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COMMUNICATIONS.

The Indwelling Word.

A Sermon, by E. J. F. Mather.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."—Col. 3: 16.

It is one of the easiest things in the world to become one-sided in religion. No one who has ever grown an orchard has failed to observe how hard it is to make the young trees grow straight, and how easy it is for them to grow crooked. Unless you train them with the utmost care, they will be crooked; and, with all your care, it will be a wonder if they are not crooked anyhow. So, it requires great care to grow a symmetrical religious character, a character that is not one-sided.

There are all sorts of directions in which a man may bend over, and become one-sided. I might illustrate this by referring you to the errors that creep into the apostolic churches, and to those which have beset Christianity from that time till now. But we can see the matter exemplified in our own day—just as fully exemplified now as at any former time; and we can see it sufficiently exemplified in our own midst, in our own churches. You can find many and many a man who has practically only one idea in his religion.

Here is a man who regards religion only as a matter of belief; and he is content simply to believe. He is crooked; and he crooks in a dangerous direction, for the highest authority has said that the devils believe. This man is one-sided, because he has gotten hold of only one part of Gospel faith. Belief is only a part of faith, and he has only belief. He likes to hear only the comforting part of the Gospel preached. If you go to preaching Christian duty to him, he does not enjoy it. That is not good preaching, in his opinion. In fact, he thinks the preacher is heretical, and is preaching salvation through works, while it is not a question of salvation at all, but a question as to what is the man's duty. Of God, of his free grace and sovereign mercy, has saved him.

He forgets that an essential part of faith is a willingness to do what Christ wants one to do, and that one ought to be glad to know what Christ does want him to do. He is so one-sided that he wants the preacher to dwell upon one side of the Gospel all the time, and thinks the preacher is a heretic if he does not do that. This man may be found at prayer meeting and that sort of thing regularly, and he may not. If he likes these things, he will attend, and if he does not like them, he will not attend. Duty will not make him go. His religion is the one-sided religion of believing—not of true faith; and he can stay at home, and still believe; he may be honest, and he may not; he can be dishonest, and still believe.

There is another man altogether different from the one just described, except in the singular particular that he is one-sided. He has gotten the idea that the Christian religion is a thing of action; and he crooks in that direction, and runs his idea of action to an extreme. Not that he does too much, but he neglects the other side of religion. When a man comes to regard religion as altogether a matter of action, of course he neglects the more spiritual and devotional part. To him it does not seem important to commune with God, or to foster tender sentiments towards Christ, but only to act for God, only to do Christ's commandments. It is possible for such a man to seek out Christ's poor, and feed and instruct them, and still have little personal communion with Christ. We have men in our churches who are always ready to respond when money or work is requested, and who still have little spiritual power. They think that money or work is all of religion, and hence they have only money or work for you. They have little spiritual power, because they do not cultivate a devotional spirit. Why, brethren, I have seen Christians who would readily respond to a worthy call with a generous contribution, and yet with reference to whom I would risk my judgment of character upon the opinion that they pass whole days without speaking a word to Christ, and whole weeks without reading a single verse of God's Word in a devotional spirit. What are we to say of such Christians? Why, they are one-sided. They have leaned over to the side of action, and left devotion at a distance on the other.

I have said enough to show what I mean by a man's being one-sided in religion, and to show that it is a very easy thing to grow crooked. And, now, if we wish, in our hearts, to grow straight, to be symmetrical Christians, let us heed the injunction of the Apostle in the text for that will be our character just in proportion as we follow his direction as given in this passage of Scripture—"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." "The word of Christ" here does not mean simply the words which Christ himself spoke in person while he was on earth; nor does it mean those portions of the Bible which speak directly of Christ; but it means the whole Bible—all that Christ, by his Spirit, has spoken to us. When I take up my Bible and open it to read, no matter what portion I turn to, Christ is there and

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then speaking to me. I should regard him as just before me and speaking to me. These Bible words are his words to me. If it be only history of the Jewish nation that I read, in that Christ is pointing me to God's hand in the whole transaction, showing me how the Father was preparing the way for the entrance of the Son into the world. "See in all this," he says, "how for me the way was prepared and the paths made straight." If it be only what seems an endless catalogue of ceremonies, he says to me, "I am the substance of all these shadows; they are only types; and I am the great Prototype; I am the great High Priest who makes atonement for your sins; I am the Lamb, without spot or blemish, whose blood cleanses from all guilt; I am the great Original of whom these types give but a faint image." If it be a stern, unbending code of laws, he says, "This is but a schoolmaster to bring you to Christ; meant to teach you your need of him. If it be doctrine, he says, "I am the great personal Center, around which all doctrine revolves; I am the fountain from which it flows; I give it to all its significance." If it be promises, he says, "All God's promises are in me, yea, and in me, amen, to the glory of God by you."

So it is that whenever I take up my Bible and read, I may consider the words I read as the words of Christ—I may regard Christ as then present by my side speaking to me. To bring this point out into clear light, I will give you an example. If you will allow me, I will give you an example of my own method of dealing with the Bible for doctrinal purposes. Suppose we take a passage apparently barren of spiritual import. Let it be the first verse of the first chapter of Colossians, the very letter from which the text is taken—"Paul an Apostle by the will of God." That is what Jesus there says to me. He tells me that Paul was an apostle by the will of God. I regard Christ as present at my side, telling me that with his own lips. He is there speaking to me, holding a conversation with me, teaching me. Here it is: "Blessed Savior, let me not be anything or do anything, except by the will of God. I would not be or do anything which God would not approve. Give me grace and wisdom to meet his approval in all things." That, then, is the conversation which would pass between me and Christ when I turn to read Col. 1: 1. I give you this to show how we may regard the whole Bible as Christ's word; and not as his word spoken long years ago, but fresh from his own lips as he sits beside us in our room and talks to us. And the great Apostle exhorts us to let this word, this Bible, dwell in us. And now, brethren, the practical question is, How are we to follow this direction? what are we to do in order that the word of Christ shall dwell in us? what is necessary? Let us see if we cannot find out.

In the first place, we are to read his Word; we must listen to him as he speaks to us. No man's words can dwell in you, unless you hear those words; no more can the words of Christ dwell in you, unless you hear them. We must read his word, then. And, oh me! how sadly some of us do neglect this! how seldom we take down the volume of his word, and allow him to talk to us! To me this is one of the saddest things I know about many Christians. They do not know anything about Christ's word. To them it is as though it were a sealed volume. They pity the Roman Catholics, who are not allowed to read the Bible; who have it withheld from them, or given to them in an unknown tongue, or in a translation which perverts the mind of the Spirit, while they read the word of Christ about as seldom as do the Roman Catholics. They thank the Lord for an open Bible, and then scarcely ever look into it. This is a day when the Bible is being studied more than it ever has before been studied, and when it is being studied more in Christian land than any other one book. The great world is stirred up on the Bible, and as busy as bees investigating it; and yet, if a preacher wishes to be popular with a great many Christians, who think themselves eminent Christians, he must not preach much Bible. These Christians will not understand him if he does; he is dry and heavy to them. The truth is, they read their Bible so seldom and know so little about it, the preacher is preaching in what is to them practically an unknown tongue when he preaches expository sermons. And knowing so little about the Bible, they do not have any desire to hear it explained. It is much more for their taste to have the preacher take up his time in telling anecdotes, whether these have much Gospel in them or not. But, brethren, if you and I wish to obey the injunction of the Apostle and let the word of Christ dwell in us, we must read that word. That is the first thing to be done.

