

Infant Church Membership.

The *Interior* undertakes to show the relation of the children of believers to the church. It declares that they are as much a part of the family as they are a part of the family. They have inalienable rights guaranteed to them in the covenant of grace. It is the recognized business of the pastor to look after them as an integral and most important part of his flock, and to see that their covenant rights to nurture and education in the gospel are fulfilled. The church has a proprietary interest in them. They are the heritage and the hope of the church, and upon them it depends for its perpetuity.

Why then deny them the restraints of church discipline and the encouraging privileges of the sacramental communion? What is the position of a member of the family who is not amenable to the regulations of the household and is not even permitted to sit at the common table? And what becomes of that grand idea of a church of saints, to realize which the precious blood of redemption was shed, and to gather which the gracious doctrine of justification by faith, without the works of the law, is published among men? The church order advocated by the *Interior* is not only unwarranted by the Gospel—it is contrary to it. It blends evangelic truth with vital error; as in the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, the iron was mixed with mire and with the seed of men. The factors of Christ's church are not families but souls converted and believing.

We suppose that our contemporary would look with horror upon the refusal of Leppie, a French Baptist, to have his dying child baptized by the chaplain of the Liverpool Hospital. But the note he sent, explanatory of his refusal, appears to us to be dictated by the very genius of the gospel. "I do not find in the gospel," he said, "any command to baptize little children. It is required of all who are baptized to believe in Jesus Christ; and if this is so, it is impossible, since they cannot believe, that infants should be baptized: Acts viii. 27, 36, 37. At the same time, I do not despise the belief of others for the apostle says that all those who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved: 1 Tim. ii. 12-14; Jod ii. 22. Although I do not understand that they must be baptized, I believe that the Kingdom of God belongs to all who resemble little children: Matt. xxi. 16; Mark x. 14; Luke xxi. 15, 16."

Any other view involves us in perplexity and contradiction. The one advantage which the children of pious parents have, is that they may be brought under Christian instruction from their earliest years. It is to be hoped that they will become Christians. But if the prospect justifies their being made church members, the privilege ought to be extended to all who are in like manner under Christian discipline—an adopted child as well as a child by blood, or any other young member of a household presided over by Christians. In these cases there exists the same presumption that the children will be converted; and if such presumption warrants church membership in the one case, it should avail as much in the other.

But if it is insisted the church membership belongs to the children only, and to all the children, let us suppose the case: a father and mother who have joined the church in old age, and whose children, already grown up, are worldly and irreligious, perhaps even infidel and criminal. Are these also church members? The *Interior* says, Yes. The Gospel says, No. And we venture to say that there is no decent Pseudo-baptist church in Christendom, that would recognize such a membership, whatever its Book of Church Order might have to say upon the subject.

Or suppose the Christian parent is removed by death, or for some other cause fails to give the proper instruction to the child, will the blessing conditioned by such instruction be granted anyhow? Or suppose the instruction fails to convert the child, so not infrequently happens, will the church membership stand in any event? And what sort of Gospel church would we have? A church confounded with the natural relationships of life, and inextricably mixed up with the world.

As we have shown on another occasion, the unit of the church is not the family but the individual believer. The theory which accepts children as church members because they are "holy," makes the worldly wife or husband of a believer, a church member also. It is a heresy which would overturn the very foundations

of the church of God. We are far, however, from saying those who hold this theory with such a design. We are satisfied that many of them would be ready to reject it, so soon as they were confronted by its logical consequences. Their faith is better than their ecclesiastical system; but the system is inconsistent with orthodoxy, and if carried out would destroy it.

Simplicity in Gospel Work.

In a charming volume of letters from Natal by J. B. Barker, which has just been published, a just tribute is rendered to missionaries who directly address themselves to the needs of the people to whom they undertake to minister. Although the writer alludes to the Church of England, scarcely less clearly the absurdity of formal and didactic methods is shown than that said establishment seeks to propagate the Gospel in foreign lands.

Lady Barker, who has observed the methods employed for the evangelization of the dusky natives not only of her native country, but also of India, New Zealand and Natal, is a competent witness in regard to the results. And she says:

"Here I feel it incumbent on me to bear testimony not only to the instance and success of the enormous amount of oral, tangible, common-sense good accomplished among the black races all over the world, by both Wesleyan Methodist and Baptist missionaries and missionaries. While our more costly and elaborate system of organization is compelled to wait for grants and certified teachers, and heaven knows what, the Methodist or Baptist missionary feels a few trees, some huts, some walls and seats, that is the roof of his shelter and beginning, and there to teach the people, and to him something of the sweet charities and deencies of the Christian life."

