

**A SMALL BASKET OF
FRAGMENTS FOR
GOD'S POOR FAMILY**

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A Small Basket of Fragments for God's Poor Family by James Middleton

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FOR GOD'S FAMILY.

BY JAMES MIDDLETON.

"Gather up the Fragments that remain, that
nothing be lost—John vi. 12."



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TO THE READER.

ART thou a pilgrim, then methinks thou'lt find
Some fragment, suited to thy craving mind ;
To Jesus look, his spirit's aid implore,
To bless and feed thee, with celestial store.
Look not for truth in grandeur's form array'd,
Here's nought but fragments, in a basket laid ;
Fragments, 'gainst which rich pharisees may rage,
And breathe reproach on every following page :
Yet still methinks the Saviour's needy poor
Will not disdain what pharisees abhor.
These fragments, first, were lodg'd within my heart,
Nor was I willing they should thence depart ;
Yet being fearful, from its treach'ry known,
I fill'd some leisure hours, and penn'd them down,
This being done, I did not love to see
What might to others of some service be
Lie hid in darkness, wherefore thus I thought
Let come what may I'll dare to send them out.
For all success I look to God alone,
If all be lost his sov'reign will be done.
Reader, weigh every line, examine well
What saith thy conscience far 'twill always tell
Where goes thy heart, and where it loves to dwell.
What here thou seest, receive it as mine own,
From other works my pen has borrow'd none,
Such scheme for conscience sake I don't pursue,
I've wrought from knowledge and experience too.
If God should bless this little book to thee,
To him ascribe all praise, and none to me.

JAMES MIDDLETON.



A SMALL
BASKET OF FRAGMENTS,
FOR THE FAMILY OF GOD.

1. I CANNOT be persuaded but that all the Lord's family are desirous of being fruitful in their day, both in heart and life, in every good word, and every good work. Yet let them remember what accompanies fruitfulness. The dear Redeemer saith, And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring fourth more fruit. JOHN xv. 2. So then, the more furnace work, the more fruit, and the more fruit, the more glory redounds to the sovereign Creator of it. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. Verse 8.

2. Holiness of life while in this world, is one grand end of our calling. 1. THESS. iv. 7. The practical part of the Gospel is by many deemed legal and set aside as useless. I have observed that such are in general, zealous contenders for doctrines, yet still methinks they are licentious livers, and if weighed in the ballance would be found wanting. Hath the eternal Jehovah strewed all these cautious, reproofs, examples, exhortations, and instructions up and down in the Bible for no other purpose, save only, to look upon and

talk about? Surely not. He hath set them there for our profit and encouragement. The bare letter of Scripture cannot satisfy us, but when the Holy Ghost shines upon that letter, and we enjoy the substance thereof, we prove it to be a suitable directory through this wilderness world to the heavenly Jerusalem above. Ps. cxix. 105.

3. Christ is our fore-runner, and as such, he has left us an example that we should follow his steps. This example faith keeps in view. It tracks his sacred footsteps, watcheth his word of command, and surmounts every difficulty, while love sweetly constrains us to follow on bearing the cross and expecting the same fare Heb. xii. 1. 2. 3. 2. Cor. v. 14.

4. Believers are not barren, they are all fruit bearing branches, although in the winter season very little fruit is visible. A christian need not be informed what is meant by winter, for he well knows by sad and woeful experience. Our Lord speaks of some as being in him and yet remain fruitless. Why then say you this is a plain contradiction of what you before asserted, namely, that believers were all fruit bearing branches. So I say still. But then let us be careful to know the real import of the Saviours words. When he saith every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away JOHN xv. 2. His meaning is this. Every one that is in me by profession only, and never was savingly united to me by the bond of love, so as to partake of my divine nature, shall sooner or

later be taken away from that profession and from the society of my saints either by temptation, persecution, judgments or death, and shall be burnt in the fire of my wrath. *JON. xxvii. 8. 21.*

5. The ears of many are shut against the cries of the poor, they seem to be void of all feeling for them, nor do they show any compassion for them yet they call themselves Christians. For my part I have no opinion of them, nor of their Christianity neither. The operations of divine grace in man hath a different tendency ; it softens the heart, insomuch that the good man is even merciful to his beast, much more to a fellow creature. The Apostle saith, As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of Faith.—*GAL. vi. 10.*

6. The holy martyrs, considered as men, had nothing in themselves more than others, which emboldened them to embrace such rigorous sufferings, for the honor of truth and the testimony of a good conscience. All the zeal, fortitude, confidence, submission, patience, meekness and consolation, which they were in possession of, they received from Immanuel's fulness who was with them according to his own promise, *MAT. xxviii. 20.* Their sufferings were sharp but of short duration. The love they bore to their Saviour was great. Many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it. It quite absorbed the love of life, and stood as a banner displayed be-