

ASSEMBLING TOGETHER

„Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together ... and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25.)

The necessity for the 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—and why? Because we think, in most cases, God is not permitted to speak, among them, or if so, he is limited.

These assemblings together, oftenest 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.

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 lady told how she, before rising in the morning, 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.

Nearly two hours passed and the human spirit had magnified itself greatly, while the holy spirit (God-like mind) of the „*new creatures*,” (for such I 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 every thing 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, at another of these meetings, one hungry sister ventured to ask information with reference to a certain scripture, and was told that lest it should provoke controversy, and since they wished to have harmony, they would just pass over that, and so she was left unfed.

Now is this right—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,

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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. (Psa. 119:97.) So also will he work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13.)

R. W.

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