

spirit is touched and tender; when his heart is bowed down or overwhelmed; when the clouds are lowering, and the spirit bitter; when he feels hungry and longing for companionship, and yearns for a kindred spirit to pour out all his heart to him? What do we know of each other's inner life? Nothing. And yet is not this the first and last and greatest object of uniting in christian fraternity for mutual edifying?

Good John Bunyan tells us that as Christian journeyed on to the Holy City, he fell in with one and another on the way, and gives us very faithfully the conversations with which they lightened the way. Get together a couple of devout church members now-a-days, and what do they talk about? Business, news, politics, anything, but not a word about one another's religious mind. How strange it would sound to hear the question, "Do you enjoy much peace just now?" or, "Do you feel sin a great power to contend with, these times?" or the complaint, "I have got into a very dark and deadened frame latterly," or "I feel as if God was afar off, and my troubles greater than I can bear," and so invite confidence, and the bearing of one another's burdens.

And yet, when this is out of fashion, we wonder why it is so few are added to the church each year, and why our children do not come forward to seek connection with the church. And so we press for more meetings, or sigh for seasons of revival.

We have too many meetings as it is; and we come and go, week after week, heart and soul *strangers* to one another.

What is it we want? How many young men and young women are there in our churches who have thoughts—and thoughts—and they come and go, and no elder brother or sister ever seeks them out to talk with them by the way and draw out their minds and sympathies and lead them to the light. Bye and bye they drop off, and the tender heart gets hard, and the hungry soul perishes, and the thirsty spirit parches, and the tares of the world grow up and choke the good seed. Then the poor prodigal, whose soul has been awaked, and who comes eagerly to seek for soul food, who of the brethren draws near to him and bears him up, and keeps by him, encouraging and helping him to form new habits and associations? None. He goes and comes, unknowing and unknown; soon he is missed, the tender frame has given place to dry numbness of soul, and he has slipped back into the old way.

"Lost for want of a word,
A word that I might have spoken."

Oh! brethren and sisters, this is not as it should be. We are seeking to be watered ourselves, but we are not watering others, and so we miss many of our good Father's blessings.

Let each of us make it our business to open our eyes in our church homes, and look about us. Single out one we might take by the arm; get him to our homes; lead the talk to things that pertain to the Kingdom; watch each other's frames; sow in season, dropping a word by the wayside. Let us seek to cultivate one another. Church socials at our churches or at our homes won't do it. Mark your man out. Ask him to spend an evening with you in your home.

Or, dear old mother in Israel, go to that young wife's house; try to get near to her heart; draw out her timid nature, and show her your sympathy and love. Your children will listen, and learn; and so your homes will become gardens of the Lord, and the desert will blossom as the rose. When your sympathy expressed has won the confidence and love of your fellow disciple, and heart has spoken to heart, you can bear each other's burden to the burden-bearer, and cast them on the Lord. It will not take long for you to find out what the communion of saints is, and is intended to be.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

E.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE DEVIL."

SIR,—While I fully and gladly recognise your ability, independence and usefulness both as preacher and editor, I would like to say a word or two by way of friendly criticism on a discourse which you lately delivered in Zion Church. I allude to the one whose title stands at the head of this letter.

I think you stated that while you believed in the existence of evil spirits, you denied that one of them was chief, or ruler, and also spoke doubtfully of the personality of him, whom the Bible designates, "the devil." Now as this is purely a matter of revelation, we can only go to the Word of God for proof. Let us begin by glancing at a few of the titles given to him. He is called "the prince of the power of the air." The term prince, according to Webster and Walker, means a sovereign, rank, a chief ruler, &c. He is called "Beelzebub, the prince of devils," we also read of "the devil and his angels," and, our Lord said to Simon Peter—"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." There are many other passages of a similar import, but these will be sufficient to prove the points under consideration. If words have any meaning, the foregoing passages show two things:—That he whom the Bible calls "the devil," is a real person, as much so, as Michael is an archangel, or as St. Paul and St. Peter were real persons. Then if he is a "prince," "chief of devils," and has "angels," he must be high in rank, a ruler in the kingdom of darkness, and over, "the spirits that now work in the hearts of the children of disobedience." In the Epistle of Jude, the 9th verse, we also read that Michael, the archangel, when contending with *the devil*, disputing about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, *The Lord rebuke thee*. This further strongly confirms our view of the personality and power of "the devil." While other evil spirits are frequently alluded to in the Holy Scriptures, he is the only one to whom a name, or names are given, and all these names, whether he is spoken of as a prince, or as "a roaring lion," or "an angel of light," indicate his supremacy over fallen angels and other evil spirits, whose name is "legion," and who, according to one of our English poets,

"Through the air, and darken heaven,
And rule this lower world."

I think these views concerning the personality and supremacy of the devil were not taken as you intimated, from either Milton or Dante, but from the Bible, and were held by the church long before these famous poets were born.

