

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John xiv. 27.

"I FOLLOWED THE LOT."



ONE bright summer day some three or four hundred workmen with their wives went out for their annual holiday, their employer sharing the expense, and joining in the festivities of the day. After a pleasant drive of about sixteen miles, it was proposed to walk to a high spot of ground about two miles distant, from which there was a very extensive view of the surrounding country. They set off in several companies, and one of these, consisting of about forty or fifty, missed the path, and, after proceeding a long distance, had to turn back in order to reach the desired destination.

"But why did you go with them, as you had been before, and must have known the way?" was the enquiry of one of them.

"I thought we were wrong, but I followed the lot," was the reply. So because others went astray he forsook his own better judgment, and missed the path which led direct to the place he desired to reach.

The lesson for ourselves is sufficiently plain. In far higher and more important things men often pursue the same course. Many would fain reach the fair hill of Zion, and share the bliss and the glory of the saved. They know, too, something of the way that leads to it. They must turn from sin, and believe in Christ. They must be cleansed in His blood, and be renewed in holiness by His Spirit. They must bear His reproach, and walk in His footsteps. They are convinced that this is the way in which they ought to go, and yet you see them walking in quite another direction.

How can we account for this? If men knew the right way, why do they choose the wrong? It is precisely like my friend in the story I have told. *They know they are wrong, but they follow the lot.* They go with the stream, rather than

follow their own convictions. They must be like the rest. They must live as *they* live, and walk as *they* walk.

Is it a wise thing to continue walking in this way because so many others do?

THE ARTIST'S PICTURE.



CERTAIN eminent artist once resolved to paint the Last Supper. Feeling the greatness of his subject, and knowing that it had been successfully attempted by others, he threw all his energies into the work. He laboured early and late. No pains were spared by him. He pondered devoutly those pages of the New Testament which record the first sacramental feast, in order that he might do his best to realize and reproduce the memorable scene.

At length his task was done. Having giving the finishing stroke, he invited a few confidential friends to a private inspection. They gazed attentively, and various remarks were made. An observation from one of them, however, as will be seen, to unexpected results. He spoke with great admiration of a golden chalice. Its shape, colour, size, were all that could be desired.

"That," exclaimed the critic, "is the most beautiful object in the picture."

Hearing what was said, the artist took up a brush, and dipping it in black paint, deliberately smeared it over the whole canvas. He soon explained his action.

"If," said he, "what you tell me is true, then my picture is a failure, for I meant my Master's face to be the chief and beautiful object."

The feeling which dictated the artist's self-accusation was noble and right. Christ ought to have the main regard. We may use the anecdote as a parable: it shows what we should be and do. All are artists; a good or bad picture each of us is painting—the picture of life. Too often, alas! men make inferior

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee;
because he trusteth in Thee.—Isaiah xxvi. 3.