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Non-attendance at Church.

The question has been often raised and discussed in religious and secular papers, and even in dignified reviews, as to the diminution or increase of attendance on public worship on the Sabbath. It is easy to make assertions on either side; and perhaps not so easy to verify them or to disprove them. Possibly what may be true of one city and one locality may not be true of other cities and other localities. Local causes and conditions may affect church going favorably or unfavorably. With reference, however, to the whole country, we think there can be no question whatever but that the attendance on public worship is decidedly on the increase, and that a larger number of the population, in proportion to the whole, is now habitually found in the house of God on Sunday than at any time during the last hundred years. It is not necessary to bring forward the reasons for this belief. They can be found in such books as Dr. Dorchester's "Problem of Religious Progress." The assertion that the sanctuary does not have the hold upon the popular heart that it once had, and that the attendance is falling off, is made either by those who would have it so, or by alarmists, who are not familiar with certain indisputable facts and mistake their fears for the actual state of the case. It is capable of demonstration that Christianity, reckoned simply by its professed believers, has outstripped in its progress in this country the actual increase in population. And, as organized Christianity always binds its followers to the house of God and the observance of public worship, this fact just mentioned is sufficient in itself to prove that church attendance is increasing, and not diminishing.

It should not, however, be forgotten that there is a large non-church-going population in every community. It is an increasingly large population, for it is not the absolute but the relative increase of this class which the statistics disprove. The great and difficult problem in this country to-day is how to reach those who rarely or never enter the doors of any church, and how to bring them under the influence of the preaching of the gospel and the means of grace; and this problem not as a religious problem solely, but as a national problem, a living, practical question, on the right and speedy solution of which depend the good morals of society, reverence for law, the integrity of the individual life, and it may be, the safety and permanence of our free institutions. Open sanctuaries well used are the strong buttresses of everything that is good in social and national life.

What remedies can be suggested for the large non-attendance at church which prevails, especially in the great centres of population? They may be said to lie in three directions.

There is, first, the legal remedy. Not that church going is to be made compulsory by legal enactment, as in the days of the Puritans. That is outside of the province of law. But the law can do one thing, viz., it can greatly diminish, if it cannot entirely remove, the most serious obstacle in the way of church attendance, viz., the liquor traffic. A large percentage of non-church-goers is found among the poor and dissipated, and poor because dissipated. The liquor saloon, more than anything else that can be named, blocks the way to the house of God. A full saloon makes an empty church. Much has been said in favor of free churches. The majority of our churches are already practically free to the humblest who wish to attend them. But free churches will remain unused havens to those who are anchored outside in shame as well as poverty. We are thoroughly convinced that the greatest obstacle to the progress of Christianity in our cities is intemperance, and that the saloon is the most deadly foe of the sanctuary, and has more to do than anything else with non-attendance at church. We do not wish to be understood as meaning that all non-church-goers belong to the low and dissipated class; but statistics prove that at least eighty per cent. of the successful, well-to-do business and professional men are actually connected, more or less intimately, with church organizations, and that comparatively few even of the families of those who frequent the saloons frequent the house of God. A law—the more stringent the better—against the saloon will be a law in favor of a larger attendance upon public worship. Let legislation shut up the saloons, not simply one day, but seven days in the week, and it will do much to open and through the avenues that lead to the place of prayer.

But the legal remedy is not the only one to be applied. There is also what may be called the *laical* remedy;

that is, a remedy which is especially in the hands of the laity, and which lies, in the first place, in the line of a higher personal character as illustrating the moral benefit of church-going, and, secondly, in the line of a larger personal effort to bring men under that influence and benefit. We need not enlarge upon this point; but we do not hesitate to say that the fruits of church-going ought to be more manifest than they are in character and conduct, in a purer morality, a stricter integrity and a broader philanthropy than exist among the majority of church-going people. The difference between the church and the world—to use words whose meaning is well understood—should be wider and more marked than it now is. The lessons of the pulpit should be more distinctly repeated in the life of the home, the street and the place of business. The life of Christ should be more manifestly relieved in the unselfish, unworldly, transparent, holy lives of his followers. The epistles of the apostles should be more legibly transcribed upon the open pages of human conduct, so as to be "known and read of all men." The world will ask, What is the benefit of church-going—what good does it confer, what changes does it work? A manly, noble, honest, generous, affectionate, Christ-like spirit should be the satisfactory answer. Such a spirit should bear unmistakable and perpetual testimony to the power and purity of the atmosphere which it has breathed in the house of God. Church-goers, we repeat, must illustrate the moral benefit of church-going, must acknowledge conscientiously the influence and the claims which the sanctuary has upon them, and must allow their appreciation of its beneficent influence to stimulate their labors for others, if they would have them acknowledge the claims of public worship and experience its transforming, its helpful, its divine influence.

The third remedy which we would suggest is *clerical*; that is, the remedy which is in the hands of the clergy. We shall not be charged, we trust, with possessing a censorious spirit, if we say that the pulpit needs to be less formal and professional, having less of art and more of heart, and being baptized anew into a holy sense of its divine message and function. A prominent layman has recently passed this criticism upon ministers: "They are too far off from men. They do not touch them as Jesus did." With greater spiritual fervor and moral earnestness in the ministry, with more of the magnetic power of human sympathy and Christly love, and with greater wisdom and fidelity in proclaiming the gospel message—whose divinest credential is its wonderful adaptability to human need and the response which it meets in the human heart—there would be less temptation to sensational and questionable methods to draw men to church. A minister who resorts to sensationalism shows nothing so much as his own lack of faith in the power of the truth which he is commissioned to preach. Moreover, all sensationalism defeats itself in the long run. It may draw for the moment, but it weaves no permanent ties and creates no sense of obligation. The modern method of advertising the pulpit and its topics, which degrades the house of God to the level of the theatre and the place of amusement, has done more, in our judgment, to diminish the permanently attractive power of public worship than can be estimated. It not only starts the question where to go to church, but whether to go or not, and leaves it optional with the questioner what to do, so that a multitude of people have been taught to consult the Saturday paper, rather than their sense of spiritual need and of moral obligation. It would be infinitely better that nothing should be published, at least nothing beyond the simple place and hour of worship, not even the preacher's name—whether it be Peter, or John, or Paul—so that men may be taught to recognize the claims of the sanctuary as the sanctuary, and to go to church to worship God and to listen to his word, no matter what particular message is preached or from whose lips it comes. The old gospel, earnestly preached to the hearts and consciences of men by those who are filled with its spirit, is its own greatest and unfailing attraction.

Until these primary remedies are faithfully applied; all discussions of change in the order of our services, or the cultivation of the social element in our churches, or free churches, or anything else, will be mere boys' play; and will be utterly unavailing to accomplish a result more important and needful, viz., a more general attendance upon the ordained means of grace. —*Religious Herald.*

Our State Mission Board and the Other Boards.