And the next is to recognize it as the word of Christ. The Bible may have some sort of dwelling in you, even though you do not at all see the word of Christ there; but it cannot dwell in you as his word, unless you see it to be his. Much of the Bible, for example, may dwell in you simply as history, and you may read it as history, and in such a case, it will do so abundantly as history and nothing more. You do not realize the fact that Christ is speaking to you personally through that history, and means to instruct you, to impress some lesson upon you for your spiritual good. Again, taking up the passage which I have already brought forward to show you my own devotional method, I may illustrate what I mean here. Take Col. 1: 1 again—"Paul, an Apostle by the will of God." I recognize that as the word of Christ to me; I realize Christ as

speaking to me in those words. Suppose, however, that I did not do this; then the words would be to me only a barren statement of the fact that Paul was divinely appointed to the apostleship. But, recognizing them as the words of Christ to me, they take this turn—"You may have all your positions, all your work, everything that pertains to you, appointed by God." And what is my response? "Lord, let it be so done unto me." In one case, these words of Scripture, if they dwell in me at all, do so simply as a statement concerning Paul's personal history; in the other case, they dwell in me as Christ's words to me, teaching me an important truth to be realized in my own private, individual life. Thus to realize the Bible we read as Christ's words to us—from him personally to us personally—is necessary to having that word dwell in us as his word. That is the second thing to be done.

And the third is to feel that Christ is precious to us. If we feel that Christ is precious to us, that will help us in two ways to the indwelling of his word: it will help us to recognize the word as his word to us. You know how this is between man and man. You have a very dear friend. He is much in your mind; you like to keep him there; and, as a natural way of dwelling upon him, you associate him with everything you can. If he has been with you much in past experience, you like to think of him in such connections and to associate him with all the little incidents of those experiences; if you are enjoying any thing, you wish he might join you. So, if Christ is felt to be very precious to us, we shall thus keep him in mind; we shall associate him with all the blessings we receive; we shall see him speaking to us in his word. The word may not be about him directly; but that does not matter, whether it is about himself or not, he is, nevertheless, talking to us, and that is the point—by feeling his preciousness, we are brought to recognize his word as himself speaking to us, no matter what may be the subject of his discourse.

And, then, to realize his preciousness will help us in another way to the indwelling of his word. It will help us by bringing us to treasure up what he says. We may again refer to the case as between man and man. You know that a man who does not treasure up the words of a man whom you dislike, let it dwell in you so as to enrich your souls. And, if it is to do this, remember that you must have, not simply the letter which kills, but the Spirit which giveth life. Let the Spirit of God make this word to you the living word of a living Christ; and let it be as such dwell in you, enriching you, and fresh into you, shedding abroad ever anew and afresh in you, rich and new discoveries of Christ's precious love to you. And how penetrating ought to be the virtue of this indwelling in you of the word of Christ! It should reach to every nook and corner of your inner and outer life, smoothing all harshness, sweetening whatever is sour, softening whatever is hard, breaking the flint, melting the iron ore, impregnating with the meekness and gentleness of Christ the dreary wilderness of your once unsubdued and unruly hearts, and turning them into rich gardens of divine husbandry, out of whose broken depths the fruit of the Spirit may richly grow. And, if the word of Christ dwell in you richly, it must go forth from you richly. Richly endowed by the word of Christ dwelling in you richly, you are to be richly productive, richly fruit-bearing; you are to be rich in a bountiful and practical exhibition of the unsearchable riches of Christ. "Put on, therefore, the elect of God, holy and humble of heart, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against you, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And, above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called, in one body; and be ye thankful; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Now, brethren, in conclusion, if there are any of you who really desire to have the word of Christ to dwell in you—and you do not all desire that?—then I have shown you the way. Shall I go over the points again briefly, that you may carry them home with you and act upon the suggestions I will do that. First of all, you are to listen to him; you are to read the Bible. Oh! brethren, read some in the Bible every day; have a conversation with Christ at least once a day through his word. Then realize this Bible that you read as Christ's word to you; realize Christ as sitting by your side, talking to you as you read. Make sure also that Christ is precious to you; let not that point escape you; embrace him as the dearest friend you have in the universe; make sure that he is precious to you. Then apply the words which this precious Savior thus speaks to you to your own experience; link them to your private life. If you do these things, then will the word of Christ dwell in you, and dwell in you richly.

"SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE."

had the finger-mark upon them dwell in her; and, if all the rest of these could have left her, that passage which said, "All things work together for good to them that love God," could not by any means have been rooted out of her heart.

That woman read the word; she recognized it as the word of Christ to her; he himself, the speaker, was precious to her; and she so studied the word that much of it had a felt importance to her personally and individually. She met all the requirements for the indwelling of the word of Christ. So let it be with us.

The Apostle would ask more of us, however, than the simple indwelling of the word of Christ. He says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

To be brief, there are two main directions in which this word "richly" may apply. The word of Christ may dwell in you richly in the sense of abundantly. Let there be plenty of it; let the mind be richly stored, let the soul be richly furnished, with the word of Christ. There is a great deal of the Scriptures that does not dwell in us because we have not realized it as the word of Christ, as his present words to us, as the word which falls from his lips as he sits by us and talks to us. There are whole books of the Bible that have no indwelling in us, because they have meant nothing to us, because we have not so studied them as to apply them to our own experiences, as to link them to the gracious dealings of God with us. Such cannot dwell in us. They must first become part and parcel of our inward, personal experience. If we consider all Scriptures as the word of Christ to us, and study to apply them to our own experiences, there will be a rich abundance in the word of Christ dwelling in us.

The other direction in which this word "richly" may apply, is with respect to the effect which the indwelling of the word of Christ produces in us, not only to the quantity of the word that is stored up in our minds, but also to the effect it produces in our hearts and lives.

It has been said, in this connection, that a rich fertilizer is one that enriches the soil; and that it dwells in the soil richly in proportion as it enriches the soil, turning its dry and hard barrenness into rich and fruitful mould. So let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; let it dwell in you so as to enrich your souls. And, if it is to do this, remember that you must have, not simply the letter which kills, but the Spirit which giveth life. Let the Spirit of God make this word to you the living word of a living Christ; and let it be as such dwell in you, enriching you, and fresh into you, shedding abroad ever anew and afresh in you, rich and new discoveries of Christ's precious love to you. And how penetrating ought to be the virtue of this indwelling in you of the word of Christ! It should reach to every nook and corner of your inner and outer life, smoothing all harshness, sweetening whatever is sour, softening whatever is hard, breaking the flint, melting the iron ore, impregnating with the meekness and gentleness of Christ the dreary wilderness of your once unsubdued and unruly hearts, and turning them into rich gardens of divine husbandry, out of whose broken depths the fruit of the Spirit may richly grow. And, if the word of Christ dwell in you richly, it must go forth from you richly. Richly endowed by the word of Christ dwelling in you richly, you are to be richly productive, richly fruit-bearing; you are to be rich in a bountiful and practical exhibition of the unsearchable riches of Christ. "Put on, therefore, the elect of God, holy and humble of heart, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against you, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And, above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called, in one body; and be ye thankful; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

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Important.

The attention of State Boards of Missions is called to the following provision in the Constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention.
Wm. H. McINTOSH, Cor. Sec.