We are reminded, by her description, of the "church" we built on James Island, then chaplain of the "Entail" Regiment, the 25th South Carolina. The Lieut. Col. John G. Pressly, (a son of the Baptist and a gallant and efficient soldier), had trespassed down and brought into the camp, for fear of disease. There the trunks were arranged into two tiers of seats. A flag, given into the ground and surmounted by a board, served for a pulpit. A carriage lamp was for the chandelier. The hymn book, a compilation of thirty or fifty of the choicest songs of Zion, which we had prepared and published in Charleston, were freely circulated among the men. We met every night, in cold or rain, "remembering the time because the days were evil." Never did we enjoy preaching more. And among these men, devoted to death for their country and singing together the praises of God in the dead of the night, not a few received impressions that will endure forever. That "crack regiment" is scattered now to the four winds. Their then commander, now decorated with honorable wounds, has laid aside the gray for the judicial robe of California. Of the men, some occupy heroic positions in the campaigns of Fort Fisher, in the trenches of Petersburg, in the tragic chain of the Appomattox; some have returned to the peaceful pursuits of life. But if it please God that we shall meet again, in those fields untroubled by war and clamor and arguments rolled in blood, sure we are that the recollection of that primitive "church" on James Island will fill to the sweetness of the heavenly fellowship, and the joy of the eternal song.

Well do we remember an inquiry meeting held in the "Chaplain's Tent" on vicinity to Charleston permitted such luxuries then. A soldier of the Washington Light Infantry has come to ask relief in his disquietude. He mourned because his distress of soul was gone—and could not be recalled. He enjoyed reading the Word, and had a relish in prayer, and for Christian conversation. He could even say he loved Christ—but he was a Saviour deserved. But he bewailed himself that he could not feel more anguish on account of sin. With what astonishment did he hear the explanation: "You are at peace because the enemy is dead. God is ended; your sins are pardoned; come let us kneel here upon the grass and thank God that you are now one of his children." That soldier is now an ambassador of the Prince of Peace—a useful and influential member of an evangelic church.

This army leaf from an army chaplain's note book may be matched by the experiences of many who were engaged in the same thrilling and blessed ministry. The said routine, ceremonial, consecrated places, which some regard, with Archbishop Laud, as "the beauty of holiness," are essential to Gospel decency and order. Nay, in times that try men's souls they are intolerable hindrances to evangelic effort. They are like bottles full of new wine—either the ferment of life will be arrested, or the bottles will burst.

Our Rome Mission.

The editor of the *Freeholder and Herald*, in a letter from Rome, gives the following tribute to our superintendent of Missions to Italy: "Rev. Dr. Taylor, of Virginia, for some time Chaplain of the State University, is also in Rome, in charge of a mission under the patronage of the Southern Baptists. He is a minister of much talent and high culture. He has several schools and preaching places in the chief cities of Italy." In another part of his letter, Dr. Montfort, says: "There is a mission for workers of every class, and no good reason exists for jealousy or unenvied rivalries. Any indications of this sort should be fixed upon by the Christian world. The Baptists can not support the Waldenses or the Free church. They will do well to help the work superintended by Dr. Taylor. He is a regular Baptist of the best evangelic type."

A curious statement is made of the method by which an American High Churchman, Dr. Nevins, assails the Papacy by pictures. He has pictures or frescoes in his church, after the manner of Rome, but they are chiefly such as reprove the Papacy for some of their errors. One is a representation of Peter's wife's mother lying sick with fever, and being healed by the Savior. It is expected that Romanists, seeing this will be led to ask how it is that the first Pope had a wife. Of course, Papal Rome has no such picture, although there are no such thousands of paintings representing the cure of diseases by the Savior, and almost every Bible incident beside. You may see a representation of Joseph fleeing from Mrs. Potiphar, of male and female nudity in great variety, and other things as indecent; but Peter's wife and Paul's withstanding the first Pope to the face, are, for it seems, good subjects for the painter. The editor thinks, that if Dr. Nevins put good arguments against the errors of Rome on the walls of his church, he is to be commended.

To us, however, this seems to be a mere trifling with the Gospel. Had Paul contented himself with rebuking Roman Sorcery by a picture of Moses overcoming Jannes and Jambres, or refuting Roman idolatry by a picture of Dagon without his head or members, many centuries might have elapsed before the Gospel could have gained acceptance at Rome. This animating of the Gospel by frescoes is mere child's play. The New Testament encourages no such symbolism. It places God by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe. We are not surprised to hear that Dr. Nevins is popular among "the best circles in Rome," even among the liberal ecclesiastics. His pictures have no more terror for them than the painted dragons of a Chinese army to a band of veteran soldiers. The Pope can give him a counterblast of pictures and frescoes, a hundred to one.

And here we find suggested to us the weakness of the whole Protestant movement in Italy. There is no possible ground upon which the Papacy can be defeated except the New Testament ground. Justification by faith imperfectly apprehended as it was by Luther, split half Europe from the papal unity. Carried out to its logical conclusion of the supreme Christ, and a converted church membership under his scepter, it will relegate the Popes to the shades frequented by the heroes of the Iliad.