[On reading the "dot" printed below I committed to paper and sent to the ALABAMA BAPTIST a few thoughts on the situation in our State. But the next issue of the *Herald* explained that Judge Haralson spoke of the agricultural, and not the religious outlook, and that the religious outlook, as relating to our Boards, and as a leading brother did make to me, at Montgomery, a remark somewhat like Judge Haralson's as below reported, I have decided to let the article stand just as it was written.]

The *Religious Herald* of Richmond, of May 13th, contains many "dots" picked up by the editor at the Southern Baptist Convention at Montgomery, the following being among them: "Judge Haralson, of Selma: 'There is no improvement in Alabama, and things seem to steadily grow worse. Except in a few places, the outlook is discouraging.'"

It is not best to take a gloomy view of any work in which we are engaged, because gloominess unfits us for energetic and tenacious effort; but yet the best way to deal with an unpleasant fact is to look it squarely in the face and take right hold of it. But whatever else we may do, we should not become gloomy. That spoils everything.

Pushing aside, as far as we can, the shadow that hangs over the above reported view of the situation in Alabama, let us look around and try to discover why it is that the outlook of our State affairs is not more encouraging. Now, I am neither a seer nor a doctor, and shall not pretend to tell all that could be told, but only to mention some things that will doubtless appear plain to every one who sees and thinks.

In the first place, then, everything that men have a hand in doing has its ups and downs, its fluctuations, its ebbs and flows, like the tides of the ocean. So of our State mission work. Three or four years ago it was on the "flood tide of prosperity." The prospect was indeed cheering. But the tide began to ebb—to run backward—and now the outlook is not gratifying. In all probability it would flow again, even if we should not do anything more than we are now doing, or anything different from what we are now doing, but its strength would be less, and it would become weaker and weaker with each successive ebb and flow.

In the second place, our State Mission Board is and has been for some years engaged in an unequal race for the prize of success with the two Boards of the Southern Baptist Convention. At one certain period of the existence of the State Board it was agreed and understood that if the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board would withdraw their agents from the State, our State Mission Board would undertake to collect whatever money the people were willing to give to those two Boards. Among the reasons for this, one was to avoid a multiplicity of agents, and the consequent annoyance to the churches, and the clashing of interests that would almost surely produce unpleasantness. The State Mission Board faithfully kept its promise. Its Corresponding Secretary and its missionaries were instructed to, and did, talk for and collect money for the other Boards, and their receipts were largely increased. But those Boards enlarged their fields of labor, and of course wanted more money. They had no active agents, under that name, in the State, but each had a vice-president. This office had been regarded as being as much an honorary appointment as otherwise. But each vice-president has gradually become an active collecting agent for the Board which he represents, and, according to the energy that he possesses and the time that he can devote to it, is pressing the claims of his Board upon the Baptists of the State. At the same time the State Mission Board has been observing its compact, and its representatives have been working for the Home Board and for the Foreign Board, as well as for their own Board. Thus it has come to pass that each of those two Boards has the benefit of the labors of its own collecting agent and also of the servants of the State Mission Board. The Corresponding Secretary of the State Mission Board (to say nothing of the missionaries) works for both the other Boards, while at our last State Convention the Home Board, through its official representative for this State, and other friends, was placed in an unfriendly attitude toward our State Board. This may or may not have been accidental, or incidental; at any rate it was, and yet remains, a revelation of the fact, that if our State

Board does not take care of itself it will be run over. Other indications to the same effect are not wanting.

From what has been said it appears that our State Mission Board has a double weight to carry. And if we add the further fact that here and there is a brother who has a grievance against our Board, and either ignores it, or, what is more probable, talks against it, it will be seen that its burden is threefold. Can it be expected to make satisfactory progress under such burdens? If so, it is hoped that some wise brother will rise up and tell us how it is to be done.

The fact is, as it appears to me, that the State Board has been so loyal to the other Boards that it has neglected its own interests. It has given its life-blood to sustain them. Still they are not satisfied, as the near future will disclose.

Indeed, in the report of the Foreign Mission Board made to the late Convention at Montgomery, the following significant paragraph appears: "Our vice-presidents have circulated thousands of documents, and performed other invaluable service. Their reports to the Convention will indicate how faithfully they have performed their duties. But, superadded to these voluntary representatives in the States, must we not have other representatives who shall give undivided attention to the support of our work? The Board hope to devise some system, which will be acceptable to the States, and, under the blessing of God, productive of the means necessary for their broad and ever broadening enterprise."

A careful reading shows that the Foreign Board contemplates the appointment of one or more paid agents in each State, whose time shall be entirely occupied with labor for that Board. It is not indicated what is the nature of the arrangement which is proposed to make with each State by which this plan can be satisfactorily worked. But the fact that the Board proposes to increase its working force in our State is sufficiently suggestive to us that the time is very near at hand when we must make some changes of methods, and perhaps of relations to the other Boards, or else our State work will fall to pieces by reason of having been undermined.

It does not affect the case to state the fact that if the other Boards should break down our State Board (intentionally or not) they will kill the goose that has been laying the golden egg, because individuals and Boards have done that often heretofore, and they will continue to do it so long as they are not perfect in wisdom. Our business and our duty is to re-establish the lines as they were three or four years ago, or else (which may be the wiser) to so change present methods, and present arrangements with the other Boards, that our State Mission Board can prosecute its work with less incumbrance by the other Boards, and at the same time fully fill its place as in a great measure the helper of both the others.

If the other Boards think they can do their own work better than we can do it for them, it may be well to let them do it, under certain well-defined conditions and regulations. But it would surely be unwise to make any concession that would tend to destroy or even impair the efficient, stimulating agency of our State mission work. For, judging the future by the past and the present, we can but know that the cause of Christ in our own State really needs the efforts of our State Board in all its departments, and also that the Home and Foreign Boards both receive more money with our State Board in active operation than without it. —E. F. BABER, Benton, Ala.

One Talent Men.

There is nothing that would add more to the power and influence of the church of to-day than the full consecration of the multitude of one talent men in her fold, to the service of God. We need this more than we do men of genius and brilliant parts. Our greatest loss of power is here, and here also is the possibility of our greatest gain. Occasionally we see a man liberally endowed—a five talent man, foolishly, recklessly, squandering his talents, burying gifts where with he might have made his own life glorious, and the world brighter and better,—and we greatly regret the loss both to himself and to ourselves. But the great loss the church and the world experience on account of buried talents is not from this quarter, great indeed is the loss that comes through the five-talent and two-talent men; but a hundred, a thousand times greater is the loss we suffer from the one-talent men who compose the multitude, and who more readily yield to the temptation to dig and hide.—S. S. Times.

