

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND.

READ LUKE vi. 39.



THIS is one of the shortest and simplest of parables. Indeed, we should have rather called it a proverb, had it not been called a parable by Luke. It seems to have been spoken by our Lord on two occasions, as recorded by Matthew and Luke.

There is no difficulty therefore in understanding this short parable.

The blind leaders mean the Scribes and Pharisees; the blind who were led mean the ignorant Jews whom they taught; and by falling into the ditch we are to understand going astray as to spiritual things, wandering from true doctrine and practice, and so coming to ruin, or at least suffering danger and loss. The people therefore were not to follow such teachers; for, not knowing the way of God themselves, they could but lead others astray.

The only true spiritual light comes from God, and this light He has given in His Word. The Scribes and Pharisees were blind leaders, because they forsook the Word of God. This was their fault, and it was this that made them unsafe teachers.

All who forsake or disregard the Word of God are but blind leaders, for that Word is still the only sure guide. Manners and customs, forms and ceremonies change, but the Word of God remains the same. The Jews had but a portion of it, we have the whole. The light which they enjoyed, though true, was but faint and dim, compared with the light of the Gospel. So that we may say, with even more confidence than David, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." For there we find light indeed, and no darkness: the light of truth, the light of God, the light which never misleads, the light which guides, cheers, and comforts all who walk by it.

Yet there are still blind leaders, and for the same reason as of old: they do not take the Word of God as their light.

Some pay so much attention to forms of man's invention, that their mind is drawn off from the Word of God.

Some refuse to submit their understanding to the

Word. They doubt and cavil, and find fancied defects, and venture to set up their own little reason against the plain word of Scripture.

Some, though sincere, have never sought the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and therefore the main truths of the Word of God are hidden from them. The light is before them, but the eyes of their understanding are darkened.

Some are careless. Though by profession teachers of others, their heart is not in their work. They have no knowledge or love of Christ in their hearts, no concern for souls, no earnest desire to lead them aright.

These are all blind leaders of the blind. They cannot teach what they do not know. They cannot lead others by a way which they have not found themselves.

The poor and ignorant who go to them for guidance do not find what they seek. For surely one cannot lead another to Christ who has not sought Him for himself, and it is hard to think that a soul can receive spiritual light by means of one who shows no sign of having received it himself.

The test to which all teaching should be brought is the Bible. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."* All religious teaching should be judged by this rule. Scriptural truth is the point of first importance; and no teaching can be really good and wholesome in which this is lacking or even obscured. As it would be the height of folly to trust oneself to the guidance of a blind man, so it cannot be right or wise to listen to unscriptural teaching. A proud,

captious, criticising spirit must indeed be guarded against by hearers; but, in humility and sincerity, with an earnest desire to know the truth, and to be fed with spiritual food, it is not only their right, but their duty, to judge what they hear by the standard of the Word of God.

Let those who are placed by God's providence where the truth is faithfully proclaimed, bless God for this great mercy, and seek earnestly to bring forth fruit to His glory. Let those whose lot is less happily cast make it a matter of continual and persevering prayer that God will give His Holy Spirit, and bring both teachers and hearers into true Gospel light. And let their prayer be the prayer of faith.

* Isaiah viii. 20.