

The Christian.

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EDITORIAL.

CHRIST'S INVITATION.

"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for My yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matt. xi:28-30.)

At this time Jesus was deeply grieved over the cities which had witnessed most of His mighty works, because they repented not, and He foretold their dismal doom. Their deliberate and persistent rejection of Him was more aggravated than the crimes of Sodom, and they would have a more intolerable judgment than that city. But instead of this hardened treatment turning away His affection from the lost, it only seemed to intensify His love for perishing humanity; and hence this wonderful invitation. When He saw all around Him men laboring for that which is not bread, grasping phantoms, and realizing disappointment and grief, He calls them to Himself, the only home and satisfaction of the soul.

1. We will first consider the party addressed. It is a very large party, embracing all that labor and are heavy laden. Some suppose it to mean only such as are deeply convicted of sin, and who are earnestly seeking a Saviour. Such a party is comparatively small; and if Jesus only invites such, what is to become of all the rest of our fallen race? He sent His gospel into *all the world to be preached to every creature*, but if only those who are deeply convicted for sin are invited to Him the great mass is left out. But this is not Jesus' way. He invites all the world—every creature. God loved all. Christ tasted death for every man, and He invites all to come to Him.

Again, instead of men being truly convicted of their sins before they come to Jesus, it is by coming to Him they gain this true conviction. It is by looking to Jesus dying the dreadful death of the cross for us that we see the enormity of our sins against God, as well as God's wonderful love toward us in giving us such a Saviour.

By the weary and heavy laden we understand those who are seeking satisfaction to their minds in the things which perish, but finding in them no rest to their souls. Everything seen is temporal and cannot satisfy the unseen, which is eternal. But Jesus can save the soul—can satisfy and fill it forever, and all who come unto Him are and will be forever satisfied.

2. "Come unto Me." He that cometh unto God must believe that he is," etc. He that cometh unto Jesus must believe that He is the Son of the living God. When Jesus was entering into public life God said: "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This is God's record of His Son. This men believe with all their heart, and thus set to their seal that God is true. What a glorious relief to those who are laboring in vain to find rest to their souls to come to the Son of God, who died for their sins and rose again for their justification. Their iniquities are forgiven. They have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. They sup with Jesus and He sups with them.

3. "Take My yoke upon you." A yoke joins two parties together, and is, hence, something plain. The Jews used oxen first by yoking, then by training them for labor. The implement which joined two oxen together was the literal yoke. Figuratively the formula of law which brought them legally under the Roman government was the yoke of that government. The law of marriage was its yoke. Circumcision was the yoke of Moses. (Acts xv:10), and baptism is the yoke of Christ. This is plainly seen by comparing this passage, in which

Jesus addresses the pupils, with the commission (Matt. xxviii:19-20) in which He addressed the teachers. In the commission He says: 1st. "Go teach or disciple," etc. 2nd. "Baptizing them," etc. 3rd. "Teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded," etc. In this passage He says: 1st. "Come unto Me." 2nd. Take My yoke," etc. 3rd. Learn of Me," etc. So for "teach" or "disciple" we have "Come unto Me," for "Baptizing them" we have, "Take My yoke;" and for "Teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you" we have, "Learn of me." It is fortunate that we have the same writer recording the Saviour's words on the same subject under different circumstances, as we can thereby the better understand the matter. All who accepted Jesus' invitation were baptized, so that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John. Jesus in this place makes a clear distinction between His yoke and His burden, just as He does in the commission between baptism, which was commanded in order to become disciples, and the *all things* which the apostles were to teach them after they had become disciples. The difference is the same as between taking the oath of allegiance to a government, and attending to the duties of true subjects—between enlisting in the army and fighting his country's battles.

