

### Querist's Column.

[All matter intended for this column should be addressed to E. C. Ford, Port Williams, Kings County, N. S. Questions touching the meaning of scriptures will be gladly received.]

Q. From the 16th chapter of I. Samuel we learn that David, when quite young, was called to play before Saul and become his armour bearer. Then, when David came to visit his brethren and accepted the challenge of Goliath that Saul did not know him. I. Sam. xvii. 55. How can you account for this? J. S. F.

St. John.

A. From the 15th verse of the 17th of I. Samuel we learn that "David had returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep." Just how long he was Saul's armour bearer, or how long a time it was between his returning home, and his visit to his brethren, when he met and slew Goliath, we have no certain way of knowing. But it is quite clear that some little time had passed, perhaps two or three years, time enough to make quite a change in the personal appearance of a boy so young as David must have been when he played before the Lord. Then, again, it must be remembered that at this time Saul was in a melancholy mood and would not be so likely to remember as if he had been of a sound mind. Thus, when David came down to the camp of Israel and accepted the challenge of Goliath, having grown from the boy to the young man, with the change these few years bring, it was not at all strange that Saul did not at once recognize his former armour bearer.

Q. How do you harmonize John xix. 14 with Mark xv. 25? H. A. D.  
Tiverton.

A. When John was speaking of the time that Pilate brought out Christ and said, "Behold your king," and said it was "about the sixth hour," he was evidently reckoning according to the Roman system, which began as we do, at 12 o'clock at night. This would be 6 o'clock in the morning. But Mark was speaking of the time when Christ had been crucified and reckoning according to the Jewish count, which began at six in the morning and evening, said it was the third hour, or 9 o'clock. Just three hours from the time he was delivered to be crucified. This is little time enough for all that transpired from the time that Jesus was before Pilate to the hour of His crucifixion.

### HOW ARE THE YOUNG TREATED?

Here is a picture that is not uncommon. Go back twenty or twenty-five years and you see a church active and prosperous. The house was plain but neat, bearing evident signs that it was intended for a special meeting-place with God. The singing was all that could be desired. It was edifying, it was interesting, and it was participated in by all. The preaching, too, was exceptionally good. The minister was a man of thorough culture, fine oratorical powers and childlike purity. He could bring the hidden tear from its hiding-place. It seemed as though he had the springs of men's hearts in his hands, and at will he could remove the tear and flood the face with joy. Immense congregations attended the church then. Apparently a course of unchanging prosperity was before it.

But a quarter of a century has passed. Let us look at it now. A dilapidated building that has about it nothing to indicate that it was intended for a place of worship. Preaching once a month by the cheapest preacher that could be discovered. Singing by three or four good old people which neither melts the heart nor encourages the soul. Empty seats where once there was scarcely standing room.

Behold the sad, sad change, and tell us why it is so. Why have not the sons and daughters carried on the work so well begun by their departed parents? Because they were not at the proper time put in training for the work. They have just as much natural ability as their parents, more education and greater opportunities. But these were not seized upon and directed aright. It matters not how prosperous a congregation now is, how grand its work and how bright its prospects, if it neglects the boys and the girls, the young men and the young women, its days of adversity are drawing nigh. Soon it will have a past, but no future. Every one who has had years for observation possesses sad proof that this is all too true. And no labored argument is needed to prove to others that the work now being performed by the aged must be taken up by the young or it will never be done. Where are the Elishas upon whom the mantles of the Elijahs may fall? In many churches they are not to be found.

What are we doing to avoid this evil? We cannot change the past, but we can learn from it and prepare to avoid its mistakes. Let every one who may chance to read these lines think of the congregation with which he stands identified, see what proportion the active young members bear to those of advanced years, and decide whether it is building a ladder by which it can climb to greater spirituality and usefulness, or whether it is digging its own grave, into which, unattended by a single mourner, because there is none left, it is to fall at no distant date.

The destiny of the church is, under God, in the hands of the young. They must receive care and encouragement from the beginning of their Christian lives. Not only must they be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but they must also be trained in the service of God's house. This must be done even if the older members seem to be neglected. Matured men and women are fixed in their ways, and if they do not take any public part in the worship now it will be almost impossible to induce them to do so. They have been guests so long that they are unwilling now to serve. They have fixed ideas and well-defined principles.

