

# New Years' Address, January 1866

by J.C. Philpot

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of New Year's reflection, spiritual influence, and the conditions for preaching to profit, highlighting Jesus Christ as the source of all blessings and riches.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 32:1, Proverbs 3:13, Proverbs 8:10, Habakkuk 3:17, Matthew 16:26, John 8:32, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 1:7, 2 Timothy 3:16

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Repentance Faith"

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## Description

J.C. Philpot delivers a New Year's Address in January 1866, emphasizing the importance of seeking spiritual profit in all aspects of life. He urges readers to assess whether their interactions, readings, and associations lead to soul enrichment or loss. Philpot highlights the need for deep repentance, faith in Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit to experience true spiritual profit, contrasting it with the emptiness of worldly gains. Amid societal challenges and spiritual decline, he encourages believers to seek wisdom, righteousness, and salvation in Jesus, the source of all spiritual blessings.

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## Transcript

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From almost the very commencement of our editorial labors we have attempted, at the opening of each successive year, to address to our gracious readers some words of friendly and affectionate counsel. The season itself seems to call for some such friendly greeting, some such affectionate recognition of the ties which have so long bound us together. Without scrupulously or superstitiously observing "days, and months, and times, and years," few of us altogether pass by so marked an epoch as the dawning of another year upon our path without some acknowledgment of it both to God and man. When we open our eyes on the first morning of the year, we almost instinctively say, "This is New Year's day." Nor is this, at least this should not be, all the notice we take, all the acknowledgment we make of that opening year of which we may not see the close.

When we bend our knees before the throne of grace, we mingle with thankful acknowledgment for the mercies of the past year, both in providence and in grace, earnest petitions for similar mercies to be experienced and enjoyed through the present. Last evening witnessed our confessions of the many, many grievous sins, wanderings, backslidings, and departings from the living God during the year now gone; this morning witnesses our supplications for grace to hold up our goings in his paths, that our footsteps slip not through the year just come.

Tears are most suitable at the burial of the dead; hopes and desires at the birth of the living. The past year was the departed father, worn out with age and infirmity; the present year the new-born babe in the arms of the smiling nurse. It is still, however, mid-winter. Today, the first of the present year, differs little in outward appearance from yesterday, the last of the past. But the thoughtful, prayerful mind takes little notice of wintry skies. It feels that the old, worn-out year has sunk into its grave, with all its trials and afflictions, and that a new year has come in its place, with its new hopes and new mercies; and if it bring new trials, yet that the promise still stands, that new strength will be given to meet and overcome them.

Refreshed and strengthened at the throne of grace, by such or similar communings with the God of all our mercies, we go down to meet our families, and are at once greeted on all sides with, "I wish you a happy new year," a greeting which we as warmly and affectionately return. Almost every friend, well-near every acquaintance that we meet with in the course of the day, greets us with the same kind wish. Now in all this there may be a great deal of formality, lip service, and traditional usage; but there may be also a good deal of sincerity, kindness, and affection. We are not, surely, so shut up in miserable self as to have no desire for the health and happiness, the temporal and spiritual welfare, of our families, our friends, or even our acquaintances. And if we desire their good, we need not be backward or unwilling to express it in a few words of friendly greeting. "Be kind one to another, tender-hearted;" "Be full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds;" "If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men," are precepts imbued with all the spirit of the gospel, and may be, indeed, should be, attended to without the least sacrifice of that faithfulness which suits those who would daily walk in the fear of the Lord. There may be a 'form of kind words' as well as "a form of sound words;" (2 Tim. 1:13;) and as we may use the latter in perfect harmony with the doctrines of the gospel, so we may use the former in perfect harmony with the spirit of the gospel.

