

Following Christ Afar Off.

"And Peter followed him afar off, even unto the palace of the high priest, and he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire."

The above is a brief account of Peter's conduct toward the Savior when taken by the mob that crucified him.

Let it be remembered that at one time Peter was zealous in the service of the Master, when every thing was favorable, when there was no persecution or trial to undergo. But when the accusers came with swords and staves, and but a few friends of the Savior were to be found to cling to him, "Peter followed afar off," even "sat in the seat of the scornful," and "warmed himself at their fires."

Are there not many now-a-days who "follow Christ afar off?"

Many would like to be called Christians if they could stand afar off while others bear the burdens of the cross. They would enjoy the earnest appeals and logical arguments on the evidences, if others would make all the liberal contributions, and let them spend their dollars in luxury and self-glorification.

Some would desire to follow Christ if you will give room enough between themselves and Christ for worldly pleasures, such as dancing, theatres, circus-going, Lord's day work, card playing, a little profanity, and many other such things that are conforming to the world.

We should always be ready to sing "Nearer my God to Thee," not only with melody on our lips, but must make "melody in our hearts to the Lord," lest we be of those of whom it may be said, "they praise me with their lips while their hearts are far from me."

The tempter is ever ready to offer inducements for Christians to "follow Christ afar off."

He says, "There is no harm in that," or "I do not see any harm in this," and thus the young man or young woman runs up the white flag and makes a truce with sin for the time, because they have "followed Christ afar off," and have left the Lord's entrenchments of Christian duty.

Peter had forgotten all the Lord had done for him—the many favors bestowed, and all the promises made.

Christians too, forget what the Lord has done and is doing for them. They forget a grand scheme of salvation—a suffering and risen Savior—the wonderful threatenings of the Divine word, and its glorious promises of salvation.

Many Christians do not wilfully intend to go away from Christ, but they adopt such a course of life and fall into such habits that before they are aware of it they find themselves following Christ afar off. Thus, by the unfaithful lives of Christians, great reproach is brought on the cause of Christ, and the truth is defamed.

We sometimes find those who follow Christ so far off, that they are found sitting and mingling with the servants of the wicked one so much that they love to sit down in the scorner's seat and enjoy the derisions that are made of Christianity while they warm themselves at the fires of Satan, and join in the revels of the iniquitous.

D.

WHO MADE ALL THAT?—It is related that when Napoleon Bonaparte was returning to France from the expedition to Egypt, a group of French officers one evening entered into a discussion concerning the existence of a God. They were on the deck of the vessel that bore them over the Mediterranean Sea. Thoroughly imbued with the infidel and atheistic spirit of the times, they were unanimous in the denial of this truth. It was at length proposed to ask the opinion of Napoleon on the subject, who was standing alone, wrapped in silent thought. On hearing the question, "Is there a God?" he raised his hand and pointed to the starry firmament, simply responded, "Gentlemen, who made all that?"

The Contribution.

The temple was a type of the church of Christ said the apostle, "Ye are the temple of God," "Ye are built up a spiritual house," "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple," &c. The sanctuary was typical of the worship of Christians where they continually, as kings and priests, offer the sweet incense of prayer and praise to God. In the sanctuary was the candlestick and the table and the showbread, twelve loaves which the priests placed anew every Sabbath day on the golden altar, of which the priests alone partook. This was typical of the communion partaken of by the Christians "whom he hath made kings and priests unto God." This was partaken of by the priests every Sabbath (the Sabbath being typical of the first day of the week, on which the disciples met to break bread). In this temple there was a treasury which was continually supplied by contribution. See Joshua vi. 19, and Jer. xxxviii. 11; also the following in the New Testament: "And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood." Matt. xxvii. 6. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury," &c.

Seeing there was a treasury kept up continually in the temple, worship which was a type of the true, in which all Christians have a part which is called the "temple of the Living God," "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Have we not a treasury and a continual treasury fund by contribution?

Jesus and his disciples had a treasury, or "the bag." "The poor," said Jesus, "ye have always with you." To the rich man he said, "Go and sell what you have and give to the poor, and ye shall have treasure in heaven." I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts xx. 35. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the Living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. vi. 17, 19. "But to do good and communicate forget not for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. xiii. 16.

