

So being bound only by the Bible we are placed in a better position to judge the opinions of others in the light of the truth than if we were fettered by certain formulated theories concerning it. The willingness with which our leading thinkers debate with others respecting differences of belief, proves that they are not afraid to fairly test the opinions of all.

4. *How do our teaching and practice generally correspond with the interpretation of God's Word by candid Bible students?* To furnish proof that our teaching and practice are probably admitted by a greater number of Bible students and Christian bodies as being in accord with those of the Scriptures and the primitive church than any other body, would make a very good subject for a separate article; but would take up too much space in this one. I make the statement, however, and will suggest a few arguments in favor of it. I feel quite confident that those who doubt my declaration will find that it is substantially correct if they will examine the question closely. The interpretation of the Scriptures by the English, Greek and even the Roman Catholic churches bare testimony to the fact that much of our teaching and practice is in accord with that of the primitive church. And where we disagree with them our position is upheld by many protestant bodies. Our practices in connection with the ordinances are probably more in accord with the explanation of the Scriptures by the majority of the Bible students than any other interpretation rendered respecting them. The same, to almost as great an extent, may be said to be true respecting the steps we insist upon as being necessary to admit a candidate into the church and the order in which these steps must be taken. Even the division we make between the law and the gospel is being gradually adopted by other bodies. Some of our authors write of what they term the "distinctive peculiarities" of the Disciples of Christ. It is true that we have 'distinctive peculiarities' but the distinction to my mind, lies more in what we *practice* than in our interpretation of God's Word. The great underlying principle of the Disciples of Christ which distinguishes them from other bodies is that they hold that no circumstance will warrant the slightest deviation from the plain commands of Christ—that the authority of Christ must be submitted to in all things, and as a consequence no place whatever is to be given to the opinions and traditions of men. My object in considering the last question is to answer an erroneous opinion which many seem to have, viz: that we are practically alone in our explanations of the Holy Scriptures and as a result we are unreasonable in our conclusions. Even if it be granted that we are alone it would not necessarily follow that we are unreasonable. But I think it does afford a very good argument in favor of the reasonableness of a certain contention to find that you are supported by a large number of authorities.

But some one says, "You lay too much stress on some of Christ's commandments and in consequence neglect others." This charge is not well founded. Where is the church that supports the authority of Christ in all points more firmly than the Disciples of Christ do? It is true that we are compelled, at times, to give some of our Lord's commandments a prominence they would not have but for the actions of other Christian bodies respecting them. If Christian people will persist in belittling some of the commandments of Christ while they submit to his authority in others, then we have a double duty to perform in connection with

the former—to defend them against professed friends as well as avowed opponents. It may be just as important to defend all portions of a besieged city equally; but if a particular point is more bitterly assailed than any other then a more vigorous resistance is necessary there. If professing Christians will stop stultifying certain commandments of Christ and give them all equal prominence then we can all unite in assailing the common foe. When this takes place the church will, however, no longer be divided.

While making the above statements respecting the loyalty of the Disciples of Christ to their Lord's authority, I do so with humility; knowing that we fall far short of our full privileges.

All great men are not only men of conviction but men who are not afraid to let others know of their conviction. Our Saviour is our best example of this. He spoke fearlessly against almost all the religious teachers of his own people; and was put to death for so doing. Many noble martyrs have suffered in the same way, for the same reason. Where a matter is not of vital importance the majority's decision for the sake of expediency may be accepted. But in essential matters all parties must decide for themselves. To aid in this decision a free expression of opinion is valuable. He, therefore, who tries to choke off this expression is a tyrant, and his conduct savors more of the dark ages than of the nineteenth century.

At no time has the honest expression of conviction been more necessary than at the present. The movement in favor of Christian union; the willingness with which people generally listen to religious matters; the prevalence of higher criticism (so called) and other reasons peculiar to our age demand it. Let us therefore, first seek the truth, then publish it.

News of the Churches.

St. JOHN, N. B.
COBURG STREET.

It is sad to report two deaths this month, Sisters Mrs. Robt. Christie, and Miss Dora Stockford. These make seven we have lost by death this year. The most we have ever lost in one year. As Bro Stewart remarked, there must be a reason for all these warnings and chastenings. We ought to be more deeply interested in our own and others salvation.

A young man, Brother Miller, from Owen Sound, Ont., who is in the employ of the C. P. Railway, was received by letter on November 29th. He is a fine singer and an earnest worker. This is our first gain from the winter port business.

