

ishing souls into the light and liberty of the Gospel. We are contending against a tremendous current, nevertheless, by the grace of God we mean to grasp firmly the sword of the Spirit, the word, which is not only able to make us wise unto salvation but a mighty shield in time of battle. Brethren, pray for us that we may prove faithful to the end.

H. E. COOKE.

We thank God and take courage. We need greater courage than we ever had to go on to greater works, but, by the grace of God, we are determined to do all we can, the Spirit helping our infirmities to battle against the powers of darkness in high places. We are in the midst of darkness here without any great help to stem the current that is running so many disobedient children of God down the stream to death from whence there is no return. May the Lord help us to stem this great current, by holding up Christ and Him crucified to a dying and perishing world.

W. J. MESSERVEY.

Original Contributions.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Sin, sorrow, sickness and death are all around us. The idols of our households are taken and we are left to sorrow; sometimes in hope strong and clear, and sometimes when hope is not so strong, and often when sorrow is sorrow indeed because hope does not remain.

The question naturally arises, who is to blame, when, in the hour of sorrow, hope reluctantly folds her beautiful garments around her and "silently steals away," turning loneliness from bereavement into desolation and almost despair, because no prospect of a glad to-morrow awaits the departed; no crown of righteousness to be placed upon the brow, no wiping away of tears by the loving hand, no psalms of victory nor song of redeeming love; but, sorrow, night, eternal banishment and wandering away from the presence of the Lord in the blackness of darkness forever.

We ask: Why is it so? and looking around for a reason, we see what may be one cause, in the divided state of society and the selfishness and partisan spirit and conduct of religious teachers—teaching to make persons church members whether they are made members of CHRIST or not.

The Divine Teacher once said: "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple," &c. So I now say: There was a certain young man who came up to what appeared to be a noble manhood, working industriously for the well-being of those who were in a great measure dependent on him. In his eagerness to provide things honestly in the sight of all men, he overtaxed his physical strength, and disease laid her blighting hand upon him—he was sealed for an early grave.

He was visited by ministers of the gospel (professedly) but, unfortunately, for the peace of the young man's mind, they were men of different denominations of Christians [?] and each came with the teachings of his particular creed. Each wished the young man saved, but, the desire of each was that he might be saved according to the teaching of his creed, and if not saved in that way, not very careful whether he was saved at all.

One, whom we will call Mr. A., came professing to have no creed but that which God had miraculously revealed to the world, and of which Christ is the centre and circumference—the Alpha and Omega—and that, in receiving Christ and becoming obedient to Him and to God the Father through Him, you come within the circle of God's forgiving love and receive all that is necessary to prepare you to live and also to die.

The young man saw those matters very plainly, and was captivated in mind and heart by the loveliness of Him who is the chief among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely. He decided to yield himself to Christ, that living or dying he might be His; but, before going forward, in obedience to

the new "law of the spirit and life in Christ Jesus," Mr. B. called to see him, and finding that his mind was drawn away to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the "obedience of faith," was very much incensed, saying many hard things and using many arguments to turn the mind of the young enquirer away from the teaching of the old book, saying: Do you suppose all the good people who are dead without paying attention to these things are lost? And, if they are saved without paying attention or yielding obedience to these things, may not we be saved in the same way? These things are not necessary. These things come from a bad source. Pay no attention to them. You can be saved very well without them. So, the chief business of this clergyman's visit was to turn the young man's mind away from the Bible.

With reference to the good people dying and going to heaven in a state of disobedience, of course, this clergyman and his compeers are the only authority. God says nothing about that, at least, not affirmatively.

While the young man's mind was unsettled and perplexed because of the lack of unity between two avowed teachers of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, Mr. C. called on an errand of mercy. He is anxious that the young man should be saved, but his creed makes his way of saving people differ very much from both the other gentlemen. He quotes scripture (all clergymen do), but the scripture is carefully selected to support his creed, and some other quotations would be very offensive to him.

The visit is ended. No more light is added, but, instead, the darkness is being intensified. The young man's mind is being more confused. The question is, what shall he do? And, the answer is, Nothing! These teachers of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ—instead of leading him to "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world," have succeeded in leading him into darkness, and leaving him there.

Mr. A. called again, and urged the plainness of the way of which Isaiah prophesied—Isa. xxxvii. 8.