Please turn with me to the following examples during the ministry of the apostles. They "sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need." Acts ii. 44. "Neither was there any among them that lacked for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." Acts iv. 34, 35. Also see the following instructions: "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." 1 Cor. xvi. 2. These words indicate (1) the thing to be done, "lay by him in store;" (2) the time when, "upon the first day of the week;" (3) the scale or proportion, "as God has prospered him." The direction indicates frequency and regularity, every "first day of the week." Thus it becomes habitual and easy. The first day of the week, on which our Lord arose, on which the Spirit was poured out and the church was founded, and the disciples met.

This is the Lord's plan and is comprehensive, "every one of you,"

young and old, rich and poor, none excepted, not even the poor widow with her two mites. Says one, "Oh! if I had one million dollars, I would give abundantly." If you had one million dollars you would not give as much as the poor widow, unless you would give it all, then you would not shine any brighter in glory than she. She gave her two mites, being all she had; you would give your million dollars, which would only be the same, "your all," which in the sight of God is no more than the two mites.

The rich were casting in of their abundance; the widow of her penury and want, cast in all. Said the Lord, "She hath cast in all her living; she hath cast in more than all."

How many Christians that of their abundance cast in nothing? "How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of God?" i. e., they that "trust in riches."

The example of the poor widow is before all. None are exonerated in the sight of God. None can plead poverty, none can be poorer than she. She could do more than the millionaire would be willing to do, with her farthing—lay up a substance—a treasure worth more than the gold of the millionaire.

The apostle says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered, that there be no gatherings when I come." The poor saints at Jerusalem were in need. The brethren at Corinth were going to contribute and send the same by the hands of one they should approve by whom the apostle would send to Jerusalem. There must be system in this, as there is in all the Lord's work. The great apostle would come some day, and in order to convenience and to be prepared, it was necessary that there be a store or treasury, where those funds would be ready, that there be no gatherings or "passing the hat around," or making collections when he came.

But says one, "did not the apostle mean that each should lay by him in store, i. e., in his own house?" I think not, that would be simply keeping the money in his own pocket. But says another, "Maybe each member had a treasury or store at home, where he laid away the amount instead of there being a church store or treasury, where those funds were to be laid away."

And again may be not. Bear in mind, the apostle assigns as a reason that they lay in store, on the first day of the week, "that there be no gatherings when I come."

I imagine the great apostle on his way to Jerusalem, unexpectedly calls on the Corinthian church (the Corinthian brethren were numerous, some living in different directions, and scattered over considerable territory) Paul preaches at 11 o'clock, and attends to breaking of bread, and at the close of the exercises, just before the benediction, says, "Brethren, you remember I wrote you to lay by you in store, on the first day of the week, that there be no gatherings when I come. Now, I must start in the morning, for Jerusalem. Are your funds ready? One of the deacons arised, and say: "Bro. Paul, the members have been laying by them in store as you ordered; but they have left it all 'in store' in their houses at home, and the members are mostly living out from town in different directions." "Why?" says the great apostle, "Did I not write you to lay in store on the first day of the week, that there be no gatherings when I come? It is true I said lay by you in store on the first day of the week. Where are you on the first day of the week? are you not assembled together to break bread? Then you should have laid by you in the Lord's treasury, and have saved all this gathering and delay."

We find in the apostle's injunctions

that every one is required to lay in store. Are the congregations living up to this rule? Visit some of the congregations and many of them never think of the contribution. The preacher says nothing about it. The elders and deacons say nothing about it, and that part of the Lord's work is ignored or overlooked, consequently there is no treasury and no provisions for the widow and orphan.

Other congregations observe it in part. Those nearest the "table" will contribute something, while the others do nothing. See a congregation of 100 members that contribute mere nothing, and it is a shameful fact, but nevertheless true, that they chew more money in tobacco and spit it upon the ground than they put in the Lord's treasury during the year.

I am not condemning those that use tobacco, if so, I would condemn nearly every preacher in the land, neither do I condemn the non-contributors, but am simply talking about "stubborn facts." I am not fault-finding the good brethren in Oregon, for I verily believe they come as near the standard of perfection as in the Eastern States.