ART. III. The Convention shall consist of members who contribute funds, or are delegated by religious bodies contributing funds, on the basis of one delegate for every hundred dollars contributed to our funds at any time within the twelve months preceding the meeting of the body; and of representatives, on the terms hereinafter specified, from any of the following bodies, viz.: the Maryland Union Baptist Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the Baptist General Association of West Virginia, the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, the Baptist Convention of Western North Carolina, the State Convention of the Baptist Denomination in South Carolina, the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia, the Florida Baptist State Convention, the Alabama Baptist State Convention, the Mississippi Baptist State Convention, the Baptist General Association of South-eastern Mississippi, the Louisiana Baptist State Convention, the Baptist State Convention of Texas, the Baptist Association of Eastern Texas, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, the Baptist General Association of Western Arkansas and Indian Territory, the Tennessee Baptist State Convention, the Baptist General Association of Kentucky, the Missouri Baptist General Association, the South-west Missouri Baptist Convention, which bodies shall be allowed one representative in this Convention for every five hundred dollars which, during the twelve months ending December 31, previous to the session of this Convention, may have been expended by them for objects similar to those in the prosecution of which this Convention may be actively engaged, which objects are at present, those of Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Indian Missions and Sunday-school work; provided, that the official organs of such State Convention or General Association shall, by the 1st day of March preceding the annual session of this Convention, have communicated to the Home Mission Board of this Convention the amount expended by the body in question as above indicated; provided, also, that the representatives of these bodies shall be formally appointed by the organs thereof in the manner which may be by the said bodies be hereafter directed, and that their appointment shall be duly certified to this Convention.

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FOR THE ALABAMA BAPTIST.

Moderate Drinking.

Mr. Editor: In the last copy of the ALABAMA BAPTIST there was an excellent article from Bro. Bishop in regard to rum sellers. Will you allow me a little space this week to say something to the rum drinkers of our land? I do not propose to say anything about rum drinking to excess, for we all know—even the drunkard himself—that intoxication is a grievous sin. The words of Scripture, "No drunkard shall enter the kingdom of heaven," are too plain upon this subject.

But there are a great many good brethren who cannot see the sin of moderate drinking. Brethren, have you ever thought that while it may not be an actual sin for you to drink moderately of wine or even of brandy, yet by so doing you set a bad example to your weaker brethren, which often causes them to stumble and fall? That was a noble sentiment of Christian charity, indited and drawn up by the number in the hundreds, and self-sacrificing love for the souls of his fellow-men, that enabled Paul to write, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

Here we claim to have found "Scripture" declaration in favor of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks. Indeed it gives judgment in favor of total abstinence from every thing that is injurious and hurtful to society.

That the free use of intoxicating drink as a beverage, is pre-eminently injurious and hurtful to society at the present time, no one will deny. The experience of every one furnishes us with abundant proof of this fact. What circle of society has not the hideous monster of intemperance shocked by the display of his unseemly and disgusting habits? What official station, whether civil or ecclesiastical, has not been degraded by drunkenness? What family, however refined and honorable, that has not, in some of its relationships, felt the bitter, heart-sickening effects of the poisonous cup? Who knows not that the almshouses and prisons are filled by intemperance; that every sort of crime is instigated by it; that the hearts of men are broken, spirits crushed, homes desolated, hopes blasted, reason dethroned, gray hairs brought down with sorrow to the grave, and souls eternally lost by this most dreadful enemy? Is there then, my brethren, any room to doubt whether, by this practice of drinking intoxicating liquors, our brother does stumble or is offended or is made weak? Therefore we must infallibly conclude, that it is our solemn duty as men and women, and more especially as Christians, to abstain from the practice. Let the noble resolution of the Apostle Paul be your motto, "If meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth." Think not that this sentiment is too sublime for ordinary practice. Sublime as it is, nothing less will square with the precepts of our Savior; nothing less will fulfill that divine and royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

But you say, "These words were not written in regard to intemperance, but for the sake of conscience, swayed by the eating of food which had been previously offered unto idols." Ah, well, but remember that no precept of Scripture is of temporary or restricted interpretation. The principle which it announces is as binding now, as it was eighteen hundred years ago, as is binding in enlightened America as in pagan Rome; and that principle is that it is our duty to abstain from every practice that is injurious to a brother.

Nor is there anything in the least arbitrary and unreasonable in such rule. It is the very dictate of reason and justice, and the necessary law of our constitution and the circumstances of our being. Men, we know, are by nature imitative; they are all influenced, more or less, by the practice and example of each other. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." So we see that good and evil reproduce themselves. The influence and example of every one of us is powerful either for good or evil; and therefore we are bound to use this influence for the good of others, to the extent, at least, that we are mutually responsible before God, and he will hold us strictly accountable for each other. Ah, brethren, on that day when you and I must stand before "the great White Throne," no Cainlike plea, "Am I my brother's keeper?" will be accepted by our Judge, in vindication of a failure to love our neighbors as ourselves, by so acting as to cause them to stumble and fall.

In another article upon this subject, I may give one or two more reasons why we should abstain entirely from intoxicating drinks. This is a practical question, my brethren, and let us all agitate it in our denominational papers, until rum selling and rum drinking, whether moderately or immoderately, shall be things of the past.

It is true that the gentleman himself resigned his membership; but it can hardly be supposed that one would voluntarily relinquish his position as minister in the grand old Presbyterian church. The course of voluntary retirement must have been adopted only on the knowledge that without it they would "send him in his resignation."

It may be suggested that no Presbyterian congregation would want a minister who could not sprinkle the infants; but not seldom a man is allowed to remain a long time in the Presbyterian ministry, though congregations no longer clamor for his services. And who knows but some church might have so high an idea of his talents and piety that they would be glad to have him preach to them, even though they were obliged to call in some other minister when there was any sprinkling to be done? Or, if, as is said to be the case with this particular minister, he desired to engage in city mission work, where there would be little or no baptizing, his unwillingness to sprinkle infants would be of no practical importance. No construction can be put on the act of the presbytery other than this, that they regard the sprinkling of infants, though "a mere ceremony," to be a matter so important that no man can be allowed to remain in the Presbyterian ministry who refuses to practice it. In other words, Presbyterians are just as much in earnest about the sprinkling of infants as Baptists are about the immersion of believers. In other words, Presbyterians make just as much "fuss about a mere ceremony" as do the crochety, cantankerous, and crooked-nosed Baptists.

O, dear Presbyterian brethren, have you not an awful amount of cheek? Does it not require a power of face that is perfectly tremendous for you to say so much against Baptists for advocating baptism according to their ideas, when you are just as anxious that the "mere ceremony" be administered according to your convictions? No one can rightly blame you for being tenacious of your own opinions, but why speak with such contempt for other people who cherish their opinions? How can the Presbyterian pot vaunt itself so loftily over the Baptist kettle?

In justice to our good Presbyterian brethren—whom no one shall be allowed to find fault with but myself—it should be remarked that they are not alone in this unfair treatment of Baptists. "They all do it." When Judson went as a missionary to Asia, he started as a Congregationalist minister; but when he came to the conclusion that sprinkling could not rightly be given as baptism he could no longer be allowed to retain his position. In spite of all that Congregationalists have said about people's "making so much fuss about baptism," they were willing to make fuss enough about it to dismiss from their ministry, on the mere question of baptism, one whose name was to add luster to the history of Christianity. If Spurgeon to-day was to ask admission into a Methodist Conference or to Episcopalian orders, he would be denied on the ground of his being unwilling to practice sprinkling. It is said that some Baptist ministers are dissatisfied with their position in the Baptist denomination because of its close communion. Why do they not go to the Congregationalists or Presbyterians? Because they cannot conscientiously sprinkle infants, and for this reason they would not be received. In the case of certain ministers who have gone over within a few years from the Baptist ministry to that of other denominations, every man of them was obliged to "eat crow," in the shape of agreeing to practice infant baptism, before he could be admitted to his position. If a godly man should be ejected from the Baptist ministry on error on the communion question, what indignation would it excite among Presbyterians and Congregationalists. How they would lift up their hands in horror at such bigotry! And yet, if that same man applied to them for a place in the ministry, they would ask him if he would sprinkle infants; and if he would not they would keep him out of the ministry forever. To exclude a godly man from the ministry on account of error regarding the communion is a terrible thing. To exclude him on account of an error regarding baptism, that is all right.