But we would hope that there is something better between our spiritual readers and ourselves than kindness and courtesy, and something warmer than the mere expression of mutual friendliness and affection at the opening of another year. We are not, at least by this time we should not be, altogether strangers to each other. In one point an editor, if not in others, much resembles a minister; his readers know much more of him than he can know of them. In the case of every sound and settled minister, his views of divine truth, his mode of setting it forth, his gifts natural and spiritual; his peculiar line of things in which and in which alone he is at home, or at all clear and strong, his very defects and infirmities, are all open to the view of, are all fully understood by, his intelligent and gracious hearers.

A minister of any real weight and power, of any long standing and general acceptability, when permanently fixed over a church and congregation, gradually forms his own body of hearers. Those who cannot hear him, or at least, not to profit, gradually drop off, and there remains a congregation which receives his ministry, sees as with his eyes, drinks into his spirit, and is united to him in love and affection. He stands to them in time as a father to his children; and the tie being cemented by mutual affection, he becomes enabled and warranted to speak to and deal with them in a way which would not be consistent, nor indeed tolerated, in a strange minister, or a transient supply.

Now, an editor cannot hope to attain a position so honored as this, for he has not either the same divine commission- the ministry being the ordinance of God, or the same authority and influence; nor has he that personal knowledge of his readers, or they of him, which the pastor has of his people, and therefore cannot gain that same amount of esteem and affection. And yet he may, no must, if he be of any use at all to the church of God, attain a position in which his words may possess a weight and power not much inferior, and in some respects, much more advantageous. How much wider is his field, how much larger

his congregation; how his words can enter houses where his person would be rejected, and be read by foe as well as received by friend.

The influence which the thoughts and opinions of others exercise over us often escapes our own notice. The power is so subtle, the effect often so gradual, and in its operation so blended with the workings of our own mind, that we can hardly distinguish between the influence and its effects, between what is another's and what is our own. And if this holds good in ordinary matters, how much more so in the kingdom of grace. Truth, we mean thereby divine truth, has a wonderful power and influence over the mind, wherever the eyes, ears, and heart have been opened to see, hear, and believe it. It carries with it its own evidence, and shines in the light of its own testimony. To know the truth and experience its liberating, sanctifying power; (John 8:32; 17:17;) to receive the love of it- (2 Thes. 2:10;) to be taught it by an unction from the Holy One; (1 John 2:20, 27;) to be of it, and to know that we are of it; (1 John 3:19;) for it to dwell in us, and for us to walk in it; (2 John 2:4;) these are some of the peculiar marks of the living family of God; and if so, without them no minister, no book will be received by, or be acceptable to them. But where they find this truth, and it is commended to their consciences, there they will find an influence and a power, and that acting for their spiritual good.

But two things are specially needful for this active influence- elements we may call them of spiritual weight and power.

1. The first element of this influence must be **CONFIDENCE**. If we cannot trust a man either in private or public life, of what use or value can he be? From the errand boy to the bank director, from the little maid who runs with a letter to the post-office to the prime minister who holds the reins of government, confidence is the foundation of all the daily transactions of life. If without a large measure of mutual confidence between man and man, society itself could scarcely hang together, how much more is mutual confidence needed between men in those matters which relate to our soul's welfare and peace? But confidence is a plant of slow growth. And as it grows slowly, so it may slowly decline or suddenly fall. To a man in business credit is everything. What exertions will he make to obtain it; what sacrifices will he endure to maintain it! But shall the children of this world esteem loss of credit almost worse than loss of life? and shall the children of light be careless and indifferent to the loss of their Christian reputation?

How careful, then, should be every minister, and every editor who professes the doctrines of our most holy faith, neither by word nor work to impair the confidence reposed in him. He should be as tremblingly alive to avoid everything to shake that confidence as a banker to prevent a run upon his bank. No, much more so; for the one may merely cause a temporary pecuniary loss, but the other permanent injury to the cause of truth and to his own happiness and usefulness.