Preparation for Worship.

Whatever we undertake to do we should strive to do well. Ought not this rule to apply in religion as well as in secular affairs? Some one proposes that a superintendent who is to lead the prayers of the Sunday school should make previous preparation for that service, so that he should know what to say and how to say it, and thus be indeed the representative of those for whom he speaks. How much more pointed and effective the service would be made.

The minister of the Gospel needs the same preparation. In preaching, the subjects should be reasonable, the words acceptable. That oft quoted text: "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak," belongs to the age of immediate inspiration, as many a preacher who has not studied his text patiently and devoutly has found out to his cost. Preparation for prayer would also be serviceable in preventing that long-windedness and aimless rambling which sometimes so try the patience of a congregation. We knew a minister not of our denomination, however, whose prayer before the Sunday sermon was usually a half hour long. The old Dr. detailed and explained everything he asked for, as if there were danger that some important particulars might escape the observation of the All-Wise!

Why should not the same principle apply to the church also? The private member who has fluency of speech and who is willing to use his gift for the edification of his brethren, should bring with him somewhat or thought, he has previously dwelt upon, to the social gathering; and not rely for theme and utterance upon the

casual impulse of the moment. The brethren and sisters could improve the singing vastly by meeting some time during the week, or at an earlier hour on the Lord's Day, and practicing the hymns that will be used in the public service. And if prayer also is offered that God may bless the pastor and the work, what follows will be all the more devoutly enjoyed and the more largely blessed.

What is worth doing, we repeat, should we do our best in that service in which we expect to spend eternity.

Exhibition at the Judson.

There was quite a large audience assembled at the Judson Chapel on last Friday evening, to witness the entertainment given by the Kloufoun Clans. The hall was beautifully decorated with flowers, which were only excelled in beauty by the "Cloufoun of Flowers." The exercises consisted of readings, recitations and music. The readings and recitations were under the supervision of Miss M. Josephine Tait, Directress, who is peculiarly skilled in getting up recitations for the edification of our people. The music was under the direction of that popular gentleman, Prof. S. P. Suow, who is a skilled musician. The young ladies acquitted themselves admirably, both in reading and music.

Literary Notices.

LITTLE'S LIVING AGE, for April 14, has six articles besides the poetry. The present Turkey complications will lend special interest to an article from the *Contemporary Review*, on the Turkish Invasions of Europe, in 1670 to 1683. Another installment of the Marquis of Lissie. There are also West Indian Memories, Turkish Story Books, Cattle Herding in the West, and a story entitled Nils Janzen.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE for May. The leader is a charming sketch of some of our Southern Birds, very much after the style of Audubon. It is a record of personal and appreciative observation. An article of equal interest illustrates the English river life with pen and pencil. Under the alarming title of Equestrianism from which we make an extract, Mr. Codman seeks to establish a good mutual understanding between the horse and its rider. Charles Reade's story runs into a hair-breadth adventure and a new dramatic situation. Prof. Draper contributes a scientific lecture on Things that are Invisible. He is more at home in science, than in metaphysics or theology. The various illustrations and the Editor's Department are unusually good. There is a beautiful poem on "Israel's Death Angel."

THE GALAXY for May. A whimsical story about a couple of babies on their travels, opens this number. There are several articles of national and social interest to the people of the United States—a description of our Public Libraries, an investigation of the Treasury Department of the present method of Life Insurance, and an account of the adoption of our National Seal, which shows, cautiously enough, that our present seal has come into use without the authority of law. There are also two articles by the eminent Literatures, Richard Grant White and Henry James. The editor endeavors to decide impartially between the Scientists and the Theologians. He gives the verdict of his judgment to the former of these classes, and of his sympathy to the latter. But clearly this position is not tenable. For in the first place, the conflict has not been unprovoked by those who have aspired to be the leaders of modern thought. Comte, Mill, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Draper and so many others engaged in open conflict with Christianity. And in the second place, while scientists and other specialists have given us many valuable facts, the conclusions they have drawn from them and the theoretical systems they have built out of them are amenable to the tests of logic and of common sense. We refuse to regard an inconsequential argument as sacred because it has assumed the name of science, least of all when it is levelled against the doctrine of God and immortality. We are glad to see that the editor does not go to these extremes—nay, that he does not believe, or wish to believe them. But we beg him not to claim immunity for those who do.

Field Notes.

Rev. John Miller, of Princeton, (Presbyterian) has just issued a book in which he is understood to deny the immortality of the soul and the doctrine of the Trinity. It is stated that Mr. Jager, who left the Jews for the Baptists, is now on the drift. His present landing place is Episcopacy. It needs no prophet to point out the next. The agricultural school at Cambridge has seven professors, and six students. The New York Board of Education has fired the limit of detention of delinquent pupils to one hour. It is thought important that no longer

period of time shall be taken from the hours of recess and recreation. Dr. Sheldon, agent of the S. W. University of Tennessee, will continue his efforts to secure a centennial endowment for that institution, if it takes ten years. He will prosecute the enterprise after the old plan—the Dollar Roll and Donation Record.

