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Marion F. Harmon

Oscar P. Spiegel

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GOSPEL MESSENGER

Devoted to the Cause of Christ in all the South and throughout the World.

Volume VIII.

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Number 3.

Among our Exchanges.

How can it be expected for a church to be a missionary church, when its preacher never preaches on missions nor says one word from the pulpit in behalf of the good work? Convert the anti-missionary preachers and the churches will soon fall in line in mission work. A certain preacher in Northwest Missouri preached five years for a certain church, and during all that time he never opened his mouth in the pulpit to say one word in behalf of missions of any kind. Of course that church gave nothing for missions. Who is to be blamed? Why, that preacher who did not *fully* preach the Old Jerusalem Gospel to the church.—Church Register.

Christ is greater than Moses, as the reality is greater than the type, the substance is greater than the shadow. Moses prophesied as a man; Jesus prophesied as a God. Moses taught as God imparted knowledge to him; Jesus taught out of the inexhaustible fountain of his own heart. As a rule, Moses got angry and made mistakes; Jesus was always calm, always correct. Moses' meditation was temporary and impatient; that of Jesus was patient and eternal. Moses gave the Law on stone; Jesus on human hearts. Moses delivered from temporal, Jesus from spiritual bondage. Moses' deliverance was temporary; Christ's eternal. Moses delivered Israel; Christ delivered mankind. Moses led to a land where much trouble, pain and sin still existed; Jesus to a land of promise, free from pain, sorrow, sickness, sin and death. Sunshine eternal fills that land.—Christian Leader.

The police in Denmark have a curious way of dealing with the drunk and incapable found in the streets. They summon a cab, and place the patient inside of it; then drive to the station, where he gets sober; then home, where he arrives sober and

sad. The agents never leave him till they have seen him safe in the family bosom. Then the cabman makes his charge, and the police surgeon makes his, and the agents make their own claim for special duty, and this bill is presented to the host of the establishment where the culprit took his last overpowering glass.—Christian Index.

The Christian Preacher, guardian of the Church of Christ, says: "The Watch Tower confesses that with all their zeal for organized effort in North Carolina they have hardly been able to hold their own. They would do better, perhaps, to fall back into the old plan of doing Bible things in a Bible way." Before we had organized effort in North Carolina we had no own to hold. It has only been by organized effort that we have established new congregations, built church houses and aided in having the Gospel preached to the whole creation. We infer from what the Preacher says that the "Bible way" is not an organized way. We were once under what the Preacher calls the "old plan," and we did just what the Preacher and its disciples are now doing—*nothing*. We shall not "fall back," but go forward with the Old Book as our chart and compass.—Watch Tower.

Whatever the character of Solomon's wisdom may have been, he who submits himself absolutely to divine leadership is wiser than Solomon, for such a man has the help of omniscience. Strange it is, therefore, that any of us will risk the guidance of our finite minds, when there is offered to us the wisdom of the Infinite.—Cumberland Presbyterian.

A truly Christian man can always be found on the side of righteousness. This applies to the ballot box as well as the pew.—The Pilot.

While the mission of the church, in the highest sense, is a spiritual one,

yet it also has largely to do with man's secular and material interests. Of its divine Founder it is said: "He went about doing good."—Tennessee Methodist.

What we see must depend on the direction in which we look. A gentleman believed he had lost a watch-trinket, on which he set great value, during a walk through the woods. He retraced his steps, but no longer saw the graceful outlines of the trees, the green abundance of the leaves, and the graceful tracery of the white clouds upon the blue sky. He was looking downward, among the fallen and parched leaves, the scanty grass, the gnarled roots, and the unfragrant weeds which hemmed his pathway. One bit of gold made him alive to what was below him, and dead to what was above him. And so the yellow magnet which mammon uses can draw away men's hearts from the beautiful and gracious facts of the spiritual life to the mere refuse, weeds, and muck of the world. Just the reverse of the Christian's attitude, as he looks up, and not down. He seeks the things which are above, and sets his mind on them, and not on the things that are upon the earth. He has been made sharer of a life from above, and what belongs to it are the precious realities of his existence.—Sunday-School Times.

Every son and daughter of Adam is more or less defective. Imperfection is stamped on every member of the human family, and thus we should all be willing to become better. But some persons are constitutionally self-willed, and by dealing with people who yield to them they reach the conclusion that they are perfect. Then God's question in Isaiah 42: 19 is appropriate. "Who is blind as he that is perfect?" The Savior in his beatitudes did not pronounce that man blessed who regards it as a virtue to be discourteous.—Octograph Review.

Biography Department.



ELDER W. H. SHEFFER.

The subject of this sketch was born in Henderson, Kentucky, Dec. 25th, 1865. The first school that he attended was a log cabin at Boxville, Ky., where his father was engaged in buying tobacco and selling dry goods. Mr. Sheffer did not remain long in Boxville, but soon returned to Henderson. Here he attended school. One who knew Mr. Sheffer at that time represented him to the writer as being "a quick witted and very intelligent boy.

Mr. Sheffer, at this time, was a well-to-do business man, and made money rapidly. He embarked in the steamboat business on the Ohio river, and was owner and captain of a packet plying between Henderson and Evansville. For awhile fortune smiled upon him; but, owing to the dishonesty of some parties with whom he transacted business, he soon lost his entire accumulation. Death followed in 1876, when the subject of this notice was only eleven years old, and the care of a widowed mother, together with a brother and sister—both younger than himself—fell upon the young shoulders of W. H. Sheffer. This, of course, interfered with the pursuit of his education. But when about fifteen years old, he removed with the family to Corydon, Ky. He grew to manhood; and by hard work and strict economy, he succeeded in completing nearly all of the course of the high school.

At this time Mr. Sheffer's mind suffered a severe attack of skepticism, caused by some false religious instruction which had been given him. Turning in disgust from religion, he then took a notion to study law.

But at this time came an important crisis in his life—effecting, doubtless, his own destiny, and the destiny of hundreds of others. In October, 1887, Dr. T. W. Brents, a Christian minister of Lewisburg, Tenn., came to Corydon to hold a protracted meeting for the Christian church. Mr. Sheffer began to attend these meetings, doubtless, through curiosity; for his skepticism, at that time, was bordering upon the verge of infidelity—

That dismal night that shows no star
To guide the traveler anywhere.

But the blows that Elder Brents dealt to infidel-

ity, sectarianism, and disobedience, were the blows of a master-workman, and Mr. Sheffer soon became deeply interested in the salvation of his soul. The result was that before the meeting closed, W. H. Sheffer obeyed the gospel and united with the Christian church at Corydon. He had already shown remarkable ability as a public speaker, in the capacity of a local lecturer; so when he united with the church, the brethren insisted on his immediate preparation to preach the gospel. At first he hesitated; but he soon yielded, and the following February—1888—found him in the College of the Bible, Kentucky University.

All of his work was of the very best, but especially delightful and entrancing were his society orations. His voice was musical and well modulated, his gesticulation easy and graceful and best of all natural.

But lest some think that my love for the man is warping my judgement, I will give an example. At one of our open sessions held in college, Mr. Sheffer was on the program for an oration. The evening was hot, and I was in the gallery where I could see every one. When Mr. Sheffer began speaking the ladies' fans, like butterflies in a flower garden, were in motion all over the vast audience. As he warmed to his subject the motion of the fans got slower and finally stopped. They sat through the half hour's speech, the fans moving a little sometimes, then stopping again. Mark Collis, professor of English language and literature in the university said it was the grandest speech he ever heard a student make in that institution.