No man is more despised, no man more justly despicable, than a time-serving minister. A shifting, time-serving editor is, in our judgment, scarcely less despicable. As there always have been and always will be religious parties, every party naturally, almost necessarily, if of any extent, seeks some recognized organ of opinion by which it may act and speak. Our desire and aim are, and always have been, to represent no party- or at least that party only which possesses and professes sound experimental truth, and sterling vital godliness. If we have any weight or influence, this is the secret of it, that we express what our spiritual readers believe and feel. We do not lead them, nor do they lead us. We are friends and brethren, not master and servants, nor servant and masters. It is the truth in the love and power of it which unites us- that secret, mysterious, invisible, and yet powerful bond which knits together as with ties of adamant all who see eye to eye, and feel heart to heart in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

But as contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, we may be considered to speak for many who have not the opportunity, or perhaps the ability, to speak for themselves. Because we do this, freely and simply putting forth from time to time what God, we hope, has taught us, and because what we thus write or insert expresses the views and feelings of many private Christians and of many ministers, we may be considered rightly or wrongly the organ of a religious body.

"The Standard men" has become almost a word of reproach. Be it so. But let all know that as we allow no man to have dominion over our faith, so we exercise dominion over the faith of none. But even were it so that we do virtually represent a large body of Christian men and ministers, to be the free, unfettered, independent organ of a party is one thing, to be the tool of a party is another. A man, be he minister or editor, who will allow himself to be the tool of a party, merits the end of all tools- to be thrown aside as useless and worthless when worn out, when the job is done. Dear readers, if we have not your confidence, we are no fit editor for you. If you read what we write or what we insert with any suspicion, either of the genuineness of the article itself, or of our motives in bringing it before you, throw the book aside; you will get no profit from it; the secret suspicion that is working in your mind will poison the whole to you. But if you feel so far a confidence in us as an editor both as to what we write and what we insert, that we would not willingly deceive you or ourselves, for due allowance must be made for human weakness and infirmity, it imposes on us the greater obligation not justly to forfeit it, but rather seek to maintain and increase it to the utmost of our power.

2. The second element of weight and influence is SOLID PROFIT. You may trust us so far as not to doubt our sincerity of purpose, or even our ability of performance- and yet derive little profit from our labors. Should this be the case, where or with whom the fault may lie, it is not for us to inquire, much less decide; but if you do not profit by our pages, do not read them. "In all labor," says the wise man, "there is profit; but the talk of the lips tends only to poverty." (Prov. 14:23.) Judge for yourselves whether what we bring before you be the fruit of labor, or the talk of the lips. If the former, it will feed and profit; if the latter, it will starve and rob you. In earthly matters, in the daily transactions of life, profit is the spring of business, the reward of labor, the soul of industry, sustaining and cheering all who live by the sweat of the brow or the sweat of the brain. Profit, in a higher sense of the word, is the strongest spring, as it is the sweetest reward, of all preaching, of all hearing, of all writing, of all reading, of all labor in the service of God and his word and truth. But what is profit, that is, spiritual profit? Let us seek to answer this question, and thus make it the chief purport of our present Address.

By profit, in a spiritual sense, we understand everything which enriches the soul, that is, makes it "rich toward God;" (Luke 12:21;) communicates to it durable riches and righteousness, causes those who love the Lord to inherit substance, and fills their treasures. (Prov. 8:18-21.) This is profit. Of this profit, of these treasures, Wisdom, that is Jesus, as of God "made unto us wisdom," (1 Cor. 1:30,) holds the key. Wisdom, therefore, cries aloud, "Happy is the person who finds wisdom and gains understanding. For the profit of wisdom is better than silver, and her wages are better than gold. Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her." (Prov. 3:13-15.) And again- "Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge over pure gold. For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies. Nothing you desire can be compared with it." (Prov. 8:10, 11.)