The case of this New York Presbyterian minister and the case of Judson are but two out of thousands. Sprague's "Annals of the Baptist Church" abounds in such narratives. Much is said of the Act of Uniform-

ity in the reign of Charles II, under which hundreds of godly ministers were ejected from the pulpits of the church of England because their consciences would not permit them to conform to certain external usages, and yet ten times as many godly preachers in this country have been ejected from Presbyterian and Methodist pulpits simply because they could not practice infant sprinkling. Wherein was the Parliament of Charles II, a whit wiser than the New York presbytery or the mission board that cast off Judson? And yet these are the men who cast reflections on Baptists for attaching so much importance to a "mere ceremony."

Another point. Baptists are accused for having "gone off and started a new sect, merely on an external ordinance." But what sect? They are included from the Presbyterian ministry, what is he? He cannot stop preaching the gospel, and if he can't preach it in Presbyterian pulpits he must preach it somewhere else. And when men are converted under his preaching, what shall they do? They will hardly believe in infant baptism, for they will hear nothing of it in his preaching and they will find nothing of it in the Bible. Shall they go and join churches which ejected their teacher from the ministry simply because he believes as they believe? It is inevitable that these converts should form a new congregation around the man through whose faithful preaching they have been converted. And then to have those who ejected their minister from his pulpits charge him with wantonly going off and forming a new congregation, simply on a ceremony—why, it is enough to make Esop's wolf put his tail between his legs and trot off shamefaced for not having half learned how to make charges! Are not those Burman Baptist churches which Judson founded verily schismatic in not all being members of the Congregational body?

And, while we are having this friendly conference, it may be allowable to suggest that our Presbyterian and Methodist brethren would do well to cease repeating that miserable slander that Baptists believe immersion to be necessary to salvation. One might search in vain to find in the mind of the most ignorant Baptist the remotest approach to such an idea; for the very fundamental principle of the Baptist denomination is that none but believers should be baptized, that no one should be accepted as a subject of baptism till he gives evidence that he has already come into a state of salvation. Baptists believe that the Lord commands the observance of immersion, as Commandment of the Lord's Supper; but Baptists no more believe that men cannot be saved without partaking of the Lord's Supper. Why should intelligent Christians continue to repeat such an absurd slander?

Some say that churches should look merely to faith, having no fixed rule regarding ceremonial. This would require that those who wished to be immersed should be allowed to be sprinkled; and, furthermore, that those who did not wish to be immersed nor sprinkled should be allowed to go without any water baptism at all. And, if no member was required to receive this (or that ceremony, or any at all, so no minister should be required to administer any particular ceremony or any ceremony at all, and the freedom allow of regarding baptism would have to be allowed regarding that other "mere ceremony," the Lord's Supper. Men should be allowed to practice open communion, or close communion, or no communion at all. Yet Baptists are to blame for not adopting this broad platform; but we are the blameless Presbyterians, Methodists and others who are just as tenacious, who make just as much "fuss" in support of their ideas of baptism and the Lord's Supper as Baptists in the maintenance of their opinion.—Independent.

LITERARY NOTICES.

Messrs. I. K. FUNK & CO., New York City, have begun a reprint of Spurgeon's immense work, "The Treasury of David." For years this great preacher has been laboring on this stupendous work—all but the last of the six large octavo volumes are now published in England—the last is nearly ready for the printers. Spurgeon has aimed to gather in this work all that is good that has ever been said on the Psalms, and then has added a world of original comment. It is far more than a commentary; it is what its name implies, a TREASURY of the Psalms—a treasury-house, rich beyond description. In England the five volumes now printed are having immense sales. The price of the five volume edition in America is \$4. per volume, cloth; \$2. for the six volumes, cloth; \$1.75 for the six volumes, one-half the price at which it is now sold in America. The price is low, as the books are large octavo volumes and of costly type work.

The following letter is addressed by Mr. Spurgeon to the American public: "Messrs. I. K. Funk & Co. have entered into arrangement with me to reprint THE TREASURY OF DAVID in the United States. I have every confidence in them that they will issue it correctly and worthily. It has been the great literary work of my life, and I trust it will be as kindly received in America as in England. I wish for Messrs. Funk success in a venture which must involve a great risk and much outlay."

Time is money, but it doesn't go into circulation again after it has once passed.

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Alabama Baptist.

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EDITORS.

W. C. CLEVELAND, - - - JNO. L. WEST.

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OBITUARIES of subscribers or members of their families (inserted free of charge when they contain not more than two words. A charge of one cent for each word is made for all over two words. Do not ask us to send bills. Count the words and send the money with the obituary. The Editors reserve the privilege of cutting all obituaries down to two words when they are not accompanied with the money.

DISCIPLINE—PUBLIC OFFENSES—EXCLUSION.

Palpable violations of the morality of Christianity scandalize the church, obscure its light, and bring reproach upon it. Drunkenness, profanity, stealing, lying, debauchery, Sabbath-breaking, extortion, covetousness, etc., belong to this class. They are not wrongs against any particular person, it may be, but direct violations of the divine law. Or, these offenses may partake of both classes, personal and public. A man may wrong me by stealing my property, and at the same time he commits a public sin. It does not, however, admit of any private adjustment between parties. The offender may restore the property, but he owes an open, public, frank confession of it to the church, and the church, if informed of the fact, owes it to itself to require this much of him.

When a member is guilty of any sin belonging to this class, brotherly love demands of any member of the church having knowledge of the fact, to seek an interview with the guilty party, to speak faithfully with him as to his sin, and endeavor to have him feel its terribleness, forsake his way, and confess it to the brethren in church meeting. If this interview proves successful, he has again saved his brother; but if he pleads not guilty, or excuses himself, or justifies himself, when the evidence of guilt is unquestionable, it is then the duty of the member knowing it to report the case directly to the church and prefer charges against the party, embodying definitely the offenses of which he is guilty. Having the charges thus preferred, the church should appoint a committee of faithful, reliable members to notify the brother accused of the charges against him, to ask his presence at the next meeting; to investigate impartially the grounds upon which the charges rest, if his silence or denial makes it necessary. If he is ascertained to be guilty, the committee ought to labor with him, and, if possible, induce him to "cease to do evil and learn to do well"—to be honest with his God, his church and himself. If he is a Christian, this method will ordinarily reclaim him. If he should make it necessary by a refusal to acknowledge his error, the facts should be reported, in writing, to the church. It may be proper to accompany the report with a written statement of the willful guilt, the penitence, the provoking circumstances, or extenuating surroundings of the case. All this should be done in a Christian spirit and manner. The accused should be made to feel that the church is not prosecuting him, but performing a painful duty for his good and for Christ's glory; that his restoration is being sought, rather than his exclusion.

