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Christian's Helper.

GOD'S
DUE .
ORDER.

By W. EASTON.



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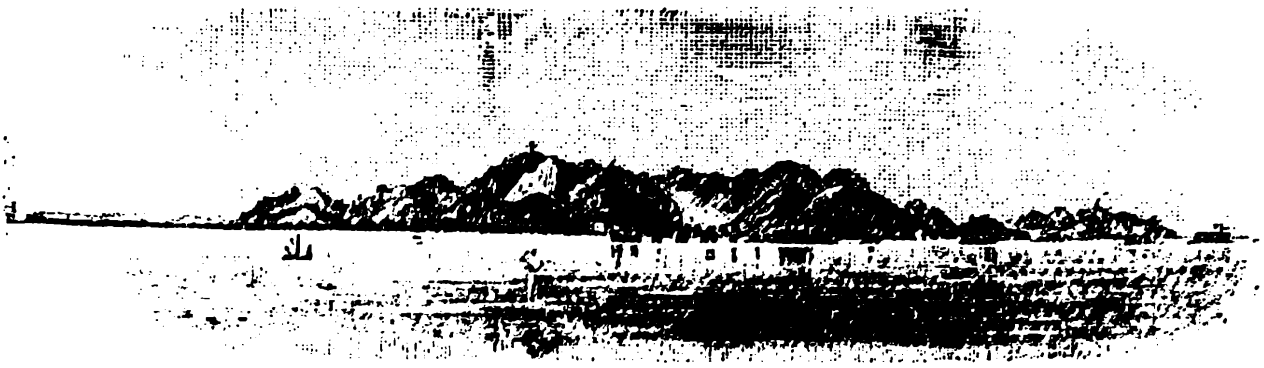
THE CHRISTIAN'S HELPER:

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GOD'S DUE ORDER.



GOD is the God of order, and His instructions to the Christian to-day is, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14: 40.) Nothing of His, in His works or His ways, is done, or allowed to be done in a haphazard way (Ps. 33 : 4). Whether in Creation, Redemption, or in His Providence, everything is carried out and carried on in an orderly way according to the plans of infinite wisdom. Nor in divine things would a spiritual mind (that is one under the control of the Holy Spirit) allow anything to the contrary. To transgress "God's due order" may, to some minds, seem a trivial matter, especially if it is only connected with *the way* a right thing is being carried out ; but it ends disastrously to the doers of it, and the inno-

cent have to suffer with the guilty in God's holy government. God will not allow that "the end justifies the means." *That*, in His judgment, is simply "let us do evil that good may come," a principle which He reprobates (Rom. 3: 8).

A striking example of this is seen in the well known but oft forgotten history of David (1 Chron. 13 and 15). It was a good and holy desire on the part of David to bring the ark of God back, but he ought to have known God's due order in the carrying it out. But, alas, like many others since, he was elated with the successes God had given him over the Philistines, and so forgot to enquire, if he did not know, or had forgotten, what was God's due order for such an undertaking.

Certainly the "captains of thousands" . . . and "leaders" . . . and "all the congregation," were not the people to enquire of as to how to do it. Alas! alas! The *captains* and *leaders* are still in evidence to-day "in things pertaining to God," and the disastrous effects are visible on every hand in the Church of God.

Where were David's *spiritual* advisors at that critical juncture? He had forgotten

himself and gone to the wrong men for advice. And God looked on in silence, and allowed them to have their own way, and do a right thing in their own fashion, and buoy themselves up in their seeming success by their exuberance of joy as they “played before God *with all their might*, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets” (13 : 8)! Who would then dare say this was wrong? Everybody was unanimous! There was not one dissenting voice heard! It was a huge success! Did God think so? Did their unanimity and their expressions of joy make it right? Was it “a work of the Spirit,” as some of our would-be captains say of a similar (in principle) effort to-day? How decidedly the answer is, no! Spite of all the outward show, it was a work of the flesh.

