

## ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

## REMOVE THE WEEDS.

EDITOR CHRISTIAN,—Dear Bro.—A few years ago I saw a colored man trying to rid a potato field of the weeds which had, during the summer, been gaining strength. I said to the man, who appeared to be working very industriously, "Your crop does not seem to be very promising." "No," said he, "I had no time to attend to it, being employed all my time in Morrison's Mill."

The land appeared good. The weeds were rank and tall, but when they were removed the promise of an abundant ingathering was not very strong. The delicate stalks dropped to the ground limp and weak, because the weeds had remained too long.

I thought then, and think now, that field, untended, until almost ruined, in some respects resembles a church which, although built on the true foundation and according to the truth of God, is afterward left too long without proper care. The weeds grow tall and rank. The thorough establishment of righteousness is retarded. The saints of God become weak in standing up for the truth, until it almost disappears, overwhelmed by the abounding evils, which, creeping in little by little, have finally an almost all-pervading influence, as did the "leaven hid in three measures of meal." In any society, if unchecked, evil leaven works as surely as does good leaven.

It is thought by some, that, in the church, everything must remain, whether good or bad. There must be no removing of "tares" until the harvest comes, and then the angel reapers will do all the removing, by binding, first, the tares, &c. But, if, by the kingdom, in this connection, is strictly meant the church, which I think is incorrect, then, the position taken by those who think the evil persons and good persons must remain together in the church is contrary to common sense, to all experience, and to the teaching of the Spirit. First: Man is imitative, and is moulded, to a great extent, by the society in which he moves. Second: Experience has proved that if a little boy, who has committed his first theft, is put in for a term of years with hardened criminals, he comes out at the end of the term, more highly accomplished in the art of crime than he was at the beginning, and also more hardened and ready for its execution. Third: Paul says, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." So, if wicked persons are allowed to remain in the church, because of a desire to keep up the number, or from money considerations, or from some other consideration—somebody's friend—it will certainly have a corrupting and, consequently, a weakening influence. There is a necessity for a church, in any community, to stand, so that it will have, because it commands, the respect of the community. If it is absolutely necessary that the overseers in a church should have "a good report of those who are without," so is it necessary that the church itself should have a good report of those outside, or, if evil is spoken of the church by those who are without, let them be under the necessity of doing so "falsely." In order to success, membership in the church must stand above, and not below, what the world calls "par." If it does not stand at a "premium," if men outside are not under the impression that in order to have and retain membership there they must be purified in heart and life, there will be no great influence for good, but, like the church at Laodicea, while they think they are all right, they may be sinking deeper, day by day, in poverty, wretchedness, nakedness and misery.

But, how may a church of Jesus Christ come to this degraded state? It may begin in some, apparently, small matters, where the care of those who have the oversight is required, in setting some wrong

right, but, instead of carefulness, they neglect their duty, and so allow that little wrong (!) to pass unheeded until, as seed, remaining in the ground which should produce the fruits of righteousness, it produces greater evils, and like the diseased tree, in the orchard, communicates the contagion to others, and the disease spreads with steady pace until its influence is felt and manifested in one form or another in every member.

But says one: Would you cut off every offender—every one who by open sin brings the cause of Christ under reproach, or who by carelessness and indifference ignores the duties of the christian life, and so rebels against the authority of Him who said: "Occupy till I come?" By no means. "The Gospel of the Grace of God" is sent to save not to destroy. In our *guide book* there is a cure for every ill—a remedy for every disease. Judicious discipline must be attended to in order to the health and well-being of the church, but, attended to in the loving spirit of Him who "came to save that which was lost." The humane and skilful surgeon will always try to save the limb while there is hope, but as soon as it is manifest that to save the limb means death to the body, then it would be folly indeed to save the limb. So when all the remedies, prescribed by the great physician of souls, are unavailing, on account of the stubbornness of the disease, it is certainly better to sever the member than to endanger the life of the body.

And again, the strength of a church is not always proportioned to the number of members whose names are recorded on the books. If every member is good and true, then indeed the names represent the strength. But it may be easily perceived by any reasonable mind that you may add to the number and thereby weaken the church, as you may weaken an army, by taking traitors into the ranks.