Mr. Sheffer took the entire Bible course graduating in the class of 1891. His first work was at Bell Buckle, Tenn., where he went immediately after graduating. He remained with this church eighteen months, giving entire satisfaction. From Bell Buckle he went to Tullahoma, where he labored one year. He found the church dead and divided, he left it alive and at work. Great pressure was brought to bear to keep him at Tullahoma, but at the end of the year believing that it was a field of great usefulness, he accepted a call to the pastorate of the church at Lewisburg. This is the home of Dr. Brents, whose days of active service are about over, and as he sat under the eloquence of the able preacher, he thanked God for this portion of his reaping.

Mr. Sheffer remained at Lewisburg two years, about 200 people being added to the church. After serving as pastor a year, he held his own protracted meeting, which resulted in sixty-eight additions to the church. Last January he resigned at Lewisburg to accept a call to the First church of Union City, Tenn. It is safe to say that a bright future is before the church.

There have been ninety-nine additions to the church at Union City, and fifty-seven elsewhere this year 1896. In addition to the regular work mentioned above, Mr. Sheffer has held a number of successful protracted meetings at various places in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia. This year he has held meetings for the Vine street church at Nashville it resulting in thirty-five additions and Paducah resulting in twenty-two additions. During the five years of his ministry nearly seven hundred people have obeyed the gospel under his preaching.

October 13, 1891, Mr. Sheffer was married to Miss Mattie Conley, of Corydon, Ky., the writer rising from a sick bed and going sixty-six miles to officiate at the wedding.

W. H. LIGON.

Correspondence = =

Things Hard to be Understood.

B. F. MANIRE.

(Concluded.)

15. This line of argument might be extended to great length; but we deem it unnecessary to pursue it further at present. We have a shorthand method by which we dispose of the difficulty in this and in all similar cases. This method is satisfactory to ourselves, and we hope it will prove equally satisfactory to our readers.

While the Bible treats to some extent of the foreknowledge, purposes, counsels, decrees, ordinations and foreordinations of the great Jehovah, it is mainly a plain and practical history of his actual dealings with the human family in society, in government, in providence, and especially in religion. It tells us what God has done for men, what he is still doing for men, and what he will continue to do for men as long as time shall last. It also tells us what God requires men to do in respect to himself, in respect to themselves, in respect to others, and all in order to their own present and future happiness. This last is one of its prominent features, and occupies a large portion of its space.

Now all these things are plain and simple matters of fact; and these matters of fact are, and must ever be, in perfect harmony with the foreknowledge and foreordination of God. They are the manifestations of his counsels, purposes, and decrees, as well as his love and mercy. There never has been, and never can be, any conflict or disagreement or inconsistency between these two great departments of the Divine economy; the one embracing God's purposes and decrees concerning men, and the other his actual dealings with them. What God requires of men must be in exact accordance with his foreknowledge of them. God's actual dealings with men must be in perfect harmony with his purposes or foreordination concerning them. Certainly no one will have the hardihood to affirm that God's requirements of men are contrary to his foreknowledge of their opportunities, capacities, character, and conduct; or that his treatment of them is contrary to his purposes, decrees, and foreordinations concerning their present and future happiness. Such a position would be utterly abhorrent to every principle of justice, to say nothing of love and mercy; and is directly contrary to every conception of God's character that can be rightly formed from the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. It would make Jehovah not only an almighty tyrant, but also a monster of cruelty and deception.

If it be true then, as true it is, that there is and ever must be a perfect harmony between the precepts, promises, and warnings of God on the one hand, and his foreknowledge, purposes, and decrees on the other, it follows conclusively that human responsibility is involved in the great principles on which God actually deals with men. Instead then of troubling ourselves about the deep things of God which are far beyond our feeble comprehension, we should devote our hearts and lives to the learning and doing of the plain and practical things which are required of us in order to the right

development of our own character, that we may be prepared for the enjoyment of God's favor here and hereafter. While the specific things required of men as tests of faith and love have been changed from time to time in the gradual development of the plan of salvation, the principle on which God deals with men has ever been, and will ever remain, the same. This principle embraces faith in God and obedience to all that he requires. The things now required of men are all found in the gospel of Christ; while the principle of faith and obedience is found all through the Bible.

We find a full and clear statement of this principle in the first discourse of the Apostle Peter to the Gentiles. When he had reached the house of Cornelius, and the full import of the vision which he had seen at Joppa flashed upon his mind, he exclaimed, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him." The purpose of God then always has been, and always will be, to accept every one who fears him and works righteousness. This is one of God's decrees, not secret and unwritten, but revealed and written that it may be read and understood and observed by all men. God's foreknowledge of the saved, therefore, and all his foreordinations concerning them, embraced their character and conduct without respect of person.

There is one oracle of Jesus that covers the entire ground of God's sovereignty and man's agency. It is found in his discourse with Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." This is pre-eminently the golden text of the Bible. It gives us the clue to the right understanding of the whole scheme of redemption. Every one who truly believes in Jesus in the full scriptural import of this expression is embraced in the foreknowledge and purpose of God, as well as in his love and mercy, and may safely postpone the investigation of the secret things of God till the crown of eternal life is placed upon his brow. In harmony with this fundamental principle laid down by the Savior, Paul says, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: for Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This opens wide the door of mercy to all the sons and daughters of the earth; and that too in exact accordance with that "eternal purpose" of God "which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Finally, let us consider that there is to be a "revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but to them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God."

On this divinely ordained and divinely revealed principle of eternal justice and mercy, will the unchange-

able awards of eternity be made; and all in strictest accord with the foreknowledge, foreordination, eternal purpose, and absolute decrees of the all-wise and all-merciful Jehovah.

Imaginary results of the foreknowledge of God can never set aside the immutable principle of the Divine government, change of the course of God's dealings with men, or destroy human responsibility. May we never wrest any of those things that are hard to be understood, either to the destruction of ourselves or to the injury of others; but may we ever walk in the clear light of the many things that can be understood, until we reach the clearer light of that Eternal Day which will dispel all darkness, reveal all secrets, and fully explain all mysteries.

Drawing the Line.

DEAR G. G.: In your last reply to my questions, only a part of which you had time to note, you give good and I think safe advice to me and also to others who may need such advice. There is one point you raise and set forth with much force. On this I am doing a deal of thinking. You say, that persons should in all investigations agree about the standard of appeal, and that in religious matters the Bible should be that standard. Many good men and great, I know might not agree to this. They would say this left no room for thought, human thought. This they think would destroy or spoil much of the labor of not a few. Such as the Commentaries and church formulas which have been a blessed boon for ages amongst men. Surely such a course must be hurtful to thousands! I know that in our conversation I said I was going to draw the line, theologically considered, where it should be drawn according to the demands of truth. I have learned that it is very needful to have some person, or doctrine, to look to as final resort in the discussion of questions. I suppose the Bible should be the standard by which to settle all questions that may arise on religious subjects. But would you say that dear book would settle all questions that might arise, and that do arise? If you so think, and are right in thus thinking, then it seems to me that we have a short cut to the end of almost all the controversies now handled by disputants, religious disputants. I wish to go slowly here, and let me understand you on this point and thus be the better able to push my work among my friends when I get upon the basis that will stand all attacks. You teach then that the Bible must be the standard on all questions. Where it speaks we must speak, and where it is silent, we must be silent. This is what you teach as to the way the Bible is the standard we need?

B. B. B.

MY DEAR 3 B's.: Yours of Jan. 1st, '97 is before me and I am glad to hear that you are doing haeal of thinking about having a standard, or ratred

the standard in matters religious. You think that many great men and good might object to this for the reason that the Bible as the standard would seem to exclude any and all other books from whatever source. I am aware of such objection. But whatever Catholics or Protestants may throw in the way in this investigation, we shall adhere to the one standard, the Bible, to test any and all questions religious. Be it remembered that we are fixed in this determination, that where the Bible teaches and what it teaches all must bow to, but where it does not teach then all should be free to act as best they can in all matters not taught in the book.

