

In the meantime Mr. Davis, on reading the address, wrote me to say that he had either misunderstood my former pamphlet or I had greatly changed since writing it, and requested a letter of explanation either privately or through the *Christian Messenger*. I wrote in the *Messenger*, but the dear old gentleman did not seem to understand, and turned to protesting and denunciation. Although he did not seem to be benefited by the letters, I had good proof that others were; and so, I thank God for His grace.

For six or seven years I enjoyed comparative peace. One day, without any known reason to me, except that some had been baptized, I received a hurried note from Mr. Murray challenging me to an oral debate on the points in difference between us on baptism. When I saw the editor of the *Summerside Journal* I published this challenge, stated the points of difference, asked him to affirm what he did and taught for baptism, and I would deny it. And I would affirm what I did and taught for baptism, and let him deny it. This did not seem to suit him, and after writing a number of letters he retreated. I continued to write in the *Journal* on the Christian religion a number of weeks after. About this time he received the title of D. D., and has since turned his attention to other men.

Sensational oral debates on points which divide professors are generally got up by fiery, self-sufficient men who seek for victory rather than for truth, and that the many may crush the few. All kinds of reports of what was said fly unchecked, and people are not in a proper state of mind to examine or receive new truth however important. If public discussion must take place, let it be through the press, where writers can step and consider that they are laboring for God and eternity, and where false reports of what is written can be checked; and where the reader with open Bible and before the eyes of the Judge, can for himself examine and decide what is right.

When accepting a challenge for public discussion I have always gone to the papers, and have been surprised at the fairness and manly independence of the editors, no matter how unpopular might be the side which I considered true.

But I must close this unfinished and imperfect sketch, asking the prayers of God's children that my last days may be better than the first.

Original Contributions.

ORGANIZATION.

I see in the July number of *THE CHRISTIAN* that Bro. Freeman is after me on this subject of Organization. I am glad of it. There is no better way to gain a knowledge of the truth than by fair, honest, diligent investigation. Bro. Freeman's criticisms are given in a kind Christian spirit and are worthy attention in as kind a spirit as they were given. His criticisms show that he has interest enough in the subject to give it some thought. It is better to "think on these things" even if we are not correct in our thoughts than not to think at all. To let any person or paper do our thinking for us, and we become simply echoes, is destructive to all growth in grace and knowledge.

Bro. Freeman labors under two mistakes. At least it so appears to us. The first mistake may be seen in the following paragraph: "It is generally understood and recognized, at least among us, that Christ established His church and gave it a plan of organization. Now if the members of the church are not willing to work together according to the Divine will, as members of that organization, are we then to say the organization is wrong? And if they form another society, adopt some other form

of organization and work in that way, are we then to say Christ's plan of organization is wrong?"

His mistake here is in taking for granted that we are not satisfied with the scriptural plan of organization and are adopting new plans. We are profoundly satisfied with God's plan and the scriptural plan of organization. The very thing we were trying to show in our former article was our great need of a scriptural organization to work by the plan that God has given us. We, with many others, are compelled to admit that our present condition of church work is not according to the Apostolic order. The references we gave (Eph. iv. 16 and I. Cor. 12th chapter) show plainly that the plan of organization in Apostolic days was one in which all the members were active in their appointed place. What our esteemed Bro. should have done, instead of assuming what is not true, was to show that a church with a hundred members, more or less, with the elders and deacons and a few others doing what work is done, and the rest inactive, is a scripturally organized church. We have studied this subject carefully ever since Bro. Campbell called the attention of the brotherhood to the need of a better organization, and we find in every line of scripture relating to this subject that every member is a part of the organization and that they are so united and compacted that if one member is not filling its place or its function it is more or less destructive to the organization. A church that is trying to do its work with the preacher and the elders and deacons and a few other faithful members, with a large portion of its members inactive, is not a scripturally organized church, but is trying to do the work as well as they can with an imperfect organization. Finding this condition of things in many churches we said and now repeat it, "that our great need is organization." Not another organization but such an organization as we find in Apostolic days. This is not play with us, but our solid and earnest convictions, and we cannot be led off the track by the cry of "new plans and new organizations." Let us meet the issue squarely and either show that the present condition of things are Apostolic, or unite heart and hand to make them so. The Disciples of Christ to-day who are working earnestly and faithfully for the promotion of the cause of Christ, show unmistakeably, by their fruits, that they love Christ and His church too well to see any new plans or new departures from the plan that God has given us.

