

them, v. 52. It is those who live nearest God and know His will most perfectly who are best fitted to comfort and strengthen others. If we would be a source of help and encouragement to others, we must seek to know God, who has revealed Himself to us clearly

and fully in Jesus Christ. In Him we shall find the unfailing fountain of grace and strength upon which we may ourselves draw, and so become channels through which the same grace and strength may be conveyed to others.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

A message of counsel will be more readily received when it is borne by a good man. v. 22.

Here is the Church's Magna Charta. v. 23.

Misrepresentation is a most dangerous form of lying. v. 24.

Faithful service is the best title to honor. v. 25.

Love to Christ is proved by sacrifice for Christ. v. 26.

Things may be necessary for the welfare of the church which are not necessary for personal salvation. v. 28.

Particular prohibitions may be temporary, but the principle of self-denial is eternal. v. 29.

He who encourages others multiplies his energy. v. 31.

Christ strengthens us that we may strengthen others. v. 32.

"Greeting." Amongst the epistles of the New Testament only that of James thus commences, as has been pointed out by Bengel and others. The coincidence may be a general one, but it is more remarkable, since this letter may have been written and dictated by James in his authoritative position.—Knowing.

This was the beginning of New Testament Scripture, the first of the Epistles. It was addressed to Christians in Antioch, in Syria and Cilicia, as later epistles were addressed to the Galatians, to the Romans, etc.—Lindsay.

The early Christian church had its problems and disputes. The world has never seen the church without its problems and discussions and disputes. The early church was happy in being led by such choice spirits as Peter, James and Paul, who could allow a free discussion and lead the people through it up to God's will and truth. That

church in our own day is fortunate, which has in its leaders of a like spirit.

More trouble comes from words than from deeds. It is often hard to find an opportunity to do an injury, never to say one. There is always someone ready to trouble the church by twisting God's will or God's word to suit his selfish aims. The devil, even, quoted Scripture to further his designs on the divine Son of Man.

The Council did much to still the troubled waters at Antioch by showing their admiration for the sacrifice and heroic courage of the missionaries of that church. A little appreciation of the good qualities of our opponents will often disarm their hostility.

Some one has said, "If you have trouble with a friend, do not write him, but go in a gentle spirit to speak to him." That was the plan when Judas and Silas were sent to Antioch.

"It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." The phrase quoted seems too bold at first sight, but it shows a very humble reliance on Christ's promise that His Spirit would lead His disciples into all truth, John 16: 13. They had unselfishly thought out the matter and doubtless had prayed; they saw what was the will of God's Spirit, and they made that their pleasure.

The people at Antioch rejoiced because they had secured to the Gentiles a place in the church and in God's affection. Self-sacrifice in regard to meals, social customs, was nothing to them. Would that all Christians felt that self-sacrifice of drink or social custom is as nothing to the saving of drunkards and bringing them to a place in the church of Christ!

This incident illustrates the thoroughly democratic character of the apostolic Christianity. The messengers from Jerusalem reported, not to the rulers of the church nor