You are right draw the line, theologically speaking, according to the demands of truth. I like this and I hope you will adhere to this strictly. Then in the next line or so you say a few queer things. Such as, that you need some one, or some doctrine to look to as a final resort. Look here do you mean by this to have some other standard than the Bible? Some human being, or doctrine to guide you, do you wish? Let me again emphasize the fact that the Bible is the only book by which we are to be tested. It is the standard of appeal in all things, therein revealed. Do I accept that statement, "where the Bible speaks we speak; where it is silent we are silent." I am sure I do not understand it as it now stands. Uncle Jo. an old darkey asked F. G. Allen about this old phrase. Bro. A. urged the old darkey for his view of it. I here give it in substance, "When de Bible speaks "dats nuff; when de Bible is silent, den all am free to speak and act." He caught the idea correctly, I think. When old Master commanded that was law to uncle Jo. but when old Master had not commanded or was silent then the old darkey felt he was free to speak and act as best he could. Thus I firmly believe the children of God are situated today. On all questions where the Bible speaks let all bow who love God. Let none be shaken by the opinions of men, for these opinions are a law to no freeman in Christ Jesus. It seems difficult for us to get free from the bondage of human authority, or human opinions. I think Bro. Allen did a great thing for many lovers of the truth by the revision of the declaration of Thos. P. Campbell, where the Bible speaks, we speak; where it is silent, we are silent.

In my next, if it be not set aside by some more preparing demand, I hope to illustrate this new arrangement of the phrase in some important particulars. Carefully weigh this old darkey's view of it. I give you this my dear friend as a better statement, more easily understood by all. This new version, as we may call it, I understand; while the old statement is obscure, even if it does not lead into error. I leave you here for a while to ponder well and be careful in drawing the line. For many are drawing lines but not wisely. All our ways and our works must be subjected to a severe and final test

in the no distant future. We should be sure that God is well pleased with us in every move we make. Every true soul will bow humbly when God speaks; but all his children are free to think in all things where there are no divine directions.

Is it not thus with God's children to this day? There are many who feel deeply and sadly concerning any move unless the thing be a command of Heaven. On this more hereafter. Yours, G. G.

What is in a Name?

It has been said there is nothing in a name. With this statement the divine writings do not agree. Peter, in Acts 4: 12, speaking of Christ, says: "And there is salvation in no other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved." He seems to think there is much in a name; for says, he, there is salvation in the name of Christ, and in none other. Yet, in the face of this positive assertion, many by their action seem to indicate that the name of Christ is not all-sufficient to save; for they persist in wearing some other name given among men. And not satisfied themselves with wearing other names given under heaven among men, continually apply them to those who are satisfied with and desire to wear only that name by which we mean to be saved. The true follower of Christ should repudiate those names given among men, for they tend to detract from that name in which salvation is. This wearing of names given among men is strongly condemned by the teachings of the sacred writings; as is plainly shown in the case of the Corinthians, who were not satisfied with the name of Christ, but took upon themselves names given among men. And some said I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, and I of Christ. For this Paul condemns them (1 Cor. 1: 12-14), and in strong terms. He says: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say I have baptized in my own name." Paul was not willing to induct any one into an organization bearing any name save that of Christ. He declares that Christ is not divided, as those who take upon themselves names given among men would have him. Paul was so strongly impressed with the conviction that there is much in a name, that he was not willing that any should wear his name, but desired that all should wear that name alone in which salvation is. Christ is called the bridegroom and the Church the bride. This being the case, the bride should receive and wear only the name of the bridegroom; for if she does not, she dishonors the name of the bridegroom. If there is nothing in a name, why are you so jealous of your own name, that you would have your bride wear it to the exclusion of all others? It is because, by refusing to wear the husband's name

the wife brings dishonor upon it. For the same reason that the bride should wear the husband's name to the exclusion of all others, the followers of Christ should wear his name to the exclusion of all others. And for the still stronger reason, that in it alone is salvation. If you will persist in wearing names given under heaven among men, do not try to force them upon others, who are willing to trust themselves to that salvation that is found in Christ's name alone; for it only damages you and does not hurt those who will wear no other name than that by which salvation comes. For does not Christ say, "Blessed are you when men shall revile you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake?" Christ prays that we may all be one. In Christ there is union, and Paul strongly sets this forth when he condemns the Corinthians by asking the question, "Is Christ divided?" In all other names is division; for Paul fully demonstrates this when he says, "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by those which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Showing that in these names the divisions existed and caused contention. Christ says, "Whoever confesses me before men, him will I confess before my Father, who is in heaven." By wearing his name alone, it is a continual confession of him before men, and will meet with his approval before the Father. Then why hesitate to proclaim his cause or fail to wear his name alone, since should you reach that happy home, the New Jerusalem, you will gladly on your forehead wear his name, that all may see and know that trusting in his name alone, at last you have been saved, and washed and spotless made as the untrodden snow.

D. L. PHARES, JR.

Mississippi Delta Notes.

A CONSECRATED CHRISTIAN.

In the county of Coahoma, Miss., five miles east of Lyons, lives Mrs. M. E. Elliott, wife of Captain T. W. Elliott, a well-known Delta planter.

Before Mrs. Elliott was married to Capt. Elliott, her present husband, she lived at Beebe, Ark., and was then, as now, a most exemplary and devoted member of the Christian church.

In March, 1895, Sister Elliott, while living where she now lives, felt that she should do all that she could to honor God in the name of Christ, and

aid in the salvation of souls. She wrote to Elder W. O. Srygley, an able young preacher of the Christian church then living at Iuka, Miss., asking him to come and hold a meeting for her, at Davis Chapel, near her home. Being a practical woman, she wrote him, saying, "If you will come and hold me a protracted meeting of ten days, or two weeks, duration, I will send you in advance all expenses of the journey, and during the meeting, satisfactorily, remunerate you. He accepted, and came, and the meeting began on the 4th Lord's day in April, 1895, under favorable auspices. On the second day of the meeting Kilby Ferguson, writer of these notes, arrived at the home of Sister Elliott. Interest grew from day to day, and on Thursday confessions began. Among those who became members during that meeting, J. H. Loyhd, Capt. T. W. Elliott, and R. S. Davis, formed part. Elliott and Davis had been enemies for years. Davis and Loyhd had long been trying "to get religion" out in the woods, of dark nights, and at the "Mourner's Bench;" but all had been to no purpose.

Under Elder Srygley's teaching they learned in the light of Eccl. 12: 1, "Remember now thy Creator in the day of thy youth," that they ought to have been serving God from the time they were old enough to have a knowledge of the difference between right and wrong. They saw to their regret that they had been taught error along this line, all their days. They not only believed in Christ, but were quickened by the word of God, as taught by Elder Srygley, till they felt their need of Christ, as the 3,000 did on the day of Pentecost, as read Acts 2: 37-41. They learned that if they would become righteous or become religious from the gospel stand point, they must obey the command of God, as spoken by Peter on the day of Pentecost, when believers who were pricked in their heart and wanting to know what they must do to be saved, Acts 2: 37, "Said unto Peter and the other Apostles, men, and brethren what shall we do?" (38) "Peter answered and said, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

They on learning their duty were baptized, born again, (read John 3: 5.) Thereby became sons of God, and received the spirit of Christ because they were sons, (as read Gal. 4: 4-6,) and having in baptism put on Christ, as read Gal. 3: 27, "Know ye not, that so many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," they realized that they were brethren of Christ; because Christ had said, Mark 3: 35, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and my sister." Elliott and Davis under the gospel made friends and became brethren and so continue to this day. The meeting closed at end of ten days with a membership of twelve.