A famous Universalist divine, during the war, declared "that he believed in Hell as a military necessity." There is many a man whose beliefs are prescribed by circumstances, but few who would so quietly confess the fact. Rev. W. B. Crompton in the *Mississippi Record*, gives a tribute to the Howard and Judson as two grand institutions of which the Baptists of Alabama are justly proud; and speaks also warmly of the affection cherished for the Alabama Baptist and the State Mission Board. In regard to the persistent Pike-burn in some quarters, Bro. Crompton remarks pitifully and characteristically: "I have always heard that 'facts were most stubborn things,' but they seem to be not half so stubborn as some Baptists."

Mr. Rowland, ex-mayor of the city of New Orleans, "is now preaching at St. Charles." He has been electrifying the people for the last two weeks by magic pulpit oratory. Something is wrong about Mr. Rowland. He started from New Orleans to face his accusers in Richmond, he said; but seems to loiter by the way.

Andrew Fuller's church is hopefully revived when he had succeeded in awakening among them an interest in missions. They had been told and dead until they began to work for the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom. Pastors should make a note of this. It is said that ministers are long-lived. But so it appears are literati and politicians. Bismarck is 62 years old; so is Lord Granville. Prince Gorkha-koff is 70, Lord Beaconsfield is 72, and Mr. Gladstone 63. President McMahon is nearly 60; the Archbishop of Canterbury is 60; Dr. Pusey 77, and Dean Stanley 61. Garibaldi is nearly 70, Lord Russell 75, and Jules Simon 62.

Don't give to wayside beggars. Go and see for yourself if the family is starving, or the child is dead, or the wife is sick. Or, if you cannot get, make one to go for you. To give without investigation encourages both pauperism and crime. On the authority of the *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, it is said that "fifty years ago thirty Baptist churches in Maryland declared themselves opposed to missions; whilst two alone took a stand in favor of them. The two increased to thousands, while the anti-mission churches diminished until they number seven or eight persons."

A brother writing from En-faula says: "I have been having daily services for two weeks; the church is waking up—good congregations. We pray God's blessing and look for it." "Some members of the Baptist church have organized a choir, and will hereafter lead in the singing at that church. The church has also decided to use organs in its services, which heretofore has not been the case."

Rev. J. M. Fortune has been called to the pastorate of the church at Fort Deposit. Bro. Mathewson delighted us at Broad St. last week with a visit. Broad Street was his first pastorate and has ever loved him. The house would hardly hold the congregations. M. G. Judson, 14th. Bro. T. P. Gwilt, of Oxford, is preaching to four churches this year, and in a private note says, "we are hopeful that the Lord is beginning a good work in our midst." We want news letters from every part of the State. Send us every item of denominational interest and we will spread it before the other churches in the State.

Rev. Dr. Muntenberg, the author of the well known hymn, "I would not live again," died in St. Luke's Hospital, New York, Sunday evening, April 10th. He was born in Philadelphia, Sept. 18, 1794, and was the founder of the hospital in which he died. "I am so delighted with the paper myself I would like to see it in every family." M. G. Judson. In the ALABAMA BAPTIST of April 19th, the following occurred under "Calls to Pastors": "If there are evils connected with it, these evils have never been printed." Instead of "printed," it ought to be "pointed out."—B. W. Whidden.

The Southern Baptist Convention—Annual Sessions Objectable. The decay of the Southern Baptist Convention cannot be successfully denied. We do not mean by this that it is beyond the hope of recovery. We believe that it can be restored to its former position, and even carried higher, as a centre of denominational union, than it has ever occupied before. Just the tendency now is to decay. Some observers have thought this to be manifest for several years. And we believe that the evil work began at the meeting which changed the body from a biennial to an annual convention. We do not lose sight of the

influence of "the times" on our convention. In common with every good cause this body has suffered much from the prostration of the country. But making all due allowance for the common evils, we still insist that there are some internal traits that are working the downward tendency of this body. Possibly it will be regarded as disloyal to make such a declaration, but with this risk we make it. It is our purpose to urge an objection or two to the annual sessions.

1. In our judgement the prestige and dignity of the convention has been lowered by this change. Whether it is true in reality or not, we think that there is a common feeling of that sort among our people. That the reader may better understand us: Suppose the Constitution of the United States were so amended as to make the term of a President and that of a Senator and that of a Supreme Judge of only one year's duration, would not this go very far to destroy the dignity and honor attaching to these offices, and would it not undignify the government itself?

2. Under this new order of things our convention has descended to the position of a mass meeting; one scene coming so soon after another, that whatever plans may be adopted are not tried before they are carried under revision.

