

oppose it. The exhortation was not for one time or place only, but to give emphasis to an important duty always necessary; for there has never been since the first preaching of the gospel, even for one day, a time when, or a place where, it was unnecessary to contend earnestly for the truth as it is in Christ. Right here we find one of the most vulnerable points in the usefulness of the Church of today. Very few of its membership are awake to the magnitude of the conflict being waged between the kingdom of Christ and the powers of darkness. Shrewdly, boldly, persistently, and often successfully, are the influences opposed to the truth at work, while those who should contend earnestly for the faith are "at ease in Zion."

The contention of the Disciples of Christ for more than seventy years has been necessary and successful, though often regretfully carried on, in that they were placed in some respects in opposition to many good people, whose excellencies they were glad to recognize, but whose doctrinal positions—in loyalty to the truth as they understood it—they were compelled to oppose. In opposition to denominationalism, they have plead for the union of God's people, the abandonment of all uninspired authoritative creeds, and a return to the faith and practice of the New Testament church. It has not yet been shown that their position is wrong. God has greatly blessed their work. May they continue to plead for the truth, until, as Jesus prayed, His people have become one, and, in the salvation of men, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

Three forms of error, of comparatively recent origin, are actively and aggressively at work in many places, and require intelligence and devotion to the truth to understand their methods and to successfully oppose their attacks. I mention these in the order of their origin.

1 *Mormonism*. In these parts it is but little known, and is supposed to be chiefly confined to the State of Utah, but read the following: "The East Tennessee Conference of the Mormon Church met in the Opera House at Johnson City, Tenn., Dec. 25-27, 1897. The conference was presided over by apostles Lyman and Cowley, from Utah and Idaho. Here were gathered forty elders to receive instruction and encouragement from their apostles. They say they have five hundred elders working in the Southern States, eighty of whom are in Tennessee. There are twelve such conferences to meet in the Southern States within a few weeks. They say they have fourteen hundred elders working in this and foreign lands." In his defence of Mormonism one of these apostles closed his address by saying, "These things are as reliable and well authenticated as the New Testament or the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and should be proof to you of the divine origin of the book of Mormon. I do not have to rely upon the evidence of man to its truthfulness, for the Eternal Father has revealed to me by the Holy Ghost that the book of Mormon is true." The zeal and success of this people were never greater than at the present. They are sending their missionaries into many lands, and monstrous as are their errors, many people are being deceived by them.

2 *Seventh Day Adventism*. This is an admixture of Judaism, Christianity, and human speculation. Its advocates profess great sincerity, and are zealous and self-denying in their efforts to enforce the observance of Saturday instead of the Lord's day, the belief in the immediate coming of Christ, and the doctrine of soul sleeping and the annihi-

lation of the wicked. The greatest stress is laid upon the keeping of the seventh day, which places them in opposition to the day of our Lord's resurrection, which is entirely disregarded. Hence their teaching is more Jewish than Christian, more law than gospel.

3 *Socialism*. Taking advantage of the widespread contention between capital and labor, it dwells upon and magnifies existing evils. It then pictures to its own satisfaction an *ideal* condition to be introduced by overturning the present national, commercial and industrial institutions, when all the interests, industries, and even the land, shall be held and managed by the government. In this visionary scheme there is no need of, or room for, the gospel of Christ, as a socialistic education, now in contemplation, will make man precisely what he ought to be. Now, while many socialists profess to be seeking for truth, and that they are favorable to Christianity, as far as I have known, nearly all church members who become such, lose their interest and usefulness in the church, forsake the Lord's table, and in many cases argue against the necessity of it. It ought to be understood that socialism is favorable to unbelief, and because of its seeming to be only political and secular, there is the greater danger of our being brought under its influence, and being captivated by its books and papers, before we are awake to the fact that our faith is being undermined, and our devotion to Christ and His church greatly weakened.