A good man said, "The Church of Christ is a hospital, in which there are many who are indisposed, and some who are ill. Christ is the Physician and Surgeon, and each member should become an attentive, skillful and faithful nurse. The medicine and nourishment have been provided and prescribed by the Physician; these, when rightly administered, according to directions given, will restore every one, and save those 'who are appointed unto death.' As Christ is Superintendent of this work, the nurses ought to go into every ward of the hospital, ascertain who are indisposed, watch their cases with prayerful tenderness, and carry out, with fidelity, the directions of the great Physician. Leave not the patient till you discover manifest signs of convalescence, or until death ensues; and never bury one until life is extinct."

This brings us to the last point to be discussed—Exclusion. There are circumstances under which a church must cut off a member from its fellowship. This ought never to be done until every divinely appointed method for reclaiming an offender has been exhausted. The limb of a body is diseased. Applications are made to restore it to health. Every known remedy is used until the whole catalogue has been gone through with. Then, when all have failed, and the welfare and life of the body are in jeopardy, the painful duty of amputation is performed only to save the body. But amputation, when necessary, is as much a duty, and should be effected as promptly, as the administration of any other remedy. So of a church. The power of faithful love should be brought to bear upon an erring member. Candid admoni-

tion as to the sin, the evil to the cause of righteousness, the consequences of such a course to the evil-doer, the direction the church will be obliged to give to the case, and, in a word, whatever obligations fraternity inspires, or love to Jesus and to souls enjoins, should be performed, and when all have failed, then the church must preserve its own integrity and reputation.

The accused should have due notice of the charge or charges against him, and enjoy fully the right of self-defense. When a church is convinced that one of its members is guilty of willful sin, who is unwilling to make confession, and abandon it; that one who has been received into communion, and seemed to enjoy the privileges of God, has so far fallen as to be a reproach to the purity of the cause of Christ, every heart should feel sad; every one should experience the deepest sorrow and humiliation, and pronounce the sentence of excommunication with a deeper sense of grief than is produced by lowering it to its last resting place the lifeless form of a loved one. There should be no feeling of impatience, no personal animosity, but a sincere regret that follows the wayward one with earnest prayer for his salvation. And yet, every member should sustain the authority of the church in its action, so that the excluded party may be made to feel he is guilty, and repent.

The discipline here marked out is thought to be Scriptural. If it is, its enforcement is of the first importance. There can be no growth in knowledge and efficiency, no returning prodigals, no maintaining the purity of the church, without it. Pastor and people ought to co-operate in teaching those who need information as to duty, in hunting up the stray sheep and bringing them back to the fold, in nursing the sick and laboring for their restoration to spiritual health. And when all remedies have been exhausted, they should jealously guard the purity of the church by promptly bringing up and excluding those who refuse the admonition of the good and turn away from the loving entreaty of their brethren, to "walk in the counsel of the ungodly." May God give his people grace to be faithful to him, faithful to the church, and faithful to one another.

THE CHURCH THE BODY OR BRIDE OF CHRIST.

Christ is the only Head and Lawgiver of his Church, and he alone has the right to say just how it shall be governed, and in what spirit. None have the right to reject what he commands, and none have the right to approve what he condemns. He is the Bridegroom, and knows just how to perfect his bride, the church, so as to present it to himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Christ has instituted just such measures as will certainly accomplish these ends. Christ being Head over all, King supreme, and having issued all the commands and given all the laws that are necessary for the government of his churches, no power has the right to alter, repeal, or amend any of these laws, unless the right has been delegated by Christ. Christ has not delegated any such right to any man, or assemblage of men, on earth. No Pope, priest, prelate or potentate, has the right to legislate for the church of Christ. The church itself has no right to make any laws, not even the most trivial, for the government of itself. The church is not a legislative body; it is simply the executive body of Christ in the world; it can only execute the law that its great Head has given.

A well regulated, orderly, affectionate family is called a well-disciplined family; so a disorderly, disobedient family may be styled a badly-disciplined family. What is true in these respects as to families, may apply to churches. The "body" is composed of many members. The union of these members fitly and appropriately made, makes the body. The compact or government of the church is sustained by the mutual support and contribution of each separate member, and the active movement of every one, in the sphere to which he is appointed, is the divine method of building up and purifying the church. This building, or edifying, is cemented by love, made strong and lasting by the mutual affection which each bears to all and all to each.

TEMPERANCE.

In conversation a few days since, one of the most intelligent, successful lawyers of our acquaintance said in substance: "During the war, it was an unusual thing to see a drunken man. It was very difficult to get whisky, either in the army or at home. The general government held control of all distilleries and distributed liquors by its agents. Since the war the Government has taxed ardent spirits so heavily that men of small capital can not distill it. The result of this has been that men of large capital have combined and created establishments of almost unlimited capacity for the distillation of alcoholic drinks. These establishments have grown into mighty monopolies that make their power felt

in the legislative halls of the nation. Liquor dealers favor heavy taxation, as it increases their profits. There is not a distillery of any importance south of Richmond and Louisville. Nothing short of the strong right hand of the general government can control the monster evil that is cursing the nation." All this strengthens the conviction, expressed repeatedly, that all temperance movements ought to look to controlling action by the government as their objective point.

REV. B. H. CRUMPTON, in a note just received, informs us that he has sold his paper, the Greenville Echo. We are glad to know that he suffered no pecuniary loss, and that he will give himself entirely to the work of the ministry. We understand that an influential church in Texas is soliciting his services. Alabama cannot afford to lose such men. The churches at Mt. Willing and Evergreen do not engage Bro. Crumpton all his time. He will not wait long before he will have as much work as he can do.

HAVING heard of the excellent sermon printed on our first page, we requested Bro. Forrester to send us the manuscript. It will be of lasting benefit to every Christian who will read it carefully. Sermons prepared by earnest, faithful, intelligent pastors, for the edification and upbuilding of their own people, not only reach the hearts of those for whom they are specially intended, but furnish the best reading for all who receive them.

We call especial attention to the sensible, practical article on Christian Indebtedness, by "Cadmus." We are sorry his modesty forbids the publication of his name. We are glad to know that we will hear from him frequently.

FIELD NOTES.

"The paper is splendid."—B. H. Crumpton, Greenville. "Professor Joshua H. Foster, of Tuscaloosa, says in regard to our work for the ALABAMA BAPTIST: 'Success will crown your noble efforts in this great enterprise. I have not forgotten my promise to contribute an occasional article.' Our readers, as well as ourselves, will be glad to know that the columns of the ALABAMA BAPTIST are to be enriched by occasional articles from Prof. Foster's pen."

"Bro. W. E. Lloyd, I believe, is expected to begin his pastoral labors for the church at this place next Saturday and Sunday. I regard Bro. Lloyd as a good and intelligent minister of the Gospel of Christ, and as a fireside talker, I have heard him highly spoken of. What a good thing it is for a minister to be attractive both in and out of the pulpit! Of late I have felt myself drawn toward this excellent brother more than ever before."—G. D. Benton, Selma, Jan. 19th.

High hopes of the speedy completion of the Selma & Pensacola R. R. are again being excited in Monroe county. Rev. W. G. Curry preached his first sermon before his Carlisle charge on the first Sunday of the year, and gave decided satisfaction. The Watchman is unwilling for the mania for Centennials to cease until the birth of Daniel Webster shall have been appropriately celebrated at Dartmouth College. We learn that Bro. Samuel Lide and his entire family contemplate an early removal from Carlisle to some point in Georgia.

The Baptists of Evergreen will soon commence to repair their house of worship. The determination to create a new county from portions of Lowndes, Butler, Monroe, Wilcox and Dallas is creating some excitement in the region of the contemplated change. The Baptist Beacon, Knoxville, Tenn., and the Baptist Sun, Rome, Ga., are to be consolidated into the American Baptist, which will be issued at Chattanooga under the management of Rev. W. T. Russell and A. McLean as associate editors.

