

God for the purpose of communion? What do we go to Him for? The answer which many Christians will give will tell us principally that they go to God for forgiveness, in order to obtain the supply of their wants, in order to give Him thanks, in order to ask blessings for others. A good and christian answer without doubt, and herein is involved a real communion with God. But is that all? Let us think what we mean by holding communion with that one Supreme Being whom we do entirely admire, venerate, adore. For one thing, we desire to see Him, to know Him. The first thing is to enter into the secret of the Lord. "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." This must always (in whatever terms expressed) be the prayer of those who seek communion with God. It is not merely the gifts of God that they seek; but God Himself. "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us."

And God never refuses to respond to such longings and prayers; because they come from a heart which has already felt the power of his love, and has begun to love Him in return. "If a man love Me," says Christ, "he will keep my word; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. What wonderful grace and goodness speak out in these words! What blessedness is promised to those who thus in love seek the Father through the Son!

And then, as a consequence of the desire for the spiritual vision of God and of its realization, there will come the desire to be like Him. For this is necessary in order to perfect communion. "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Our communion with God will be real and deep just as our spirit is in harmony with His. It is possible for men to mount up, or to fancy that they mount up, on the wings of mere natural excitement, and to think that they are then holding communion with God. It is the wildest and grossest of all delusions. God is a Spirit and those who hold communion with Him must hold spiritual communion, and they must have their spirits cleansed and sanctified, and kindled by the energy of Divine love. Hence our attitude towards the Most High in prayer must not only involve an earnest longing for the revelation of His character, but also a deep desire for conformity to His image.

And then, indeed, there may be sweet and blessed communion with God in prayer, in the reading of Holy Scripture, in the worship of the Sanctuary, in the Sacrament of the Altar, in every sacred ordinance, in every holy work, in every lawful occupation, even in those things which we count secular. "My meditation of Him shall be sweet," says the Psalmist. O how sweet the meditation of the great and blessed and living God should be to those who know Him and love Him, and are conscious of His fatherly love and care!

Then would communion with God no longer be thought of as a duty or a necessity, but looked forward to, nay, rather even enjoyed as a privilege, a means of peace and joy, and love and hope. To dwell in Him—to have Him

making His abode in the heart—this must, even here, be fullness of joy and pleasure for evermore.

WHAT IS THE CHAFF TO THE WHEAT.

THE RELATION BETWEEN OUTWARD AND INWARD WORSHIP.

By the Rev. W. S. Darling, M. A.

THE question above is found in Jeremiah 23 c. and 28 v., and from it I propose to draw out some lessons regarding the underlying principle of the ceremonial worship of the Church. As regards ultimate value, the first and most natural meaning which would be drawn from the words is undoubtedly true—the chaff is as nothing in comparison with the wheat. It is the universal conviction and acceptance of this truth, which leads men thoughtlessly to overlook other truths connected with the subject, which nevertheless are well worthy of consideration. In our eager selfishness we think chiefly of the great end of our efforts—the securing of the wheat, which is not only the staff of our temporal life, but the main source of our wealth. We blow away the chaff as a useless thing, we burn it, we turn it into a very symbol of worthlessness, a proverb and a parable of everything that is valueless and vile. If the question were asked "what is the chaff to the wheat?" we should answer contemptuously that it is as nothing. This is true if we compare the two in the last stage of development. In this sense they are frequently used in Scripture as types of what is valueless on the one hand and precious on the other. If from another point of view we ask "what is the chaff to the wheat?" the answer can have no reference to what we regard as the worthlessness of chaff. On the contrary we must recognise it as being just as much the work of God as is the wheat itself. Being so, it has all the features of a divine work. It is full of beauty to the observing eye because of its wonderful adaptness to the ends it is intended to serve. It is absolutely necessary as one of the chief means of obtaining the wheat. It protects the grain in its incipient growth. It shields it from the biting cold and from the scorching heat. It defends the wheat from the thousand ills which would otherwise be its destruction, until in the fulness of the ripened grain its wondrous work is accomplished. If the chaff were to be removed no substitute could be devised by human skill, the wheat without the chaff would inevitably perish and the crop be ruined. Thus we see that this worthless thing is a Divinely appointed means to a Divinely appointed end, it is the means of the wheat's protection, growth, and perfecting, and fills these functions by the ordering of Divine wisdom.

It is the same in higher things. We frequently hear people who profess to reverence the word of God, speak slightly of the body as if it were a vile and refuse thing, as nothing compared with the soul, forgetting or knowing not how near such a view brings them to a

grievous heresy of old. What is the body to the soul? We answer, what the chaff is to the wheat, only in a far higher and nobler sense. The body is the Divinely formed shrine in which the spirit dwells, the means and instrument by which the soul is brought into contact with outward things, which furnish the sphere of its growth and education for a higher world, and apart from which, we know not nor can imagine, how its powers and faculties can be called into exercise. The application of the question what is the chaff to the wheat, what the soul to the body, is more striking when applied to the outward "means of grace" as men rightly call them—the Sacraments of God's Church, the ceremonial of religion, the whole constitution of Christian worship. It is much the fashion amongst a certain class who are straining after a false spirituality, to depreciate the value of outward religious observances even though sanctified by Holy Scripture, practised by our Lord and His Apostles, and adopted by the most eminent of God's servants in all ages. They speak despairingly of forms as if by some necessary antagonism forms were opposed to spirit instead of being as God intended them to be and as they always are when used according to the Divine will, the means appointed by the Almighty for developing, protecting, and bringing to perfection the worship of the inner spirit. What then are sacraments, rites, and outward ceremonial to the worship of the soul? When rightly used they are as the chaff to the wheat, that is, outward means devised by Divine wisdom for the protection and nourishment of the inward life of the soul and adapted to that end with a fitness and a beauty not of this world. To attempt to do without the chaff of outward observances is to lose the wheat of spiritual increase, to curtail and render it as cold and bald as possible is inevitably to contract and shrivel the roundness, the completeness of the Christian character. This is no matter of opinion, it is capable of undoubted proof. Look at the sect of Quakers, who reject Sacraments and abjure all forms. After a brief existence and notwithstanding much personal excellence amongst its members, there have grown up among them many grievous errors of doctrine, such as a denial of our Lord's divinity, and by the confession of its most zealous supporters this sect is fast dying out. Look to those other sects who have made the reverent ceremonial of the Church the ground of separation from her, and you will see that the type of Christian character which they have produced is generally narrow and peculiar. Their subdivisions are numberless and their latent conviction of the original error on which they were founded is leading them, in a wonderful way, to adopt forms of worship of which their fathers and founders never dreamed. In fact the growth of outward bodily worship among the sects, is proportionately to their position and principles greater than in the Church. To depreciate, or try to do without a reverent outward ceremonial in Divine worship is to attempt the impossible task of growing wheat without chaff. To be satisfied with mere ceremonial, would be as it were to spend our

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