Items from Fort Deposit.

Eds. Ala. Baptist: About the first of the present month I took a run up to my home in Fort Deposit, the model town of Alabama, where I spent two weeks very pleasantly with my children and friends, and for the first time in this year, had the pleasure of attending church and hearing the gospel preached. Our pastor, Bro. Hart, officiated on the first Sabbath, and Bro. Forrester on the second. I also attended Sabbath-school and found Bro. Gunn, that indefatigable worker for the Master, superintending a school of one hundred or more pupils. It was quite a treat to be present with the dear old school and grasp the hand of so many dear Christian friends, and young people, with whom I have worshipped for so many years in the past.

The young members of the Baptist church have a prayer meeting every Sabbath evening, to which I was invited and went. I can't get the words to tell you how much I enjoyed these meetings, and how full of thankful praise was my heart to God for his goodness and mercy in bringing these dear young friends from darkness to light, these who had so long been the object and burden of our daily prayers, to him be all the praise forever. If you ever visit the Fort, and wish to have a good old fashioned time, by all means go to the young men's prayer meeting.

Now, as to the model town. There are forty-one white families living within the corporate limits of the town and twenty-five living immediately around and near it, in all and each of which (with one exception) there are more or less Christians, members of the different churches; the exception is a Jew, who is a very clever, liberal gentleman. The town is orderly and peaceable, no whisky sold, and but little drank within its borders. The old toppers have a lonesome time in the Fort, and grow more sly in taking their drunks, as prohibition grows stronger and more outspoken. The town does not support or need a marshal, and the guard house is only used occasionally to accommodate those who have *exceeded* to Greenville too often and too deeply. Now what do you think of the model town?

May God strengthen every Christian in the land that is fighting for prohibition; may their blows fall thick, fast and heavy, until the last drop of whisky and its kindred liquors is absorbed by the sands of the earth, and the dealers therein become God fearing men and women, is the prayer of W. P. R.

Prohibition and Politics.

Eds. Alabama Baptist: I rejoice to know that so many good and wise men are coming to the front on the question of prohibition. We have a work before us to be done between this time and the first of August, 1886, that concerns the people of the State, not a few men in Alabama, but the whole people. In view of these facts shall we consider the claims of a political party, or the claims of prohibition?

These are questions that arise in the minds of the best citizens of our country, and they are questions of vital importance, yet we have men seeking high and honored positions in the State, who propose to be neutral on the prohibition question, except they cry out, "Let us keep prohibition out of politics." Now, we have all well known agreed that whisky is the greatest enemy to prosperity and peace, and on the other hand that prohibition does prohibit its use, and brings peace and prosperity to our homes, and to our country at large; then, strange, very strange indeed, that prohibition should be so much dreaded by political men, when it is a demonstrated fact that it brings a better state religiously and financially in every section of the country where the law has been enforced. Then may the Democratic party who has done so much for Alabama in the dark days that are gone by, do still more by putting in a prohibition plank. —S. M. ADAMS, Oakmulgee.

Prohibition in Politics.

On the above subject I can point to the articles in our dear ALABAMA BAPTIST, from the pens of our Baptist brethren, Turnley, of Gadsden, and Wörrell, of Talladega, and our Methodist (I think he is a Methodist) brother Whittle, of Birmingham, and say, "these are my sentiments." Politically, I am a Democrat, have all ways been, and like to be one for all time to come. But if, to be a Democrat, I must sanction and bear my part of the responsibilities of saloons, grog-shops and doggeries, those legalised destroyers of mankind, both

body and soul, in every city, town, village, and cross roads throughout this lovely Alabama of ours, then I am no more a Democrat while the world stands. It seems to me that the time has come when the Democratic party of Alabama must cut loose either from whisky or from Christianity. The two are neither homogeneous nor harmonious, but are absolutely and emphatically antithetic and belligerent. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" "What part hath Christ with Belial?" Two recent State conventions of the Democratic party of Alabama have, so to speak, forced Christians to walk with it, though we were not agreed, and to our shame be it said, we walked with it. Now, as the time approaches for holding the county, district, and State conventions, which are to nominate candidates for the various offices let Christians all over this State make it known, that if we walk with it further it must give us men who are sober, honest and competent. Yes, let the Christians of Alabama call God to witness that in the year 1886 they placed before the Democratic party of Alabama whisky and Christianity, and called loudly to it to choose Christianity and live. —E. G. MUSCROVE, Bangor, Ala.

The Spiritual is the Real.

Our real life is not made up of the outer events through which we pass in this world, but of the inner things which we experience in our souls. The real heights and depths of life are not in the wealth and poverty of earth, its successes and its failures, but in the riches and the wants of the spirit. The real greatness of man, or his real contemptibleness, is not in the magnificence of his apparel or of his method of living, nor on the other hand, is it the humbleness of his position and the insignificance of his labors. But his greatness, if he has it, is because of the meanness of his spirit. The real soldier is not that one who carries a gun or sword, seeking to destroy his fellow-man of this world, or to carry on the conflicts which arise between these selfish interests of the nations; but he is that man who within the silence of his own breast is waging conflict with the powers of evil. The real traveller is not that person who has been abroad, who has encircled the globe and beheld the distant wonders of the earth; but he is that man who in the realm of thought and feeling has attained unto the apprehension of divine truth and unto the growth of his affections. The real stay-at-home is not the one who has never left his native village; but he is that one whose thoughts and affections have never extended beyond the little beaten circle of selfish satisfactions to which his life has been devoted. Not he attains unto the real romance and adventure who has hair-brained escapades with his body, and experiences thrilling adventures in his conflict with desperate characters in the world, but the real romance is within the heart. And the real explorer is not the discoverer of new countries; but he is the man who dares to cut loose from the commonplace of thought and affection in which he has been trained, and ventures into other kingdoms of spiritual intelligence; and to other climes of spiritual emotions.

One may be all these naturally, and not one of them spiritually. One may traverse the globe to its remotest corners, and spiritually never leave the house in which he was born. And though living naturally in the corner of an obscure village, one may spiritually traverse the highways of truth and of love to their extremities. One may wear the uniform of a soldier, but never dare to stand in a battle in his spirit. One may be wealthy with the opulence of earth, and go spiritually in rags. As the Lord said in the Revelation to the church of the Laodiceans: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and with raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." (iii: 17-18). Thus all conditions and achievements of life in the natural world represent corresponding states of the soul; and these last are the real experiences. —H., in *New Church Messenger*.

Our Savior says: "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." And he commands us to "Go teach all nations." If we can't go to people, we may go by helping those to go, who are saying: "Here am I, send me." If we believe that men are perishing without the gospel, and that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, then let us help to send them this saving power.—Ex.

How the Christian is a Child of God Both by Birth and Adoption.

BY GEO. E. BREWER.