Rev. W. L. Brown, of Gaffney City, has declined the overtures of some brethren in Alabama, who were seeking to entice him away from the Palmetto State, and has wisely concluded to remain at his old home. —Baptist Courier. We are sorry to know that Bro. Brown will not come to Alabama. Dr. Robinson, of Brown University, is to deliver the Yale Lectures on preaching this year, and they will be reported for the National Baptist. "The district meeting of the Bigbee Association will not meet on the 5th Sabbath in January, because of inclement weather and the looked-for non-attendance of several brethren who take interest in such meetings."—N. B. Williams, Chairman Committee, Livingston, Jan. 22nd.

"On account of the rain, muddy roads and high water, I was compelled to return to College without reaching my appointment at Autaugaville on the 4th Sabbath in this month. It was my privilege to listen to an excellent sermon in the Baptist church in Marion Sunday, preached by Rev. Dr. Gwaltney. Subject, 'Love.' It was delivered in a very forcible manner, and I trust did a great deal of good."—A. L. B. Howard College.

T. O. M. GOLLAND.

After knowing the man whose name appears above, I felt it my duty to put Baptists upon their guard wherever he went. This brought down on me his wrath, and some other parties severely censured me. I now make known the following facts: Last summer I received a letter from Port Hudson, asking about Mr. Golland's record in Alabama. A little later, a communication appeared in the Baptist Record, of Mississippi, asking for information as to his whereabouts. It seems that he was president of Woodside Female Institute and pastor at Jackson, La. He was sent out Sept. 1st, by the Board of Trustees, to collect some funds to buy school property. Collecting about \$250 or \$300, he went to New Or-

leans. Nothing was heard of him till quite recently, when his wife received a letter from him from Sparta, Ind., stating that he was robbed in New Orleans, started home, lost his mind, and didn't know how he got to Sparta. Extracts from a letter received today: "The opinion of the outsiders is that Golland, who, all must admit, was addicted to drink, got too much; hence his conduct. Others think he was merely physically deranged from an 'epileptic.' "From my first acquaintance with him, I did not think he acted in a way becoming a minister of the Gospel. "Personally, I thank you for your letter to Bro. Roberts, for no doubt our church thereby escaped what the Jackson church is now suffering. He refers to a letter written while I was in Meridian, Miss. 'The briefest summary of the whole matter is: Golland drank too much.' "You deserve no censure, but thanks, for your timely warning." A card from a brother in Mississippi, who has taken pains to find out from those who knew him best, says: "He is beyond question a bad man, whisky ruined, and there is no ruin like that—a total ruin of the man, mentally, morally, socially and religiously. You were certainly right to put people on their guard touching Mr. Golland."

I hope this will be the end of trouble among the Baptists from this man, who has caused trouble wherever he has gone. I never met him but once, but have ever believed him to be either a bad or a crazy man. In this opinion I was not alone.

W. B. CRUMPTON, Shield's Mill, Ala., Jan. 13.

North Alabama News and Notes.

Eds. Ala. Baptist: At your request, I will furnish you with such items of news from North Alabama as I can get. I am not, however, in a situation to secure much news from our churches, as I am very closely confined to the school room.

So far as I can learn, many of our churches have gone into winter quarters. This, I believe, is a very common practice among Baptist churches all over the South—country churches especially. Very many of our churches in this section of the State have very open houses, that are not at all suitable for use in cold weather. They are without stoves, window sash or shutters. People are not disposed to go to such places on the Sabbath and sit for an hour in the cold, and I do not blame them.

Our church at Decatur is about at a stand still. Bro. David has an appointment for once a month. He preaches in the Presbyterian house of worship. Our house is up, covered in and painted, but is not finished. We have no seats, and it is not celled or plastered. We are very anxious to finish it, so that we can have worship every Sabbath. We have an arrangement by which we can have preaching every Sabbath, if we only had our house finished. It may be asked by some, Why don't you finish it? For a very good reason: we have not the money. We have done all we are able to do now, and we do not wish to go in debt. If we had three hundred dollars, we could finish it. We have asked for help so often that we will not trouble our brethren and friends at a distance again. We will wait and hope that after awhile we can finish what we have begun.

The church at Huntsville, I understand, is in a prosperous condition. Our young brother Kone, its pastor, is much beloved, and is doing, we trust, a good work. I have not heard how our cause is in Athens. I suppose Dr. Sumner is doing a good work there.

At Tusculum, our young brother Hare has taken charge of the work. It is a difficult field, and yet an inviting one. Our church there needs help. I hope the State Mission Board will remember this church and help it sustain its pastor. It is very weak financially, and I know of no place that needs assistance more. Now is the time to give this assistance. It will be a good investment for the Board.

At Town Creek, on the M. & C. R. R., 18 miles east of Tusculum, we have another weak church. Bro. J. I. Stockton is its pastor. It has preaching only once a month. As a matter of course, it is not very prosperous. Its house of worship is very well ventilated—plenty of windows and other openings suitable for the free circulation of air. There are some good brethren and sisters here, and Bro. Stockton is doing all he can to build it up.

Our cause at Russellville is looking up, I understand. Bro. R. T. Wen is the pastor there and preaches twice a month. He is a most excellent brother, and a church will be very apt to be in a good condition where he is its pastor. He is full of zeal and good works. He is also pastor of Town Creek church, 8 miles west from Moulton, where he preaches twice a month. This is a large and influential church. It ought to do a great deal for missions. I hope it does. If it does not, Bro. Wen will be apt to stir its members up. Moulton church is in a good condition. I resigned the care of this church last year. Now, Bro. Matthew Lyon, recently from Mississippi, is the pastor. The church has called him to preach twice a month. Bro. Lyon is an important accession to the Baptist cause in North Alabama. He is an able minister and a good writer. I hope he will contribute to your columns. He is an old editor, having edited a Baptist paper before the war. At Courtland, we have a church house, but no membership scarcely, and no preaching. Our Association at its last meeting had this place brought to its notice, but nothing was done. Whether our mission, Bro. Adams, will make an effort there, I am not informed. I hope he will, however. I do not think it ought to be given up entirely. I am inclined to believe that something can be done at Courtland yet by the Baptists. I am willing to give my assistance in a projected meeting next July at this place. I was at Madison a short time since. This is another place where Bro. Davidson preaches regularly. I learned that our numbers are very weak there; yet

I am inclined to believe that there is a first rate opening for a Baptist church at Madison. One thing is certain: there is needed there a church that will openly oppose and denounce all the worldly amusements and practices that are inconsistent with the pure principles and teachings of Christianity. If Baptist churches all over our land would be more faithful, they would have greater prosperity. Cherokee, a small town 16 miles west of Tusculum, on the M. & C. R. R., is another place where Brother David has an appointment. It is also a hard field, yet, with proper cultivation, our church there will doubtless revive.

The Baptist cause in North Alabama I do not consider in a very prosperous condition. We have churches probably enough and quite a number of ministers. In the Muscle Shoals Association we have at least twenty-five ordained ministers. I do not know what the number is in the other Associations whose territory lies within the limits of North Alabama, perhaps twice as many as we have churches. Yet, with all this ability for doing good, I see but little advancement and little prosperity. The churches, as a general thing, seem to be asleep. They are doing comparatively nothing, either to sustain the Gospel at home or to send it abroad. Some churches are alive, but the mass of them are not. The ministry, to a very great extent, are secularized; necessarily so: they work on their farms, or in the school room, or in some other avocations, all the week, and preach on the Sabbath to some churches that do not sufficiently remunerate them even for the little labor they get from them. Under such a condition of things, we cannot expect any better results. Oh, that our churches, Christian men, Baptist men and women, would wake up to a sense of their responsibilities!