But as the fruit of this wisdom is to make us wise unto salvation, and as it is the free gift of God to those who feel their need of it, (James 1:5) we have to cry and seek for it, but shall not cry and seek in vain. "Cry out for insight and understanding. Search for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God. For the Lord

grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding." (Prov. 2:3-6.) Few, however, seem to know, few to prize this heavenly wisdom, this divine teaching, this unction or anointing from the Holy One which teaches all things, and is truth and no lie. Forms and ceremonies content some; a name to live satisfies others; a sound creed, with a tolerably consistent life, is enough for this professor; the approbation of men, the flattery of his own heart, are sufficient for that.

But O the insufficiency, the emptiness, the deceptiveness of all these forms and shadows, when we are made to see and feel who and what we are; when our spiritual poverty comes upon us like an armed man; when our miserable destitution, nakedness, beggary, and thorough insolvency, with all their attendant needs and woes, stare us in the face; when we stand before the throne of the Most High without a rag to cover us, a refuge to hide us, or a plea to avail us. It is this view of ourselves within and without, this sinking down before God as the great Searcher of hearts, this deep and feeling sense of the pitiable state into which sin, original and actual, has brought us, which, in the hands of the blessed Spirit, opens our eyes to see what alone can profit us.

One beam of divine light shining into the soul is enough to show us not only what we are, but what alone can do us any good. One drop of the unction from the Holy One falling upon the lids is enough to open the eyes to see in whom all salvation is, from whom all salvation comes, and thus forever to chase away those idle dreams, those vain delusions, those deceptive hopes in which thousands be as in the midst of the sea, or upon the top of a mast. By hunger we learn what is true food; by thirst, what is pure water, wine, and milk; by poverty, what is kind charity; by cold and nakedness, what are warmth and clothing; by pitiless storms and beating rains, what are house and home, refuge and shelter. That, then, which feeds, warms, relieves, clothes, shelters, comforts, blesses, and saves the soul is that alone which profits it. Everything else, every other substitute, is but a stone for bread, or a serpent for a fish; (Matt. 7:9, 10;) the dream of a hungry man who eats and awakens, and his soul is empty; (Isa. 29:8;) ashes for food, and a lie in the right hand for substantial truth; (Isa. 44:20;) the vine of Sodom and the fields of Gomorrah for the best wine that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak. (Deut. 32:32- Song 7:9.)

But where or whence shall we get this solid, substantial food, this wine that makes glad the heart of man, this oil that makes his face to shine, this bread which strengthens man's heart? (Ps. 104:15.) Is it not all in Jesus?- the risen, the ascended, the glorified, and glorious Son of the Father in truth and love? He alone is the bread of life to feed us- (John 6:48;) the water of life to refresh us; (John 7:37;) his justifying righteousness is our only acceptable dress- (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:6; Phil. 3:9;) his atoning blood our only redemption and remission of sins; (Eph. 1:7;) his word and promise our only hope- (Rom. 4:18-21; 2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 6:18-20;) his sympathy and compassion as our great High Priest on his throne our main support; (Heb. 4:15;) and his ability to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him our chief encouragement.

But how are we to obtain this food, this shelter, this peace, this support, this strength and consolation? We see, clearly see, that it is not in us, and we see, clearly see, in whom it all centers. But to get at it, to draw it down into our own breast, to feed on the bread, to drink the milk and wine, to enjoy the peace, the rest, the quiet, the calm security, the deliverance from all foes and fears; to have the pledges and foretastes of eternal bliss, the sweet assurance of all sin pardoned, all backslidings healed, every crooked thing made straight and every rough place made plain; to have all bondage, distance, darkness, guilt, and apprehension fully removed, and to walk in the light of God's countenance as freely accepted in the Beloved- how shall these heavenly blessings be realized as our happy portion?

Only as the blessed Spirit takes of the things of Christ, reveals them to us, gives us faith to believe in the Son of God, and by this precious faith to receive every mercy and blessing out of his fullness. We thus see that before we can preach to profit, write to profit, and, we may well add, hear or read to profit, we must know and feel these three things-

1. A deep sense of our own emptiness, poverty, and destitution.
2. A view by faith of the Son of God as containing in himself all the treasures of grace and glory.
3. A communication by the blessed Spirit of some of these glorious riches feelingly and experimentally to our heart.

