

1872 Earth was owned by the Great Head of the Militant Church which was not with flesh and blood, but with "principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places."

Under this precious covering, we were enabled to enter upon the consideration of the State of Society within our borders with quietness of spirit, and a feeling of brotherly condescension, giving occasion for a living expression of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father, that we could consider the various concerns of Society in such beautiful order, without the aid of any veil to presiding head.

We still have to mourn that so many of our members fail to avail themselves of the privilege of attending our mid-week meetings, and gaining the spiritual strength to be derived from mingling with their fellow-members in social worship. The chief cause of this was believed to be a lack of religious life. Those members who are found attending our large meetings, and neglecting the small ones at home, were tenderly and affectionately exhorted to greater faithfulness to this duty, and more dedication of heart to the service of our Heavenly Father, that thus those little meetings may be held in the life and power of God.

It was clearly shown, that if we would deepen in the Divine life, we must draw nearer the Fountain in our own souls, looking not ^{to} man, or to the wisdom of men; for it remains to be a truth that "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase."

A living concern was also expressed for the tender-hearted precious children committed to our care, that they might be taken to meeting, and not left with those whose influences and examples may be hurtful to their tender minds. They were instructively likened to the flowers and plants in the garden and field; and we were reminded of how much time and care was thoughtfully devoted to the nurture and training of these, in order to produce beautiful specimens and good crops, and with what general success. And this was ~~farther~~ regarded as strong ground for the belief that a corresponding care and devotion directed to the training of the dear children, in gentleness, love, patience, truth, simplicity, moderation, and all the virtues, would be equally blessed, and alike successful. They would then, as a part of this culture, be taken with their parents to our religious meetings, where their pure spirits might be partakers of the "Fountain of Living Waters"; and mingle with us in our silent meditations; lending their inspiring presence to animate our hearts, and kindle anew the flame of devotion.

Our neglect of this important duty was shown to be a prolific cause of the non-attendance of our meetings; but we were comforted in the belief that a brighter day is dawning upon us, in the movements of the younger members of our beloved Society, giving promise of a more hopeful condition of things in the early future.

The subject of Gospel Ministry considered as a Divine gift, was feelingly adverted to as one of the means ordained by Infinite Wisdom to build up the Church of Christ, and advance the cause of righteousness in the earth. A truly baptized minister—one who is humbly brought into harmony with the Divine mind—becomes as mouth for the Lord. This is called in the New Testament the Gift of Prophecy; for he that ministers under this influence, speaks to edification, exhortation, comfort, and to a renewing of spiritual strength. The view was expressed, that if all were faithful to their impressions of duty, very few meetings, if any, would be held without some of its members being called to the ministry and qualified to hand forth the bread which Christ hath blessed, to nourish those present that they faint not on the way. Yet it should be remembered that the primary object of meeting for Divine worship, is not to hear what a brother or sister may have to declare of their experience in the way of Truth, but rather to wait upon God in the silence of all flesh, and to be taught of Him through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Those who have passed through deep spiritual baptism, and believe themselves called to express in the assemblies of the people—even a few words, under an humbling sense of the Divine presence—should not hold back, and thus experience that poverty that attends the withholding of more than is meet, not yet more forward further than the power accompanies them, and the Guide shows the way. It should be borne in mind, too, that when a clear spiritual Truth is presented to us, accompanied by an impression that it should be uttered, by withholding it, we keep from others that which is not our own, but belongs to them, and we are therefore unfaithful stewards of the Lord's goods.

An ardent desire was felt that the Lord of the harvest would qualify and send forth more laborers into His fields, "for he that laboureth receiveth wages and layeth up fruit unto Eternal life." There is a diversity of gifts dispensed to His obedient servants by the Head of the Church, and each one should endeavor to occupy his talent in promoting the good of