

Baskets of Picked Fruit.

The one right use of our faith in immortality is neither as bribe nor as menace, but simply to face us from all disturbance about the consequences of righteous action, to give us strength to look singly at the quality of our life not at a lot at its results.—John Hamilton Thom.

Oh, there is a fine passion in feeling the heart of humanity beat, an in-singing your heart to its music, which will lift you above a diseased selfishness in a glorious way, and link your whole life in healthy union to God through union with man.—Stopford A. Brooke.

If there be in us a divine element, no wonder it should instinctively seek communion with its source, and that our religious belief and our religious fervor should be in proportion to this clearness and force of the witness of God's spirit with our spirits, that we are his children.—Thomas Sadler.

Only a careless and flippant mind can pass over the beginning of a new year without some serious reflections. At least it is a fixed point in the movement of events that prompts us to take our bearings.

The man who protests against an evil and fights for its overthrow must expect to have the thorns turred on him after the fashion of the address of Ahab to Elijah: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

The distinguishing characteristic of the spiritual life is found in the soul's responsiveness to spiritual motives, and the sign of spiritual death is the soul's indifference to the appeals of the noblest considerations.

Pray that you may have the compassion of Christ when He looked on the hungry multitude. Pray that you may have such a vision of Christ that when one says "I would see Jesus" you can tell that one where to find Him. Tell him, not what Calvin thought, nor St. Augustine said, but tell him what your own heart knows. Pray that you may have a persuasive testimony.

Speaking of his business perplexities a devout Christian recently remarked: "I have the habit whenever my worldly affairs are exceedingly trying and a way of relief seems to be quite impossible of raising my heart in silent prayer to my heavenly Father, who never fails to give me courage and strength."

Whoever enjoys divine union as a spiritual habit will not be surprised when he listens to such testimony; his own experience corresponds to just this blessed rest. He does not always see the way of deliverance, but he is in that spiritual condition which enables him to trust, which is far better than seeing. He feels that God has entered into a contract with him and that the very best results will come, even though the earthly cares may be hard for the flesh to bear and the unexpected reverses may be distressing.—Selected.

The Vision of God.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." The vision of God unseals the lips of men. Herein lies strength for conflict with the common enemy of the praying world known as wandering thoughts. If the eye is fixed on God, thought may roam where it will without irreverence, for every thought is then converted into a prayer. Some have found it a useful thing when their minds have wandered off from devotion and been snared by some good, but irrelevant consideration, not to cast away the offending thought as the eyes are again lifted to the Divine Face, but to take it captive, carry it into the presence of God and weave it into a prayer before putting it aside and resuming the original topic. This is to lead captivity captive.—Charles H. Brent.

Are We Trustees or Traders.

By O. P. Eaches.

A VAST deal depends on the question whether Baptist churches can traffic in the New Testament precepts and practices or whether they are trustees in charge of them. A grocer may dispose of his stock at his own prices. No court may interfere with him. If a man be the custodian of invested funds he must manage his trusteeship in accord with the imposed conditions. Paul's conception of the relation of the church, the pastor, the believer to the truth is that they are trustees entrusted with the gospel (1 Thess. 2:4). The church is to receive the teachings of Christ, interpret them, defend them against all comers. New Testament precepts and practices are not to be altered, amended, or trafficked in as merchantable articles.

The recently published proceedings of the Baptist Congress reveal the appointed speakers and writers as uniting to abridge or repeal statutory provisions. That Baptist traditions should be appealed from is not unreasonable. That New Testament commands should be laid aside or displaced by something higher—this is not conceivable. There is a manifest desire on the part of two speakers to strip certain passages, that stand for commonly accepted Baptist positions, of their meaning. It is suggested that the passage in John 4:2, declaring that Jesus made and baptized disciples, occurring in but one place, does not carry much weight. It is suggested also that certain Unitarians reject on doctrinal grounds Matt. 28:19. The spirit of a destructive higher criticism is invoked in order that Baptist churches may open their doors to the unbaptized. It has been held by us, always, as a New Testament teaching that belief must precede baptism. The truth of the multiplication table seemed no clearer that the teachings of Jesus and the practice of the New Testament churches on this subject. It did not seem to be an open question. It seemed to be settled once for all, for all people, for all ages. But one speaker maintained that if a person hold in all sincerity "that infant baptism is right and scriptural" and shape his life in accordance—this man has a right to a Baptist church. Infant sprinkling and believer's baptism stand in precisely the same relation to a Baptist church. Infant sprinkling and believer's baptism stand in precisely the same relation to a Baptist church. It is written plain all over the New Testament that belief must precede baptism to make it a baptism. The Baptist Congress would have a Baptist church deal in all varieties of beliefs and practices, believers' baptism for those who wish.

