

45³ important to the community around us, and essential to our Christian progress. David said, in making his offering unto the Lord, "But I will surely buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that which cost me nothing." When we come to our religious meetings, although they may be small and silent, if we are individually concerned to present ourselves before the Lord and earnestly to seek to know our real condition in his sight, and to look unto Jesus for the realization of his precious promise to those who meet in his name, we shall be a strength to those who meet with us; but if we allow our minds to be filled with worldly thoughts and desires, we go as we came - and it may be said of us, as of some formerly: "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." The important mission of our portion of the Church of Christ in upholding prominent doctrines and testimonies of the Gospel has been brought impressively before us. We may be but as a speck in the multitude, yet the eyes of the world are upon us in our high profession, and we should live in great watchfulness and prayer under a deep sense of our accountability to God as Stewards of that which has been committed to us.

We were encouraged to increased attention in the religious training of our children, and though we cannot confer grace upon them, yet like the careful gardener, we may prepare the ground of their hearts for the seed; and however discouraging at times our labors may appear, there can be no question of the words of Solomon, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it;" many wanderers have at last, like the prodigal son, remembered their father's house.

The Holy Scriptures are a record of God's will to man and a precious legacy to the Church. The Apostle declares that "they are able to make us wise unto Salvation through faith that is in Jesus Christ." May there be increased concern among us to read them daily in private and to our families collectively.

Our Schools for the Scriptural instruction of the youth have not been forgotten by us, and we would encourage our members to diligence in sustaining them and gathering in those who are growing up in their neighborhoods without religious training or a knowledge of the Bible.

45⁴ Upon the subject of temperance we have felt much concern that having been pioneers in the cause we might not now relax our testimony in any degree against the use of strong drink, or in being seen where it is sold. Temperance is numbered among the fruits of the Spirit - may we be temperate in all things - and in reference to the excitement of the day, may there be no intemperate zeal among us. We were exhorted to uphold the peaceable character of the Redeemer's Kingdom, abstaining from all acts inconsistent with that love and good will towards men which is the breathing of the Gospel, and in this day of trial to let our light shine before men that they may see our good works & glorify our Father which is in heaven. We deeply regret that a few of our members have violated our ancient testimony against war.

Much sympathy has been felt for our members in the management of their outward affairs in this day of turning and over turning. May they ask counsel of the Lord and attend to the check of His Holy Spirit, and seek advice from experienced and concerned friends. He who regardeth the sparrow will not forget them; though they may have to pass through trials and realize the insecurity of earthly possessions, yet as these dispensations are submitted to as a part of the disciplinary care and wisdom of their Heavenly Father over them, they will know these promises to be sanctified to them as blessings in disguise.

We would, in conclusion, earnestly remind our members that Church membership will avail them but little if they are not changed in heart - may the solemn enquiry come seriously home to every one of us, am I a living member of the Church of Christ?