

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

More than seventeen years have added their varied lessons to my experience, with whatever result, since I quitted my connection with congregational dissent, and resigned my charge as the minister of Islington Chapel; and it is due to the truth itself, and much more to the God of truth, that I should present, in few words, the bearing of that experience on the following pages.

In the first place, it has falsified many of the predictions relating to it, which were uttered by timid and calculating persons at the time of my secession.

For, as is common in all such cases, there were many minds that could foresee nothing but inevitable ruin and fanaticism as the consequence of leaving the beaten track of denominational Christianity, to walk in what appeared to them an isolated and a visionary path, whatever might be urged in its defence from the Word of God. But the path of obedience will always be found by the humble soul to be the path of light, and the path of Christ's presence and power. There is much more to encourage the poor, feeble, and halting soul in it than, "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." There is the promise of Christ's presence and sustinment attached to it. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and *they follow me*; and I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "Let your conversation [way of life] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*"

In the next place, I may add, as to my experience, that whatever I have met with from the imperfections of men, or have enjoyed of the everlasting goodness of God, has but served to deepen the conviction that the truths and principles that first led me into the path I have, too feebly, sought to follow, are truths and principles that were taught of God.

Trials and temptations may beset the pathway of obedience, and sorrowfully teach the truth that "He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey;" but trials are easily borne, and difficulties overcome, when the conscience is at rest and the peace of Christ's approval is enjoyed: and especially when the mind is delivered from the distractions and uncertainty that are rife on every hand, by that divine assurance as to its path, which faith and subjection to God's word alone can give.

Amidst the endless conflict and jar of opinions which mark the present day, and the increasing diversity and confusion that pervade the mass of nominal profession, to talk about *certainly*, and to assume that there can be any "*way of truth*" indicated to the inquiring believer and to the Church of God, will doubtless be esteemed presumption. But be it so. For if Christians—at least of a certain class—are reaping the fruit of their boasted philosophic spirit in a scepticism which has reduced the eternal grounds of a sinner's peace to a rational conclusion, or, at best, to an *argued* certainty, and left them, in effect, to ask, as to everything connected with the will of God, "What is truth?" it is not the time to shrink from the declaration that *divine certainty*, and not the spirit of doubt and hesitation, is assured to the soul that bows in faith to the precious revelation of God's word. "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

However, the only assumption before us is this, that God, in His wisdom, has furnished an unfailing directory for His people in His word; and that Christ does not cease to care for the interests of His Church which is His