

power." So we say. But what is the difference between "one man power" and two men having the power? No ruler but God has absolute power. When the power to rule is invested in one or two men there will be a reign of tyranny. I have never yet seen the elder or elders who ever attempted to force their judgment against the voice of the church. The function of an elder is not to make laws or rules, but to see that the laws of God and the rules of the church are attended to. When the elders assume the right to say what hour of the day we should meet, or what evening of the week we should meet for prayer, or who we should appoint as a deacon—or many other things of like nature—without the voice of the church, then they transcend their mission and their trouble, discord and destruction will follow. If those who say the people—the church—or the majority should not rule in things about which God has spoken then we accept it. No man has any right to legislate on what God has said. His word is final. A "thus saith the Lord," is enough for our rule of faith. But when we come to the things about which God has not spoken, but has left to our own common sense, the things that are "good," such as is absolutely necessary in every church, then the majority must rule. We must have a singing book, but who is to say what kind of a book, Bro. A. or the church? We need a new stove in the house, the church wants one kind but Sister B. wants a different kind. Who is to rule in these cases and many like cases? With the grace of God in our hearts and common sense in our head we will gracefully submit to the majority.

H. MURRAY.

THE FOUR STAGES OF A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

Joy and gladness beam forth on the faces of a thanksgiving household. A beautiful child appears upon the first stage of life. The God of heaven has added another blossom to His multiplying millions to brighten and cheer the home with the merry voice. The faithful mother ever beside the cradle vainly tries to pierce the obscure future. "Am I caring for one who shall break my heart or raise me to the height of honor?" she sighs faintly. God only knows. Watch the footsteps as they patter along life's rough way to innocent sports, the joys of childhood. Unmolested by the cares of life, it moves around, not realizing that the days are passing. Sleep, the sweet restorer, soothes the young mind and prepares it for the weight of human burdens. Hear the merry laugh, the childish saying, the gentle prayer for a night's protection, the noble thoughts, and say within yourself, "Surely this one is for good."

That sweet child that gladdened the household years past has now grown to a robust youth. Alas, but a dream have my days been. Now I prepare to meet lions in the way. Now the sorrows and cares of life shall heap themselves upon me. He understands the crags of life, the path and its many windings. He has ambition stirred in his soul and resolves on something high and noble. He is eager for the race of life; to enter the paths his father trod. Stout-hearted and brave he hastens to seek his fortune. He nerves himself to meet all obstacles. He shuns the path of sinners, the door of damnation, as he has already resolved to be a Christian. In one word, he is the youth for any emergency. He knows how to sympathize with the poor and friendless. Great hopes are founded upon him. Gentle and sincere are the words of warning from his mother's voice. He is on the march of life.

Again the peals of joyous gladness echo through the old hall. Many are the merry comers wishing the happy couple success in life. The tones of the old church bell sound abroad the marriage bells.

He has selected a partner for the battle of life. She is young, beautiful and good. Happy is the union of two Christians. Joyfully the days pass, lighted by the counsel of the loving Jesus. He prospers exceedingly, although he gives amply to the poor, to missions, to the church. Truly he is a Christian gentleman. Let us visit his home. A bright light is glowing within. Around the cheerful fire sit the happy circle with their faces beaming with kindness. As the hour for retiring has arrived, the great Bible is taken down, read, and a blessing is asked of God. His family rises to man and womanhood bearing signs of the good training received.

Again a voice is heard from the tall spire. Its bell tolls the news of death. Slowly a procession leaves the old mansion and repairs to the old churchyard. The prayer is offered, the hymn sung, and the body is lost from sight till the last trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. It is the body of our once innocent child, our happy boy, our gay man settled in married life. Let us view his last minutes. He calls his dear family to his bedside. He bids good-bye to them all, in parts a blessing, hears a prayer ascend, a hymn sung, and with his hands folded, his face turned towards heaven, he closes his eyes in death. What a blessed death to look upon: not a scene of agony, in fear of the judgment! Would to God there were more such deaths and this would be a happy world, in all its iniquity, woe and death.

HOWARD.

SOMETHING OUR LORD SAID NOT RECORDED BY THE EVANGELISTS.

Acts xx. 35. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Many things Jesus did and no doubt said that we do not find recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. John xxi. 35. All the sayings of Jesus were precious as the words of "Teacher come from God." And as we do not find this sacred truth contained in the Gospel we regard it as a sacred gem of Divine import, rescued from oblivion in the latter treatise by Luke written to Theophilus, called "Acts of the Apostles."