They engaged the writer as their minister to

preach for them monthly. The engagement still continues, and the membership has increases and embraces nearly all the white population in that locality. John A. Stevens, our State Evangelist, has also been a builder of the church at Davis Chapel.

THIS OUTGROWTH

from "one insolated christian" to twelve earnest members, is an object lesson worthy of every readers attention. They promptly organized and began a regular observance of Lord's day communion services.

Sister Elliott simply did her duty. Today thousands of our brethren, and sisters, are situated as she was, and can do as she did if they will sanctify some of their money, as she did, by setting it aside for the express purpose of compensating some able minister of the Christian Church to come into their neighborhood and hold not less than a two weeks' meeting. The result will, almost surely, result in enough conversions to organize a live church, and have regular services every month.

VINEYARD LABORERS

are to be found, or should be found, wherever a Christian lives. Drones, or idlers, are not contemplated, Scripturally speaking. All are to be workers. God is not a respecter of persons. Read Acts 10: 34, 35.

Reader, read the language of Christ in Matt. 25: 14-30. You will see it applies to you, to-day. If you discharge your duty all along the line of Christian duty, all will be well with you. In the Book of Proverbs (12: 28) we read: "In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof, there is no death." Righteousness is doing the will of God. Hence, whoever does right by himself, right to his fellowbeings, and right towards God, is in the way of life, and in that kind of a life there is no spiritual death. In said second parable, in Matt. 25: 14: 30, every one who reads these lines can read his or her doom beforehand, if he or she persist in refusing to let his or her light shine, as taught by Christ, in Matt. 5: 16: "Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." If you wish eternal salvation, you are to have good works, and not evil works. Whoever refuses to do the will of God, or violates the laws of God, thereby commits sin, as read 1 John 3: 4, "Sin is the transgression of the law." Sins may be commissive or omissive. Either kind continued through life, or committed, or omitted, in our last days, the terms of pardon not being complied with, you will be lost. Read John 5: 28-29, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

To do God's will is a good work. To omit to do God's will is equally as sinful as to knowingly transgress His law. Christians are to labor in the vineyard of Christ. If they cannot teach or go, they must furnish of their means, according as God prospers them, so that they can be represented. Read 1 Cor. 16: 2; 2 Cor. 8: 12, 13, 14.

Now read Matt. 25: 31-46, and you will have no trouble to understand the true meaning of Matt. 25: 29, which is simply this: Whoever will have God's Word and do his will as revealed in the Gospel of Christ will have an abundance, for he will have a home in heaven. And whoever does not do God's will and dies—physically or spiritually—can read his or her coming doom in Matt. 25: 41-46.

Reader, God is now blessing you, your everyday opportunities is a school-room of golden opportunities now rapidly passing away, never to return. Will you act, and do it now before your opportunity is gone forever? If you cannot raise enough funds to get a preacher, then raise what you can and buy an express money order and send your funds to John A. Stevens, our State Evangelist at Jackson, Miss., and it will become *missionary money* to enable him to preach the Gospel to weak and destitute points.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

of our brethren at Davis' Chapel, of which Sister Elliott is only one of a zealous membership, will be considered in my next communication, and show how they are letting their light shine, that their good works has already developed two other church congregations, both numerically stronger than the present, but not so strong financially.

Was sick ten days from December 22 to January 9, but then resumed my regular round of labor, reaching Lost Lake the second Lord's day at 8 A. M. Will aim to give among other things news from and of some of my churches. Let all letters in the future be addressed to me at Coahoma, Miss.

KILBY FERGUSON.

Tennessee Notes.

A. I. MYHR.

Our meeting at Rockwood closed last Sunday night. The audiences were fairly good all the time. Bro. Shelburne is doing a very fine work at Rockwood. The people like him. He has their confidence and will be able to lead them into higher spiritual life. There were some hindrances to the success of our meetings. There were two additions. The causes need not now be mentioned. There are some as faithful people there as are in any church in Tennessee.

Bro. Buck has held a meeting at Poplar Ridge. The church has been revived and as they have such great opportunities, it is to be hoped they will uni-

tedly give themselves to the work of the Lord.

Next Friday Bro. Buck and others will have a conference in regard to the work in the First District. We mean to make an aggressive canvass throughout East Tennessee before the next convention. The cause of Christ can never be prosperous in the best sense until all our people are united in unselfish service for men. Out of the whole number of members in our state only the minority really do any service for men. Why is this the present condition. The answer is not far to find. Wrong teaching as to the essential principles of Christianity. The motive which has led many into the church is selfishness. Anything therefore looking to unselfish service is not very welcome to such. The ministry need to awake to its duty in leading the church to a higher spiritual life.

We mean to make this year the best in our missionary work. Every preacher employed in this work is consecrated and energetic in the work. We hope for a large ingathering through the year. Every minister is asked to hold a meeting for the missionary work at such places as may be chosen—the churches which they serve giving them the time and continuing the salary for the time spent in the meeting. Some preachers, (J. E. Stuart, W. J. Shelburne, W. H. Sheffer,) have promised to hold such meetings. Will others who see this request please notify me, if they agree to hold meetings? The results of such meetings to be reported as if the ministers were employed by the churches co-operating. We would be glad to have twenty such meetings held this year.

There are several young men ready to do some work, through the vacation, in destitute fields. Will those who are anxious to see churches planted help us to employ these men? We are anxious to have your help.

A GOOD WEEK.

Comparing the receipts for Foreign Missions for the week ending Jan. 19th, with the corresponding time 1896, we have the following:

Contributing	1896	1897	Gain
Churches	3	5	2
Sunday-schools	1	1	0
Endeavor Societies	3	6	3
Individuals	16	19	3
Amount,	\$308.90	\$1,017.59	\$708.69

Order the Missionary Voice and the March Offering Envelopes for the March offering, first Sunday in March. F. M. RAINS, Treas., Box 750, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Remember the GOSPEL MESSENGER remains one dollar for a year.

THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.

M. F. HARMON, }
O. P. SPIEGEL, } EDITORS.

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NASHVILLE, TENN., JAN. 21, 1897.

SETTLING THINGS.

Sometimes we get impatient over the little, petty affairs in the church, over which we differ, and wish that such differences were settled. Then again, when we think seriously about these things, and remember that they are matters of mere opinion, matters of expediency in church work, then we realize that there is no way for us to settle such things. Inasmuch as they are matters of opinion and not matters of faith, we are glad that we have no way of settling them. It is easy for us to be united on the great fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ; to these, as a religious body, there is no people on earth more united on any one point than are we. We have heard a great many of our preachers, of every size of calibre, and without an exception they stand firm and unitedly on the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. We all love the old Book, swear by it, and would die by it. In fact, there is such a striking similarity among us, that should I hear a preacher in the church of God, (*Church of Christ* is not *scriptural*, not occurring a single time in the book) preach in China, I could locate him unless he spoke in Chinese language or some other unknown (to me) tongue. We can only settle things that are already settled by the word of God. The Catholic church, and many others also, which has the power, as it thinks, to make laws and rules for the government of its subjects, can settle all these matters of expediency, but as a religious people we will go on to the end of time having our several opinions on methods of church work and aids in the worship. In many matters God has dealt with us as rational, responsible beings; has not hedged us around with minute specifications, as to our Christian duty. It was not enough under the old law for God to say to the Jew: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," but he *specified* what the keeping it holy meant. He also said that they should give, and set the

amount. Under the new law, we are taught that we should regard the day as unto the Lord; and in giving we are told to give, but the amount is fixed by "As a man purposeth in his heart," and as the "Lord has prospered you." There is room left for us to exercise our freedom in Christ, and thereby better develop ourselves in the Christian life, than if we had a thus saith the Lord for every step in the Christian's duty. The chief difference between the Law and Gospel is that the letter (Law) killed, but the Spirit (Gospel) gives life. Taking these statements of the apostles, and coupling them together with the fact that we are free men in Christ, that Christ has not marked out methods of work, nor said anything about the way we should carry out the principles (second and third) of the Gospel, we take it that these things were left to our best judgment. That we should believe in the Christ, repent, confess, be baptized, walk in a newness of life, have been settled for all time to come—settled by the King of Glory; but matters of opinion and methods of work never, so far as we are concerned.

