through him had first declared to seeking sinners the way of salvation, and he had so faithfully declared the will of the Father. Probably it is on this point (what man must do to be saved) that the greatest lack of the light of the gospel is manifested. It is on this point the truth of Christ is least sought. Blindly becoming the devotees of traditions, our minds clouded with its vagaries, where it leads we follow; where it bids us rest we sit in repose. When our souls thirst for the Water of Life, instead of drawing from that “well of water springing up into everlasting life,” we partake of the putrid streams shown us by a faithless guide.

Is not the thought of eternity and the doom of a misguided soul solemn and dreadful enough to move man from his lethargy, and cause him to seek the true way to eternal glory? How can one rest till he is assured (by the Word of God, our only true guide to the land of peace) that he is among the saved, that the road he is travelling is the strait and narrow way to the city of life?

But as our purpose is to suggest a few thoughts to quicken the minds of God’s children to the importance of a fuller acquaintance with his truth, our thoughts will be addressed to them alone. The thought arising in our minds is: What is the nature of the knowledge the scriptures set forth? Is it a liberal college education or is it knowing “the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” While the college education is a great help in studying the will of God, yet we are confident it is the latter in which our faith is to “abound yet more and more.” The former would be quite an impossibility, while the latter is quite within the reach of all. It has well been said, “The poor man may know nothing of history, or science, or philosophy; he may have read scarcely any book but the Bible; he may be totally unable to vanquish the sceptic in the arena of public debate; but he is, nevertheless, surrounded by a panoply which the shafts of infidelity can never pierce.” Paul recognizes this to be the all important knowledge and that the scriptures are competent to impart the wisdom necessary for salvation, for he says: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” The true believer can hardly fail to see God’s wisdom in giving such a perfect guide in so small a volume. It is so comprehensive as to include the whole duty of man to his Maker, and man to his fellow, yet so simple this duty may be learned alike by the simple and the wise. It is so condensed that the busiest as well as those at leisure have sufficient time to be amply informed. It is so placed in our power that all may know in childhood the way that leads to perfect manhood, and ultimately into the presence of God. One brief sentence of fifteen monosyllabic words and each word familiar to an infant before it can fully speak in its mother’s tongue. “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost”—sets forth the purpose of Christ in coming to the world. One simple word—“father”—and that the one first lisped by the infant tells us our relation to God: one equally as simple—“brother”—tells us our relation to each other; and another—“neighbor”—tells us our relation to all humanity; it is simply left to us to learn from God’s Word our duty to each, to be rich in knowledge, indeed “even wise unto salvation.”

Kind reader, have you learned what your Father requires of you in this relationship so holy? Is your love abounding in all knowledge of what he would have you do? Have you studied and do you know your Father’s will with respect to the rest of his family on earth? Are you informed as to your duty to humanity? Look north and see the many in the thralldom of sin, see the struggle between iniquity and purity, between the world and the church; then ask

yourself whether you have been instructed by the Divine One, whether you are wise unto salvation and ready to bear the message of Jesus to the fallen.

But should we look at the matter from another point of view, *i. e.*, from the standpoint of the privilege of knowing the things concerning the Divine One, how can we delay to unreservedly yield to him our wills, hearts and affections and earnestly seek to know of life and salvation? Have we sinned or been tempted to sin; is there a soul so dead as not wanting to know how greatly he has grieved a loving Father, or whether this Father is willing to receive the wanderer again to his bosom?

Are we living a careless half religious life never either trying to know or to do the will of God, remember we are manifesting ingratitude and making the sufferings of the blessed Son of God void as regarding our souls. Do we neglect to know the will of God, then we will next neglect communion with him in prayer, that sweet and holy supplication to Heaven for strength and protection, we will neglect the Spirit’s help which is to aid and comfort us through life. Pray, let us never forget, whatever may be our surroundings, whether o’erwhelmed by the many duties that the returning days bring to us, or with happy hearts rejoicing amid the happy scenes of sports; whether loaded with sorrow, or in perpetual delight that we should know more and more of things divine; things that have a direct bearing on our eternal weal or woe. Then let every Christian so use his time so as to secure a higher cultivation in the knowledge of God, and a deeper communion with him. The father loves us, he gave his Son to die for us, he gave his Spirit to guide us, he has wonderful things in store for the faithful, may it be the lot of the reader of these words to reciprocate his love, receive his Son, be guided by his Spirit and in the hereafter receive a portion of the things in store for him.

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

T. H. BLENNIS.

I read, not long since, an admirable article on the “Prayer-Meeting,” by Dr. Judson of New York. Among many good things said, the Doctor commented on the time and place of the weekly assembly for prayer and praise, with these words:

“The prayer-meeting is not as a rule held in the main auditory of the church. The people do not feel at home there. They lack what is called the elbow-touch. Many Christians, like the Deepfic girl, seem dependent upon poisoned air for their inspiration. The close, mephitic atmosphere of a small, ill-ventilated room, is conducive to that feverishness without which the prayer-meeting seems cold and dull. The fitful and evanescent devotion of the prayer-meeting is hardly robust enough to endure the ample spaces and the pure air of the main auditory. The week-night meeting is usually held in a smaller room, called a chapel or vestry, which is too often a musty conventicle inaccessible to the public street—the last place in the world into which you can lure an unregenerate man. It has too much of a mouse-trap look. He is shy of being caught. He is afraid of coming into close quarters with Christians lest he should have to be converted in self-defence. It seems to me that if sometimes of a Sunday night, for instance, at the close of the preaching service, the minister and his fellow-Christians