The young man said: Yes, I know, it seems plain, but, is there no other way? Is it not possible for a man to be saved without that? Our fathers and mothers, where are they? Are they not saved? May not I be saved without compliance? O, I find it so difficult to see everything as the teachers see, they differ so much. I will wait.

Mr. A. tried to present the matter in a personal, individual light. Strive [you] to enter in at the strait gate, &c., but all in vain, the mind was unsettled and could not be concentrated. He would wait. Time, however, does not wait. Disease does not wait. The body becomes more enfeebled until, at last, he said: All I can do now is trust in the ONE—in His mercy.

So, a young man of perfectly honest mind goes down to the dark chambers of death, without a hope which gives comfort, because pretended teachers of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ would rather have it so, if they fail in making him a member of their party and have him pronounce their "Shibboleth."

Is it not perplexing to think [if we do think] that God has committed the eternal interests of the human race to such teachers as are manifestly of the earth earthly, and whose religion [analyzed] is only a kind of *not very refined* selfishness?

Will He in His mercy and love over-rule all for good.

Does He still wink at the ignorance, wilfulness, selfishness and rebellion of the people? Will He consign to everlasting night the false teachers of this age, and have eternal mercy on the taught, who, by the teaching are blinded, deceived and led astray?

Or shall the deceiver and the deceived—the blind leaders and the blinded—both fall into the ditch?

When we see the zeal of those who are giving to the people that which rests only on human authority, as Demetrius and the craftsman gave to the people, gods made by men's hands, and then see the apathy of those who have the plan of salvation according to heaven's own revelation, we are per-

plexed and cry. How long, O Lord, how long, before the Gospel will cause to pass away every opposing influence, and reach the people pure as thou hast given it?

O. B. EMERY.

Montague, Oct. 22, 1886.

CHRIST'S INVITATION.

BY E. C. FORD.

Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—Mat. 11:28.

This is a blessed invitation, in which are some points worthy of special attention. Let us note a few of them: 1st. Who are invited? The careful reader of the Scriptures will see that there is a distinction as to the character of those who are invited. The invitation is only to such as "labor and are heavy laden." The self-righteous Pharisee, who can boast of his righteousness, and thank God that he is not like other men, is not included. He does not labor under a load of guilt, nor feel the burden of sin. To come to Christ we must feel our need of Him, and rely wholly on Him for salvation. The man who thinks he is "good enough," is not invited. He must learn that he is a sinner in the sight of God, and under condemnation as well as other men. Who, then, are invited? Such as are conscious of their own sinfulness before God, on account of which they are justly condemned, and are weary of this burden of sin, and are seeking rest for their souls. To all of such characters the Saviour says, "I will give you rest."

2. To what are we invited? Our Lord says, "come unto Me." He does not invite people simply to make a profession of religion, nor to join the church; but to come to Him. There are too many, we fear, who make a profession of religion, and join the church, who do not come to Christ. Coming to Christ's ordinances, or to the church, without consecrating our hearts and lives to Christ, amounts to nothing. It is worse than nothing. It is deception, and a deception that is likely to result in the ruin of the soul. Let us, therefore, in coming to a profession of Christ, be careful that we come to Him, without which all profession is but an empty shell, and a solemn mockery. The reader will notice that the sinner is to come to Christ, and not stand inviting Christ to come to him. Much of the teaching and practice of our day would lead us to think that the Saviour had to be persuaded to come to the sinner, when in the word of God He is said to be very near to us all; so that we have not to say, "who shall ascend into Heaven, to bring Christ down," or "who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ again from the dead." In the gospel Christ has come very near to us all, even to knocking at our hearts, and asking us to let Him in. We are not invited to this creed, or to that; to this, or to that church; but to Christ, and to Him only.

3. For what are we invited? There are two specific purposes for which we are invited to Christ. First, to take His yoke upon us. This means to take on us His authority—His government. No one is invited who does not come with this purpose. Jesus says: All power is given unto me in heaven, and on earth; Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matt 28: 18-20. As all power in heaven and earth has been given to Christ, we come to Him to heartily submit to His authority. Christ demands the whole heart, and the whole life. Unless we come in this spirit we are not invited by Christ to come at all. We must make an unconditional surrender to His authority for life. This is what Christ means when He says, "Take my yoke."

Second. We are invited to Christ to learn of