3. Many brethren who would be glad to attend every session, and who would be useful there, cannot bear the expense as frequently, nor can they spare the time. There is no month in the year more useful to the Southern churches from the work of their pastors than the month of May. That month is spoiled by 42 annual sessions on the convention.

4. We suppose that the attendance will average 950 delegates, annually, at a cost of \$50 a piece, making about \$47,500 annually paid by these brethren. And all this to manage but little more money than it costs us to get together.

5. The facts do not show that any new impulse or forward movement is given to the work of the Boards or of the Seminary by these annual meetings, that would not be as well or better done in a biennial or triennial session.

6. The annual sessions should not be continued to gratify the ease and pleasure of those few brethren who chance to be in a situation to attend every year. We cannot go to New Orleans, but in this way we cast our vote against annual sessions. R.

Wants of Alabama Baptists.

NUMBER FOURTEEN.

FAMILY RELIGION.

We state it as our opinion, that there is no one duty more neglected among Baptists, nor one which if faithfully observed would contribute more to the well-being of our denomination than family religion. We are apprehensive that this branch of Christian duty has less hold on the hearts of the people, and in all its obligations is more ignored now than at any previous time in the history of Baptists and Protestants. We fear that this great matter has been too much transferred to the Sunday school. There is not enough said on this subject in our religious literature.

Pastors do not insist on it as persistently as they should. An observing man cannot mingle extensively with our people without finding many things to impress him that there is a wide-spread and lamentable neglect, with the religious members of families, to impart in the household religious instruction and to maintain the spirit of devotion. We have styled it "family religion," because in the Christian discharge of parental duties there is much to be maintained besides what is usually denominated family worship. An occasional reading and prayer is not enough of itself to claim a healthy tone of religion in the family. Christian instruction and Christian authority must be maintained as well as singing and praying.

We assume that religion in the family is barely second in point of importance to religion in the church; and in all its round of obligations it comprises a class of the most difficult duties to perform faithfully, that were ever required of poor erring man. Large faith, and grace, and determination, are essential to success.

There are many social, moral and religious organizations among men, but the God of the Bible is directly the author of but two of these, namely—the family and the church; and however much good may be accomplished by other institutions, these two comprehend the elements of all good, and are precisely adapted to meet the moral wants of the whole race of man.

The family is the first institution that our God organized on this earth, and this institution has descended to us through all the ages of the world, and in some important respects exists among us now in its primeval purity; and as an essential conservator of the happiness of the race, it should be everywhere perpetuated under the weal of our holy religion. The Lord God placed himself over

the first family and every other family that should come after it. And the history of that early family shows that while man has dominion over the earth and every living thing on the earth, he holds that tenure at the pleasure of God, and his right to the possession of any good thing is suspended on the contingency of obedience to God; so that a failure to recognize and adore the Author of all good, forfeits the right to every agency of happiness, and thenceforth he may expect disappointment and misery to be visited on his household. An impatient believer could as reasonably hope for heaven as a totally irreligious family could expect real and continued happiness. A church without pure religion is not a greater absurdity in the world of ethics, than is a family where there are no love and worship of God. And families of this character may be expected to create such a church.

Again, let it be observed that while the church of Christ is congregational in its administration of authority, the family is an absolute monarchy, where there is no appeal from the legitimate will of the united head. However numerous the family of children and servants, the united will of the husband and wife is the end of all strife, and absolute and all directing in all things in the household. This is instinctive. It is found largely to exist among the less civilized and barbarous tribes of the earth. It is founded in great wisdom, because it is immeasurably important that children, during a suitable period of minority, while in the formative state, should be placed under such circumstances as will mould them into that moral shape which will make them ever afterwards obedient subjects of law, orderly members of society, and under grace, faithful to the church of Christ.

Our object here is to give some prominence to the position that the exercise of absolute control on the part of pious parents is essential to the successful inculcation of religion in the family. And now, having premised this far—

1. We maintain that in order to enjoy a wholesome family religion, there must be a constant and devout recognition of the presence, power and goodness of God. In the family it should be distinctly understood that every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of mercies; and that every-trying providence is sent over by His same just and merciful God; and that all His dispensations are premiously right; and that to murmur is a species of rebellion, and that it is not only unbecomingly to offend God, but that there are countless reasons why we should esteem it the highest privilege of our existence to render a full and affectionate obedience to His holy will.

