

The true Christian has nothing to fear in death. "For when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting, oh grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Deut. we read of God speaking to the children of Israel in these words: "See I have set before thee this day, life and good, death and evil; and I call heaven and earth to record against you that I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: Therefore choose LIFE, that both thou and thy seed may live." Before each of us is placed the decision between life and death. This is the most solemn, the most important decision of our life; for on it depends our future happiness, and perhaps the happiness of others, for our lives influence others. Which will you choose to-night. This life is the time to prepare for the next — the present only is ours; the past cannot be recalled; and we have no promise of the future; for "we know not what a day may bring forth." We have the same opportunity for life as we have for death. And why not choose life and live. God is ever willing to receive any and all who will come to Him. Then let us not concern ourselves about this earthly death, but rather to shun that second death which is "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power;" for we know that physical death only leads Christ's followers to the beautiful home he has prepared for them, and of which it is said of those that dwell there: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Port Williams, Sept. 22, 1891.

"H. M." ON ORGANIZATION.

In the September number of THE CHRISTIAN H. M. tells his readers that "we are profoundly satisfied with God's plan and the scriptural plan of organization," and that it is a mistake "that the societies or the associations of the church are separate and apart from the church." He adds that these societies "are not organizations outside and separate from the church organized," and in another place refers to "Eph. iv:16 and I. Cor. 12 chap." as giving his view of "such organization as we find in apostolic days."

It is singular that a respected and experienced teacher of the faith, who allows the Bible to be its own interpreter, should take Paul's description of spiritual or miraculous gifts and the place they occupied in the ancient church and apply it to the election of officers and the division of labor in modern "Sunday-schools" or "missionary societies." The apostle had nothing of the sort in view, and "organization" in the sense in which our brother uses the word was a thing unknown in the primitive churches. Our friends who wish to introduce or commend so many of our nineteenth century "improvements" in order to "keep up with the times and the needs of the age," should remember that we have nothing to do with the apparent results of scriptural labor, but to leave these with God while we commit ourselves entirely to apostolic precedents in evangelizing, and avoid all "plans" for which there is no "Thus saith the Lord."

Nor is there any force in what Bro. H. M. says about the inconsistency of those who oppose the Y. P. S. C. E. yet favor Sunday-schools. Is it logic to assert that because A, B and C violate their own principles that, therefore, the contrary principles

of D, E and F are the true ones? Yet, on this our brother's argument is mainly based. It is a groundless assumption to say that such organizations are in the church, or part of the church, or simply the church organized" just because their members are also church members. If all the members of an Odd-fellows' Lodge were Christians, would that be proof that the lodge was a part of the church or "church organized" for benevolent purposes? Any society, no matter by what name it is called, that has officers and rules, terms of membership and methods of operation different from those found in the New Testament is a distinct thing from the church itself, and, therefore, unacceptable to those who look to the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice.

Some of our brethren, we fear, are like the Ephesians of old — forgetting their first love and beginning to sip little by little of Babylonish wine. As a consequence there is no longer that unity and fraternal feeling which characterized Disciples of our Lord years ago. And when once we set out to adopt the customs of sectdom, where is the stopping place, or who is qualified to say, Thus far we may go and no farther? We know nothing of the divine Will save as we read it in the one Book. When we follow this we are sure we are right; when we add to it our own wisdom, how can we trust that Christ will acknowledge us in the end? But Bro. H. M., in his zeal for modern organization, virtually condemns the whole primitive church. He says, speaking of a church that had discontinued its Sunday-school: "Here is the inevitable result of the opposition to societies. It is not only anti-scriptural, but anti-salvation to the cause of Christ." Then the apostles themselves were anti-scriptural and anti-salvation, for the churches which they organized had no G. C. M. S.'s, S. M. S.'s, C. W. B. M.'s, Y. P. S. C. E.'s, nor Sunday-schools in any of their bounds! To such absurdities do men come when they set their own wisdom above the word of the living God.

O. D.

WHEN HAS A PERSON ETERNAL LIFE?

Jesus answers, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii. 36.