But, Bro. Editors, I now close this rambling letter, hoping that the little information I give will be of some interest to your readers.

JOS. SHACKLEFORD, Trinity, Ala.

Christian Indebtedness.

In a former article I made some general remarks on this subject, pointing out the fact that this indebtedness springs from the relation which Christians sustain to Jesus Christ, and speaking of the binding obligations which are inseparably linked with it. In this communication I desire to present the subject in a more specific manner, and I have two thoughts to offer.

This indebtedness is strictly an individual matter. The Apostle Paul evidently so regarded it. In his letter to the Roman Christians he did not say we Christians are debtors, but "I am a debtor." He felt that he as an individual was responsible to his Master for carrying the Gospel to the Greeks and the Barbarians. But he did not, by emphasizing his personal accountability, imply that he was a greater debtor than his fellow Christians, or that there was anything at all peculiar in his case. He was simply speaking for himself, expressing the fact that he recognized the obligations which rested upon him as a servant of Christ, and that he alone could discharge those obligations. As it was with Paul, so it is with all Christians, they are individually indebted to Jesus Christ, and are therefore individually responsible for the performance of the work which has been assigned them. The Master does not deal with his servants collectively, but individually. "Every one of us must give an account of himself to God." On the great day of reckoning when the work of every servant will be examined both as to its kind and amount, the question of the Master will not be, What has your church done, or what has your denomination done? but it will be, what have you done—individually, you—in the interest of the Lord's kingdom in this world. Your denomination might send out and sustain ten thousand missionaries among the heathen, it may supply millions with Bibles and religious books, it may erect houses for the poor and hospitals for the sick, and it may establish any number of institutions of learning for equipping young men and young women for efficient service in the Master's vineyard; but all of this would be nothing to your credit, it would be no payment on your indebtedness if you were not really connected with the great work, if you were not represented by your prayers, your labors, and your money. No combination of men can perform the duties of any individual, and thereby release him from the obligations that are upon him. Every man must do his own work, and no man can do anything more. No amount of service performed by others can meet the claims which Jesus Christ has upon any one of his servants. We too often overlook this important fact, and suppose that the success and prosperity of the general body of Christians to which we belong take for our shortcomings as individuals.

We are often very highly elated at the grand achievements of our denomination; we are gratified at the great work that it is accomplishing; we are delighted at its wonderful progress; we contemplate its glorious triumphs with joyful hearts, and we feel proud that we are Baptists. This is all well enough. But at such times it would be well for us to stop in the midst of our exultations and serious-ly and honestly ask ourselves some questions as these following: What is my connection with this great work? What have I done for its accomplishment? How many prayers—earnest, sincere prayers—have I offered? How many real sacrifices have I made for its success? How much money have I paid out? If we have not participated in it, all this grand work is nothing to us personally.

It is no indication that we have been trying to pay our debts. It is mainly showing that some of the Lord's servants have been striving to perform their duty, but it is no evidence whatever of our faithfulness to him who has done so much for us. We have no shadow of right to claim what has been accomplished by others as a part

of our work, and if we do claim it, it will profit us nothing at all; for the blessed Master cannot be deceived; he knows full well who are the active workers and who are the drones.

We talk about our missionary enterprises, our churches, and our schools, but are these institutions really ours? True, they belong to the Baptists, and we claim to be Baptists, yet they are not ours if we have not been striving to pay them the debt which we, as servants of Jesus Christ, owe them.

2. To whom are the Christians of Alabama debtors? They are debtors to all who are without the Gospel, if matters not who they are nor where they are, provided they can be reached. Through the medium of Boards we can work for the heathen in every country, and it is our duty to do it. There are thousands of people in this State who are ignorant of the glorious plan of salvation. It is not necessary to go to Africa or to Asia to find heathen; we have them in our own land, in our own State, at our very doors. How strange that there should be such persons in this land where there are so many Christians, so many preachers, and so many Bibles! Yet it is true. The destitution of religious privileges in some portions of this State is distressing. There are thousands of men and women hastening to eternal ruin, who ought to be active workers in the Master's vineyard. This state of affairs ought to be alarming to the Christians of Alabama. It ought to arouse them, and make them more earnest in their prayers, more active in their work, and more liberal in their contributions. We owe these people the Gospel, and we ought to send it to them at once. Our State Mission Board is doing a grand work; but it ought to do ten times as much as it is now doing, and it would do it if every servant of Jesus Christ in this State would discharge his duty. The Board is powerless without the co-operation of individual Christians. They must supply the money, or the great work cannot go on. Christian men and women of Alabama pay your debts, send the Lord's money to the Board, and messengers will be sent to these dark corners to carry the news of salvation to the benighted people, and then, if they refuse to receive the message and to hear the warning, their blood will be upon their own heads.

But let us not for a moment suppose that we are debtors only to the people of our own State, nor that the paying of this debt is any excuse for neglecting the heathen in foreign lands. The Baptists have done nobly in their efforts to supply the destitute places in the State; but they have fallen very far short of their duty, if in their zeal for home work, they have neglected and become indifferent to the great fields beyond the seas. The Christians of Alabama are debtors to the heathen in China and Africa, as well as to those at their own doors, and one debt is just as binding as the other. We have no right to pay home debts and to leave those abroad unpaid; such a course is not right, it is not faithful to the Master, whose last command was, "Go teach all nations." Nor are we to wait until we complete the evangelization of our own country before we send the Gospel to foreign lands. It is our imperative duty to do our best for both fields, and not to cultivate one to the exclusion of the other. Both of them need work and they need it now. Let us as true servants of Jesus Christ put forth our strength to meet this pressing need. Let us pay the poor heathen the debt we owe them as soon as possible; for they are dying for the want of it.

Another Veteran Fallen.

"So young, and a lovely child; her going leaves a vacancy in many hearts." Thus I read one day in a letter, and the next I stood by the coffin of an aged man of God and heard the wail of the widow, "Oh, William! William! why did you go first?" And so it is; here a life suddenly snipped in the bud, and there another garnered in golden ripeness.

And flowers to wither at the North-west's breath; But—thou hast all Seasons for thine own, O Death!

The life of the aged man above spoken of, and about whom this article is written, was a life that went down under the sickle "fully ripe and ready for the harvest"—a life that merits more than local mention, more than momentary notice.

Rev. Wm. Spence lived among us a Christian life that had its beginning with the beginnings of our Baptist cause in Mobile, and that grew up with that cause to its strong maturity. As might have been expected of the thoroughly converted old Scotchman, he played no mean part in the toils and struggles and triumphs of that cause. How much our cause and the general cause of truth and righteousness in Mobile city, as well as in Mobile and Baldwin and Monroe counties, are indebted under God, to that industrious and heroic life, eternity alone can reveal. Some facts of the life deserve mention in the columns of our State paper.

Born of sturdy Scotch parentage in Greenock, Scotland, March 25th, 1806, he inherited fine, native vigor of body and mind. He entered upon life in times of storm and stress in Church and State, a contemporary of such men as Jeffrey, Carlyle and Chalmers, and other giants who took part in the conflicts then raging.

He, however, quietly served his apprenticeship, and learned and plied his trade, as stone-cutter and mason. The religious atmosphere was full of the smell of battle, but he attained to manhood without taking any active part in the strife and without making any profession of faith.