In the transactions of business and daily life, profit is something real and tangible. It is not a set of account books or a balance sheet, a heap of bills or a row of figures, which at the end of the year shows the trader where he stands, that he terms profit; but a real, solid, substantial addition to his income or his capital, to his necessities or his comforts, to the support and education of his family, to his honorable standing in business, to the increase and enlargement of his business. It is this solid, substantial character stamped upon profits which makes them so sought after and so valued. And similarly, it is the misery of losses, and carrying on a sinking, unprofitable business which furrows the brow with care, fills the mind with gloomy anxieties, and embitters to thousands every day of their lives.

Now take this parallel into the things of God. The profit of the soul is, or should be, as solid, as real, tangible, and substantial as the profit of business. The soul trades as well as the body; there is a business, a daily business, carried on in the closet as well as in the counting-house, at the throne of grace as well as behind the counter. The soul has its gains and losses, its receipts and payments, its account books- its waste book, journal, and ledger; the first for wasted time and opportunities, the second for the sins of each day, the third for the transgressions set down in the long debt book of memory during many years.

But when the books are opened, a glance at their contents, for we need not sum up the totals or make a balance sheet, shows us our entire insolvency and total bankruptcy. Where then the profit if the whole be loss? Here, as we close the books in despair, and look upward as if without help or hope, a Friend above meets the eye who has beforehand paid every debt, and bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Col. 2:11.) Is there no profit here? What! No profit in his precious blood which cleanses from all sin- no profit in his righteousness which justifies from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses? Why, it is all profit. This made David say- "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." (Ps. 32:1-2.)

It is this which makes Jesus so suitable, so precious to those who believe, that in him we are blessed, already blessed, "with all spiritual blessings;" that "in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" that "in him we have obtained all inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will." And why? "That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ,"- not in ourselves, not in our good words or good works, not in our account books, but in Christ. (Eph. 1:3-12.)

To set forth, to exalt, and hold up to believing eyes and hearts this glorious Christ, whether by tongue or pen, is to speak to profit, for in him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" (Col. 2:3;) and

as these treasures are opened and their precious contents revealed, the believing heart becomes enriched by the communication of them through the blessed Spirit.

Now we believe that none but the living family of God know, or care to know, for themselves anything about this spiritual profit. In fact, none but they have truly learned that first element of divine teaching which makes us at all concerned about profit or loss. Our blessed Lord said, and his words touch this point to the very core- "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26.) Thus there lies a deep and weighty matter at the foundation of the whole question about profit and loss- that I have a soul to be saved or lost. What then shall I give in exchange for my soul? for what am I profited if I gain the whole world and lose that? This deep conviction of a soul to be saved or lost lies at the root of all our religion if it be of God. Here, on one side, is the world and all its profits and pleasures; its charms, its smiles, its winning ways, its comforts, its luxuries, its honors, to gain which is the grand struggle of human life; there, on the other, is my solitary soul, immortal in a mortal body, to live in death, through death, and after death, aye, forever and ever, when the world and all its pleasures and profits will sink under the wrath of the Almighty- and this dear soul of mine, my very self, my only self, my all, must be lost or saved.