The second mistake of our respected Bro. is in another supposition that needs proof, i. e., that the societies or the associations of the church are separate and apart from the church. The "Aid Society," the "Sewing Circle" and Sunday-school" and the "arrangement," as Bro. Ford calls it in the July number, and other helps we might mention are not organizations outside and separate from the church, but simply the church organized. We may call it organizing a society, or "starting an arrangement," just as we choose, but the principle is the same. To suppose the Sunday-school is an organization apart from the church because it has its regular officers and makes its regular appointments is supposition run wild. It is the church organized for systematic work in the line of teaching the young. There are other interests of the church that need help as much as in teaching, and to organize such into systematic labor is the true idea of church organization and is not a society outside of the church, but it is the church after the Apostolic order. The principle of the Y. P. S. C. E. is the same as the Sunday-school and Sewing Circle. If one is wrong the other must be. The Y. P. S. C. E. may be a better organized society and wider in its range, but that does not change the principle. The societies already mentioned are Christian endeavor societies in principle if not in name. The name does not

change the principle. The principle in these societies or "arrangements" is to get all the members in their place and all at work, thus fulfilling the true idea of organization. To oppose this work is to oppose church organization and thus destroy the work of God. There are some who oppose only the imperfect plan of the Y. P. S. C. E., but accept the principle. This to me looks consistent, for no doubt there are imperfections in the society as it is only in its childhood. But to be a worker in the Sunday-school and oppose the Y. P. S. C. E. is beyond all bounds of consistency, as the principle in both cases is the same. I have learned very lately of one preacher who struck an attitude against all societies, and seeing his inconsistency in upholding the Sunday-school worked against it until he succeeded in closing the school, which gives us now one church in our provinces without a 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. H. M.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Daniel Webster was once asked, "What is the greatest idea that has ever passed through your mind?" and, taking but a moment to think, he replied, "My individual responsibility to God." He thought that God had given him talent, that He had given him a work to perform, and that a day was coming in which he would judge him "according to the deeds done in the body whether good or bad," transcended in its importance and its solemnity every other thought that had ever entered the mind of one of the most intellectual men of this age. And well it might; for it is appalling to remember, though often forgotten, that God has given every one some duty to perform, and He holds that one accountable for its due fulfilment.

The majority of professing Christians seem to believe that God will find some way of accomplishing His plan, and bringing all to a glorious consummation, and, therefore, they need not concern themselves about it. If God wants to send a man to preach among the heathen He will find plenty people ready to support the missionary, and, therefore, I need not give the matter a thought. If He wants money raised for work in destitute portions of our own country, others will give it, and I need not put myself to any inconvenience, not even the inconvenience of enclosing a five dollar bill in an envelope and sending it on its mission of love. If it is decided to engage a preacher, it is not necessary that I should contribute to his support, because, you know, the others will attend to that. I will not be active in any kind of church work, since I know they can get along without me. I will go to church only when I feel like it; take part in prayer meeting only when I cannot possibly avoid it, and come to Sunday school only when there is some special attraction. In fact, when I look all over the range of Christian duty I can see that there is nothing for me to do which some one else cannot do just as well. So say very few; but so believe very many, if we may be allowed to judge thoughts by actions.

But a man says, I can do very little. That is not the point. Here it is, Are you doing what you can? Are you bearing your own burden? or are you trying to make some one else do what God intended as a part of your duty. Shifting responsibility seems to be one of man's favorite occupations. He labors at it long and earnestly. Not only is he often unwilling to walk in step with God's loyal children as they march onward against the hosts of Satan, but he wants to find some one else to blame for his sins. The Adams still seek shelter behind the Eves, and the Eves behind the serpents. But a thousand such manoeuvres will never change the solemn fact, that "every one shall give an account of himself to God." It is just as