

"Sorrowful Words from a Sorrowful Heart

to beloved brethren in the Lord."

W. Kelly.

(B.T. Vol. 17, p. 379.)

Such is the title of a short paper from an anonymous brother. Sorrow for sinful acts and state is of God, where the truth is still faithfully clung to in the sorrow, It is a mistake if it be supposed that many have not mourned overt high and hard self-confidence, not merely where wrongs were done, but slighting grace, the only healing principle in an evil day. Any one, even unconverted men, can condemn mistakes slashingly, not only erring themselves in an opposite way, but fostering and confirming the pride of knowledge (often equivocal) and the assumption of an impregnable position, or "true ground" (often a delusion). "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Either grace or truth alone, perhaps only so-called, misleads. It is not the Christ we received, in Whom we are to walk, if we would walk acceptably to God. Is there Philadelphia nowhere, because Laodicea is come?

Nothing unkind is said or insinuated (for I really do not know); but it seems pertinent to ask if our dear brother who thus sorrows, cleaves to the Lord with full purpose of heart? Or is he, through despair because of the faults of others, giving up thorough devoted heart-adhesion to the truth he values so highly in the writings of a departed brother? To own without acting on the truth is bad testimony. Is he as a fact walking in the love he feels so lacking generally? Is he also "walking in truth"? This surely is essential. Has he no greater joy than to hear of any children of God so walking? Truth and love together magnify the Lord. Is he, whatever be the weakness, keeping Christ's word and not denying His name? Or is he while complaining of others shirking the cross and tampering with those ways of christendom which he once judged to be faithless?

Brotherly kindness, and love above that even, are surely of God; but are they not, as the rule, where the truth is most prized? Or does our brother take the ground of "I, even I, only"? In this case he must forgive one who desires to weigh before God his "sorrowful words," and has nothing but the kindest affections toward their author, if he express the fear that he deceives himself and is hardly fair toward not a few. Surely God has His 7,000; and they are not so hidden, now that the Holy Spirit is come down, as to escape a single eye. For gathering to Christ's name is a distinct and abiding part of our allegiance. He died not to save only but to gather together in one. No true heart, cognisant of this, will ever make it secondary. One may have to purge himself from vessels to dishonour; yet one cannot rest negatively there, but follow His will with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Without this it is vain to talk of love. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5: 2, 3).