On the 26th of July, 1834, he was married to Jane McMillan, with whom he lived in contented and happy wedlock to the day of his death.

soon established himself in business as mason and builder, and plied his trade steadily for nearly forty years, taking large building contracts and employing many workmen. "I myself," says a lawyer of this city, "have paid into his hands for building done for my clients over \$68,000, and in all my transactions with him I found him the very soul of honesty and fairness." Others equally as reliable give similar testimony.

Before his conversion, though a ward in some respects, he was ever remarkable for the integrity and downrightness that characterized him in after years. Shortly after coming to this country, he was brought under the ministry of Rev. Jacob Henry Schroeble, one of the most remarkable preachers and successful workers that have ever labored in this part of the State. As a result, he was converted and professed faith in Christ in 1842, when both he and his wife were baptized by Bro. Schroeble and received into the fellowship of the St. Anthony Street Baptist church. He was soon made deacon, and from the first took active part in the prayer-meeting and in all the work of the church.

On September the 29th, 1846, in accordance with the call of the same church, he was ordained to the ministry at Claiborne, Ala., during a session of the Bethel Association. The presbytery consisted of Revs. Kedar Hawthorne, Alexander Travis, J. J. Sessions, John McWilliams and Miles McWilliams, whose names are now found signed in their own handwriting to his ordination paper. He soon related the following incident as showing a single agency used in leading him into the ministry. He was accustomed from the first to take part in public meetings, sometimes as leader of the prayer-meeting, and sometimes as "exhorter." Not long after he professed religion, an excellent "sister in the church" invited him to her home and told him that she thought he ought to preach. He remonstrated with her and earnestly disclaimed having the qualifications necessary. Later, at an Association, he led the devotional exercises. When the meeting was over, Rev. J. J. Sessions approached him, and, laying his hand earnestly upon him, said, "My brother, you ought to preach." The idea thus planted in his mind grew gradually into a strong conviction that swayed and shaped his whole future career. The leading traits of his character at this time, and (as I say) throughout his Christian life, were, as one has well represented it, "downrightness and uprightness," "unwavering conscientiousness and heroic devotion to duty."

On entering the ministry, he did not abandon his trade. It was with him as it was with Bro. Schroeble and many others at that time, the circumstances of his life and the condition of the field in which he was called to labor forbade this. His first preaching, which was done in Baldwin county, was truly "missionary work." He planted, and for years cultivated, the seeds of Baptist influence at Montgomery Hill, Stockton and elsewhere in that county. He would ply his trade and superintend his work during most of the week, but would leave on Friday or Saturday to fill his appointments and to preach. Mobile county also shared largely in his labors. Whistler church was organized by him, and its members loved him and enjoyed his occasional ministrations to the last. There are hundreds, indeed, white and colored, in both of these counties who always loved to greet "Bro. Spence" as their "father in the Gospel." For years before and during the war he was the faithful and cherished pastor of the old "Stone Street colored church," doing a work similar to that done by Rev. Robt. Ryland in Richmond, Va.

He never, during his life, left the city on account of an epidemic. In all those trying times, when the city was desolated by "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," and "the destruction that wasteth at noonday," his moral heroism, his implicit trust in God and his practical Christian philanthropy shone conspicuously. He gloried in it as a solemn privilege, as well as a sacred duty, at such times to visit and care for the sick, comfort the living, and bury the dead. Many stories are still told of his going, often alone, to the homes of the poor to carry, not only the light of the Gospel, but also food and drink and the substantial help of his own hands in nursing the sick and preparing the dead for burial. In one of those dread years, one of his own negroes died one night with the fever. He ordered the coffin, washed and dressed the man with his own hands, and then, after bathing and changing his clothes, calmly repaired to the church and preached according to appointment. During the fearful scourge of '53, he scarcely rested at all for visiting and burying those who were victims of the fever that year. "He finally 'gave up,'" says one, "that God would shield him from such perils," and it is remarkable, indeed, that, though exposed to the fever in a thousand ways, he never took it. The same was true of his wife, though several younger members of the family had it. By such exhibitions of heroism and trust, he won many friends, and scores of outsiders confided in him implicitly, some of whom quietly expressed their feeling for him by saying, "When I die, I want 'Bro. Spence' to bury me."

For years he was Moderator of the Old Bethel Association, and at one time or another during his life he was called on to fill the Baptist pulpit of our city. The last public service which he performed for the Master was as pastor pro tem. of the Broad Street church. There are many, very many, still left who came, with Bro. Frank Williams, now of South Carolina, concerning him and the lamented Cuthbert. "Their sacred utterance still rings in our ears; their exemplary lives still shine on our pathway."

His death found a fitting close to his earnest life. "How does your strength seem to hold out, Bro. Spence?" said to him a short time before he died. "I have no strength of my own," he replied, with fine Scotch brogue and emphasis; "my strength is in the Lord God Almighty!" After the doctors told him that

death was near at hand, I went to him to speak with him of dying; but, as I approached the bedside, he anticipated me with a mild and wave of the hand, and said cheerfully, "Yes, yes, but it's all right—it's all right! I've no fears for myself; I can not need a woman's name; 'I'm only a little troubled about the old woman.' Forty years we've lived happily together, and it seems hard to leave her alone now. But," he resumed after another pause, "that, too, will be all right—all right! And so he died—died calmly, triumphantly, restful in the sublime assurance which he so touchingly expressed, 'It's all right—it's all right!'"

Now to the God of victory, our Immortal thanks be paid, Who makes us conquerors while we die, Thine Christ our conquering Meek!

GEO. B. EXNER.

Pleasant Pastoral Changes.

It has been the conviction of the writer for a score or more of years, that in pastoral changes (which frequently occur), great care should be taken by the church, the retiring pastor, and the incoming pastor, that no unpleasant feeling should arise that would leave a sting behind, either with the church or retiring pastor. In accordance with these convictions, after several years' pastorate of nineteen years, continuance at Oxford, Ala., he understood, on the 26th of October, 1881, tendered his resignation of pastor of that church, to take effect, at the close of the year. At the November conference succeeding, after a sermon by the retiring pastor, the church elected Eld. J. C. Wright as pastor for the ensuing year. Bro. Wright accepted the call, and has entered on his pastoral work. All this has been accomplished without any friction or unpleasant feeling, either by the church, the retiring pastor, or the incoming pastor.

Eld. J. C. Wright is a noble specimen of a Christian gentleman. He is a strong preacher, a clear thinker, and a "born" pastor. These qualifications, with other noble traits of character, eminently qualify him for the important and responsible position he is called upon to fill.

An Oxford Baptist church, Bro. Wright has a band of noble Christian workers to operate with him in his labors in promoting the cause of Christ. It is the earnest desire and prayer of the writer that the church shall prosper under his care.

An retiring from the pastorate of the Oxford Baptist church, the pastor received many substantial expressions of kindness, and none were more appreciated than a very handsome gold watch chain, presented by the ladies of the ladies' Aid Society of the church, and a purse of fifty dollars in silver, each of the 50 cents of the church. It will always be a pleasure to the retiring pastor to look back at a pastorate of 35 many years, spent with cheerful readiness to co-operate with him in laboring in promoting the cause of the Master. And, although the connection of the church and pastor has been dissolved, it will still be the pleasure of the retiring pastor to co-operate with the church, as far as he is able, in advancing the cause of the Redeemer.

F. T. SMITH.

Oxford, Jan. 14.

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Rev. John