Looking at blessedness from an earthly standpoint, how easy to get the idea that all blessedness comes through receiving only.

1st. It is blessed to receive a supply of our temporal wants; thus we are blessed of God every day, and we can but say, It is surely blessed to receive.

2nd. Blessed to receive alleviation of sorrow and suffering. For sorrow of mind or pains of body, it is a blessing to receive healing or consolation. Who does not congratulate those objects of Christ's compassion while on earth? Blind Bartimeus, the man whose son was possessed of devils, the widow of Nain, etc. Surely in their case it was blessed to receive. So when our fellow-creatures are poor or afflicted, sick or in sorrow, how blessed to receive sympathy and aid.

3rd. It is especially blessed to receive spiritual favors. Luke x. 23. Mind dark, blessed to receive light through the Gospel.

Soul contrite in sorrow for sin. How blessed to receive comfort and assurance of forgiveness. Only those who can sing of the new-born joy of sins forgiven can ever answer.

How blessed to receive a new name written in the Lamb's book of life, and to receive the Divine assurance that we have been adopted into the family of God.

While we ponder and think over the great blessedness of receiving such favors, both temporal and spiritual, let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

1st. It is more honorable to give than to receive. Men often seek honor from wrong sources and

through purely selfish means; but there is true honor connected with liberality and benevolence. The honor of a Geo. Peabody will be bright when names of statesmen and warriors shall have passed from the earth.

2nd. It is more profitable to give than to receive, for by benevolence we improve our own character at the same time we impart blessings to others, so thus increase the talent God has given us.

3rd. It is more Christ-like to give than to receive. In order that we might receive life and immortality the Son of God, for our sakes, became poor, and gave years of time, gave infinite power, gave flowing tears, gave His person to the soldiers, gave His back to the lash, gave His cheek to the smiters, gave His head to the thorns, and gave His life on the cross.

In giving, then, we become like Jesus on earth and are brightening our prospects of finally being conformed to His image in heaven.

Reader, are you looking for an opportunity to bless and be thus blessed in return by giving somewhat of your means for the furtherance of the cause of our Divine Master? Then read again Bro. Ford's letter in the January number of THE CHRISTIAN, in which he states the needs of our Mission Board in order that it may be enabled to carry out its noble undertakings for the extension of the borders of Zion and salvation of precious souls, and as you send in your aid to Bro. Capp do your best to thus confer blessedness on others, at the same time "remember the words of the Lord Jesus how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

H. A. DeVOR.

WHEAT AND TARES.

In dealing with this subject we do not wish to force our interpretation or our opinions upon the minds of any one. We simply wish to contrast our opinions and ideas with others, in order to gain more light, and also to add some additional light if possible. The parable in question is one of the most difficult of the many propounded by our Lord. To find its didactic drift is not an easy matter. We understand a parable to be an allegorical relation of something real in life or nature from which a moral is drawn for instruction. And as the parabolic teachings of Jesus have direct reference to the kingdom of heaven they are of great interest to us. In the parable under consideration, our Lord selects a sower, some seed, and a field, from which to draw the moral He wished to teach. Some may argue that He did not compare the kingdom to the field, or to the seed, but to the man; but this method of argument only stultifies the didactic import of the parable. The great Teacher had no need to say the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man (sower) some seed and a field. We understand that in order to produce a crop of wheat we must have the seed and the soil and some one to do the labor (sowing). Therefore the sower and the field are indispensable in this case. I believe the most definite solution of this parable depends upon the construction placed upon the expression "Kingdom of Heaven." If, in the sense the Lord uses it here, it has direct reference to the professed church, then it is difficult to ascertain the direct meaning of the parable. In the "Emphatic Diaglott" (Wilson), *Basileia ton ouranon* is rendered "kingdom of the heavens." In the twenty-fourth verse the "Diaglott" reads thus: "The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a field in which the owner sowed good grain." Now we will observe that the Kingdom is compared to the field. But in the thirty-first verse the Kingdom is compared to a grain of mustard, or to a seed of the mustard. Also in the thirty-third verse the same idea is expressed; it is the leaven instead of the meal. Again, in the forty-fourth verse the Kingdom is compared to the treasure, not the field.