But not so with the young. Theirs is the critical time of life—the formative period. It is then that so many avenues are opening up leading away from the church and so many strong temptations are held up as inducements to enter in. It is then that they can most easily get into the Christian's armor and learn to work in it.

If there is a church in these provinces where the young are not brought into active service, the course which wisdom seems to suggest is to make an immediate change. Begin very early to train them up for efficient service. Make the Sunday-school—and I pity the church that has none—a training school. As far as possible let the young have something to do as well as something to learn. Let there be young people's societies and young people's prayer-meetings. Let there be something for every one to do—and there is always an abundance of work in an active church; for the more we do the more there seems demanding our attention and the more competent we are to perform it. Encourage them in their efforts and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that the good work to which you devoted yourself will not cease when you are called to leave it, but will be carried on with increasing earnestness and success. Posterity instead of looking back to find a prosperous church will be looking forward with the eye of faith to grander achievements, of which the present is but the prelude.

J. D. T.

Gather up the fragments. He that is unjust in little is unjust also in much; and he who is faithful in the least, to him will be committed the true riches.

### Miscellaneous.

#### IS INFANT BAPTISM DECLINING?

GEO. T. SMITH.

The above is the title of an article in the *Magazine of Christian Literature* of October, 1890. It is taken from the *Independent*.

The *Independent* declares that it would not be troubled if the assertion were true, but cannot be blind to the fact that it is not true. Unfortunately its vision is limited to five or six years, and as it will not disturb the equanimity of the *Independent* to know the truth we would invite the editor to lift up his eyes and take a broader view.

Look back 500 years and has not infant baptism declined? Then adult baptism were rare; unbelievers' baptism was general. One hundred years ago the infant baptism exceeded believers' baptism in every Pedobaptist sect in America. To-day, unless it be the Episcopalians and some dying obscure sects, the fact is reversed. So late as 1860 the Methodists reported infant baptism 2,000 in excess, in 1870 the believers' baptism were 13,600, in excess.

A few years ago the *Presbyterian Banner* said concerning infant baptism: Unfortunately remissness in the performance of this duty has been manifesting itself for some time in certain quarters. In many Congregational churches the baptisms are very few, and in one town in Massachusetts no child has been baptized in twenty years. That there has been a rapid decline proportionately in the number of children baptized in the Presbyterian church cannot be doubted. At least, one-half of the Presbyterian church must be neglecting this ordinance of God, and the proportion is increasing.

To assist the vision of the *Independent* we append a few figures, showing the proportion of infant baptism to membership in the various churches, at different periods named: Episcopal church, 1850 1 in 7; 1880, 1 in 11; Reformed Dutch, 1841, 1 in 10; 1880, 1 in 20; Presbyterian, 1831, 1 in 15; 1880, 1 in 33; Methodist, 1857, 1 in 22; 1880, 1 in 29; Congregational, 1830, 1 in 50; 1880, 1 in 77.

As Japan is the latest country to receive Christianity it is worth asking whether infant baptism will commend itself to this wide awake nation. Sleeping babes take it but the Japanese have an idea that Christianity ought to correspond to the Book. The Presbyterians' seven bodies united into one body. Some missionaries did not like it but they had to yield. At the last meeting of the synod a few weeks ago, the Japanese preachers took the bit in their teeth, again threw away the Westminster Confession of faith, taking the Apostles' Creed (as it is called) instead and abolished infant baptism. If the advocates of primitive Christianity would spend as much on Japan as the Presbyterian do we could bring the Japanese church to the apostles' model or put influence at work that would probably bring about that result. The Japanese are impressed by numbers, by show, by evidence of strength. If we could pour into Japan men and means enough to show that we believe we have something of importance for them, we could impress the principles we profess, the practical way to Christian union, upon the entire body of Japanese Christians. There is a dim suspicion that this cannot be done by passing resolutions in the convention. We have had more of them than of anything else, but in seven years we have increased our number of male missionaries by one. If a few families can be sent out we will manage to worry along without those magniloquent and sagacious resolutions for a year or two. If the Japan mission is forever to be doomed to feebleness, at least a determined effort should be made at Allegheny City, to make the resolutions, that now is the time to help Japan, a little stronger. They are becoming impaired by age.—*Christian Evangelist*.  
Hongo Tokyo, Japan, Jan. 28, '91.