

thren, members of His household, for whose unbelief He mourned.

When the disciples followed Him in body, they did so very imperfectly in spirit. For what a change is visible in their state of mind after the Holy Ghost was poured down upon them at the day of Pentecost! What a full understanding had they then of His will! How they entered into His mind, and were filled by His Spirit! But that was not until they had ceased to follow Him in body, for they did not put away childish things until they could say, "Though we knew Him after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."

We cannot tell why the man who cast out devils was not one of those who followed Christ in body. It may have been in consequence of a command from Christ, or it may have arisen from weakness, or infirmity, or prejudice, or humility upon his part. But while he did not follow Christ in person, he followed Him in spirit; for he confessed Christ's name, and he did Christ's work, casting out devils in His name. Yet this is the man whom the disciples of Christ forbid, because he did not follow with them! But was that essential? Was it impossible to be a genuine disciple, and to follow Christ with a true and obedient heart, unless he did so in their way? Who told them that? Not the Saviour; for the Saviour said "Forbid him not! He that is not against us is for us."

Let us, then, apply these principles to the regulating of our duty in the present day. It is obvious that all Christians are now in the position of that man, and not in

the position of our Lord's more immediate followers. It is impossible for us to follow Christ in body.

But if we may now, as then truly follow Christ in the sense in which this man followed Him, so may we now, as then, be guilty of the sin of which Christ's disciples were guilty, and for which they were rebuked by Him.

Here is a man who professes Christ's name. He acknowledges Him as the only Saviour. He has felt the burden of sins, and, bathed in tears of penitence and of love, he has laid it down at Christ's Cross, and recognizes the crucified Saviour as all his salvation, and all his desire. This man's knowledge may be very little, but he is learning, and what he has learned has taught him to esteem the gospel, and to value the Saviour. But this, you say, is mere profession. Not so; this man does more. Through Christ's name, he is casting sin out of himself, and helping to cast it out of others by his words and by his life. He has not many talents, he may be deficient in wisdom, he may be far, very far behind you; but still, though the work done may be little work, or imperfect work, it is nevertheless the Lord's work, and such as the Lord will accept and reward at the day of judgment. Now, you may forbid this man; you may cast him out of your society; you may hinder him, and condemn him because he followeth not with you and is not of your church, or sect, or party. What then? Has Christ anywhere revealed it to you, that ere a man be His follower, he must follow with you—that your sect and His church are