Now certain schools of theology have taught — taking this answer as authority, — that eternal life is a gift of God immediately bestowed upon the person believing prior to any act of obedience. Let us see if we can find out the meaning of the term or terms here used by the Saviour and translated "believeth not" then we shall know what the Saviour meant when using "believeth" as the condition of eternal life.

The word employed by the Saviour and translated "believeth not" occurs some sixteen or seventeen times in the New Testament. The word is *Apeitheo*, but in King James' translation is not uniformly translated, a fact which will be apparent as we proceed. In the following places the word (or some form of it) used by the Saviour in John iii. 36, can be found and the italicized words are the various translations of this word.

(1). He that "believeth not" the Son shall not see life. John iii. 36.

(2). But the "UNBELIEVING" Jews stirred up the Gentiles. Act xiv. 2.

(3). But the Jews which "BELIEVED NOT." Acts xvii. 5.

(4). When Dives were hardened and "BELIEVED NOT." Acts xix. 9.

(5). Do NOT OBEY the truth. Rom. ii. 8.

(6). All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a "DISOBEDIENT." Rom. x. 21.

(7). In times past have "NOT BELIEVED" God. Rom. xi. 30.

(8). Even so have these now "NOT BELIEVED." Rom. xi. 31.

(9). God hath concluded them all in "UNBELIEF." Rom. xi. 32.

(10). May be delivered from them that do "NOT BELIEVE." Rom. xv. 31.

(11). To whom swore He * * * * to them that BELIEVED NOT. Heb. iii. 18.

(12). Rahab perished not with them that BELIEVED NOT. Heb. xi. 31.

(13). Which stumble at the Word being DISOBEDIENT. 1 Peter ii. 8.

(14). If any "OBEY NOT" the Word. 1 Peter iii. 1.

(15). Which sometime were "DISOBEDIENT." 1 Peter iii. 20.

(16). End be of them that "OBEY NOT" the gospel of God. 1 Peter iv. 17.

In the foregoing we notice that *Apeitheo* is translated ten times by "believeth not — not believed — or unbeliever" — the remaining six by "obeys not" or "disobedient." In examining the marginal readings we find that four out of the ten read "OBEYS NOT" or *disobedient* — leaving but six out of the sixteen favoring the translation by any form of the verb *believe*.

The American Bible Union follows closely the common English version — with the exception of Acts xvii. 5 — *believeth not* is omitted and Rom. xi. 30—31 is *disobeyed* and verse 32 has *disobedience*.

The Living Oracles — a translation of the New Testament from the original Greek — by Doctors G. Campbell, James Macknight and Philip Doddridge — and revised by A. Campbell — gives some form of the word *believe* with the negative in the five following passages — Acts xiv. 2, xvii. 5, xix. 9, Heb. iii. 18, xi. 31. In ten others is found "disobedience" or *obeys not* — and in John iii. 36 it reads He who *rejects* the Son shall not see life.

The "revised version" gives WITHOUT EXCEPTION some form of the word "DISOBEY." So that John iii. 36 reads: He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that *obeyeth not* the Son shall not see life — but the wrath of God abideth on him. According to the evidence before us and much more at our command, we are justified in saying that a man receives eternal life when he OBEYS the Son and not before. And to this agree the words of the inspired writer, "And being made perfect He (the Saviour) became the author of eternal salvation (or eternal life) unto all them that obey him. Heb. v. 9 T. H. C.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

This parable is probably one of the most familiar to the diligent Bible student. The preacher use it often as a favorite theme. Its fulness is surpassed only by its simplicity. To sinner and saint alike its adaptability is incomparable. He who would find its treasures must search eagerly; for, like many other passages of scripture, this "grows the more by reaping." Let us study it a short time, in an introductory way, for at best all that can be said is merely a door of entrance, a prelude, a beginning.

The man travelling into a far country is the Master; His return will be after His mediatorial reign shall end, the servants are the Disciples. To the servants were entrusted talents to be increased by profitable use, and each was to be "rewarded according to his work." The numbers five, two, one have no special significance; any other numbers might just as well be used. We are well acquainted with the talents of the parable, but what bearing has the parable, and especially the talent on the Disciples of to-day? We often hear it said that a brother has a talent for speaking, another for praying, etc., and that these talents are to be improved; the talents, in most cases, are made to refer to natural ability.