2. In order to accomplish this in the household, it is at once seen that parents have a weighty but delightful task before them. A vast amount of instruction is necessary. That parent who prays for and who his family does well, but that one who both prays for and instructs them in religion, does far better. This instruction may be partly imparted at the hours of family worship, when a few words of explanation, or advice, or warning, or encouragement, are always appropriate, and likely to make lasting impressions. And many other occasions will offer opportunity to do these same things; and to talk with them of the great mercies of God, to relate pointed Bible stories, to impress incidents in the life of the Savior, and in the lives of good men and women; to warn them of sins and popular vices, and impart to them such intelligence concerning current religious matters as is suited to their wants. In all this work of instruction in the family, the Bible should be exalted as the text-book as faithfully and unmistakably as it is done in the church. There is nothing more beautiful than the Bible lessons of parental duty, such as the following: "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Where parents discharge this duty of religiously instructing their household, it may be said of their children, as of Timothy, that "from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures."

And where can the lessons of benevolence, liberality, to all the claims of our Redeemer's kingdom be better taught than in the home circle? No Christian parent should be willing to allow his children to grow up around him ignorant and illiberal as regards the plans of missions, the support of the pastor, the claims of the poor, and other causes of the great work before the people of God. At home they should be taught to give, made able to give, and required to give; and so taught as to have them understand the necessity and true spirit

Precursors on the Political Page.

A worthy and influential brother in a distant part of the State, in a letter just received, says that there are three Baptist ministers in his county who are candidates for civil offices; and asks us to publish our views on that subject.

In our judgment, as a natural right, ministers of the Gospel have much right to offer for civil offices as any other citizens have. They have the civil and political rights that the constitution grants; and we are prepared to deny that they have no moral right to hold office. Any State whose constitution prescribes for office either the infidel or the minister is a foe to freedom of conscience. And there is a general disapproval shown among men of other callings when a minister offers for office, and takes part in a political gathering, if he were an intruder. We confess that we have no respect for this content.

And yet we believe it to be better for reasons, that ministers should take these things alone. "Some things are lawful that are not expedient." Occasions are not frequent when a minister can enter this range without injury to his ministerial usefulness. A minister has the right to "swap horses," but he'd better not swap them three times in a while, without hunting his standing. Something like this is true in regard to running for office. We confess several important reasons why we think it best for ministers to abstain; but these reasons will readily suggest themselves to the reader.

of Christian liberality. A great truth which our people have yet to learn themselves and impart to those who are rising around them, is that God is as truly worshipped in the consecration of our substance to the furtherance of his holy religion, as in praying, preaching or anything else that we can do. That there are as many commands for benevolence and liberal giving as there are for any other religious duties, and that we have no more right to disobey here than in anything else; and that covetousness and parsimony comprise the most hateful and abominable character. Where is the Christian parent who can be willing to bring up a covetous and stingy child? Then let them be taught the right lesson on these matters at home.

Nor will we neglect to claim that it is important in giving instruction to our family, that we should give some prominence to those Scriptures which bear directly on our denominational peculiarities. And let this be done in such a way as to impress them with the fact that we claim the whole Bible as bearing on our spiritual life. Let them see that our church order and ordinances have a letter and a spirit, a soul and a body, a power and a form; and that these are drawn directly from the word of God.

3. Of course we cannot expect success in this great work with our children without the help of God. This help is obtained by earnest, faithful prayer. Prayer is the act of recourse to God in time of need, and who is it that is not sensible of great need while under the fearful responsibilities of a household? A Christian parent should never allow a day to pass without worship with his family. Many perplexing difficulties will obtrude themselves in the way, but fixedness of principles—determination, will and faith, will surmount all obstacles. David said, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud." And Cornelia, the devout centurion, was praying in his house when the angel visited him and informed him that "his prayers for his slaves had come up for a memorial before God."

Too much importance cannot be attached to secret prayer with the children—the habit of taking them, one or two at a time, into some private place and there offering fervent prayer for them. The child will never forget this.

4. And now how important it is that the life, spirit and example of the parent shall always be consistent with the religion which is taught to the children! With how this example is powerful will all else be lost. We should point our children to heaven, and lead the way.

5. We close with a return to the essential importance of affectionate authority in the whole matter of family religion. The right exercise of parental authority is the great way of the age. There is authority as well as purpose and faith in the parent. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." My house serves the Lord—as the heart of the house I will see to it. This authority should be exercised in love. "As ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

There is great danger of transferring these great duties too much to Sabbath-schools and other institutions. Parental relations and duties cannot be transferred. God appoints the family relation for good purposes, and when it shall come to pass that Christian parents will discharge their whole duties with their children, there will be little left in moral and religious training with their children the direct work of the church of God. The religion of church relations takes charge of them before family religion exhausts itself.

Precursors on the Political Page.

A worthy and influential brother in a distant part of the State, in a letter just received, says that there are three Baptist ministers in his county who are candidates for civil offices; and asks us to publish our views on that subject.

In our judgment, as a natural right, ministers of the Gospel have much right to offer for civil offices as any other citizens have. They have the civil and political rights that the constitution grants; and we are prepared to deny that they have no moral right to hold office. Any State whose constitution prescribes for office either the infidel or the minister is a foe to freedom of conscience. And there is a general disapproval shown among men of other callings when a minister offers for office, and takes part in a political gathering, if he were an intruder. We confess that we have no respect for this content.