Now, it may be that the most of my readers are so fortunate that none of the things I have mentioned have come in their way. The time, however, may be near, when some of them shall be knocking at their doors. But, if not these, something else will have to be withstood; therefore, cling to the Rock, and contend earnestly for the faith.

MONEY AND THE CHURCH.

T. H. BLENUM.

This is a theme thought by many to be outside the range of the preacher's sphere. I beg to differ from such people, whether they be few or many. If instruction in religious duty is a part of the faithful minister's work, he certainly has not declared the "whole counsel," when either through fear or indifference, he has neglected this important phase of Christian duty and obligation. There are many in our churches who never yet learned that the consecration of their *all* to God is no more a matter of option with them than are the practices of honesty, virtue, purity and temperance or any other duty. A glance over the treasurer's book of the church will very often disclose some startling things. First it will be seen, that as far as contributing to the support of the work of the church is concerned, many members of the household of faith are simply loungers, loafing loads, shirking all financial obligation and responsibility, and unchristianly throwing unnatural burdens on the faithful few. Others, it will be noticed, leave their giving to the uncertain promptings of impulse, giving when they "feel like it." These people usually live the Christian life (?) when they "feel like it;" attend the house of God when they "feel like it;" meet with the Disciples of Christ around the Lord's table when they "feel like it," and we fear many of them are not overburdened with such feelings.

No man or woman can come to Christ without a full and complete self-surrender. No man or woman can live the Christ life without the practice of the characteristic Christian grace of self-abnegation. Christ makes it a test of discipleship for a man to forsake "all that he hath." It is a difficult thing for one given to the study of the teachings of our Lord to understand how some professed Christians interpret his sayings, who pretend to be his followers. There either must be a terrible misunderstanding, or a deception somewhere. The idea of sacrifice, of consecration, of self-denial seems to have dropped out of the religion of a great many, and the instruction of Christ to his followers become to them a dead letter. I am fully aware, that in this matter of giving, the moment it is mentioned it is at once said by many, "We have so little, if we had more we would give as it is required of those who have." This is only a subterfuge, and is either born of covetousness or base ignorance, as false as it is untrue. God asks for the sacrifice; he will develop the gift. The self-denial is to him the essential thing. At the judgment those who complained on earth that they had so little, will before the bar of God feel sorry that they had so much—Jeremy Taylor, an eminent English Bishop and author once said: "He never loved God who will quit anything of his religion to save his money." Two principles are lacking in the disciple of Christ who neglects the duty of giving liberally of his substance to the Lord's work. First he lacks the sweet constraint of love, and he also lacks the realization of the Bible sense of Christian stewardship and consecration. No plan for increasing the power, the influence and the spiritual life of the kingdom of Christ can take the place and do the work of the plan of self-sacrifice. It was a stupendous sacrifice that brought salvation into the world, and the saving power of the church in advancing this salvation is in direct ratio to its willingness to sacrifice. When the apostle Paul sought a model and pattern for Christian liberality, he holds up that most wonderful of all examples Him who "gave himself"—That covetous one—and my reader if you are not giving the free-will offering of a loving heart and an open hand to the Lord, you are the one I mean, you are an idolater, for the Word declares "covetousness is idolatry"—will be tracked into the eternal world by a procession of lost souls and lost opportunities that will witness against him before the bar of God.

"Next to Sincerity remember still
Thou must resolve upon Integrity
God will have *all*, thy heart, thy mind, thy will,
Thy thoughts, thy words, thy works."

OUR DUTIES TOWARD THE WEAK.

H. MURRAY.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. (Rom. xv. 1, 2). Here is a duty that demands our very best attention. The weak ones are greatly in need of all the help and encouragement that they can obtain from those who are strong, that they also may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. It requires, however, much wisdom and more grace in bearing the infirmities of the weak lest they are made worse instead of better. If their infirmities are fads or whims, fashions or passions, it would be unwise to tolerate