Bro. Stewart visited Nauwigewank on November 30th and preached to a large and attentive audience. He intends going again when Bro. Appel can accompany him.

On the 10th Rev. Mr. Ward, of Tremont Temple, Boston, preached to a packed house on "Redemption." He is one of the most interesting speakers that has ever visited St. John. He has a remarkable memory, can quote the passage in English, Greek or Hebrew. He is an original thinker, makes startling declarations, and takes some peculiar positions in regard to the Scriptures. He has strong faith in the Word of God, says every time man attempted to tamper with it they miserably failed. He said sectarianism was the greatest hurt to Christianity, and that union should prevail. He defied an intelligent, conscientious person to read the Bible through and not be a believer in it.

The Wide Awake Mission gave an entertainment in our hall in Portland on the 18th, which delighted everyone. The children, who were trained by Miss Stella Payson, went through the drill splendidly. Bro. Robt. Johnson arranged for and announced the magic lantern views, which were most enjoyable. The proceeds amounted to over twenty dollars, and will be divided among some of our funds.

MAIN STREET.

Two additions by letter this month, one from Coburg street and one from the F. C. Baptists.

On December 3rd we received the deed of our lot and put it on record. Bro. O. B. Stockford gave his legal services free, also contributed in cash. As will be seen by receipts we are still \$300.00 short. Several of our Coburg street brethren who live out of the city have kindly sent us aid. They have our hearty thanks.

On December 4th we had a social from both churches for Bro. Appel. Bro. Stewart gave him a hearty welcome. Bro. Appel suitably replied. J. B. Allan, Mrs. Gibson, Miss Hersey and Master Dickson, helped entertain the company. Cake and coffee were served. Everybody was introduced and a real social evening was spent.

On November 30th eighteen ladies met with Bro. Appel and organized a Ladies' Aid society. The officers are as follows: Mrs. Morrison, President; Mrs. Armstrong, Vice-President; Miss Purvis, Treasurer, and Miss Whelpley, Secretary. They meet each Monday evening. On the last Monday in the month the proceeds are divided between home and foreign missions. It is their missionary meeting. The proceeds of the other meetings and the profits from their sales of needle work will go towards the building fund.

These ladies also have a visiting committee, and nearly every family connected with the Sunday school and church have been visited. There is a bright outlook for this society and much good will be accomplished by it.

All the teachers of our older classes have been supplied with a copy of McGarvey on the Acts. Probably the best book published in this most important part of the New Testament.

We intend to supply eighty of our older scholars with the "Standard Lesson Quarterly" as three-fourths of them are not connected with the church. Sending these quarterlies (which will give the correct ideas in regard to these lessons on the Acts) into so many families who are not well posted on our plea for a return to primitive Christianity, will do much good to them and will be of great benefit to us. This is carrying out the idea of our good literature committee.

WESTPORT AND TIVERTON, N. S.

Thanksgiving day was observed in Westport by union services. The pastor of the Baptist church, C. E. Pineo, and the writer together preached a sermon. The brother took the text from Ps. 90: 1, and talked for fifteen minutes on the past providences of God, and the writer followed with a fifteen minutes talk on the present and future providences. At night, Mr. Tingley, of Freeport, N. S., was to preach, but being detained, the writer was again prevailed upon to preach, which he did although the notice was short. He spoke on "National Evils and Blessings." This service was held in the Baptist church. The attendance was good, considering the weather.

Temperance sermons were recently preached at each place, and now Christmas is the special line of thought.

Mrs. Allen Outhouse, Tiverton, has been quite sick recently, but is convalescing. Joseph Ossinger, Tiverton, one of our deacons, has been quite poorly of late, but is recovering slowly.

The S. S. at Westport added over sixty books to the library not long ago.

The brethren are getting home now from their season's work, and it seems more homelike to see them with us again.

We wish all the readers of THE CHRISTIAN a happy new year.

J. W. BOLTON.

December, 22nd, 1896.

GULLIVER'S COVE, N. S.

Our meeting here closed Sunday evening, Dec. 13th. We never saw worse roads nor such unfavorable weather. The meetings were small at first, but increased in interest and in numbers until the house was well filled. A number walked night after night a distance of three and four, and some, five miles, through the mud. Such getting to church, under difficulties, was beyond anything we have ever seen.

We preached thirty-seven times and made seventy visits during the five weeks. We were very busy preaching, praying and singing, both in church and from house to house. We found a hearty welcome wherever we went. We had no occasion for shaking the dust off our feet.