And yet we believe it to be better for reasons, that ministers should take these things alone. "Some things are lawful that are not expedient." Occasions are not frequent when a minister can enter this range without injury to his ministerial usefulness. A minister has the right to "swap horses," but he'd better not swap them three times in a while, without hunting his standing. Something like this is true in regard to running for office. We confess several important reasons why we think it best for ministers to abstain; but these reasons will readily suggest themselves to the reader.

Alabama Baptist.

MARION, ALA.

Thursday, April 26th, 1877.

S. S. Department.

BIBLE LESSONS, 1877.

SECOND QUARTER—1877.

STUDIES OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

April 22.—Nathan the Leper. 2 K. 5:1-14.

April 29.—Elisha at Bethel. 2 K. 2:23-25.

May 6.—The famine in Samaria. 2 K. 7:1-20.

May 13.—John the King. 2 K. 10:30-31.

May 20.—Joah at Ninveh. Jonah 3:1-10.

May 27.—The death of Elisha. 2 K. 13:17-19.

June 3.—The death of Elisha. 2 K. 13:17-19.

June 10.—Promises of Revival. Hosea 14:1-9.

June 17.—The captivity of Israel. 2 K. 17:1-18.

June 24.—Review Lesson.

Second Quarter, Lesson

XVIII, May 6, 1877.

THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA.

2 Kings vii. 12-20.

Golden Text.—THE THINGS WHICH

ARE IMPOSSIBLE WITH MEN ARE POSSIBLE

WITH GOD.—Luke xiii. 26.

Central Truth.—THE LORD CHANGES

FAMINE INTO PLENTY.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Benhadad

besieged Samaria, and there was so

great a famine that a woman boiled

and ate her son. She appeared to

the king, who rent his clothes and

sent an executioner to behead Elisha.

The prophet predicted that upon the

next day there would be plenty of

food. Four horses went out to the

Syrian camp found that the enemy

had fled. They reported to the

king, and it was told to the king.

Othniel of Ephraim.—(87.) The famine

in Samaria.

NOTES.—*Men's a sack*, which was

the third part of an ephah and con-

tained from a peck to a peck and a

half. *Sheek*, at this time money was

not coined, but weighed, and its value

cannot be exactly determined. The

later third shekel weighed a little

more than our American half dollar,

and was worth from 50 to 60 cents.

The *Eastern* gateways are arched

overhead, and are favorite places for

the transaction of business; the mar-

kets are frequently about them.—*Win-*

done in seven, slaves, or fugitives,

through which flour and barley might

pass, or money. *Shew*, Comp. Gen.

vi. 2; Mal. iii. 10.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) The Search

for the Besiegers. (II.) The Promis-

ed Plenty. (III.) The Threatened

Death.

I. THE SEARCH FOR THE BESIERS.

(12) the king, Jehoram; in the

night, as soon as the report was

brought to him; his servants

commanded to *hide* themselves in

order to draw the Israelites into an

ambuscade; Comp. Josh. vi. 3-19.

(13) which are left, have escaped

starvation; behind, a consumed—

that is to say, they are only left, as

many have done already, and as all

must sooner or later. *Comp.* Gen.

vi. 2; Mal. iii. 10.

II. THE PROMISED PLENTY.—(16)

the people, from Samaria; spoiled,

plundered the tents, probably obtain-

ing as well as provisions, see

v. 16; measure, a shekel; see

Notes; was sold for, became worth;

the wool of the Lord, as spoken by

Isaiah, see vs. 1.

III. THE THREATENED DEATH.—

(17) the lord, the captain (*Speaker*);or, adjacent (*Key*); on, whose hand

he leaned, implying age or infirmity

in the king (*Speaker*); in the gate,

gateway; had said, see v. 2; (18)

windows in heaven, see Notes; see, the

abundance promised. (20) fell

on, happened; rode upon him, he

Communications.

Is Sanskrit a "Practical"

Study?

SOME time ago, we read in the

Southern Baptist, an able and learned

article from the pen of Prof. C. H.

Tos, of Greenville, South Carolina.

The article points out the impor-

tance of our acquaintance with San-

skrit as a basis of any satisfactory

science of language. The absolute

necessity of a knowledge of San-

skrit in order to any scientific treat-

ment of the subject of comparative

philology, was, of course, to be read-

ily admitted by any student, who has

kept himself liberally informed on

the subject of linguistic science in its

progress. During the last twenty

years, but as Professor T's ulti-

mate object is to get the study of

Sanskrit introduced into our univer-

sities as a college, and as probably

only a limited number of the readers

of this paper read the *Southern Review*,

it may be well to our while to ex-

amine some of Professor T's posi-

tions in short review his article.

