

## **ASSEMBLING TOGETHER.**

Paul says, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10:24,25.

The necessity for assembling together for mutual edification, encouragement and strengthening, has been very generally acknowledged among Christians, yet we doubt if this most desirable end is very frequently attained, because we think, in most cases, God is not permitted to speak among them, or if so, he is limited. The assemblies together most frequently take the form of prayer and experience meetings, unless there is one of the number who is able to preach, and then the tendency is to depend upon that one to a greater extent than is profitable. We think that in meetings of Christians, much time should be given to the study of the Scriptures.

The writer attended one of these experience meetings among those professing the higher life, where God was almost shut out, and poor, weak humanity, ignorant of its weakness as it always is, had abundant opportunity to boast itself. At the beginning of the meeting, one text of Scripture was read, the context of which all were ignorant of, and consequently its true application could not be understood. The dear old book was closed and reverently laid aside, and a prayer was offered, after which, one after another told how he or she felt and acted. One told how before rising in the morning she received her morsel of food (a single text of Scripture) on which she fed all day. How many do so – taking a text that happens to be stored in memory, often interpreting it out of all harmony with the context, because they fail to examine it closely,

taking a little crumb of comfort when the Lord has spread his bountiful table and invited them to feast at it.

Over an hour passed, and the human spirit had magnified itself greatly, while the Holy Spirit (Godlike mind) of the "new creatures" (for such we believe they were), was almost quenched. A brother seemed to perceive that something was wrong, and said, "What these meetings want is more prayer," and then proceeded to pray for everything he could think of, ignorant of the fact that he asked for many things in direct opposition to God's expressed will. And so the meeting closed without attaining the object for which they met, because God was shut out.

Again it is the aim of some in their undue desire for harmony, to avoid the investigation of any subject which might provoke controversy. This, we think, is manifestly wrong. Shall we sell the truth to purchase harmony? and are we so puffed up as to be offended if God's word should overthrow our former convictions? Or shall we limit God to five or ten minutes, and take the remainder of two hours to listen to each others experiences, which in nine cases out of ten would be better untold? Why not open the doors wide, and let the blessed Master come in and lead our meetings?

It matters not whether there is any one learned or talented among you. Let each one bring his own Bible, paper and pencil, and avail yourselves of as many helps in the way of a Concordance, Em. Diaglott, old and new versions of the New Testament, etc., as possible. Choose your subject; ask for the Spirit's guidance in the understanding of it; then read, think, compare scripture with scripture, and you will assuredly be guided into truth. "And the truth shall make you free" – free from error, superstition, and the corruption of our perverse nature, and the Holy Spirit (mind of God and Christ) if entertained will liberate you from formality as well as from self-exaltation.

Our prayers need not be long or vain repetitions of the same thing, since we are not heard for our much speaking. In few and simple words we can make known our wants as far as we can estimate them; but God has so much more to tell us than we have to tell him. Let him speak much and long and often through his Word. "Sanctify them through thy truth," thy word is truth, was Jesus' prayer; and his admonition, "Search the Scriptures, for these are they that testify of me." (John 17:17, and 5:39.) So will we learn to delight ourselves in God's Law; it will be our meditation by night and by day. (Ps. 119:97.) So, also, will he work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13.)

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