Sometimes a child sees clearly what appears obscure to great minds. Most of us have heard of the chamber maid who clearly unfolded to several divines how the apostolic injunction "to pray without ceasing" could be carried out, after they had vainly sought a solution. Acting upon this thought pardon me for attempting to tell what has appeared so great a difficulty to many really great men. Even Hend. Buck, usually so clear and strong, regards adoption as a subject of inexplicable mystery. He says:

"Much has been said as to the time of adoption. Some place it before regeneration, because it is supposed we must be in the family before we can be partakers of the blessings of it. But it is difficult to conceive of one before the other; for although adoption may seem to precede regeneration in order of nature, yet not of time. They may be distinguished, but cannot be separated."

Before being born again man is not in God's family at all. "If ye have not the Spirit of Christ ye are none of his." Regeneration then precedes any family relation, and must therefore precede adoption. That cannot be adopted which does not exist, and as it is only the regenerate who will be adopted children of God, regeneration must come first.

But let us strike right to the root of the difficulty. This grows out of the supposition that both regeneration and adoption are applied to the same thing. This is not true, and would be absurd if true. If regeneration precedes adoption, then the regenerate one is a real child—a legal descendant of God—partaker of the divine nature, and it would be a humiliating act to adopt such a real child, and a strong implication that no real relationship existed. To adopt one that it was intended subsequently to bring into the closer relationship of childhood by generation, would be still more absurd, and of supererogation.

The truth is, that the one who is the child by the new birth, is not the one who is the child by adoption. They are intimately associated, so much so that in one sense they are one; but in another sense they are different. The Christian, like Christ, possesses a dual nature—the Spirit, which is divine—the body, which is human. Christ says, the one who enters the kingdom of God "must be born again—born from above—born of the Spirit." That which is born is an emanation from the parent, partaker of the same nature, and cannot be adopted, for a higher and holier relation exists. It is a mystery as to how the divine nature is imparted or exists in a depraved human being, but the mystery does not destroy the fact. That the divine nature dwells in the Christian and is distinct from his human nature is evidenced by the following passages. "If ye have not the Spirit of Christ ye are none of his." "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "The body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of Christ." "He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Here the body is said to be mortal, but the spirit dwells in the mortal body, is the Spirit of Christ. Is it any wonder then that John says, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God?" These and other passages prove clearly that the spirit nature of the regenerate is divine, and emanates from God through the process of birth, a real child, needing no adoption.

But this spirit nature exists in connection with another which it needs to perfect its being. That is its bodily organism, through which the spirit performs its function—does its work. It needs eyes to see a brain to think, a mouth to speak, feet to walk, hands to work, &c. These are furnished in the body. While representing Christ in this world, the spirit needs a mortal body, "subject to vanity," to interlink with depraved humanity if draw him to humanity as God has appointed agency, just as Christ needed a human nature to draw man to God. This is a part of the Christian, distinct from his spirit nature, but closely allied to it, and without which the spirit could not do its work. The body is dear to the spirit, cling to it by it, but it can never be born into the childhood of God, cannot enter the kingdom of God a mortal body, a sinful body, and yet the spirit longs for associations with it. If it ever enters the kingdom it cannot do so by birth, for it is a piece of mechanism, a crea-

ture and can only be made a child by adoption.

Dear Christian, do not be too much troubled at the frailty of your human body, though it is "subject to vanity," for that vanity "is subjected in hope," "for the creature," (the body) "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Recollect that while "we are groaning within ourselves" over this body of sin, longing for deliverance, "the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of our body." Thanks be to God for the sweet assurance that the body shall be brought into the relation of childhood by adoption. The time when it takes place is at the redemption or resurrection of the body, when the mortal body of the Christian shall be quickened by the immortal Spirit of Christ that here dwells in his body. Each Christian spirit recognizes its old tabernacle of clay, now made like unto the glorious body of Christ, and enters what is to be thereafter its ever living habitation. The strife and warfare are then ended, for the two distinct natures of the Christian both become loving members of the same family, one by birth, the other by adoption. How fitting will be the union, and how just the award of mutual eternal felicity, for whatever the loving Christ Spirit within the Christian has accomplished for the glory of God and salvation of man, has been done through the reluctant body subjected to the Spirit of Christ within.

LaFayette, Ala.

Why a Dearth of Ministers.

Among the various reasons assigned by our contemporaries for the insufficient supply of effective preachers there is one which has not been sufficiently considered, viz. the failure of Christians to comply with the command: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." This was spoken with special reference to a greater scarcity of ministerial workers than we have to-day, and reveals the divine method for supplying the world with preachers. The ministry, then, is not to be recruited on the same principles as other professions. They draw men by their attractions; but only the voice of God, a keen sense of obligation, ought to lead any one to preach. The amount of salary, the hardships, worldly emoluments of all kinds are not to be considered. The young man with whom these considerations are the determining motive is wholly unfit for the ministry of Christ. The conscience must be profoundly stirred by the Spirit of God, and the heart must be constrained by the love of Christ, or one lacks the very first qualification to do the work of a gospel preacher. When they are thus wrought upon young men will not refuse to preach because they can earn larger pay at some other calling. The Lord can lay his hand on the most talented men among us who have the brightest prospects and bring them into the pulpit. He has done this in other ages. The men who were mighty preachers foresaw the most flattering inducements for fame and fortune and became heralds of the Cross. The Lord laid the work upon them, and followed them with his call until they gladly surrendered. When was this? When God's people prayed for more preachers. He has always shown himself ready to send all the ministers needed and of the kind most wanted when Christians have asked him for them. We have seen this illustrated more than once. We remember a certain church where, often, in almost every meeting, the Lord was asked to raise up able young men for the ministry, and during all these years it has been blessed with able pastors and peace and prosperity, and has licensed more men to preach than all the other churches in its association. At a certain meeting about eighteen months ago an hour was given to prayer, not to talk, but earnest supplication, for an increase of preachers, and very soon several young men offered themselves for the work and are preparing themselves to preach. One of them was present at this meeting, unconverted, but in a few weeks was converted and at once decided to enter the ministry. In one of our Associations last fall considerable time was given to prayer for this object. A year has not passed, but within this Association two young men have already entered upon the work of preaching. One of them is very acceptably serving two small churches which were then destitute of preaching and saw no way to get any.

If all our Associations and churches would pursue a similar plan the present ministerial destitution would be reasonably supplied. The resources of God's kingdom are equal to the emergency. If we will not use the Lord's plan for helping ourselves we must go without. Let prayer for more preachers become as common as it is now uncommon and our vacant pulpits will be filled with men after God's own heart.—*Indiana Baptist.*

Alabama Baptist.

MONTGOMERY, ALA., JUNE 8, 1886.

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MINUTES OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION.