The Great Salvation.

NUMBER NINE.

To the true penitent, what is more natural than prayer? May it not be said that prayer is the spontaneous and inevitable result of sincere repentance. Yea, more, is not prayer the soul's confession of Christ? The convicted and penitent Saul prayed, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This was his prayer in which he confessed Jesus as Lord and expressed the subjugation of his will to. In reviewing the past, the writer recalls many arguments, written and spoken, by many preachers of the "current reformation," in which the effort was made to prove that the sinner had no right to pray, as this was the exclusive right and privilege of the child of God. And there was a time when these labored arguments were satisfactory to him, for during his earlier Christian life his mind was under the dominion of narrow legalistic ideas; and he confesses to have made and relied upon these arguments himself. In these efforts, Prov. 28:9, and John 9:31, and similar passages were cited, not then perceiving their logical unfitness when applied to the contrite sinner. It is the rebellious sinner, who turns his ear away from hearing God, to whom Prov. 28:9 applies. The charge of the Pharisees against Christ was that he was a blaspheming sinner, and it was because they so regarded him that they called

him a sinner, and not because of any depravity of life. It was in response to this charge of the sin of blasphemy that he, who had been restored to sight, used the words of John 9:31. But the penitent sinner, although his guilty past burdens him with shame, is neither a rebel nor blasphemer.

We have said, prayer is the soul's confession of Christ, and so it is, but the soul or spirit of man is not all there is of man in this world; and Christ must not only be confessed in the inward man, but the outward man also must participate in this confession. Jesus says: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven." And Paul writes in Rom. 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. The only difference in the purport of Saul's and the Savior's words is that one statement is of broader application than the other. To confess with the mouth, is to declare our faith in words: but confession can be and is more effectually made in deeds, or in obedience. The most impressive confession of faith is that which is seen in a life of loving obedience to Christ. This kind of confession needs to be emphasized as well as that made with the mouth. The whole Christian life, which flows out of a heart full of faith, repentance, love, and prayer is the most effectual confession of Christ before men. It is indeed the confession unto the fullness of salvation. Jesus says: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." To lead men to glorify God is the reason and purpose of this living confession, which ceases not with the sound of the words that mark its beginning. It is effectual because life is more powerful than words, and is an argument that convinces when logic fails.

But what is it which gives this living confession its power? It is Christ seen in it. All that is contained in faith, repentance, and love are in it. Christ is contained in all these experiences of the soul, and by them, and through them, Christ is made visible in life. To confess Christ, is to "own, acknowledge, or declare" him before the world. And like all the spiritual conditions, out of which the "so great salvation" is evolved, this also is lifelong. We need not daily nor hourly to utter in words, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," for if we truly confess him in our life, that will far more effectively declare it. Among all the acts of obedience to Christ, there is

none more significant than the baptism of a penitent believer. It is the embodiment of an act which forcibly and beautifully confesses his faith in and his love for Christ; his death to sin in his heart; his calling upon God and his absolute surrender to him. Without these spiritual elements, it is on more than a mere rite, an empty and valueless form. Christian baptism is faith, repentance, love, and prayer, not in sentiment, but in act. It is the condition of the heart, out of which an act proceeds, that determines its character. Is there any spiritual value in faith, or in repentance, or in love, or in prayer, or in self-surrender to God? If so, then the act which embodies and confesses these must partake of their character and value. It is often contended that baptism is a positive commandment, and that it is right *simply* because it is commanded, and rests *alone* upon divine authority. We are sometimes told that some things are right in and of themselves; and some things are right only because they are commanded. We are inclined to enter, but not to argue, a caveat to this scholastic distinction; but we earnestly protest against the placing of Christian baptism, or any other act of obedience, proceeding out of faith and repentance and love, in the latter class. Are there any absolutely arbitrary requirements in the system of redemption? Are they not all indicative of the various experiences we must have in order to the enjoyment of the "so great salvation?" Surely God would make no requirement of his creature which did not minister to the end he had in view in sending his Son to redeem the world. All of the divine teaching, the life and suffering of Christ, the mission of the Holy Spirit, and every divine institution, the preaching of the gospel, and the establishing of the church, have, as their grand aim and purpose, the redemption of man from his sins, and the purifying and ennobling of his whole being, until he is made a partaker of the divine nature, through the indwelling of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit: so that the great mystery of the incarnation is reproduced, in a subordinate sense, in every one who has been born again; and all Christian service is in order to enlarge this divine element, breathed into his soul, so that it shall become the dominant principle of his life, and fashion him into the image and likeness of Christ.

A rough block of marble lies in an artist's workshop, which he approaches with an ideal in his mind and his tools in his hands. He knows perfectly the nature of the stone with which he has to deal, and thoroughly

understands the capacity of his tools, and their adaptability to the work before him. He begins to work, knocking off a corner here and chipping off a piece there, until the form of an angel begins to appear. He is pleased, yet does not cease his work, when the outline, or contour, is seen, but continues to put in a touch here and there with finer tools than those first used, and to scrape and polish until the angelic form is complete in its graceful beauty.

But God is the Great Artist, and he thoroughly understands the nature of the material upon which he works, for he created it. He has had humanity under his hand for ages, and he only fully knows its weakness and depravity, as well as its capabilities and possibilities. He only can comprehend the possible depth of degradation and misery into which it may descend and the height and glory unto which it may attain. It is not passive material upon which he has to work, but quick and active souls, which can either resist or yield to his formative hand. Because of this ability to resist, it may be marred in his hands, but if it yield willingly to the divine strokes of our wise and loving Father's hand he will carve out of this unsightly material more glorious forms than angels ever wore. From the beginning of man's history this work commenced, and it has been continuous through the ages past, and will be in the ages to come, until the divine ideal is finished. Our God is a patient worker, and he makes no useless strokes, for he is the one great Economist of the Universe. He puts forth no more force than what is necessary to the accomplishment of his purposes; hence in leading men from darkness to light, he indicates no step which is unnecessary, and leads through no experience that is not essential.

Book Reviews.

Commentary on Acts of Apostles. David Lipscomb, editor. Gospel Advocate Pub. Co., publishers. Cloth, 255 pages. Price, \$1.00

This book is well printed and ably edited. In point of helps on the Sunday School Lessons for '97, it has the chronology of the Acts, a brief biography of each of the apostles, then a straightforward commentary on the entire book of Acts. It closes with an index of the history of the book, giving the various divisions of each chapter. This is a very valuable addition to our church literature. It can be had at the place and price above quoted.

This issue contains largely correspondence, which has been accumulating for a month. Some of our field reports did not get in, owing to the lateness of their arrival.