It has been our accepted belief that baptism is a burial and a resurrection. Paul taught this in Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2:12. The form of baptism is a mold of doctrine. But we are told on page 48 that the form is no integral part of baptism. "Immersion is adapted to oriental countries. Had Jesus lived in another country he might have adopted another mode." Here the act of baptism is an object of traffic, of merchandise. The church may not ask what Jesus did, what the word meant in the command; but what convenience would like. The church, according to this conception of its powers, may deal in all varieties of baptism. It may keep on hand aspersion, pouring, immersion, trine immersion, something suiting all tastes.

The church may recognize infant baptism and believers' baptism—may recognize any form of baptism. It may go further and suspend baptism entirely. It is affirmed—"In the presence of the highest spiritual attainments ritualistic qualifications are as naught." It may well be asked who imposed ritualistic qualifications—did not Jesus Christ? Was not Jesus a person of the highest spiritual attainments and did not He submit to baptism that he might fulfill righteousness? Did not Jesus establish a spiritual system of religion, and did He not intrench baptism in it, as expressly as belief (Matt. 28:19)? "Insistence on a form does not make for character." Insistence on what Jesus said does make for the finest Christian character. There can be no Christian character apart from obedience. Character is manifested in the outward observance of Christ's commands, and strengthened also. Not even for the sake of a Whittier should a church depart from the plain commands of

Jesus Christ. It is said that "ceremonies were for the most part matters of indifference." No one can read Matt. 3:15, 28:19, Mark 16:16, Rom. 6:4 Acts 2:38, 1 Pet. 3:21 and say that outward New Testament ordinances are treated in an indifferent manner.

A Baptist church may explain Christ's statutes—it may not repeal them or suspend them. "In all such cases the baptismal statute should give way to the higher claims of Christian fellowship and love." This sounds almost like the utterance of a Pope who may supplement, add to or take away from the words of the New Testament. What higher things are there in the world than the precepts of Christ? What more binding precedents for us than the teachings and practices of the Apostles? If the New Testament everywhere places baptism before the church—why may we be above the New Testament in our endeavor to show respect for a Friend? If Jesus places belief before baptism how may we show our respect for Him by consenting to alter His command to please some persons whom we love? Is not the best fellowship shown for the truth by claiming no power to put the New Testament statutes aside? The churches are trustees for New Testament commands. They have no right to be dealers in New Testament statutes, telling when they may be kept, and when laid aside.

It is everywhere declared that the commonly accepted Baptist position is one of intolerance and an infringement on the rights of conscience. Every affirmation of a truth is a denial of its opposite—there is a certain intolerance about all truth. To affirm that believers alone may be baptized is a denial that infants may be baptized. If some of these Baptist ministers who spoke at the Baptist Congress carry their words to their fitting results they must sprinkle all infants brought to them—to do otherwise will be to deny the right of private judgment in interpreting the Scriptures, to be intolerant of those loving the truth. The Baptist churches of today are trustees of certain large teachings that are not held clearly by other religious bodies. They should witness for believers' baptism, for a burial and a resurrection because the New Testament commands it. These are truths to be uttered not traded off. The truth should be held, in love, but it should be held, not given away. Baptist churches are to be trustees and interpreters of New Testament teachings. They are not to be religious shops where all forms of beliefs and all forms of ordinances are kept on hand and dealt out according to personal tastes.

Hightstown, N. J.

Ordination.

A council was called at head of Cumberland Bay on 16th inst., to consider the propriety of ordaining the pastor elect, Bro. F. P. Dresser.

Rev. I. B. Colwell was chosen chairman; Bro. H. O. Branscombe, clerk; Rev. E. T. Miller examiner. After usual statements from clerk and deacon of the church the candidate was subjected to a most rigid examination. At the conclusion it was unanimously resolved to advise the church to proceed with the ordination service. This took place in the evening, a large attendance being present.

After reading of Scripture Rev. L. Wason offered prayer; Rev. E. T. Miller preached the sermon from II. Kings, III. 16. Rev. W. E. McIntyre offered the ordaining prayer and extended the hand of welcome to the ministry. Rev. I. B. Colwell gave the charge to the church and minister, closing with benediction by the pastor. Bro. Dresser has the hearty and generous support of his people, and with the aid of Rev. I. B. Colwell is conducting special services at the Range.

One burdened heart has been the beginning of a revival many a time. If you are moved in your holiest moments to join with others do it at whatever cost. A religion that is not worth a little extra time is not worth holding. Pray first for self and then for others. Hold mind and heart to the one desired blessing. There are other duties, cares, delights; but let heart and mind keep reverting in this. Remember these two words: Definiteness, Importance.—B. A. Greene.