Above all other societies on earth the Church of Christ should be pure. Its members be of one mind, and be one in sympathy, effort and aim. They are members one of another. They are united to one head. They are animated by one spirit. There should be no schism in the body, as a house divided against itself cannot stand. The blacksmith could never heat the iron if others continually kept pouring cold water on the fire.

Unitedly, let the children of God march on to victory. What is the interest of one is the interest of all. God has placed before us a perfect pattern. Let us follow after, remembering that the church is also the temple of God, that the Spirit of God dwells in her, and, if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, and intended to be holy.

O. B. EMERY.

Deer Island, Dec. 22, 1883.

## "BURNING A HOUSE TO KILL MICE."

The above met my eye not long since, and I concluded it was a very successful way to destroy mice, but awful hard on the house. Unless a man was crazy he would save the house even at the expense of the destruction of mice. Homely as this may appear, it well illustrates a principle far too often manifested, *i. e.*, doing a great amount of harm for the sake of doing, what may seem to us, a little good. How many homes and churches have in this way been destroyed.

We ought, as one has said, "To aim at reformation and not desolation." Never kill the patient for the sake of destroying the disease. How unwise, not to say presumptive, for one to make his notion or idea so prominent that it destroys the peace and unity of God's children, and thereby blocks the wheel of prosperity. We would not question the sincerity of such, but sincerity does not alter the case nor prevent the evil. If to thus destroy the unity of the brethren is wisdom, it is

certainly far from harmless. There is great need of careful and sober thought on this point in order to see the importance of balancing the scales with the love of humanity and the love of truth, then we will see the folly of making one overbalance the other, and then we will be careful to push our ideas of right only so far as will benefit the person or the cause. When we love our brethren as we ought we will be as unwilling to sacrifice their peace and happiness as we are now to sacrifice our opinions. When our cherished ideas have an evil effect we may rest assured they are not sound. Effect must follow cause. A good tree cannot bear evil fruit. The destruction that has followed this pernicious evil of pushing our pigmy-idols into society and insisting on their acceptance is sufficient proof that the tree is not good. The effect of our actions and our teachings should be to build up. We ought to be satisfied with nothing short of actual growth in character and in church work, not simply airing our ideas of how to build up, but to really and successfully build up the cause of God. Pity the man who has nothing but scars and bruises and broken bones for life's trophies. May common sense have her perfect work, and ever teach us the folly of endangering a good cause for the sake of destroying what seems to us an evil.

H. MURRAY.

## THE TWO ANCHORS.

Every vessel that leaves our shores—from the tiny craft that floats lightly upon the surface of the waters up to the magnificent ship that proudly spreads her sails to catch the favoring breeze—is provided with an anchor. No captain, no crew, could be found who would be so utterly reckless as to put to sea in a vessel unprovided with this absolutely necessary article. But it is of another kind of anchor I wish to speak more particularly—an anchor necessary not only to those whose business is upon the great waters, but to all men and all women alike. The Apostle Paul calls it the "anchor of the soul," and says that it is founded upon hope—the hope set before us in the gospel—the hope of eternal life—and declares that it is both sure and steadfast, because it takes hold within the veil. A person in possession of this hope can bid defiance to the storms of time and be calm in the midst of surrounding dangers. A vessel was driving ashore—her anchor was gone, her helm disabled—a few moments more and passengers and crew would be tossed upon the beach by the angry waters. In the midst of the general dismay and confusion there was one person calm and collected. He had done all that could be done to prepare for the worse, and now he was calmly awaiting the final shock. Some one asked him the reason of his calmness in the presence of dangers so appalling. "Do you not know that the anchor is gone, and we are drifting upon the rocks?" "Yes, I know it; but I have an anchor to the soul!" This was the ground of his confidence; this was what enabled him to possess his soul in patience, while those around him were overcome with terror.

But although this "anchor of hope" is so necessary to the present and future happiness of all mankind, many fail to realize the risks they are running by neglecting to properly equip themselves for the great voyage of life; and by and by, when the angry waters of eternity foam and dash upon the rocks that rise threateningly before them, they will be like the noble ship with her anchor gone and her helm disabled—they will fall an easy prey to the enemy of souls, and their light will go out forever in utter darkness, where there will be no possibility of a single ray of hope reaching them, and where they will spend a long eternity in unavailing regrets. From such a fate we may well pray to be delivered.

In conclusion, to the tempest-tossed soul we