In our reports from the field will be found a letter from our well-known and beloved brother, J. S. Lamar, of Graveltown, Ga. This was a private letter, but its subject is one in which all Southern disciples are interested. We feel sure that he will not object to its appearance in these columns. We thank him for his words of encouragement, and for his promise to write occasionally for the GOSPEL MESSENGER. He is one of the best writers in the Christian brotherhood. His most excellent Commentary on Luke, his First Principles and Perfection, and Life of Isaac Errett should be in every Christian home.

We do not make a rule of sending out receipts for subscriptions paid, but simply change the date on the tab of your paper, putting it up to the time that the paper is paid for. This is our receipt. If a subscriber pays up and orders his paper stopped, and it is *stopped*, that is sufficient receipt.

Brother Kilby Ferguson has changed his address from Lyons to Coahoma, Miss. Correspondents will please note the change.

Brother T. B. Larimore's meeting at the Line Street Church of God, in this city, continues with unabated interest. He is doing some fine preaching, and is receiving encouragement by the presence of a large number of the brethren from all the congregations in the city. So far there have been about ten additions.

We club the GOSPEL MESSENGER and the *New Christian Quarterly*, one year for \$2.25. Every preacher in the church should have the *Quarterly*, and this is a fine opportunity for you to get the MESSENGER for 25 cents a year, or the *Quarterly* for \$1.25, money with the order.

In next week's paper we will publish J. A. Minton's reply to E. A. Elam which occurred in last week's paper.

Many are taking a hint from the letter contained on 12 page, and are acting accordingly. Brethren (and sisters too) wake up. Don't allow a paper to come to you for from 1 to 4 years, read it and then cause the publishers to lose the entire thing. If you don't expect to pay, say so, and the paper will be discontinued.

Reports from the Churches.

GEORGIA.

GRAVELTOWN: I received two or three copies of the GOSPEL MESSENGER a good while ago, and wondered why it ceased to come, though I did not know you had been so kind as to compliment me with a subscription. I meant to write and tell you how highly I appreciated the publication, but I have been, as I still am, so busy. I tell you when a man starts with nothing, and no strong members around to help him on, and has to raise the money, and then see to everything about the building from day to day and hour to hour, he hasn't much time for anything else. But I am getting in sight of the end. The Lord has been good to me.

I think your enterprise is the most promising one we Southern disciples have ever had. Let us have one good strong Southern paper—and one is enough. When I can get my breath, I shall take pleasure, if I retain my present excellent health, in writing some for you. Fraternally Yours,

J. S. LAMAR.

LOUISIANA.

PORT VINCENT: On my arrival at Port Vincent, I was met by our esteemed Brother W. A. Sibley. After a few miles ride on horseback we came to the comfortable home of Brother Sibley, where we spent the night. On Jan. 16, we began our meeting at Magnolia Church. The old house is a union house, and like all other property that belongs to everybody, is cared for by no one. Hence we found a very dilapidated building in which to preach. The window shutters are all down, and in many places in the house the boards are falling off. The wind was blowing from the North, and to say it was cold is only to speak mildly, but the people came and listened. We built a fire in the yard and warmed the mamas and the babies. We had three services a day. The good women brought their baskets and coffee pots. We came near living at the place of meeting. I had only five days to stay, and wanted to do all the good possible. I have long since learned that to unite a community on any one subject, just get them to mix knives and forks. Give a man a good dinner and you will put him in the best of humor. We all worked for the Master. We preached, sang, prayed, eat, drank good coffee, and had a real good time, if the wind did blow. The best of all,

Brother Sibley, who had been for several years a M. E. preacher, came in with us, and was installed as pastor of the church. Brother Sibley is a man of more than average ability. As a preacher he has a splendid voice and a good delivery. His thoughts are always arranged so as to make his points very clear. His argument is always logical and to the point. He is a man of splendid standing and of good report, both in and out of the church. He is pre-eminently the man for the field. We hope and pray for a new era to dawn on the old Magnolia Church.

Brother Lee, the son of a Baptist minister, took membership with us. For the length of time and the surrounding circumstances, it was the best meeting of my life. May God bless all the workers.

FRANK LANEHART.

Jan. 13, '97.

MISSISSIPPI.

ABERDEEN: Notes.—We had one confession at the last service held with the congregation at Aberdeen. A number of disciples have moved into this vicinity from the North who will doubtless put in their membership with us as soon as they get permanently settled.

BALDWIN: The congregation at Baldwin seems to have led Mississippi in contributing to Mission work in 1896. Several other congregations did well.

AMORY: As soon as the weather is settled, the brethren at Amory will begin work on their new church building. They are very enthusiastic. The sisters have a nice fund already to be used toward seating the church. We want to have the building nearly enough completed to use for the convention in August next.

By a combination of Business, La-Grippe, and Satan, our congregation has been smaller in Aberdeen than usual for two months. Many have been down recently from the epidemic that seems to prevail everywhere. The writer has been somewhat buffeted and pressed by the above-named Company, viz., B. L. S. Co., but is able to be up and consider his ways.

OUR CHRISTMAS.

The Christmas holidays of 1896 were the most pleasant we have had for several years. Father and wife's sister with two children came to see us. Some brethren at Baldwin sent us a box full of substantial presents; and

some at Aberdeen made a liberal donation of turkeys, hams, etc. For two seasons past we have had more turkeys and finer ones than we ever dreamed of before. Well, we had a royal time. Weather, health, everything looked our way. The gratitude we feel for these kind remembrances cannot find room for expression in these notes. We accept these tokens as from our Heavenly Father, and ask him to bless the givers with joy that does not perish.

GOSPEL MESSENGER made us a visit this P. M. This is an old-time friend, with a change of its front name and clad in a new suit. We are pleased with its changes. The mechanical work is equal to any. It preaches several good sermons, sings a single hymn of "The Two Ships," and gives a loud, large call for a collection. Why not? If a preacher of the Gospel, it should not be thought strange that a "GOSPEL MESSENGER" should have its dues. We turned at once to the label on our paper to see our standing, but it happened to be blurred—the only blur we noticed on this issue. Make it plain next time, and the wherewith shall be forthcoming.

Brother Stevens is expected at Baldwin to-night, making his tour among the churches. We hope the brethren will make every effort to meet with and encourage Brother S. at his various appointments over the state.

M. H. ARMOR.

TENNESSEE.

CHATANOOGA: Our work moves on nicely. Three additions yesterday. The largest audience we have had so far. We have one of the finest C. E. societies in the state. They are a splendid band of young people and are doing great good. Yours truly,

M. D. CLUBB.

KNOXVILLE: Last Sunday I preached twice at the Fourth Baptist Church by the request of the pastor who was sick. Had fine audiences and more compliments than I had had in a year before. Brother Lewis Tillman filled my pulpit at Gay Street Church. I am invited to preach at the University of Tennessee next Sunday at 2 P. M. We had a good Sunday school at Gay Street last Sunday and good attendance at church, for us. The work here is hard and slow-growing.

R. M. GIDDENS.

NASHVILLE: There was a fine audience at both services at Woodland Street Church Sunday. The morning service was specially delightful, as the largest part of the membership was present, and all seemed to enjoy a spiritual feast. H.

The Business of Soul Saving

C. J. BURTON.

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke 2: 49.

These are the Savior's words when he was twelve years old. It seems even that early in life he was impressed with the greatness of his mission. His mission was to redeem the world from sin. He made it his business to come down from heaven and to enter upon this work. He came, he conquered, he finished the work the Father had given him to do, he went back to heaven, and now it is his business to lead his followers on from victory to victory.

What may we learn from Jesus?

1. Let our early years be given to God's service. In too many instances men and women spend the greater part of their lives without God and without Christ. Jesus was about his Father's work even at twelve. Let us then say to the boys and girls that twelve is not too early to give your hearts to Christ.

