

while reformed Judaism, brushing away these excrescences, shows forth the kernel which lies hidden therein, delineating it as clearly as a ray of the sun lights up the particle of dust in its path."

Instinctively, as we read this interesting article, we think of the beginning of Christianity, for which, we believe, Judaism was the divine preparation. We think not only of the words of the Pounder of the Christian religion, "God is a Spirit: and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth," but we think also of the hindrance to Christianity caused by the same exclusiveness which this writer mentions. This was the dominant spirit of the Pharisees in our Lord's day. Again and again in His teaching He taught that religious privileges bring with them great responsibilities to those without; that the people of God were chosen to extend far and wide the knowledge of God, not to imprison it selfishly within their nation.

Our Lord's first disciples, being thoroughly imbued with the prevailing spirit of their race, only slowly grasped this profound truth of salvation for the world to be proclaimed through chosen instruments. It is most instructive to study the growth of this principle in the early Christian church as set forth in the Acts of the Apostles. We see even then indications of the difference between orthodox and reformed Judaism. The Hellenistic Jews, having mixed more freely with their surrounding Gentile neighbors, were, on the whole, less exclusive than the Palestinian Jews; and it is worthy of notice that it was almost entirely through Hellenistic Jews who had become Christians that the message of salvation was at first proclaimed to the Gentile world. All honor to the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, at Antioch, had the moral courage to break down the wall of exclusiveness and preach the Gospel, not merely to Hellenistic Jews, but also to Greeks! Some scholars hold that this was even before St. Peter received the vision which overcame his extreme reluctance to impart the blessings of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

All honor to those Hellenistic Jews, Paul and Barnabas, who travelled far and wide in fulfilment of the Lord's last commandment to preach the Gospel to the whole creation, and make disciples of all the nations!

Among our Christian churches of to-day, as well as within our own hearts, we can still find traces of the blighting spirit of exclusiveness. It exists wherever there is lacking the true missionary spirit, and can

only be expelled by an inflowing tide of the Spirit of Him who came into this world to seek and to save that which was lost; who went about doing good—not afraid in so doing of becoming ceremonially unclean through contact with loathsome lepers, or of losing His social position through eating with publicans and sinners.

F. H. DUVERNET.

THE SERVANT'S PATH IN A DAY OF REJECTION.

SERVANT of Christ, stand fast amid the scorn
Of men who little know or love thy Lord;
Turn not aside from toil; cease not to warn,
Comfort, and teach. Trust Him for thy reward;
A few more moments' suffering, and then
Cometh sweet rest from all thy heart's deep pain.

For grace pray much, for much thou needest grace
If men thy work deride, what can they more?
Christ's weary foot thy path on earth doth trace:
If thorns wound thee, they pierced Him before;
Press on, look up, though clouds may gather round;
Thy place of service He makes hallowed ground,

Have friends forsaken thee, and cast thy name
Out as a worthless thing? Take courage then;
Go, tell thy Master, for they did the same
To Him, who once in patience toiled for them;
Yet He was perfect in all service here;
Thou oft hast failed; this maketh Him more dear.

Self-vindication shun; if in the right,
What gainest thou by taking from God's hand
Thy cause? If wrong, what dost thou but invite
Satan himself thy friend in need to stand?
Leave all with God. If right, He'll prove thee so;
If not, He'll pardon; therefore to Him go.

Be not men's servant; think what costly price
Was paid that thou mayest His own bondsman be,
Whose service perfect freedom is. Let this
Hold fast thy heart. His claim is great to thee;
None shouldst thou soul enthrall to whom 'tis given
To serve on earth with liberty of heaven.

All His are thine to serve: Christ's brethren here
Are needing aid; in them thou servest Him.
The least of all is still His member dear;
The weakest cost His life blood to redeem.
Yield to no "Party" what He rightly claims,
Who on His heart bears all His people's names.

Be wise, be watchful. Wily men surround
Thy path. Be careful, for they seek with care
To trip thee up. See that no plea is found
In thee thy Master to reproach. The snare
They set for thee will then themselves inclose,
And God His righteous judgment thus disclose.

Cleave to the poor, Christ's image in them is;
Count it great honor if they love thee well;
Naught can repay thee after losing this.
Though with the wise and wealthy thou shouldst dwell,

Thy Master oftentimes would pass thy door
To hold communion with His much loved poor.

"The time is short;" seek little here below:
Earth's goods would cumber thee and drag thee down,

Let daily food suffice; care not to know
Thought for to-morrow; it may never come;
Thou canst not perish, for thy Lord is nigh,
And His own care will all thy needs supply.

—J.J.P.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

CRITICIZING THE SERMON.

It is told of an old lady who used always to sleep during her pastor's sermons that, when taken to task for it, she defended her conduct on the plea that she "could trust him." It is to be feared that there are some in almost all of our congregations who have a similar confidence in their clergyman. Such implicit trust is, no doubt, commendable, and a truly pleasing thing in this sceptical, critical age; yet we question whether it is the very best spirit one can have. The opposite extreme—the suspicious, fault-finding, never-pleased spirit—is much worse. To keep wide awake and ever on the alert to pick out trifling flaws, doctrinal or otherwise, is much less commendable than the slumbering confidence of the old lady.

But there is surely a juster mean—an open-eyed attention that is more respectful both to God and His ambassadors than the doubtful honor of trustful sleeping during the sermon, yet without the carping, hypercritical spirit—an earnest desire and aim to discriminate, and so to learn and profit. It is this "more excellent way," this medium between the two extremes, that I would urge upon hearers of sermons.

Sermons should be criticized both for the sake of the preacher and the hearer. I do not mean criticism that is only fault-finding. The dictionary definition of criticism is, first, "The art of judging of the beauties and faults of a literary performance." This is true to the derivation of the word from a Greek root signifying to decide or pass judgment upon. A decision or judgment is not necessarily adverse and unfavorable. The critic, if he marks defects, also notes merits. His aim is to understand and judge intelligently, and he is, for those who really wish to learn and improve, by no means a dreaded, unloved being, but a valued and cherished friend.

It is good that in this sense the sermon should be criticized—good for the critic, who thus gets a better understanding of the truth the clergyman would teach, and for the clergyman, who will be chastened and ripened by the prunings his critics suggest.

The preacher will be a more useful man if his sermons are criticized. Instead of getting discouraged by no notice being taken of them, he will be incited to persevere in his endeavors by knowing that they are listened to and talked about, and made a large part of the moral and spiritual diet of his congregation. It will be more comfort to him than even the knowledge that they "trust him" to the extent of slumbering