We should have acknowledged last
week the receipt of Minutes of South-
ern Baptist Convention, which ap-
pear in less than two weeks after ad-
journing. The skill and promptness
of Bro. Gregory and Burrows, the ef-
ficient secretaries, are a source of grati-
fication to the denomination. The
statistics are full, and show much care
on the part of Bro. Burrows. If you
want a copy send three cents in
stamps for postage to B. B. Davis,
Eufaula, Ala.

REV. B. F. RILEY, D.D.

Information comes to us that Dr.
Riley has been invited to take the
Presidency of the Baptist college of
Louisiana. This is a well deserved
compliment. Bro. Riley has won for
himself during his stay in Livingston
where he is now pastor, a reputation
that will live as long as that town shall
live. As an advocate of prohibition
he has been fearless, manly, aggressive,
successful. Not only this but
his church is always crowded to hear
him preach. His sermons are always
rich, argumentative, eloquent, and
full of gospel truths. He is universally
beloved by every Christian man and
woman in his community. While we
are satisfied Dr. Riley would, by his
talent, scholarship, and unconquerable
perseverance, succeed as the presi-
dent of a college, we must enter our
protest against our sister State taking
him from his field of labor. We need
such men and preachers among us.
Our field is white unto the harvest,
and we cannot spare a reaper—espe-
cially a first-class one.

REV. J. J. PORTER.

This famous evangelist is now at
work in Montgomery, holding three
meetings a day. His labors promise
to be blessed here as they have been
in Fort Deposit, Greenville, Andalu-
sia, Troy, and Tuskegee. His meet-
ings are held in a warehouse, and his
audiences at night, for ten nights in
succession, have been estimated at
2500 to 3000. God has given a man
great opportunities for usefulness who
can hold such audiences night after
night, seated on rough plank benches
with no backs, while he preaches for
from one hour and a quarter to one
hour and a half. Earnest and fearless
he attacks sin in high places and in
low. He reaches many whom other
preachers do not find in our churches.
Altogether we think he is accom-
plishing much good.

When the battle against sin begins
every Christian should buckle on the
armor and fight. It is then not the
time for criticisms of the general's
methods. Then the preacher needs the
earnest work, the hearty co-opera-
tion, in word and deed, of every man
and woman who is on the Lord's side.

REV. ISAAC U. WILKES.

We have already mentioned the
sudden death of this brother at our
late Convention, whether he had gone
for the double purpose of attending
that meeting and consulting a physi-
cian in reference to his voice. Some
eighteen months or two years ago, he
lost the use of his voice, and has been
practically laid aside from his work
ever since. On Monday night of the
Convention, he went to the Baptist
church to attend the missionary meet-
ing, and while sitting in the church,
he commenced feeling badly, and
arose to go to his room. On his way

he fell on the sidewalk and immedi-
ately expired.

The late venerable Dr. Dagg once
said to us, in deep emotion, after at-
tending a meeting of unusual interest,
"My dear brother, we know not how
near heaven is to us!" We thought of
the expression in connection with this
event. The heavenly chariot suddenly
descended, as in the case of Elijah,
caught up our beloved brother as he
was leisurely walking in the highway,
and bore him in triumph over the ever-
lasting hills!

Brother Wilkes was approaching,
we suppose, his three score years—
had been in the ministry not less than
thirty-five years, and had made an
honorable record as an able, zealous,
and effective pastor. To a fine native
endowment, were added the advan-
tages of a good education and appre-
ciative churches. With capacities that
would have adorned what we call
the higher stations in the sacred call-
ing, he was content to serve country
churches through his entire ministerial
life, and satisfied with what the Mas-
ter has promised his servants, "food
and raiment." Never seeking to
"make gain of godliness," he lived
and died just as the Master directed,
in humble life, leaving nothing to his
wife and children but his good name.
For like Moses, he "had respect unto
the recompense of reward."

We hope his surviving brother, Rev.
Washington Wilkes, will furnish a
suitable sketch of this worthy man.

PRAYER—ITS AGENCY IN THE WORK OF MISSIONS.

After all that has been written and
spoken by the Godly of all ages, in
books, tracts, religious journals, ser-
mons and addresses, after all the ex-
periences of Christians in the closet,
in their families, in the great congre-
gations, and in all the varied exigen-
cies of life, from the cradle to the
grave, there is something about prayer
that never has been transferred to
parchment or paper, or uttered by hu-
man tongues. When we attempt to
explain that wonderful something, it
recedes back into its mysterious pa-
villion of "secret things" known only
to God. The most constant and fa-
miliar duty to which we are called, it
is nevertheless the most inexplicable.
A child can wield it, but the profoundest
thinker cannot fathom it. More powerful
than the "law of gravitation," the
"weakest saint upon his knees" can
touch its springs and bring
Almighty to the rescue. More
subtle and less understood than growth
in the vegetable kingdom, it over-
comes all the forces of earth and hell
combined. It is at once the alpha-
bet of religion, and its unknown and
unknowable quantity. One while we
think we have its true rationale when
we are told it seeks to change us, not
God. That is true as far as it goes.
But we are met by the great fact that
it has changed what appeared to be
divine determinations, as where Moses
interceded for Israel when God pro-
posed to destroy that people, and
raised up another nation from Moses.
The great lawgiver intercedes, and
God changes the sentence from one
of destruction to one of correction.
Hezekiah is ordered to set his house
in order, for he must die and not live.
He prays piteously to God and fifteen
years are added to his life. Then we
think we have some solution of it in
the fact that the praying man is in
covenant relation with God, is his
child, and that he has promised to
hear him. But then we are confronted
with such a case as Cornelius,
a heathen, who knew nothing of the
plan of salvation, or of a spiritual in-
fluence, "whose prayers and alms
went up before God," and Peter is
sent to open the kingdom of heaven
to him. The fact is, all the great
doctrines and duties of Christianity
are, as a great preacher once ex-
pressed it, "set in mysteries." The
law came from the cloud that en-
veloped Sinai. The advent of Christ
came through the mystery of the in-
carnation. That great change that
fits us for the service of God in this
life, and for his glory in the life to
come, is involved in the mystery of a
spiritual influence. And prayer is
the communion of an invisible spirit
with the invisible God. We live in a
world of mysteries. O, it is the
grandeur and the charm of the mys-
terious that hold our spirits to the
great God with more than adaman-
tine chains!