Everything then which I gain to the injury of my soul is certain loss, everything which I lose to the benefit of my soul is positive gain. Here is my measure, here my scale of loss and profit. My conscience keeps the account book in which the entries are made. There is a page on each side for debtor and creditor, a "minus" and a "plus." Against every sin, every idle or foolish word, every wandering glance, every infidel, unbelieving, unchaste, rebellious, fretful, murmuring thought, every proud, selfish, careless, carnal, worldly movement or desire, against all coldness, darkness, deadness, barrenness, prayerlessness, and the whole crop of earthliness there is a "minus." But on the opposite page over against these numerous entries, these long, long sums there stands a "plus." Every gleam and glimpse of divine light, every sweet season in prayer, every visitation of the Lord's presence and power which preserves the spirit, every gracious promise or encouraging invitation, every soft word or gentle touch, every kind whisper, every rising hope, in a word, everything which warms, cheers, melts, and raises the soul up from earth to heaven is a blessed "plus," for all are placed to our account as so many pledges and, as it were, prepayments of the infinite riches of the Son of God as made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Now the main work of the ministry is to unfold this question of profit and loss, and examine, so to speak, the account books of the family of God. Every living hearer brings his account book with him, and as he sits before the man of God he finds his accounts examined and entered into. The servant of the Lord enters first into our losses, and shows what we are by nature and practice, by sin original and actual, bringing against us debt after debt and bill after bill, conscience meanwhile not merely owning the truth of every charge, but secretly whispering, "Aye, and a thousand sins twice told which you have not mentioned and cannot, dare not mention," until down the poor soul sinks almost into despair, like a tradesman poring over his books in a very cold sweat of agony at the prospect of immediate ruin to crush him into the dust.

But now the man of God opens the other side of the page, and holding up to view the Person and work, blood and righteousness, of the Lord the Lamb, not only shows every sin forgiven, every charge met and paid, every debt discharged, and full acceptance for the whole sum given; but, the blessed Spirit bearing his inward testimony, by describing the work of grace, proves to the soul's joy that it has an interest in the finished work of the Son of God. As then he shows that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, and that where sin abounded there grace did much more abound, and this is received and

believed, it raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the ash-heap to set him among princes, and to make him inherit the throne of glory.

This preaching is to profit, not like much in our day, a "subverting of the hearers" by perverse disputings and erroneous doctrines, (2 Tim. 2:14; 1 Tim. 6:5,) but a building of them up on their most holy faith. (Jude 20.) This sound, searching, experimental preaching, and, we may add, writing, for we may include both, communicates to the soul solid good, for it enters into the conscience, God's special domain, sometimes wounding, sometimes healing, but always, as owned and blessed of the Spirit, making it alive and tender, and thus fostering the fear of God as its choice treasure. By it, as a message from God, faith is strengthened, hope enlarged, love drawn forth, humility, meekness, brokenness and contrition of spirit produced or renewed; by it sin is made exceedingly sinful, and though the light which it casts into the heart, and perhaps upon some passages of the past life is sometimes almost too great to be borne, yet in that very light, and by the working with it of divine Life, there is wrought a repentance, a godly sorrow, a self-loathing, a solemn casting oneself down before the Lord's feet, which though painful is felt to be profitable.

Is not God's teaching to profit? (Isa. 48:17.) Is not Scripture "given by inspiration of God," that it may be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness- that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?" (2 Tim. 3:10-17.) Does not Paul declare that in his preaching at Ephesus "he kept back nothing that was profitable," and that by so doing he was "pure from the blood of all men?" for "he shunned not to declare unto them all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:20, 26, 27.) Are we not also told that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man (that is, not every man universally, but every one of those to whom it is given) to profit withal?" (1 Cor. 12:7.) If we are "God's building," is it not that our bodies may be the temples of the Holy Spirit? If "God's husbandry," that we may be "fruitful in every good word and work?" (1 Cor. 3:9, 5:20; John 15:1, 2, 8.)

Measure then, by this scale, all whom you hear, and all that you read. Let this be your simple question- "Does it profit me? This ministry, this book, this company, this connection, this person, do I get real soul profit from them? How does my account book stand? What does my conscience say? Do I not know, do I not feel when I lose and when I gain, when I fall among thieves and am left half dead, and when the oil and wine are poured in, and I am bound up and healed? Why then should we encourage thieves and robbers? for such all are who do not enter by the door into the sheepfold, (John 10:1) whether in the ministry or out of the ministry. Will a banker keep a dishonest clerk, or a store owner a thieving assistant? Are we then to encourage dishonest men, ministers or not ministers, erroneous books, and time-serving publications, when once our eyes are opened to see who and what they are, and that the truth in its real vitality and power is not in them?

