

adopted, the churches would become more generally identified with the work, and much greater good would come from our annual gatherings. It is not intended by this suggestion to make the number of visitors less, but rather to have those who attend, or at least some of them, authorized to speak for the churches they represent. If the churches would choose certain brethren as delegates to our annuals to represent them, they would then be more in touch with these meetings, and feel under greater obligation to assist in carrying out any measures decided on to forward the cause in the interest of which we meet annually.

It would be well if every church would instruct their delegates as to what amount they could name as a pledge from each church to carry on our general missionary work. The churches making these pledges through their delegates, or entering into any other arrangements that may be thought best to promote the cause of Christ, would feel under obligation to see to it that these pledges, or arrangements, are fulfilled.

While much good has come from our annual gatherings in the past, we believe, if some such method were adopted, the influence of those meetings would be felt all along the years, and the churches would be more in touch with our general work.

As the object of this paper is only to bring this matter before the brotherhood, hoping others will give us their best thoughts thereon, I will only add that my suggestion now is, that every church whose membership is less than fifty should have at least two delegates, and two more for every additional fifty; that is, those churches which have, say, 100 members should have four delegates, thus giving two delegates for every additional fifty members. This would give a fair representation to all the churches and place all on an equal footing.

There are many other things that might be said in favor of this suggestion, but my paper has grown long enough, and I will leave the matters for others to speak of. I could hope that some one in every church in these provinces would speak out on this subject, and let us see if we cannot make at least a beginning at our coming annual. The sooner we get into shape along this line the better for the cause we plead.

SOME THOUGHTS ON BOOKS.

BERTHA W. BARNES.

Books are a very important factor in the building up of character. If we constantly read books containing noble sentiments, which reflect, as in a mirror, the beautiful spirit of the author, we are benefited and lifted nearer to that which is true and noble. If, on the other hand, we read light, frivolous matter, that only serves to give us false ideas of life, we, filled with these erroneous ideas, become dissatisfied with "our common daily duties," and our higher nature is dwarfed.

As we are careful to take such nourishment as will conduce to healthy growth in our bodies, so we should exercise the same care in selecting food for our minds.

Let us then try to read only those books which will ennoble our characters and lift us

nearer to God. As the result of such reading, the pages of our lives will be so filled with Christ-like deeds that the world, looking at them, will see that we are trying to be among those "who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality."

"If Christians like their Lord will be,
All men will lose their doubts and see
How real is Christianity;
What do they see in you, and say of you and me?"

To the zealous follower of Christ, this life is but a preparation for the glorious one beyond, upon which he shall enter when "this mortal shall have put on immortality."

"Full of vows, and full of labors,
All our days fresh duties bring,
First to God, and then our neighbor—
Christian—life's an earnest thing.

"Onward—ever onward pressing,
Yet untired as angel's wing;
Believing, doing, blest and blessing—
Christian—life's an earnest thing."

May we be found continually trying to "wear the white flower of a blameless life," so that when the angel of death closes our life-volume forever we may be judged worthy to enter the pearly gates of that city where all the unrest and turmoil of life shall have disappeared, and where "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

"The one remains, the many change and pass,
Heaven's light forever shines, earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it in fragments."

FORM IN CHURCH SERVICE AND ORDINATION.

O. B. STOCKFORD.

In an article on "Form in Christianity" in the February number of THE CHRISTIAN, I stated that I would in a future issue refer to some cases in which, in my opinion, we somewhat neglect proper forms. I will discuss these cases now.

While we cannot be fairly charged with detracting from the importance attached to the ordinances of the Church of Christ, nor treating them in any way with disrespect, yet at times it would appear that we may be justly accused of too lightly observing or entirely disregarding appropriate religious ceremonies.

While undoubtedly the prominence given to form during the Jewish age has been largely done away with under the present dispensation, yet it (form) is still necessary. And where it is still required it should be respected as much under the new as it was under the old covenant.

Public worship may be cited as one of the instances in which rite is still essential. Can it be said that we duly regard forms therein involved? Take prayer, for example. Do we follow the practice of the early church by assuming a reverent attitude in petitioning our Father in heaven? It is evident that the first Christians knelt in prayer, Acts xxi, 5. See also Acts vii, 60; ix, 40; and Eph. iii, 14, where this position has been adopted

in cases of individual devotion. Our Saviour honored this attitude by use, Luke xxii, 41. Again, it was customary under the Jewish dispensation, as II Chron. vi, 13; Ezra ix, 5; Ps. 95, 6; Dan. vi, 10, and other passages inform us.

Standing with bowed head is another approved posture during prayer. Luke xviii, 13, and presumably Mk. xi, 25, teach this. I do not know of any other position that is sanctioned by the Bible.

These acts of humility seem perfectly natural and proper when petitioning our Creator and Benefactor for those mercies, the least of which we are not worthy.

Then, again, we appear to push beyond its limits the truth that Christians, and not houses of worship, are the true temples of God, and do not treat with due reverence the place in which we meet to commune with God. Our demeanor should be more devout than usual when we assemble to worship. While Christians may always, when doing that which is right, have the presence of their Lord, yet we should not forget that he is in our midst in a special manner when we gather together in his name. There is a special sacredness surrounding the united worship of God's people.

Would it not be advisable for our congregations to take steps to provide for more uniformity and reverence in our church service?

Another rite, which at times is overlooked by our members, is the laying of hands upon elders and deacons at their ordination. This we know to be the practice of the early church, guided by the apostles, and therefore should be followed.

According to the nature of things, form cannot be entirely dispensed in religion during this life. Although now only of secondary importance—being worthless, and in some cases worse than worthless, at least so far as the person using it is concerned, unless accompanied by the true spirit—yet the fact of its being essential demands our careful consideration. And while it thus continues the necessary medium of the manifestation of our spirit, it should not be lightly treated.

WHAT SHALL WE SING.

"W."

And when I write "we" I wish to be understood as referring to those who profess to have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, saved from their past sins and made "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," and consequently "Fellow helpers to the truth." We all know that every Christian has a responsibility. No one lives to himself but is exerting an influence on others.

Now with regard to our influence. What shall we sing? Are we ourselves influenced by what we sing? I think we are; if so, should we not see to it that we sing nothing that will tend to the lessening of our spirituality. If it is desirable that we should "grow in grace," should we not as much as possible avoid those influences and emotions which foster conformity to the world and draw away our minds from the singing enjoined by the New Testament. We all understand