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"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY."

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P. D. GOLD, EDITOR.

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P. D. Gold, Wilson, N. C.

WHITMELL, VA., July 12th, 1875.

Dear Brother Gold:—

FOR some time I have had impressions to write an article for publication, but as I am not fond of subjecting myself to criticism I have reluctantly come to the work.

Carnal men and nominal professors, either in or out of the Baptist Church, are ever ready to misconstrue the expressions of God's Ministers; therefore we Preachers should never write without a solemn direction of the Spirit of God. Writing at random, merely to see our names in print, is very unprofitable to the cause of God, and usually genders controversy. Perhaps one will write, and then another, in order to show to the readers that he is smarter than the first one, will bring up either a real or an imaginary difference of opinion. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed, one of another," Gal. 5: 15.

When Paul charged Timothy to "preach the Word," he did not mean for him to simply rehearse and misapply the Scriptures, but for him to preach Christ and the Power of God as the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," John 1: 1. "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God," Rev. 19: 13. "For there are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," 1st John 5: 7. "Through faith we understand that

the worlds were framed by the Word of God," Heb. 11: 3.

Pharisees urgently recommended many of their unscriptural institutions as a means of eternal salvation, and thereby reject Christ. But Paul says, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," 2nd Cor 4: 5. Again: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God," 1st Cor. 1: 23, 24.

Place a lump of tallow, and likewise a lump of clay near the same fire; the tallow will melt, and the clay will harden. The preaching of the Cross tends to soften the feelings of God's children, but carnal men are often offended when their schemes are set aside, and Christ is preached as the only way of life.

Elder John Stadler once remarked that he had never been pleased with his own preaching, but that whenever he was best pleased, men were ~~highly~~ ~~pleased~~ ~~with~~ ~~his~~ ~~preaching~~ ~~and~~ ~~his~~ ~~enemies~~ ~~would~~ ~~have~~ ~~thrown~~ ~~him~~ ~~headlong~~ ~~down~~ ~~the~~ ~~hill~~ ~~if~~ ~~he~~ ~~had~~ ~~permitted~~ ~~them~~ ~~to~~ ~~do~~ ~~so~~.

Arminianism tends to licentiousness, therefore carnal men love that doctrine and hate God's electing grace which places their safety upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ instead of their own. When they are indulging in sins of the deepest dye, they do not aim to go to hell, but believe that they can at a moment's notice cancel the account with their own works and prayers.

Those who are fond of dancing, gambling, drinking and other vices, do not feel that they are running any great risk, because they hear from every fashionable pulpit the proclamation that they can at any time make their peace with God.

"No harm" is a great phrase with Satan and he sometimes induces God's children to quote it. A merchant who is anxious to dispose of his goods, will sometimes persuade certain persons that there is no harm in making an account with him. Should they be slow to comply, he will, perhaps, call their attention to their ability to pay and remind them of the property which they possess. Thus he will induce them to make an account and though it may be correct, it will advance more rapidly than they are aware of, unless they are watchful. Satan keeps a large assortment of sins and will sell to all classes on long time. Should any of his customers become alarmed he tries to conceal their accounts from them and persuades them that others

are deeper in debt than they are and that "it is time enough yet." His religious drummers are zealously engaged in reminding men of their ability to satisfy the demands of the law at any moment, instead of calling their attention to the enormity of their debts of sins and their bankrupt condition by nature. Honest men are at ease even while in debt, provided they think they can pay at any time, but as soon as they find their liabilities to be greater than their incomes they become uneasy. The children of God can well remember how quiet they were in sin 'till God showed them their sinful and helpless condition by nature and then became uneasy and went to work to pay, but alas their efforts were all vain! The debt was increasing every day and they were becoming less able to pay. Sins hitherto forgotten, were brought up and acknowledged. "For I was alive without the law once but when the commandment came sin revived and I died," Rom. 7: 9.

Persons thus made sick of sin do not wish to drink a "cup full of iniquity," but they ~~had~~ ~~already~~ ~~drunk~~ ~~their~~ ~~fill~~. They struggle as long as they have strength and finally fall down in despair, fearing that theirs is a hopeless case. At this extremity Jesus, the Surety, meets them and shows them their receipts in full, written before the foundation of the world. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," Eph. 1: 4. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. 8: 12.

"They that are whole have no need of the physician; but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," Mark 2: 17.

As soon as God applies his promise of eternal life to his children, they cease to boast of their own deeds and begin to feel that the Lord has done great things for them whereof they are glad. (Psalms 126: 3.)

The Christian does not feed either upon the recommendation, or the condemnation of the inventions of men, but upon the promise of eternal life applied to his own soul. He attends preaching to find out whether he himself is right; and not whether others are wrong. He is already satisfied that many others are wrong, but the all-absorbing question with him is this: "Am I a child of grace, and is my name written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world?"

The introduction of light into a dark room is the quickest way of

driving out the darkness. The extravagant measures of carnal teachers are becoming so palpably false, that even natural men ought to detect their merchandise, therefore gospel Ministers should feed the sheep and allow Haman to hang himself.

Christ said "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Mat. 15: 14.

Frequently young Preachers and sometimes old ones take up the erroneous idea that long sermons are "great sermons" and therefore bring in a great many trashy things entirely foreign from the subject.

He who can express the greatest number of ideas with the fewest words must evidently be the smartest man.

Heretofore, able Preachers, in speaking of the inventions of men, would sometimes say the brush must be thrown out of the way, but they did not spend their whole time in heaping the brush. The weaker gifts can heap brush—able men should attend to the heavier work of explaining the mysteries of the Scriptures.

Natural men can condemn the institutions of men, but it requires spiritual ones to apply the deeper matters of the Scriptures to the experience of Christians. Railing men arrogantly call themselves "doctrinal Preachers" and say that others must feed the sheep. They glean from Papers, Tracts, Histories and other worldly sources a routine of extravagant expressions used by carnal Teachers and spend their time in condemning them, instead of talking about Christ.

What they say in condemnation of those things is true, but there are other things equally true and vastly more important to be told. The doctrine of Christ is found in the Scriptures, and not in such outside quarters. Satan often gets up some of his new schemes to attract the attention of the Preachers while he can scatter the flock.

A cunning thief will sometimes place one of his party on one side of the yard to attract the attention of your guard dogs, while he himself will creep in on the other side and pilfer.

A failure to feed will soon scatter the sheep. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind," 1st Pet. 5: 2.

Rash Preachers are more disorderly in their daily walks, and it more frequently becomes necessary to cast them off from the Church than any other class. Meek, sober reasoners seldom give the Church any trouble. Before the war brawling men would