When we could only see men as trees walking, there was an excuse for some degree of unsteadiness and vacillation. Our natural kindness disposed us to think and hope well of almost all who made a profession of truth; our conscience would not permit us to speak against them, or separate ourselves from them. But, when we have learned by repeated and painful experience how hurtful their company or example has been to us, are we still to take them to our bosom and associate with them? Are we to give our ears to erroneous men, and our eyes to erroneous books, if we know anything of truth in its purity and its power? Are we to give our company to those who by their inconsistent conduct, carnal conversation, worldly conformity, light and trifling ways, vain presumptuous confidence, and utter lack of everything gracious and spiritual in heart, lip, and life; can only rob and plunder our soul of every grain of tenderness, meekness, and godly fear?

Do not sit under a ministry which starves or injures you. If we cannot find books which do profit us, let us read nothing but the blessed word of God- if we can find no simple, humble, spiritually minded child of God to walk with, let us rather walk alone, and commune with our own heart on our bed and be still.

With many of us life is fast ebbing away. Of some who read these pages, it may soon be said, "There shall be time with him no longer." God's judgments are abroad in the land. He has smitten us with a most terrible stroke in this fearful cattle plague, of which we have seen the beginning; but who can tell the end? It may be soon with us in the words of the prophet, "The fields shall yield no food; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls." (Hab. 3:17.) So intimately bound together are all the links of society that this calamity, which neither we nor our fathers knew, strikes not only the immediate sufferers, but all who have themselves and their families to maintain. Closed markets, a general paralysis of business, the greatest risk and uncertainty in all buying and selling, even in keeping stock, must be the greatest loss, if not positive ruin, to many; and food at famine price is real poverty to most, and a serious injury to all.

Nor is this all that we may greatly fear or painfully feel. A visitation of cholera is generally expected by medical authorities in the ensuing summer; and who can tell when and where it shall begin, and when and where it shall end? How dark, too, and gloomy are the signs of the times! We have lost a veteran statesman who, with the support and confidence of almost all political parties, and endowed with an incredible union of sagacity and firmness, held the helm of government during a most trying period, and, humanly speaking, preserved us from the misery of being even now at war.

Popery is advancing at a rapid pace, and all the more surely as the eyes of most seem blinded to its progress. A large number of the clergy are Papists at heart, and by accustoming their congregation to Popish ceremonies are gradually paving the way to a fuller development of Papal doctrines and observances. In the House of Commons, any motion which tends to expose its practices or check its progress is so ridiculed and laughed down, or counted out, that few members have the moral courage to speak in favor of it or support it. Ireland has just escaped the breaking out of a wide-spread conspiracy, which, but for the good hand of God, might have issued, as others have done before, in a fearful massacre of the Protestant population, avenged as it would have been by a fearful retribution.

When we turn from the world to the church, little that is pleasant or hopeful meets the eye. The Lord is taking home or laying aside his servants, and few seem raised up in their place to blow the trumpet with a certain sound, stand on the battlements of Zion, or feed the 'flock of slaughter'. In churches there is much strife and division, little conversion work going on, and a general apathy seems to brood over most congregations, even where sound doctrine is preached and experimental truth contended for.

But it is time to draw to a close. Through mercy, all is not thoroughly or totally dark. The Lord has always had, ever will have, a seed to serve him. Thus, with all these fearful and gloomy prospects we hope, no, fully believe, that he has still a goodly number of those who fear and love him in this land. For them we labor, to them we here address ourselves; and if the God of all grace be pleased to crown with his blessing, through the present year, what may drop from our pen or appear in our pages, to him in his Trinity of Persons and undivided Unity of Essence must be ascribed all the praise, and honor, and glory.

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

The Editor

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