

proceeding in the way suggested, than by following the usual course: but, since we do not read the Scriptures for practice, but rather to learn our duties to God, to our neighbor and to ourselves, the objection is of little importance.

He who does not make the Bible a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path, but walks entirely after the counsel of man, must be in doubt and fear, since, among fallible mortals there exist such a diversity of opinion and practice on vital points. He who investigates for himself the Word of God, and by it tries the statements of ministers and others, whether they are in harmony with it or not, and accept or reject them accordingly, is truly wise. The servant of God, who is trying to make known his whole counsel, would, for a moment, think of being irritated with any of his hearers, who proves all things by the Word of God and holds fast that which is good. We know that the Bereans were commended for searching the Scriptures daily and seeing whether or not what Paul said was true. (Acts xvii. 11.)

Another matter that may not be foreign to the nature of this communication, and one that professing Christians and even the true followers of Christ neglect too much, is committing to memory as many of the choice passages of Scripture, as by diligence, they can. It is not absolutely necessary that we do so; but, if such an amount of pleasure accrues to him that memorizes portions of the most beautiful writings of uninspired men, surely much more will to him that does the same with the Word given by inspiration of God. When from home we cannot always have our Bible with us; but it is impossible to leave the verses behind; and during the spare moments in the day and the sleepless ones at night, we can meditate upon them and derive such benefit therefrom, that we will be the better prepared to resist the devil so successfully that he will flee from us.

It is necessary that Christians study the Word diligently, that they may grow in grace and the further knowledge of Jesus Christ, and be able to give an answer for the hope that is in them, that the professing Christians may find what yet they lack, and finding, obtain it, that yet they become meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and the ungodly be warned to flee from the wrath to come and lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel. All should study it till they become familiar with its contents; then they will know what is right and pleasing to God, and what is displeasing to Him and consequently wrong.

A concordance, a Bible dictionary and biblical study, and all should have them. Of the three, probably the most valuable is the concordance, enabling those that consult it to find all the passages with ease, that bear on any subject they may be studying. Dr. Smith's Bible Dictionary comprises, "antiquities, geography, biography, and natural history," and must be seen to be appreciated. The value of maps was shown by a communication in the February number of THE CHRISTIAN, entitled "Geography."

S. F. H.

P. E. Island, March 16th, 1885.

FROM NEW ZEALAND.

DEAR BRO. CRAWFORD,—In addition to the Salvation Army and American Evangelists, we have a new sect calling themselves the Church of Christ, who teach and hold the souls-leeping, materialistic doctrine of "conditional immortality," which being interpreted means that immortality can only be obtained by the believer and follower of Jesus, all others are lost in the grave. Their bodies return to the dust, but as they have not immortal spirit,

when the vital spark quits this mortal frame it goes out like a farthing rush light, without hope of being relighted in the hereafter, except through a belief in Christ. This is a convenient doctrine, and gets rid of the inconvenient notion of future punishment, and gives those who are so minded to follow in the steps of him who

"When he lived he lived in clover,
And when he died he died all over."

a full opportunity to do so, as the consequences are simply non-immortality, otherwise annihilation.

This strange notion was introduced to New Zealand by a Mr. G. A. Brown, who I believe was at one time a Baptist minister. He is a very clever speaker, and has succeeded in gaining a good number of followers. Their teaching in almost every other particular approaches extremely close to the plea of the Disciples, while their church order and many other items are identical. Mr. Brown has recently gone to America and it is not improbable that you may hear of him.

Bro. Exley, who has on several previous occasions combatted their conditional immortality notions, has recently delivered a course of lectures in opposition to their views. These addresses have been well received and have caused considerable interest in Auckland where they were delivered. They will be published in pamphlet form and circulated at a low price. Owing to the very great interest aroused by these lectures our brother's intended visit to the Thames has been delayed until after the commencement of the New Year.

This brings to my mind the near approach of that interesting season—a season of joy as well as one of serious reflection—and I think I shall just conclude this short epistle by wishing you and all the readers of THE CHRISTIAN a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Yours, etc.,

L. J. BAGNALL.

Thames, Nov. 10th, 1884.