We would not say it was *wickedness* on David's part, but it was gross *carelessness*. It was acting apart from and independent of “God's due order,” and it brought its own swift judgment. Can this be said of the movement of to-day in their effort to undo what exists, and put back the hands of the clock, and get saints together in one big company

by the process of "a clean slate and a fresh start?" One would fain give them credit for mere "mistaken zeal" if one could. But, alas! the principles of God's word have been presented before some of these leaders time and again, both by voice and pen, yet they persist in *their* way of doing this, spite of the consciences of other of their brethren, and the knowledge that they are only making fresh division among the saints. Is this mere *mistake*, or is it positive *sin*? A doing of the very thing they are professedly trying to undo! Strange!

"God moves in a mysterious way," we often sing, and so He does. He does not always immediately resent fleshly interference with His ways. He allows us to go on unchecked sometimes for a long time, but He does not forget. "*I remember* that which Amalek did to Israel" (1 Sam. 15: 2), is a solemn remembrance for us to-day. Forbearance is not forgetfulness. And "whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap," is still true whether of an individual or an assembly, and finds its fulfilment sooner or later. It cannot fail. Just now it is the day of grace, and government is not so openly manifested, but it sleeps not.

On the other hand it *may* fall sharply and suddenly. He knows best.

This last is strikingly seen in David's case. In the midst of their exuberance of joy, with David at their head, as they marched to the appointed place; suddenly the oxen stumbled, a mere common incident, and the hand of Uzza was stretched out to steady the ark, and he fell dead under the judgment of God! God resented the mistaken fleshly effort to do what seemed a right thing at the moment. Was this nothing, and not to be seriously taken to heart? David did not think so, though displeased at the time. He saw the hand of God in it, and the mistake he had made in following the example of the Philistines and carrying the ark in "a new cart," and there was recovery; but it was recovery *after* judgment and as the result of it.

One is thankful when there is recovery, whether of an individual or an assembly who have trespassed against the Lord; but the damage is done, and cannot be undone; and the only thing remaining is for the doers of it to take low ground as mourners because of it, and evidence that by Confession—Contrition—and Return to the point of departure. They

cannot be right otherwise.

When David recovered himself and got back to the commands of God given to Moses (Num. 4 : 1-15 ; 7 : 9), how different it was. The captains, and leaders, and congregation are out of it. Only God is in it. The instructions are His. Dare any one question or disobey ? Yet there are those who do dare to reason, and argue, and excuse to-day, because as they say the present matter is a very unimportant affair and not worth troubling about so long as the desired end is obtained—there was no *vital* truth at stake, merely an ecclesiastical blunder. Alas ! And so we hear David saying, “None ought to carry the ark but the Levites” (1 Chron. 15 : 2). “For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, *for that we sought Him not after the due order*” (ver. 13).

God had *His* way to carry the ark. They had taken *theirs*, not His. David had been ill advised, and did a right thing in a wrong way. It was not “God’s due order,” and He would not have it. And let party men, intent on carrying their own ways, say what they may ; a right thing done in a wrong way to-day, as then, can never be of God, nor labelled

“the work of the Spirit of God,” as is claimed for this effort at amalgamation. God is *not* in it. It is a work of the flesh.

Then see how beautifully everything finds its place when God is owned and His instructions carried out. Peace, and joy, and satisfaction is witnessed on every hand, and God's claims acknowledged in the sacrifices offered. Indeed it carries us on in its typical teaching to the Millennium, as seen in chapter 16 : 1-4.

And what is its voice to us to-day? Surely it says, beware of the captains, and leaders, or the whole company that would act in the things of God without a “Thus saith the Lord” as their authority. It was done in 1884-5 on both sides of the Atlantic with the disastrous effects of world wide division, severed friendships, and broken hearts ; and above and beyond all that, the dishonour done to the holy name of Him who loved us and died for us on the cross.