2. Christ's method was that of personal, individual concern for men. His power over the individual was great, because he took a personal interest in the people. It was in this way that he won Zaccheus. Luke 19: 1-10. See also Matt. 9: 9.

3. He was in sympathy with the suffering, and was ever ready to minister to their wants. This is one great reason why he drew great multitudes after him.

4. He taught what was right, and then he lived out in his life what he taught the people.

5. He was a busy worker. He was ever doing good. He said, "I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night cometh, when no man can work."

6. He looked upon the work of soul saving from the most serious standpoint: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what would a man give in exchange for his soul?" To gain the world is to lose the soul. To save the soul is to conquer and overcome the world, and to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.

REPORT ON OBITUARIES.

(Read before the East Ala. District Convention, Sand Hill, Ala., Dec. 20, 1896.)

We, your committee on obituaries, beg to report that while our heavenly Father has blessed us the past year abundantly, yet death has been a visitor to our churches.

We report from Harmony the death

of Bro. Roberts, a man whom we all loved for his work's sake. He was struck down at the post of duty. A brave man he was, but he has gone to his reward, and while we mourn yet not as those who have no hope of the reward of the righteous at His coming who giveth us our reward.

From Shady Grove we report dear Sister Griffin, a charter member of that church—indeed the last one who composed the church. Our organization passed away when Sister Griffin left us. She was indeed an exemplary Christian and a bright standard-bearer of the simple light of the Gospel. She "rests from her labors, and her works follow her." Corinth is also numbered with the churches who have been visited by this grim Monster.

Sister Thomas, who was a faithful Christian, a neighbor of worth, and a constant worker for Christ in all the ways she knew, has gone to meet her Savior. She has left us; her voice will no more be heard in sweet song and prayer. but she, though dead is living with Jesus. Lebanon has also vacancies made by the ever-present Reaper.

Sister Suddeth and also Brother Taylor have gone hence. True to their Master as they lived, we expect to meet them all in heaven. May we live so that we may.

Having spoken of each one of our number who have gone on before us, we resolve:

1. That in the death of these our brethren and sisters we have lost those whom we loved, and those to whom we looked for counsel and advice, and in their death we sustain a great loss.

2. That we remember their faithful Christian lives as an example to us, and that we live so that we will meet them in heaven. Respectfully submitted,

MISS HATTIE WADKINS, } Com.
L. A. DALE. }

It is not enough for us to be with Christ; that does not fulfill our duty and privilege as Christians. Beyond the matter of fellowship with Christ is the duty of showing our fellowship by our fruit-bearing, and thus also glorify the Father. There must be a oneness between our spirit and life and that of Christ—we must be in him, abide in him as the branch abides in the vine. In this way only can his image be formed within us, and we be fitted for his society forever.—Our Young Folks.

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Prof. J. F. Draughton, Nashville, Tenn., now has a position as bookkeeper and stenographer for the Southern Grocery Company, of this place; salary, \$75.00 per month. I would call to your books on book-keeping and shorthand prepared for home study.—P. Armstrong, Pine Bluff, Ark.



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To Subscribers.

We rarely ever say anything in these columns about our subscribers "paying up." We want to say now in large type, once for all, that we not only want those in arrears to "settle up," but we are going to adopt a

CASH IN ADVANCE

system. Those over one year in arrears, will be dropped at once, unless they pay up. Pay up before you order the paper discontinued. We don't propose to publish a paper for people who won't pay for it, for such readers do not appreciate it. Again: Let us suggest to those who have the welfare of the MESSENGER at heart, that a paper needs something more substantial to operate on than "good will." We appreciate good wishes, but the mortal DOLLAR will

go much farther in paying rents, printers, buying paper, paying postage, etc. &c. Are you a friend? This means U. We don't want to lose a single subscriber, but a name without the money is like "faith without works," dead, with a big D. Send money in any legitimate way, to

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Miss Ethel Siraator, Editor. Clarksville, Tenn.

Prayer meeting Topic for Jan. 24: "Our Failures and Successes." Luke 5: 1-11.

Lowell says, "Not failure, but low aim is crime." The real failure a young man makes is when he contents himself with what he can do easily; when he does not take for his standard anything beyond his present capabilities, by which he can measure his weakness and his progress. It is so easy to become discouraged when our efforts fall short of a high aim; but if each effort was satisfactory, one would soon cease to try for anything better; and that would be failure indeed. There is a touch of hopefulness in Simon's reply when Jesus told him to cast the net once more: "We have toiled all the night and have taken nothing." Yet he obeyed the command, and with what wonderful success! But the Lord's help did not come till Peter was conscious of his own weakness—in that consciousness is your success. In something very much like it is ours, for it is only when trusting him for strength that we will accomplish anything worthy of the powers he has given us.

We are in danger of self-complacency in view of what we have done, if we do not impartially judge ourselves for what we have failed to do.—Missionary Voice.

Among the many causes of failure in life, none is more frequent than that febleness of the will which is indicated by spasmodic action, by fitful effort, or lack of persistence.—Mathews.

The Christian Church in Memphis has a Y. P. S. C. E. of 100 active members and a number of associates—the largest society in Tennessee, perhaps. Now, we would like to hear from them directly: we would like to know what work they are doing and how they do it. Moreover, we want news from our Endeavorers wherever they are. Won't you send us notes concerning your work? We want to make this department helpful, but we cannot do it by ourselves, for the most practical good comes from methods that have already been tried. Don't keep your plans to yourselves, but send them out to be used elsewhere; and then, when this or that has proved to be successful with oth-

ers, try it; it may be just what you need.

Florida Endeavorers, it seems, have divided the state into districts, one of which held its annual conventions during the first three days of the new year. Eight Young people's and two Junior societies were represented by seventeen delegates. A small convention, but a good one, for the time was spent in discussing plans and methods, and many good ideas were exchanged.

The Lookout heads one of its departments with the question, "What is the best thing your society has done during the year?" Some of the responses are excellent; one society reports that its "best thing was the determination—made and carried out—to begin the meeting promptly, and to allow no pause to occur." The young people of the Central Christian Church, Cincinnati, report that their best work was to more than double the attendance at and participation in their meetings. Their success in this was due to the efforts of the Lookout and of prayer meeting committees. And this report from Muncie, Ind., is so good that we give it in full: "The prayer meeting committee of the First Christian Church C. E. Society consisted of five persons. Each member assumed the responsibility of one meeting during the month, the chairman taking the fifth Sundays. The active members were divided into five divisions, and a list assigned to each member of the committee. The member whose duty it was to provide for the first Sunday in each month chose a leader and secured the promise of at least six persons from his list to take a prominent part in the meeting. He also gave quotations to the backward members, etc. The remaining Sundays were provided for in like manner. Under this plan embarrassing pauses have ceased to be a feature of our prayer meetings; we never have time for all to take part who desire; our room has been filled and our spirituality greatly increased.

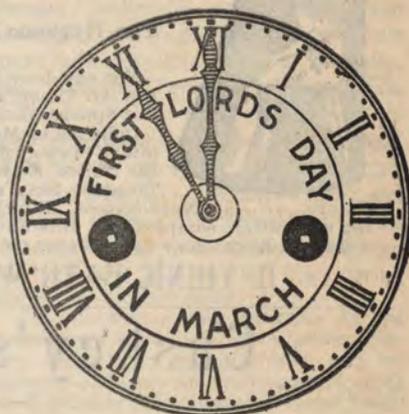
The work of prayer meeting committees requires constant thought to make it successful. When experienced leaders can be appointed, it is comparatively easy for the committee; but when the time comes for new members to lead—those who have not yet learned to guide a meeting

and infuse into it some of their own enthusiasm—then the committee must do good work. They should not only appoint the leader, and enlist other members in other parts of the program, but should be ready to take some part themselves when a pause seems likely to follow. These pauses will kill any meeting; the best of talks lose effect when followed by a vague silence, which frequently happens because the others are not quite sure what they want to say. If five or six take part promptly, it puts life and spirit into the meeting, and frequently encourages the others. Still there is danger in apportioning a program, the danger of changing a prayer meeting into a literary entertainment, which is to be condemned as much as a prayer-meeting without life.