[The above was mislaid.—Ed.]

A SUCCESSFUL PRAYER-MEETING.

It is the purpose of this article to offer a few suggestions upon the means of creating and sustaining a good prayer-meeting. There is no service, in our judgment, that presents such opportunities for mutual helpfulness and spiritual development, as this one. Here we gather as a family at the evening fireside. All the restraints of the day's conflict and toil are laid aside, and the family's cares and disappointments, triumphs and hopes are discussed with a common interest. It is essentially the people's meeting and under modern restrictions the only meeting that the people have. It ought to be the happiest and most joyful service of the week, a place where the weary soul could find rest and refreshment, where the sorrowing could find comfort, and where all could sit down as members of a great family to cheer and encourage one another onward in the struggle. It should be such an occasion that weary mothers may find it refreshing to tear themselves away from cares and sit for an hour under its cheering influence; that the tired workman will go home renewed in spirit and encouraged in his daily toil. Such results may be realized in many of our now lifeless prayer-meetings with proper attention, zeal and earnestness.

Perhaps the most serious problem with most leaders is to secure such an attendance as is essential to success. It is next to impossible to work up a very strong interest with a handful scattered about over the audience room. One of the failures of most prayer-meetings is in not reaching church people as a class. There is generally a startling difference between the Lord's day morning and the Thursday evening attendance.

Perhaps a congregation of one hundred and fifty can muster thirty or forty who have the heroism to go through with the average prayer-meeting. Every such prayer-meeting, however beneficial to those who attend, is in a measure a failure, since a large majority gain nothing from its exercises. One of the efforts, then, should be to increase the attendance, fill the house, if possible. It will require that all the energy of the pastor and people be bent to that end. Let the same effort be made to get the people to attend prayer-meeting, that there is to get an audience on Sunday and it can be done. In the first place make its services attractive and profitable. It is often unprofitable because it has failed to draw out the sympathies and sustain the interest of those who attend. It's very tediousness causes weary men and tired mothers to prefer their own cheerful firesides and the warmth and glow of family companionship to the weary monotony of such an hour. On the other hand if the meeting is made interesting and helpful to those who attend its influence will begin to spread through the congregation. Then let every one act on a committee of invitation and its influence for good will be doubled. The young people will soon find that the prayer-meeting has something for them, and the weary sinner will here find himself nearest the divine presence, whose pardoning love he desires.

A great many fail to make the meeting interesting because they neglect to give attention, in the preparation of exercises. They have gotten into a rut, and there they remain the year round. A few long prayers and tedious exhortations, interspersed now and then with a lifeless song, to fill in awkward pauses, is often the weekly fast before set weary souls who have come hungering for blessings. If an effort were made to get out of this rut it would have a wholesome effect. Let the exercises be varied to suit the occasion; and as it is the people's meeting, in some way give each individual a share and responsibility in the service. The timid shrinking servant of Jesus Christ, must not be pushed aside by the stronger and more ready of speech. The tender girl who has just confessed her Saviour must have an opportunity to testify of her love. There must be a part for the young and a part for the old and the Master's spirit over all. By prayerful thoughtful preparation, under the management of a skilful leader, the prayer-meeting may be made the most interesting, soul-inspiring service of the Lord's house. And where it is made such, we will not need to lament as we often do now, the absence of the membership from this service.—*The Christian Evangelist.*

HOW TO PREACH.

Make no apologies. If you have the Lord's message, deliver it; if not, hold your peace. Have short prefaces and introductions. Say your best things first and stop before you get prosy. Do not spoil the appetite for dinner by too much thin soup. Leave self out of the pulpit and take Jesus in. Defend the Gospel, and let the Lord defend you and your character. If you are lied about, thank the devil for putting you on your guard, and take care that the story shall never come true. Do not get excited too soon. Do not run away from your hearers. Engine driving wheels run fast with no load, but when they draw anything, they go slower. It takes a cold hammer to bend a hot iron. Heat up the people, but keep the hammer cool. Do not brawl and scream. Too much water stops mill wheels, and too much noise drowns sense. Empty vessels ring the loudest. If you have lightning you