But really we have been betrayed
into this strain without at first intend-
ing it. Prayer for the success of
God's cause, for missions, was in our
mind. There is no form of prayer,
we may well suppose, more powerful
with God than intercessory prayer,
for this brings us in more direct com-
munion with the work of our adored
intercessor. What has been called
"the selfishness of the closet" has
often destroyed its efficacy. Prayer,
to reach its sublimest power with God,
is an *outflow*, instead of an *inflow*.
Take our Lord's prayer, every peti-
tion in it implies or expresses this out-
going of desires into the most bound-
less compass. If we may so express
it, the very central petition of the
prayer is, "Thy kingdom come, thy
will be done on earth as it is done
in heaven." The whole prayer is an
embodiment of that philanthropy that

brought our Savior from heaven to
earth, and it is only as we imbibe its
spirit, and illustrate it in our works of
faith and labors of love that we can
obey the injunction with which it is
introduced, "After this manner,
therefore, pray ye." The idea seems
to be that *prayer increases its power by
the breadth of its sympathies*. That en-
largement of heart that embraces the
whole world lying in wickedness pre-
sents that complexion of piety that
busies itself most in its own immedi-
ate sphere of activity. Those who
reach farthest in their solicitude and
efforts are the very persons who
abound most in the work of the Lord
at home. And this is to copy the ex-
ample of him who embraced "all na-
tions and every creature" in his bound-
less compassion, and who at the same
time "went about doing good" in his
own land with a zeal that never re-
laxed until he could say, "It is
finished." That pastor who fails to
develop his church on this broad scale,
dwarfs its piety, and dooms him-
self, in his own salary, to penury and
want.

KINDLY GREETINGS.

The late Convention presented one
of those rare occasions where good
men are permitted to mingle in so-
cial and religious intercourse from all
sections of our country after a separa-
tion of one, two, and three or
more years, to interchange those kind-
ly greetings which the religion of Je-
sus makes so pleasant and profitable.
We were forcibly reminded of the
meeting of Moses and his father-in-
law, Jethro, soon after the Israelites
had passed the Red Sea. Jethro had
heard of the marvellous wonders
which preceded and accompanied the
exodus of Israel from Egyptian bond-
age, and he came out to see his illu-
strious son-in-law, Moses, whom God
had so highly honored, and it is said
when they met, "they asked each
other of their welfare." It requires but
little imagination to realize what kind
of an interview occurred when two
such men as Moses and Jethro met
after a few years of separation, and
after Moses had achieved a reputation
that made him the greatest figure in
the history of the world. How much
each would have to tell the other of
what had occurred since last they met.
Especially would this be true of Mo-
ses. How his mind would kindle into
rapture as he would detail to the ven-
erated man the wonders that had
crowded into the last few months!
How our interest in Jethro deepens,
as, having listened to the wondrous
story of Moses, he departed and
"went to his own country." What
food for reflection for his old age
would this interview furnish him.
With what interest he would likely
listen to the subsequent history of his
son-in-law.

But what we aimed to say related
to the social privileges of our late
Convention. There are no friends
ships so strong, so tender, as those
cemented by the religion of Jesus. So
that those occasions which bring good
men together at longer or shorter in-
tervals, are always hailed with a cer-
tain desirable pleasure that nothing
but Christian love can inspire. The
tie that binds Christian hearts to
Christ and to each other is, and must
be, stronger than all other ties. It has
its origin in a far higher source than any
of those mutual complaisances found-
ed in earthly interests, congeniality or
even consanguinity. It is heaven-
born and heaven-tending. It comes
of a common union with our glorified
Immanuel, and is therefore as much
above all earthly affiliations as heaven
is above earth. Mere worldly friend-
ships are generally founded in inter-
est and dissolved from convenience.
Even the most sacred ties that unite
us to earthly objects are broken by
death. But the union of saints to a
common Lord survives the shock of
death, and meets its highest perfec-
tion in that world of untroubled har-
monies.

"Where those who meet shall part no more,
And those long parted meet again."

Indeed, that bond of union by
which saints are united, and which
makes them "one in Christ Jesus," is
called "the kingdom of heaven" even
here. And why? Because the very
principles on which this union is
founded, as well as the sacred tend-
erness of their mutual sympathies and
love, are the same that animate the
course of the general assembly and
church of the first born in the king-
dom of glory above, the only differ-
ence being that here they partake of
the disproportions of earth, whereas
there they share the proportion of
heaven—there the spirits of the just
are made perfect. These occasional
re-unions are bright spots in our earth-
ly pilgrimage, reminding us of that
happier re-union which awaits us
when we shall put on immortality.
The difference is between grave and
glory—grave is glory begun, and
death is the merging of the one into
the other. O with what misery care
do we treasure up such occasions in
our memories, occasions in which our
spirits unbend, yielding to those gen-
eral sympathies, those tender amenities
which leap from our hearts as soul
meets soul in all the confiding inti-
macies of mutual Christian love!

"Like a young hawk on earthly ground,
And glory in the bud!"

STUBBORN CHRISTIANS.

We purpose saying some plain
things in this article. From our ob-
servation and close examination we
are of the opinion that every church
in Alabama has one or more stubborn,
unruly, troublesome member in it.
We regard these elements in a church
member as a stumbling block to the
success of church work. When the
conference day comes, the stubborn
member will go out to the meeting,
approach the church with a sour look,
and a cold, formal, good morning.
He says but little, he goes into the
house, gets as close up to the wall as
he can, and squares himself ready to
oppose everything except what he
proposes himself. You never see him
smile, he is all the time looking for
something to "growl" at, and he is
never so happy as when he can get up
a fuss. He goes home and criti-
cizes the preacher and the deacons,
and all the members that did not agree
with him. In the summer season
he feeds on crab-apples, in the winter
vinegar. He is always looking out
for something to complain about, and
if he fails to find it he is disappointed,
and as unhappy as disappointed.

Present any new plan concerning
church work, for instance, the "en-
velope system," and he at once makes
a vigorous assault on it, prophesying
that it will ruin the church, drive away
members, destroy harmony, and all
this. Now this is all wrong, the only
reason that brother does not fall into
line, is because he was not consulted
first. There are some church mem-
bers who will not move a peg unless
they can work in the lead. These
crusty, crabbed, cross members, whose
ways are above everybody else's ways,
will always create trouble. We have
seen members come into church, who
actually look like their very walk ex-
pressed dissatisfaction. How good
and how pleasant it is for brethren
to dwell together in unity. For brethren
to meet fraternally, cordially, affec-
tionately, wearing a smile of joy and
gladness, insures a successful coming
together.

A growing Christian! is there such
a being? Can one who has the love of
God in his heart, love for his fellow-
men, a desire to see good accomplish-
ed, show signs of discontent, of
stubbornness, crustiness, crossness?
We think that every true genuine
Christian, whose heart is full of love,
will manifest it even in the darkest
hour of affliction and trial. It is said
that the devil goes about like a roar-
ing lion seeking whom he may de-
vour. And so with these unruly,
unsatisfied, discontented members of the
church, who think their way is the
only way, and whose countenances
are like a storm-cloud—frightful and
fearful—they are always huffing and
looking for something to complain
about, and their complaints are most
often directed against the innocent
pastor.