The Y. P. S. C. E. of the Christian church in New Orleans, which is the society in the only one city, has an excellent way of introducing impromptu songs throughout the meetings. It often happens that some familiar hymn would be appropriate after one of the prayers or talks; and it is all the more so when some one starts it unannounced. The others join in quickly, and, needless to say, enjoy the verses that come so informally.

"I find the greatest thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving."

HOLMES.



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This is a question which is frequently asked and variously answered. It is at best a matter of pure speculation, and there is absolutely no proof on either side of the question. The most that can be done is to suggest certain possibilities. We know very little of the surface conditions of the planets, and therefore can arrive at very uncertain conclusions as to their habitableness. There are but two of them on which it would seem possible for life to exist. These are Venus and Mars. An atmosphere is an absolute necessity to life, at least such as we have on the earth. It serves two special purposes. In the first place it supports life by furnishing gaseous food. In the second place, it moderates the heat of the sun, and tempers the cold on the side of the planet away from the sun. Without the atmosphere our earth would be uninhabitable. The days would be burning hot and the nights freezing cold, and animal life could not long endure such extremes.

Let us see how it is with the planets. Mercury is so near the sun that little is known of its surface conditions. We have no evidence that it has an atmosphere, and the extremes of heat and cold must be very great. Life on Mercury is therefore hardly possible. Venus resembles the earth in many respects. It has a solid surface, there is water on it, and it has an atmosphere containing water vapor. Being nearer to the sun, its temperature is somewhat higher than that of the earth. With these conditions, there seems to be no reason why it may not support life. Mars is still more like the earth. Its surface shows indications of land and water, and the spectroscope shows that its atmosphere contains moisture. On its surface is a network of fine lines which have been supposed to be canals containing water, as they appear and disappear from time to time. There are bright spots at the poles which have been supposed to be caps of ice and snow. The day on Mars is about equal to our day, and the seasons recur in the same manner, though they are twice as long as ours. The year of Mars is nearly equal to two of our years. As in the case of Venus, life may exist here, but there is no proof of it. Jupiter and Saturn are masses of molten matter, surrounded by dense clouds of vapor, and with no solid crust. Life, as we understand it, is here impossible. Uranus and Neptune are still hotter, being yet in a semi-nebulous condition, and shining partly by their own light. Of course, life cannot exist on them. The moon is a cold body, without atmosphere, and turns on its axis only once a month. It is thus seen that the possibilities of planetary life are very limited, and speculation in regard to it is not very profitable.

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CHIPS.

Rejected Suitor—Alas! What worse fate than to be fired with love?

Ejected Suitor (sadly)—Fired without love.

It always surprises a visiting American that the pavements of London are not strewn with dropped H's.

She—How nervous you were when you proposed.

He—Yes, I am always that way when I'm getting engaged.

Mother (angrily)—Joe Jefferson, how many times muss I call yo' befo' I can make yo' hear?

Joe Jeff—Dunno; you stan' thah an' holler, an' I'll sit here an' count.

Magistrate—The gamekeeper declares that he saw you taking this pheasant. What have you to say to that?

Prisoner—I only took it for a lark.

Magistrate—Six months for making such an ornithological error. Consult your natural history in future.

Mrs. Younghub—"Oh, Fredy! I have such a surprise for you!"

Younghub—"You have, love?"

Mrs. Younghub—"Yes, dear. See this sweet little dog I bought for us!—only twenty dollars, and the dog seller warranted him to be a pure mongrel."

"We can't stay at this hotel, Maria!" exclaimed farmer Meddergrass, after reading the rules tacked to his room door. "Why not, Nathan?" "Why, they have dinner from eleven to two. I kim to town on business, an' I can't afford to waste no three hours a day on dinner, to say nothin' 'bout breakfast an' supper. Gather up yer traps an' we'll go somewhere else."

"As a general thing, I discourage puns," said Mr. Gimplite, "but when the other day, after my young son had eaten all the marmalade, my oldest daughter said that marmalade the blame on her, I laughed before I knew it; and then, of course, it was no use to lecture."

She shed great lakes of tears. 'Twas sad

To watch her when she'd cry;
She couldn't help it for she had
A cataract in her eye.

Jones—I'm a victim of insomnia. I can't sleep if there's the least noise—such as a cat on a back fence, for instance.

Doctor—Get this prescription for a powder made up. It will prove effective.

Jones—When do I take it, Doctor?

Doctor—You don't take it. You give it to the cat in a little milk.

A school master in a boarding-school was endeavoring to make clear to his young pupils' minds the meaning of the word "slowly." He walked across the room in the manner the word indicates. "Now, children, tell me how I walked." One little fellow who sat near the front

of the room almost paralyzed him by blurting out: "Bow-legged."

Perhaps the most startling suggestion for a "reminder" was that of the little boy whose grandmother had forgotten his Christmas present the year before. She wished to know what she would do in order that she should not forget it again. "You might put your teeth in upside down," said the boy.

GIRLS IN INDIA.

All girls in India are very fond of pretty and bright-colored dresses. The dress is simply five yards of muslin. When only three or four years old a little girl begins to learn how to wind it gracefully around the body and over the shoulder. When she goes into the street she slips one end over the head as a veil. A little short-sleeved jacket is the only other garment she wears. This is a very cool and comfortable costume for the hot climate. Every family has a jewel box, full of little "cubby holes," for each ornament. This is often buried in the mud floor of the woman's inner apartment. If you want to see their jewelry you must make an appointment beforehand, so that they can dig it up. Once in eight days the girls and women wash, comb, and oil their hair, and have it nicely braided. They also take off and brighten the jewelry at this time. They would rather starve than give up their jewelry; they are so fond of it. The poorest people make theirs of tin, brass, lead, glass, sealing wax, and shells.—Over Sea and Land.

THE CREEDS in our day are not dead, but, like some old man whose body is diseased, they are sensitive to every cold wind that blows. The truth might, perhaps, be better expressed by saying that the sectarian world is very apprehensive of danger, and has spies posted at every turn of the road to watch for some stray idea that might be labeled as heresy. The latest heresy that has been thus caught and labeled was found running astray in Ian McClaren's famous book, "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," in which he expresses his belief that if a man can be kind to a dog he has some inherent good in him. Strange as it may seem, this is interpreted to be directly opposed to the doctrine of original sin.

The meeting on Lord's day for public worship and for the observance of the Lord's Supper is the most important of all assemblies.—Our Young Folks.

Give Earnest Heed.

The time for the March offering for Foreign Missions is at hand. The missionary force is larger, and the receipts will need to be correspondingly increased. We must do three things this year:

1. Enlist 3,000 contributing churches.
2. Bring 1,000 churches up to their full apportionment.
3. Reach \$100,000 in the receipts.

The *Missionary Voice* will be sent to every church requesting it. It should be distributed in each church preparatory to the offering. See that one copy reaches every family represented in the church. And the March Offering Envelope will be furnished the churches. Place one in the hands of all the members. Order *Voices* and envelopes at once.

The watchword for the year is: An offering from every church; a gift from every member.

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