

But is as natural for one promising his normal manly power to new fields of labor and usefulness as for him to breathe the pure air of heaven. It is only by the union of manly energy and decision of character that we can hold our position and stem the swift current of life. We look upon this life as a solemn reality and not as an empty dream; but forget it is based upon and encompassed by eternity. Uniting the first with the second the thought naturally comes to our minds, the thought preceding every act should be its influence on time and eternity.

In seeking fields of labor due recognition should be given to the opportunities scattered around us by a Divine hand for uniting with our daily labors honest and willing work for the cause of Him who gave His life for us. Then how thankful we should be for opportunities brought to us by the Infinite One. Perhaps we have not taken advantage of those cast around us. The moments filled with opportunities to speak the kindly word, to check the flowing tear, have flown forever; they are now in the past; they cannot be recovered. The hours that should have been spent in the service of the Great King, in attending to those things He has committed to our trust, have been spent for self. To the many hours God has given us for temporal benefits we have added those given us for preparation for the life to come. We have robbed Him of His due, withheld all proper honor, and applied them to ourselves. The treasures placed at our disposal, whether goods, abilities or precious opportunities, have not been duly appreciated and used for our spiritual development and the honor of God—they, too, are recorded in the deeds of the past.

Yet in the bestowment of these blessings there are reasons for thankfulness to the Bountiful Giver of all good gifts; He has recognized His children, and withheld not from them His choicest blessings; though not appreciated and used as the Benevolent One desired. Our thoughts should be pre-occupied with the words of the psalmist: "Have mercy upon me, oh God, according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions."

Again, what pure thankfulness can flow from the hearts of those who have passed the year with kindly deeds, who have worked conscientiously for the uplifting of humanity, for the upbuilding of Christ's Kingdom. Those who recognized that time, talent and earthly goods and treasures were given to them by a kind Heavenly Father, to be used with wisdom for personal spiritual improvement and the spreading of Christ's glorious Gospel in its purity to a waiting world; to alleviate in all ways the sufferings of humanity, and to bind them all in one great brotherhood of redeemed souls. Thrice blessed are those who have thus done. Here can they say with joyous hearts, for all these opportunities for rising into a sphere of noble manhood and honorable service under the Great King: "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord: call upon His name; make known His deeds among the people; sing unto Him; sing psalms unto Him; talk ye of all His wondrous works; glory ye in His holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord."

But a rebellious heart may say, "His disappointments have been so many that I fail to join in the praises of God. Sorrows have been so bitter that gratitude to the Supreme One cannot now be enjoyed by me." But what is a disappointment but the sorrow of

our hearts caused by the failure of some plan, the creation of our own minds. God had nobler things for us than we had conceived for ourselves. He had other fields of labor than those we had chosen—fields of greater activity and productive of more good than our own chosen ones. He, probably, in His kindness, lets us enjoy the pleasure desired from our own plans, even sometimes till they almost become accomplished facts to us. Then, probably, by some working of His laws, He leads us to our proper sphere, sometimes with sore hearts and tearful eyes. He who knows all things knows that in thus dealing with us, though there is sorrow, the joy preceding and the joy following in our new sphere of action is far beyond that which we would have received had we been permitted to follow our own ways.

There are, too, those tears that have been shed at the grave of the parting ones. Can we be thankful to Him who has taken our loved ones? Yes, but the means for thankfulness are too many to tell. Even while standing at the grave and listening to the cold earth falling upon the casket which holds the one most precious to us—hiding the dear one from view, Jesus is a sympathizer in our sorrow. There is no tear however small but that heaven is imaged in its bosom. "Tears are softening showers which cause the seed of heaven to spring up in the humblest heart." Perhaps the one laid away is a mother—of all the gifts of God's bestowing the one most precious. Yet in this sorrow there comes stealing over us the hope of meeting again.

"Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way;
And still, as darker grows the light,
Emits a brighter ray."

Thank heaven for all temporal blessings, scanty or in abundance. Yes, thank heaven for more breath when it is made up of a breeze as pure as if sent from heaven's throne. It comes with a real kiss upon every cheek; it would linger fondly around if it might; but since it must be gone it embraces us with its whole kindly heart, and passes onward to embrace the next it meets. God's blessings are in abundance, everywhere flowing abroad. They are scattered far and wide over the earth, to be gathered up by all who choose.

"Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men."

OUR PLEA AND OUR OBLIGATION

GEO. MANIFOLD.

James A. Garfield, an honored President of the United States, who lived and died a member of, and for many years a preacher in, the Christian Church, was once asked by a lady to formulate a statement which would give her a more definite idea as to our doctrinal position. The following is a copy of Mr. Garfield's reply:

We call ourselves Christians, or Disciples of Christ.

We believe in God the Father.

We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and our Saviour. We regard the Divinity of Christ as the fundamental truth of the Christian system.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, both as to His agency in conversion and as an indweller in the heart of the Christian.

We accept both the Old and New Testament Scriptures as the inspired Word of God.

We believe in the future punishment of the wicked and the future reward of the righteous.

We believe that Deity is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God.

We observe the institution of the Lord's Supper on every Lord's Day. To this table we neither invite nor debar. We say it is the Lord's Supper for all the Lord's children.

We plead for the union of God's people on the Bible and the Bible alone.

The Christ is our creed.

We maintain that all the ordinances should be observed as they were in the days of the Apostles.

The above is a statement of "Our Plea" in very short metre. We have need to be more familiar with our message and mission. There is dense ignorance in this part of the world respecting the people calling themselves Disciples of Christ. There is imperative necessity on the part of brethren and sisters, both young and old, to arouse themselves from their lethargy. Too many are content to be designated as "Baptists," not knowing or indifferent to the reasons, vital and fundamental, as to our existence as a separate religious body. For this, brethren, I praise you not.

I am well aware that the influence of established religions, and the hereditary conservatism of the masses, are great obstacles in the way of progress. But I take the ground that these difficulties are not nearly so great as the prejudice and bitter hostility manifested on the part of Judaizers and Gentiles against the early disciples. Their burning earnestness, their consecrated personality, their sublime trust in God, overcame all opposition. "The church, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied."

It is not enough to preach the truth—we must also live the truth, and do the truth. A Christian man should be a convincing reply to all skepticism and all questions of prejudice; his life should be his argument.

"If you want to teach a man,
Let loose a life at him;
Words are weak, the logic
Of a life is irresistible."

Brethren, continue in the Word; be loyal disciples of the Christ; bring unto men that glorious freedom that alone can come through the truth.

"ARE WE IN A RUT?"

ANOTHER DISCIPLE.

This subject, as treated in the last CHRISTIAN, should cause all the Disciples who may have read it to pause a moment (or longer) and consider the matter for themselves.

Of course there are different kinds of ruts. Experience has taught me that a nice, smooth rut, providing it is not too narrow, is much better than the middle of the road. This is so because there it is possible to make better speed, and do so with less wasted energy. On the other hand, there are ruts that are dangerous, and, if we persist in running in them, we are likely to have a fall—sometimes, however, the accident comes when we attempt to get out of the rut on the wrong side.

It may seem that the "annual meeting" does a part of the business of the "Board;" still, I believe there is a wide field in which they may carry the work to the advantage of all the churches.

Many of us have seen how easy it is to raise two or three hundred dollars at our annual meeting; and why is this so? Not because those present are more able or willing to give than those who are not present, but because they hear of the need of money and the good that it will do, and also because they have the fact brought before them that