You seem also to be unable to accept the account given in the New Testament of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, in a literal sense, and appear to regard the whole as symbolical. There are two reasons, however, why this view of the case seem to be unsatisfactory. The record stands there in the Word of God, and the details of the whole affair are given with particular minuteness, as of something that really did occur, are we not therefore bound to believe it just as much as we are bound to believe the account of the transfiguration, or the ascension of Christ? Then we should not forget that it was a miracle. Although a stupendous and extraordinary miracle, it was certainly not beyond the power of God to perform, for Christ himself wrought greater miracles than that. When we read the narrative, we should remember that it was only the human nature of Christ, and at a time of sore weakness, that was subjected to temptation. When we look at it in this light, it appears to me that some of the chief difficulties are greatly diminished, if not altogether removed. We find difficulties and mysteries everywhere, and yet we accept and believe, notwithstanding, then, why should we not do so in this case? "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" With him all things are possible.

Now let us look at some of the difficulties that stand in the way of believing in a supreme and personal devil from the standpoint of reason. It is asked, Can he be in more than one place at the same time? I must confess that in some respects that is a hard question for one who holds the old orthodox view. In fact, unless he be omnipresent the thing is impossible. Omnipresence is an attribute of Deity alone, therefore we are bound to answer, No. But may he not through his agents, whose name is "legion," operate as effectually at all points as if he were there himself? The fixed residence of the Pope is in the city of Rome, and yet who will deny that his power is not felt as much or even more in the Province of Quebec and in the city of Montreal as in Rome itself? Then if the Pope, while residing at Rome, holds almost absolute sway over all his subjects in every part of the world, may it not be so, only in a much higher degree, with the devil? It is not therefore necessary that he should possess the attribute of omnipresence to constitute him a prince and chief of evil spirits, or to give him the power attributed to him in the Holy Scriptures. What do we know about *spirits*? They may be swifter messengers, a thousand times swifter, than we have ever dreamed of. For ought we know to the contrary, they may travel with the fleetness of light or sound, consequently his power as ruler and chief may be very great, in constant exercise, and felt throughout the world as if he were everywhere present himself. It is therefore hardly wise on our part to attempt to confine the action and work of spirits to our flesh-and-blood way of doing things.

If I remember correctly you also stated that evil means anarchy and confusion, and therefore cannot be organised or put in rank and file like troops of the line, so that there cannot be a chief or ruler. This may be true of evil principles and evil influences, but not, I think, of "lapsed intelligences," or evil spirits. We know that evil men can be organised and be made to render service and obedience, however unwillingly, to their superiors, and why not evil spirits? Besides, all evil spirits are in some way, according to the Scriptures, enduring judicial inflictions appointed by the Supreme Governor of the Universe, consequently may He not for some good and special reason have permitted the introduction of order and rank into the service of evil? The Holy Scriptures, I think, strongly favor this view, and therefore speak of "the devil" as a "Prince of the power of the air," "the god of this world," and Beelzebub, the Prince of devils.

QUARTUS.

SIR,—In an article on "The Future Life" in a late number of the SPECTATOR, reference is made to the dishonour done to God by those creeds which represent Him as insincere in offering pardon and life to all, and especially to that terrible statement of Calvin, that God not only ordains before their birth the everlasting destruction of myriads of the human race, but that He arranges their lot in life so that their sin and punishment may be increased, and you add the pertinent enquiry, "Is that God-like—is it Father-like?" Certainly not must be the answer, if God has any meaning akin to good; but whatever conceptions of God's character may be possible to those who uphold these doctrines, they are at least so far consistent as not to believe Him to be the Father of the human race. I have heard one of them argue against the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood on this very ground, maintaining that as no father could or would do such things to his children, therefore God cannot be the Father of all, but only of the Elect. Once admit the Divine Fatherhood as true for every child of man, and those dishonouring views of God propounded in the past, and yet clung to by many, must be banished from human thought. Perhaps it is a consciousness that this is the fundamental question that causes many to assert so strenuously that God is Father only to His believing children; sovereign Ruler and King alone to others. But even these may be met with the enquiry, Would such methods of dealing with His subjects be possible to a righteous and benevolent King? And it is, as not less, but more merciful than man, that God says, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Few things are more strongly convincing to my mind of the truth and vitality of Christianity than the fact of its having survived the terrible teachings of its advocates; and one is thankful that nobler thoughts of God and His dealings with men are becoming prevalent. True, much remains confessedly dark and perplexing in the problem of human life and destiny, yet Christian men should carefully avoid putting into the hands of sceptics the weapons most damaging to their faith, by representing Him, who is Love, and whose love to man can only be measured by His unspeakable gift, by the life and death, the Cross and Passion of His well-beloved Son, as insincere, partial or vindictive.

Although caution is doubtless necessary lest any statement should be made calculated to lead men to think lightly of sin and its consequences; let all who consider any departure from old creeds as damnable heresy refrain from misrepresenting the views of those who differ from them. Can they not see that by uttering the sneer, that believers in "the larger hope" are guilty of re-