4. "Learn of Me." Disciples, like children, have everything to learn. Their training is for eternity, and their school time is short. Every evil is taught around them, and they are ready to receive what the world is so ready to teach. The old serpent, the Devil, is always on the alert, and will, if possible, by his skill and malice effect their ruin. They need the Saviour. They need Him every hour, and He says: "Learn of Me." He is a leader as well as a Saviour, and the training for eternity He will not entrust to others, but says, "Follow Me." He tells us how He met and overcame every enemy, and shows how we may do it by stepping in His footprints. His life was spent in doing good to others, and if we are His disciples He tells us to study and practice the same. His crowning act was giving Himself a ransom for others, and what He particularly enjoins upon us is to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, positively assuring us that He who saveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for Jesus' sake shall save it.

But to have the sympathy of Jesus and His teaching is a happiness that turns even self-denial into a luxury. Who can describe the friendship and confidence of Him who gave up the company of angels that He might be his nearest and dearest friend both for time and for eternity. He says, therefore: My yoke is easy and My burden is light. Circumcision was a yoke which, if taken by Gentile Christians would make them debtors to keep the whole law, and the apostle Peter opposed putting it upon the neck of Gentile converts, alleging that neither the Jews nor their fathers were able to bear it (Acts xv:10); but Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden light. All that Jesus commands His disciples is light. It flows from a heart of infinite love and is commanded because it is for the best interest of those who receive it. Their service is a service of love. "Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."

ARK OF SAVING, NOT SAFETY.—Rev. Dr. Mackenzie says that he has no sympathy with the idea that is commonly associated with the phrase "ark of safety." Not Noah's ark, but Paul's, is the nobler type. The ship did not so much in saving on the stormy Adriatic as did Paul himself. But for him and his great soulful courage and trust in God, all would have been wrecked. Our work is not merely to secure our own safety, but to save others. "Lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

Original Contributions.

ORGANIZATION.

This subject has been before us a number of years, and the more we agitate it the more we see its importance, and the better we understand what it is, and how to organize. Webster tells us that an "organism consists of parts, of which the functions of each are essential to the existence of the whole, and of each of the parts." Hence, to organize is to "arrange or constitute in parts, each having a special function, act, office, or relation." This may relate to the "human intellect, or to institutions, as a science, a government, or an army," and we may add, or a church. The apostle in 1. Cor. xii:12-20, teaches very clearly the same lesson by telling us the church is a body, which must, therefore, be an organization. The body is made up of many parts or members. "For the body is not one member but many." Each member has its particular place and use. The foot, the hand, the eye, the ear, have their own mission or office; but they cannot say, because they are not of the same office that they are not therefore members of the body or organization, "for they are all members one of another." "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; or the head to the feet, I have no need of you." In Ephesians iv:16 we read that, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Here we observe the close relation and mutual communion of the members of the body, or church. Here also is seen the *vital* connection that one part, or member, sustains to the other; all orderly, closely, and firmly united to each other. Thus, according to the effectual working of every part maketh increase of the body. Each member is communicating to others of what it has received. Strength and life is conveyed to all in their proportions, and according to the state and exigence of every part. This makes very plain the *true* idea of organization. It is not the idea of a company or assembly, but a living, vital, acting union of *all* the members. Too many of our churches are only assemblies. They have no special interest in each other, and therefore no vital connection, and of such it cannot be said they are "one of another." Such a company of people, however closely they may adhere to doctrine, cannot be called an organization. The Saviour says in John xv:5: "He that abideth in Me and I in Him the same bringeth forth *much fruit*." If the branch does not bring forth fruit, it is because it is not *in the vine*. This is equivalent to the idea above expressed, i. e., that an inactive person is not a part of the body or organization. He may have a formal relation but no living connection, and is not therefore part of the organization. The dead branch has no more connection with the tree before it is cut off than after. In one sense it belongs to the tree whether united or separated from it, but in the sense of union it must be a living branch, and only in this sense can it be part of the tree. There can be no living organization only by *living* members. A dead or inactive member is no part of any organization or body.

When we find professors who assemble, time after time, to worship the Lord and to attend to the ordinances of the Lord's house, and at the same time the church work is neglected, little or no interest is manifested in the welfare of each other or in the growth of the church, we say, unhesitatingly, the trouble is in the lack of organization. As we see just such a condition of things to-day, we are led to make our strong, earnest plea for a better organization among us.