FIELD NOTES.

Dr. T. P. Crawford lectured in
Tuscaloosa last week on the "Races
of Men."

Rev. Alva Woods, D.D., first presi-
dent of our State University is now
living in Providence, R. I.

Dr. G. A. Nunnally, of Eufaula,
contributes an article on Helps to
Prayer for June number of *Pulpit
Treasury*.

The First church of this city re-
ceived ten upon profession of faith
last Sabbath. Numerous accessions
were had to the other churches.

On the 16th, by authority of the
church at Roanoke, Geo. W. Hill, J.
F. Barrow, and F. T. Manly, were
ordained deacons of Roanoke church.

There is nothing I enjoy more than
the weekly visits of the ALABAMA
BAPTIST, it seems to improve each
week. Long may it live.—*An Au-
tanga Reader*.

The annual sermon before Shorter
College will be preached next Sunday
by Dr. Lansing Burrows. The ad-
dress before the societies will be de-
livered on June 9th by Hon. Seaborn
Wright.

We sympathize deeply with Col. A.
B. Stanley of the *Greenville Advocate*
whose wife died last week. Many
are the friends all over Alabama whose
tears mingle with his in the sad be-
reavement.

Dr. Geo. Cooper of Richmond,
Va., will preach the baccalaureate
sermon of Washington and Lee Uni-
versity on 13th, and Col. McClure
of Philadelphia will address the
literary societies on 16th.

Rev. M. M. Wamboldt preached
his farewell sermon as pastor of
Adams Street church, in this city, on
30th ult. He has accepted the call
of First church, Chattanooga, and
enters at once upon his work there.

The meetings at the Baptist church
in Gadsden under the auspices of the
Rev. Mr. Thomson are increasing
in interest, and no doubt will result
in another great revival. Services
are now being held three times per
day.—*News*.

Anniston, after trying prohibition,
is satisfied, and on Monday voted
427 for prohibition and 88 against.
The result of the Eufaula election
gives assurance that the sentiment

grows there, too, for a council was
elected favorable to the temperance
interest when the question comes up.

Rev. J. D. Renfro of Talladega,
will begin a protracted meeting at the
Baptist church at this place on Friday
before the second Sunday in June. Dr.
Renfro is a very able divine and the
probability is that the church can't
contain the people that will be here
to listen to him.—*Lafayette Sun*.

Rev. F. M. Law, of Bryan, Tex.,
is now visiting relatives in Talladega
county. He preached for Bro. Wilkes
at his appointment, Saturday before
the 4th Sunday inst., and on the next
day gave a Bible reading on the sub-
ject of temperance, which was certain-
ly very entertaining and conclusive.

—*L. A. D., Fayetteville*.

The First Baptist church in Bir-
mingham is to have a Chinese depart-
ment in the Sunday-school, which
will be under the auspices of the
Sunbeam Society. Rev. D. I. Purser,
the pastor, thinks much good can re-
sult by teaching the heathen Chinese
at home rather than sending mission-
aries abroad.

When Dr. Lyman Beecher was
once congratulated on the great suc-
cess of his Boston pastorate, he re-
plied, "It is not I that do it, it is my
church. I preach as faithfully as I
can on the Sabbath, and then I have
three or four hundred members who
go out and preach every day of the
week—preach by their Christian ex-
ample and also by their words, en-
deavoring in and by both so to live
and act as to point and lead men to
Christ."

A most interesting revival meeting
has been going on in the Baptist
church at Tallapoosa, Elmore county.
During the two weeks there have been
80 accessions to the membership—
nearly all by baptism. It has been
attended with no particular excite-
ment. Rev. Jefferson Falkner did
most of the preaching. Bro. Upham,
the pastor, was present, giving his aid.
Bro. Falkner's sermons were earnest
and full of solid gospel truths. Let
God be praised for what he has done
for Tallapoosa.

May 23rd was a good day with the
Lafayette church. The morning
showed the largest number of pupils
present we have ever had before in
the Sunday-school. We had a large
and interested congregation. The
mission collection for the month was
\$22.55. Two were baptized, both
promising young men. There have
been seven additions to the church in
the past two meetings, and a good
state of feeling pervading the church.
We are happy in the prospect of having
Bro. Renfro with us soon, to stay
a few days.—*Geo. E. Brewer*.

Perhaps it would be of some interest
to your readers to know of our gra-
tuitous meeting at this place. I began
this meeting immediately after the
Convention, up to this time we have
had fifty-six accessions to the church,
still the work goes on. There are
scores of earnest seekers at the morn-
ing's bench every opportunity given.
Indeed, the whole town is moved to-
ward Christ. Our dear Bro. Falkner
is aiding me in these services, doing
most of the preaching, which gets
right hold of the people. Pray for us
that the Word of the Lord may have
free course.—*W. J. D. Upshaw, Tal-
lapoosa*.

Our church here organized a Sab-
bath-school May 9th. We have nine
teachers and fifty-four students, and
prospect of a good school. We will
observe "Children's Day" and Sun-
day in June. The church at her meet-
ing two weeks ago resolved to take
quarterly collections for the objects of
our State Board. I introduced Bro.
Crumpton's Envelope plan, and for-
warded him a small contribution,
which will be larger next month. If
some of our brethren will look at the
figures on their ALABAMA BAPTIST,
they will see that they are in arrears
—would be glad to forward their re-
newals.—*D. Rogers, Shorterville*.

Our Baptist friends of Carrollton
have renovated and repainted the in-
side and front of their house, display-
ing much taste in the combination
and blending of colors. It presents
a handsome appearance, and altogether
we suppose it is the most attractive
and comfortable meeting-house in the
county. The new arrangement of the
seats will add much to the convenience
of the congregation. The lighting
and heating arrangements are excel-
lent. This is commendable pride and
reflects to the credit of the church,
but especially the committee charged
with the work, who have displayed
good taste and judgment in the dis-
charge of their duty.—*West Alabama*.

We invite attention to the advertise-
ment of Dr. Everhart's school for
girls, "Hammer Hall." It is situated
in Montgomery, and the surroundings
here furnish advantages not to be found
at some other points.

Difficulties flinched from or mini-
mized for temporary relief usually
avenge themselves at some future
time by assuming more formidable
shapes; and he who would help others
towards the "yea" of a well assured
conviction must measure with them
the full force of every "nay" which
obstructs their path.—*T. Vincent
Tynins*.

State Missions Now—Two Months More.

My dear brother: The Southern
Baptist Convention is now over. The
last few months we have been doing
our best for its Boards. I am pleased
to say, we have contributed more to
these than for several years past. Let
us now remember our own State
Board. Two months more and it
must make its report to the State Con-
vention, at Birmingham. What that
report will be, depends largely upon
the action of the pastors and churches
in the next sixty days.

