

trouble. In general the brethren are getting on happily here, and in a good spirit. There are restless ones, who seem formed to exercise one's patience; this is very useful, if it is there to be exercised, and not overcome. But patience must have its perfect work, and in due time we shall reap, if we faint not. How simple it is that God alone does any good; and now that the machine is out of order, few can come in with authority, and, when attempted, it only makes confusion. I do trust the brethren in the A., and all in France, will walk faithfully. The eyes of men are more on them everywhere than ever they were, and if this witness were to fail, I do not believe there could be any other as to the truth witnessed for until the Lord comes. He might set us aside, and raise up other witnesses to the same truths, but I have not a doubt that the truths are final and full ones for the saints. . . . Paul says, "I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ;" and, alas! he had to say to the Philippians, "All seek their own." He can awaken us to live more to Him: may He give this to us!

It is a blessed thing to serve Christ in the present course of service, though we have laid up all our happiness with Him for that day.

December, 1877.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am always glad to hear from you, and of Australia, even if I do not answer at once, which excessive occupation sometimes hinders my doing. I am very thankful that they are happier at —. The Lord is sufficient for all things; that we must carefully remember. It is the great thing. I am the more thankful, as it would seem to be a real work of grace, not merely what is called settling things. I think we have to remember that our part is to go in the strait and narrow path, to follow the word, and let all move on around us under God's hand. It is quite possible there may have been faults in the path of exclusives: I think there were—fruits of weakness—myself the first. I do not doubt of our path, and that we have to follow the word in peacefulness and grace—as I have often said—the feet in the narrow path, the heart as large as we can, by grace. I dread narrowness excessively—what does not embrace the interests of all that are Christ's. We have not to promote 'brethrenism,' but the

interest of every soul we meet with, just where its need is. I can honestly say I never thought of 'brethren' with a single soul I ever met with—never—but what that soul wanted from God, as far as I was able.

I have the fullest persuasion that the testimony we have is God's testimony for the last days—the gospel Paul preached, brought out to light—what I never suspected when I began in this city, just fifty years ago now. I sought to walk for my own conscience as the word taught me. The loose brethren are just gone back, with some bad ecclesiastical habits changed, to the camp and its principles. I do not think we should be occupied with them as such. If they had the truth brethren are built upon, they have given it up to get on with the church-world. I admit the difficulty of combining Joshua, who did not leave Moses' tabernacle outside, and Moses, who, having established it outside, went back into the camp in testimony; but this is a question of spiritual capacity, in grace. Jeremiah xv. 19 laid hold of me in starting as a guiding verse, reading the chapter as shewing the working of his soul. We have only to go on right, firm in the exclusion of evil and bad doctrine, but seeking the good of all souls, separating the precious from the vile, and being as God's mouth, according to what is given to us. Brethren are in a new position; attention is universally drawn to them. The Spirit of God is working, the emptiness of what is had in churches is felt: it is commonly owned that they have more of scripture. This is a new, and in some respects, a dangerous position, but I pray the Lord may keep them. It is a call for faithfulness and lowliness, not to lose their nothingness—to be an afflicted and poor people, calling on the name of the Lord. This is what I earnestly pray for. What I dread is the world slipping in. What use are they if it does? Very full truth compatible with worldliness—that is a poor testimony, and cannot last. God will not allow it. The Lord keep us little in our own eyes!

As to —, dear brother, let patience have its perfect work. It is the secret of triumph according to God: "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." The signs of an apostle were wrought in all patience. I admit in the fullest way, the ruin of the church in the world, but this is no reason for continuing in the evil that brought it in, and into which it has led. "From such turn away" is the word. And then "follow