

## OVERSEERS.

The duties of the overseer of a congregation of Disciples is somewhat apparent from the qualifications marked out by the Apostle Paul in his letters to Timothy and Titus. An overseer "must be blameless, the husband of one wife, [not a plurality], vigilant, sober, [or prudent], of good behaviour, [modest], given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, [not quarrelsome], not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity, for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? not a novice, [one newly come to the faith] lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them who are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Thus writes Paul to Timothy.

The prosperity of a church of Disciples of Christ depends much upon the character of the overseers. The apostle has been very particular about the character of this officer. There is no higher officer in the church of God, than an overseer; and how careless the brethren have been in many instances regarding the choice of their overseers. Political standing, riches or flippancy of speech, have been their standard, while the apostles qualifications have been ignored. Persons appointed to that office who were unacquainted with the Bible! How could they be apt to teach! True they might teach men's opinions, but this is not Paul's instruction. When brethren unfit for that office are appointed, the moral dearth must inevitably follow.

Properly qualified overseers are much needed in the present day. Churches are waning in strength, brethren are becoming discouraged, schemes are devised, such as hiring pastors, &c., some becoming "luke warm," going back into the world, and more would go if it were not for the occasional visits of the preacher. All this and much more may be seen and felt in consequence of inefficient, or what is very near it, no overseers at all. Churches are now languishing, simply on account of these things. A thirst for office on the part of some bold, rash and presumptuous persons, cause modest and better men to hide their heads and seek the path of quietitude without the responsibility,

the former glide easily into office, and what can be expected as to the result, but what we too frequently see and hear. No christian can neglect the command of Christ, with impunity. No church can neglect the precepts of Jesus, the Head, with impunity. Better have neither overseers nor deacons than to appoint improper persons. It is easy to put an office hunter into place, but very difficult sometimes to put him out. Preachers should visit those churches where no overseers exist as frequently as possible. More anon.

PHILEMON.

## CRITICISMS.

"Baptism is the first resurrection." So said a public speaker not long since. I have long believed there will be a first resurrection, but I do not think *baptism* that resurrection. If baptism be the first resurrection there is a death connected with it, why not this the first *death*? If so that which is called by some "natural death" will be the *second*. The bible says upon those who have "part in the first resurrection the second death hath no power." But christians die. The first resurrection is inseparably connected with a reigning with Christ a thousand years." Rev. xx. Can this be predicated of any person obeying christian baptism before the "resurrection of the just."

The same person said that a man who was baptized, was "buried in his own death." How can this be? A child can see that the person baptized is buried in water: but buried in his own death, if truth, is a new revelation!

After ridiculing the idea of shedding tears, he said *repent* meant *turn*. This is an important thought, correct or incorrect. If correct we should all know it. If incorrect the speaker ought to know it. In 3rd of Acts Peter says "Repent ye therefore and be converted," and the word for which we have convert, in the King's version, should be translated *turn*. This being indisputably true, the speaker referred to would charge Peter with the most flagrant tau-tology. "Turn ye therefore and turn or be turned," would be shocking to common sense. But we regard those words of Peter, in the 3rd chapter of Acts, the same in import as his response to the anxious inquirers in the 2nd chapter. The baptism of a penitent believer in the name of the Lord is simply his *turning* to the Lord. "Repentance is not reformation