And now that reaction has set in in some places, how is this *sin* of usurping the rights of the Lord as Son over God's House, and causing this breach in the Church of God, being met? Has Scripture been turned to and its holy principles shown us in order to guide us as to God's way to heal assembly sin, and restore broken

communion among saints once in happy fellowship? For, be it remembered, the sin was committed by assemblies as such, and must be met in the same way, each assembly for itself, "clearing themselves" (2 Cor. 7 : 11) before God and their brethren. Has this been done? No; emphatically no; not one company has done it.

What is it we are asked to accept in its place? The so-called confession of a few leaders, whose confession leaves out the most important point of all—the sin against the Lord; and merely says it was "a thing which should never have taken place, and without scriptural warrant." And because of that they demand the right to come to us, and go again to the companies from which they come, who have neither judged the sin as assemblies, nor given those leaders leave to speak for them. Truly it is David's new cart business over again—a work of the flesh, and without a "thus saith the Lord." Yet some have the temerity to call it "an action of the Spirit of God."

Have brethren forgotten that the principles of God's Word for this dispensation hold good while the dispensation lasts? And so if there is sin—call it *ecclesiastical* or *vital*—as some are trying to make a difference between the two, as

though sin was not sin before God unless it be what *they* term *vital*; then we must obey God's "due order" in meeting it, and that can only be by *Confession—Contrition—and Return*; and vital godliness would lead souls, conscious of their guilt to all these.

2 Cor. 7 : 10, 11 shows us how godly sorrow ended for the Corinthians when aroused to *their* sin. This is what is looked for still as "God's due order" for recovery to-day. Nor is it one company making *demands* on the other to come to them, as is said. All that is dust to blind the eyes, and being used freely. *There are no demands made.* It is godly souls who have suffered for years because they would not follow the captains and leaders at first, who still stand firm and will not allow other captains and leaders to do the same thing to-day, and force them into a mere amalgamation of meetings at the expense of "God's due order." And surely if guilt is really felt, true godliness would lead the guilty ones to return in deep contrition, and in obedience to the Word. Pride lies at the back of it all, which will not allow them to stoop so low as to return to the point of departure, because of what it might involve. God is not in it. And "the poor and contrite soul that trembles at His

Word" (Isa. 66 : 2), and "hides it in his heart" (Ps. 119 : 11), says, "I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way" (Ps. 119 : 128), and so refuses such action as not of God, nor "His due order."

To "clean the slate and start afresh," ignoring all the divisions that exist, and receiving all Christians because they are such (and we are told by some of this class we must not ask where they come from when they come to us) may sound very right and proper to them, and provide a way out of the scandal of divisions : but "God requires that which is past" (Eccl. 3 : 15) and no man can avoid or evade that. The only way to "clean the slate" is by *confession* (Pro. 28 : 13 ; 1 John 1 : 9), then God cleans it. Then as to "starting afresh," how little those who teach it have learnt the lessons of the past. No ! No ! You cannot put back the hands of the clock. The only safe path, and "God's due order," is to acknowledge the ruin, and our own individual part in the sin and state which made it possible, along with that "*godly sorrow* which worketh repentance not to be repented of;" and maintain that *godly separation* which God enjoins on those who call on the name of the Lord (2 Tim. 2 : 21) ; and the *following with* those

who have done it before us. This is His way for the restoration of broken fellowship, and godly “slate cleaning,” and may be summed up in those three words, however distasteful to some *CONFESSION, CONTRITION, AND RETURN* to the point of departure. But this is just where the boot pinches, and displays our pride, spite of denials and special pleadings to the contrary, and makes manifest that Christ has lost His place in our hearts.

Happy the Obed-edoms who take Him into homes and hearts when displaced by the mass. What blessing awaits them! Not of a public and ostentatious character, but known and enjoyed none the less by those who know Him more intimately, and prove their love by obedience to His word and will (John 14 : 21-23).

The Lord have mercy on us all, and give us more grace to act for Him *INDIVIDUALLY* and *at all cost*, so that none of us may be ashamed before Him at His coming.



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