There is only one chair of Sanskrit

in America—Yale, at Yale, filled by

Professor Whitney. Students are

not apt to get time, labor and

money in acquiring what is not

believed to be practical. Latin and

Greek were originally studied be-

cause they contained about all the

learning which the world then pos-

sessed; and we continue to study

them because of their value in train-

ing the mind. Professor T. seems to

think that Sanskrit can hardly

claim a place in our scheme of stud-

ies from purely practical considera-

tions; from which opinion we feel

constrained to differ. The night

have made his case stronger by in-

sisting upon the practical value of

the study which he advocates. In

the true sense of that much abused

word, "practical" we are convinced

that it may be properly applied to

the study of any language, of which

we may justly say that it is the el-

dest sister in the great Indo-Euro-

pean or Aryan family—a family

which includes (with the exception of

the Semites), all the languages

which have played an important part

in the civilization of the world;—

a family which extends from India

westward, and includes nearly the

whole of Europe. Study this family

of tongues must be with examining

on a purely scientific basis and this

is impossible without Sanskrit. Pro-

fessor T. argues that we ought to

encourage the study of Sanskrit

for the very reason that it is not

supported by the practical spirit of

the day, and finds no aid in our tra-

ditional ideas of education, which

keep up the study of Latin and

Greek; that we ought, therefore, to

extend our sympathies to his new cen-

tral strength, enough to make it

not our own.

Now such an argument might go

to the heart and even to the pocket

of some earnest devotee of science—

some earnest devotee of science—

some earnest devotee of science—

some earnest devotee of science—

some earnest devotee of science—

some earnest devotee of science—

some earnest devotee of science—

some earnest devotee of science—

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Romance languages are members

of the Indo-European family.

These simple statements are enough

to show the thoughtful student of

language that Sanskrit is a member

of the Indo-European family.

They who are dead to sin may not

live in sin; if, then, it can be shown

that Christians are dead to sin, it fol-

lows that they are dead to sin in pro-

vided from.

THE DESIGN OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

It is taken for granted (the expres-

sion, "know ye not") being simply a

reminder to the readers of what they

knew already; perhaps did not fully

appreciate, but knowing that they

were baptized into Christ, could not

but admit, at least that this involved

the idea of baptism into his death,

even if it did not point to that exclu-

sively; that we are baptized into

Christ's death, or, as the apostle more

pointedly expresses it, "are buried

with him by that baptism into his

death." But wherefore? Paul an-

swers, *transmuted*; that like as he

was raised up from the dead, even so

we should walk in newness of life.

And this he goes on to show; as ap-

pears by the "for," introducing the

next verse. Baptism, he reminds

us, is a transitory act immediately

followed by emergence from the wa-

ter, as the death of Christ was but

transitory, being speedily followed by

his resurrection. He dwells not upon

the place which Christ's death and

resurrection respectively occupy in

the plan of salvation, but upon the

Resurrection itself, as the great fact

with reference whereof it may be

said that all else is subordinate and

introductory, and that, in a certain

sense, he died in order to rise. By

his death, if that had been "the end

all," nothing would have been ac-

complished. So, then, we go down

into the water, in order to emerge

from it; that being, of the two, the

important act. Then repeating his

reminder, "know ye not?" but now

affirmatively, "knowing this," he takes

for granted again what he knows

they understand, and strengthens his

argument with an illustration drawn

from death alone. For Paul's great

theme was "Christ crucified," and

none who had heard him preach could

be ignorant of the doctrine that, as

partakers in the crucifixion which

Christ suffered in the likeness of sin-

ful flesh, we, in our sinful nature, are

crucified, slain, dead, *free!*—for

death is the end, the penalty of sin;

its eternal penalty, but for the inter-

cession of him who, dying for us,

took us with him in his death, and

with whom we can—oh, wonder of

wonders!—look back upon death—

—free! free! free! Having thus

restored the cross to that prominence

which he always "gloried" in assign-

ing to it, and shown how the cross

is the basis of our new life, he

turns to the question of the new

life with Christ. Christ's death is

one-for-all, as they knew; but why

the apostle, in this brief and themat-

ically condensed argument, touches

on that point, does not appear unless

it is to round out the view of bat-

tism, which a Christian submits to

once-for-all. Then considering his

argument complete, he closes it with

re-asserting, in a conclusory form, his

introductory proposition, as it were

the *which* was to be demonstrated of

the geometrician.

3. Thus we see that THE DESIGN

OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM IS TO TESTIFY

OUR FAITH AND OUR HOPE; SYMBOLIZ-

ING, AS IT DOES, OUR PARTICIPATION

In the Death and Resurrection of Christ.

The argument lies between these two

points, and is in this form—

They who are dead to sin may not

live in sin; if, then, it can be shown

that Christians are dead to sin, it fol-

lows that they are dead to sin in pro-

vided from.

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