But says one, "I am in favor of imposing a tax on the brethren, and let every one pay in proportion to their property," etc. That may be a very good plan when the Lord's plan is no longer good enough, and it comes to compulsory means being necessary. But we find no compulsory means taught in the "law of liberty." "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." There must be a "willing mind," "according to what a man hath," and not "according to that he hath not." "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully." "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things," "and as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Funds are necessary, and should always be at hand, to feed and cloth the widow and orphan, to send the Gospel to the destitute, etc.

I know not our numerical strength in Lane county, but suppose we number at least 500, all told. Each member average 10 cts. per week into the Lord's treasury, we would have an income of \$50 per week, \$200 per month, or \$2,400 per year. I will venture that if all Christians would contribute one cent per week on an average, it would clothe every widow and orphan in the land.

For instance, select a congregation of 100 members, that meet each first day of the week, and but one-third are lively members, the rest all drones, and each contribute 10 cts. each per week, on an average, it would amount to \$3 per week, \$12 per month, or \$144 per year. Certainly there is not a congregation in the land that cannot average 10 cts. per week among its working members.

T. M. MORGAN.

"Take the Safe Path, Father."

A gentleman said to his pastor, "How can I best train up my boy in the way he should go?" "By going in that way yourself," wisely replied the minister. This reminds us of a story told by Dr. Thomson, author of "The Land and the Book." He had climbed nearly to the top of a steep mountain, lifting his feet carefully along over the projecting rocks, when faintly from below he heard a silvery voice call out: "Take the safe path, father; I am coming after you." His heart stood still as he realized the danger of his precious boy. If fathers only remembered that the boys are indeed coming after them how differently they would walk. If they smoke or drink, they must expect it in the boys. If they get angry, they will see the same thing in their children. God gives lives into our keeping, to be returned at last, fitted for an endless future. Knowing well our fearful responsibility, we yet carelessly set poor examples for our dearest ones to copy, and thus not only endanger our own souls, but theirs.—*Congregationalist*.

Bride.

Adam had one wife. The second Adam now has one wife or bride, not six hundred. The first Adam was in "a deep sleep" and minus a rib—side pierced—before a bride was given him. Jesus was in the deep sleep of death, and while in that state, his side was wounded; not many days hence a bride was presented to him. Isaiah prophesied of this bride. (Isa. liv. 5; lxi.) Hosea, in his prophecy concerning the bride, the Lamb's wife, says: "I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." (Hosea ii. 19, 20.) John said; "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." (John iii. 29.) The Savior very forcibly illustrates this by the parable of the marriage feast. (Matt. xxii. 1-14.) Paul says: "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy," and the reason for which was, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 25-27.) John, in the Isle of Patmos, says: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said to me, Write, blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And there came to me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." "And the Spirit and the bride say come." (Rev. xix. 7-9; xxi. 2, 9; xxii. 17.)

ELIJAH WHITE.

Minnie's New Year's Gift.

"Mother gave me a Bible last New Year's," said a little girl, complacently; "and Aunt Lou gave Cousin Harry one at the same time. Just look at them now, and see the difference!"

Harry's was worn. Its gilt edges were tarnished, and the newness was gone from the cover, but it looked as if it had been read very often. Here and there I saw pencil marks near favorite verses, and in one or two places it seemed as if tears might have fallen. Little Harry Gordon had become a Christian lately, and his Bible had evidently been very precious to him.

Minnie said, triumphantly, after I had finished my look at Harry's, "Now, see mine!" She unfolded the tissue-paper from it, and there it was, just as fresh and fair and uninjured as when it came out of the shop.

"I've never had it out of the drawer but once," said Miss Minnie, "and that was to show to somebody."

"Minnie," said I, "if your father were away from home, and should send you a letter, telling you just what he wanted you to do and be, would it be good treatment never to break the seal, and to lay it away in a drawer unread? Would it not be better to take it out every day and to read it over and over, trying each time to obey its injunctions?"

"Yes," said Minnie, blushing as she began to see my meaning.

"This is God's letter to you, my love. Like the man who folded away his talent in a napkin, you have folded up your precious Bible. Hereafter, my child, use it as God wants you to. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."—*Ec.*

The Old Testament is being printed in Ameyanese, the language of the most southerly of the New Hebrides group, the expenses having been met by the natives. The British and Foreign Bible Society is doing the work.