We are helping at the following
places: Demopolis, Anniston, Geneva,
Third and Fourth and Southside
churches in Birmingham, Auburn,
Decatur, Madison, East Selma, Etowah,
Clinton, Ironsonton and a number of
other villages and towns in the State.
We have Colporteurs in Hale and
Perry counties, Selma and Mont-
gomery Associations, Missionaries
and Colporteurs in the Union, Bigbee,
Elm, East Liberty, Tuskegee, Ten-
nessee River, Cherokee, Antioch,
North River, South Bethel, Tallapoosa
River, Pine Barren, Cahaba Valley,
Bethlehem and Judson Associations
and the Baptist Union. We have
promised aid at Briarfield. There
are nearly two thousand people there.
Forty or fifty Baptist can be gathered
there. They have in hand \$500, a
nice lot, "and a mind to work" to-
ward securing a house. At Wood-
lawn, four miles above and almost a
part of Birmingham, a good church is
organized, with quite a sum in hand
for building. They have the chance
of a good pastor. If the Board can
help them a year or two they will be
able to help others. At Warrior
and many other places where the
cause was weak the Board is asked
to help. At Florence, one of the
finest towns in the State, we have no
church; the same is true of Greensboro,
where once flourished the strongest
church in Alabama.

We want to raise between this and
July \$2,000 for State Missions. Will
you not help us to do this?

Write to me for envelopes, intro-
duce these in your churches for
monthly or quarterly collections; the
Board furnishes them free on applica-
tion—but don't wait for the en-
velopes—the demand is urgent. Send
me a collection for this object as soon
as you can.

Now, my dear brother, read this to
your brethren and ask them to "come
up to the help of the Lord."

W. B. CRUMPTON.

Items from Clarke County.

Editors *Ala. Baptist*: The following
is inspired by your late editorial
"Give us more news."

West Bend church is situated five
miles north of Coffeeville, on the
Tomlinburg river, on the western side
of Clarke county, in the midst of a
quiet, fairly prosperous, and moral
community. Its organization dates
back only a few years, and it has en-
joyed the pastoral labors of Elders P.
E. Kirven, (now of Texas) L. T.
Daniel, G. M. Parker, and James W.
Dickinson, who is the present pastor.
The South Bethel Association con-
vened with this church in its last ses-
sion. Like too many other churches
that could do better, it has only
monthly meetings, and a Sabbath
school that rises and falls with the
thermometer, that is to say, usually
lasts through the summer months.
The church is numerically small, but
we dearly love our pastor and try as
best we may, to "hold up his hands."

His sermon last Sabbath from I
Cor. 16:10, was a plain exegetical dis-
course upon the relationship of the
church to its pastor, in the main, but
he managed to put in a strong appeal
to the church on behalf of missions.

I hope the question of Bro. J. A.
G., "Can it be done?" will be answered
affirmatively. Brother Crumpton
seems to be "a workman that needeth
not to be ashamed," and the fit suc-
cessor of our beloved Bailey.

He is endeavoring to introduce the
Envelope System of contributions in
this association, and presumably
throughout the State, and I trust that
he may not only succeed, but that we
may all realize from it our best hopes.

J. R. COWAN.

"I Cannot Keep the Command- ments."

REV. J. H. BROOKES.

Of course you cannot, for if you
could you would not need Christ to
save you. You mean, no doubt, the
Ten Commandments, Thou shalt not
do this, that and the other? If there-
fore you could keep them, you would
still fail to attain a positive righteous-
ness, and at best have only a negative
goodness. A young ruler came to our
Lord with the question, "What shall
I do that I may inherit eternal life?"
As he proposed to do something, Je-
sus met him on the ground of his own
choosing, and told him to keep the
commandments, mentioning six out
of the ten. "All these," said the
young man, "have I observed from
my youth," but still he was not saved
nor satisfied, for if he had been, he
would not have come to Christ to

know what else he must do. Mark
x, 17-22.

But take the first two command-
ments here mentioned, and look at
the deceitfulness of human nature,
when men talk about keeping them.
"Do not commit adultery." Follow
up the command with the comment
of Jesus, "Whosoever looketh on a
woman to lust after her, hath com-
mitted adultery with her already in
his heart." Mat. v, 27. The next is,
"Do not kill." Follow up the com-
mand with the comment of the Holy
Ghost, "Whosoever saith his brother
is a murderer; and ye know that
no murderer hath eternal life abiding
in him." 1 John iii, 15. Multitudes
are guilty repeating the ten command-
ments every Lord's day, who would
be appalled if the light of their far
reaching demand were flashed into
their conscience. "The Lord seeth not
as man seeth; for man looketh on the
outward appearance; but the Lord
looketh on the heart." 1 Sam. xvi, 7.
He knows your vileness and helplessness,
and this is his commandment,
"uttered, not amid the thunders of
Sinai, but from the cross of Calvary,
"That we should believe on the name
of his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John iii, 23.

The old commandment under the
law was, "Love God," the new com-
mandment under grace is, "Believe
in God's love for you," and surely we
may add with the inspired Apostle,
"His commandments are not grievous."
1 John v, 3. You are not only
invited and entreated, and authorized
to believe on Christ, but you are com-
manded to believe. "This is the work
of God, that ye believe on him whom
he hath sent," John vi, 29; and until
this work is done, ye are folly to talk
about keeping the commandments.

Preparation for Life.

We heard the statement made re-
cently that the New Testament has
nothing to say about preparation for
death. We have not attempted to
verify or disprove the statement, but
we have not been able to recall any
words that directly refer to that sub-
ject. Of course the speaker did not
mean that the New Testament does
not tell us how to be ready for that
solemn hour that awaits us all. It
was in his mind that the aim of the
New Testament is to teach us how to
begin and persevere in that life of
glory and peace that never ends.
Death he said was incidental. It is
but a step in that onward movement
of events that leads into the life of
eternity. We are sure, then, that
whether this assertion be literally true
or not, it contains a suggestive truth.
We prepare best for death by prepar-
ing for life. Life, as life, begins on
earth. What we call death is but the
dark door that divides the life beyond
from the life here. The great thing
is to be ready for that life beyond.
And we are prepared for the life be-
yond by being ready for the life that
now is. No one is ready for the
present life until his faith rests in
Jesus Christ. When he does repose
faith in the Savior he is ready, surely,
for the life that is to come. In the
largest and most important sense he
has made preparation for death.
Such preparation as good whether
death comes announced and with
measured tread, or whether it comes
in the twinkling of an eye. So, while
it may be that in a limited sense we
ought to concern ourselves with pre-
paration for death, in the larger sense
we are to direct our attention to pre-
paration to live. If we are ready for
life we are ready for death.

Commencement Howard College, Mar

