

more in every church and locality where there are disciples, who will take interest enough in this work to mention and solicit every one in regard to the matter. We have many good disciples in the churches who can't preach or even speak in meeting, who are anxious to do something for the cause of Christ. Let such ones take this work upon them. Try and see how much can be done in your community towards this all important work: Don't be discouraged when some one objects to the work or the manner of doing it. There are some (there ought to be less) who lose their religious ardor when money is mentioned. I heard of one man who was in the habit of shouting when the preacher said anything that suited him. It somewhat disturbed the preacher, so he requested the deacon to speak to the shouting brother. The deacon did. The preacher asked the deacon what he said that so successfully quieted the man. "All he did was to ask him if he would give a dollar for mission purposes." We have no reasons whatever to be discouraged, because we find some who have more "say" than "pay," for we have many who are interested in the good work, and many more who are becoming interested. The interest in our little paper *THE CHRISTIAN*, is growing all the time. The interest in our mission work is constantly increasing, and now this work of educating our young men is making a splendid beginning. I believe we will see a greater work this year than any former time. We need to agitate this work and plead earnestly but lovingly with the people and help them to see the magnitude of this work, and God will bless us, and we will rejoice in seeing the triumph of the gospel of Christ.

H. M.

TWO OR THREE—WHO ARE THEY?

Jesus said: Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst. Matt. xviii. 20. Believers to-day claim this promise, as applying to the children of God just as it did to them, to whom the words were spoken; and often we've heard it said, "We can claim the promise, because we have more than two or three."

It is well to have faith—strong faith in the promises of God, and with the utmost confidence to appropriate every promise to which we may lawfully lay claim. The promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus—they fail not.

I take, not my pen, to-day, to argue that Jesus is not present in the spirit with every child of God, wherever He may be. I do believe with all my heart, that each and every child of God is under His peculiar care. I. Peter, v. 7; is under the unerring leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ, Heb. ii. 10; has received the earnest of the spirit, I. Cor. v. 5; is sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30; is the Temple of God, because the Spirit of God dwells in him, I. Cor. iii. 16; and is destined for glory, honor, and immortality, even eternal life—indeed, He is in possession of eternal life now, because eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, John xxi. 3; he that hath the Son hath life, I. John, v. 12. Yet, I think the religious world, so called, has done evil and not good in giving this 20th verse of the 18th chapter of Matthew a general application, on account of the connection in which it stands, and the license which it gives in so doing.

The 19th verse: "If two of you shall agree, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

Well, say they, we can claim this also, and in this is our confidence in praying to God, because we now know that whatever we ask, He will give us. Persons, sometimes at least, taking this position, forget that it is necessary that our prayers should be in accordance with the will of God (I.

John v. 14) in order to be heard. Again—It is possible to ask and fail to receive, because we ask amiss, i. e., not according to His will. James iv. 3. So, although two, three or more might agree to ask, they might ask and fail to receive, because not asking according to God's will.

But there is something else in connection with this, viz: verse 18, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." What of this?

Well, we do not claim this, because we do not believe that this power of binding and loosing was intended for all Christians or even for all time, as we do not believe in "apostolic succession." This we think belonged to the apostles and the age of miracles.

But why not claim this as well as the other? Do not all those thoughts stand together? Were they not all spoken to the same persons? And are they not all linked into each other, so that they stand or fall together? If we can claim one we can claim all.

1. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall bind, etc.

2. Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, etc. It shall be done of my Father, etc.

3. For where two or three are gathered together, etc.

Who can fail to see that this was all spoken to the men who, by Paul (Heb. ii. 3), are shown to be the successors of the Lord Jesus Christ in publishing the great salvation, "Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost," etc.

If we had space we could easily prove, conclusively, we think, that those (the apostles) are the persons, and the only persons to whom those special privileges were given, and given not for their own special benefit, but rather for the well-being of all mankind.

Jesus said to those men, "As My Father sent Me, even so I send you."

"It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you," etc.

"You shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses of Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

"Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

These men were sent to bless mankind, by giving the laws of the kingdom of heaven, opening up the way of life and salvation in the gospel, the gospel itself being given them by the Spirit, the Comforter, the fulfillment of the promise of Christ and the prophecy of Joel. He led them into all truth, brought all things to their remembrance whatsoever Jesus had said, through them, gave the knowledge of life and salvation to a lost world in the glorious gospel of the grace of God.

Now, if I at all understand this matter, it is just this: The apostles were to receive extraordinary power and authority (not simply discretionary power), by which they were to act in the place of Christ after He went away from earth. The power was the power of the Holy Spirit, giving them wisdom to teach and power to prove their divine mission. When they spoke they did so by the authority of high heaven; when they put forth their hands and touched the couch of the sick, the dying or the dead, they manifested the power of God.

Well, these men might bind and loose, yea, it was their duty so to do. They might agree as touching anything concerning the well-being of the

kingdom of Christ; indeed, this was their duty also.

Very well, when they did so it was not necessary that they should all be together, as their work might scatter them sometimes; but, if two should be together and agree, both clothed with heaven's authority, it would be all right; it would be done, etc., because Jesus was with the two as well and as truly as if the twelve were there.

This is the sense then in which Jesus is with the two or three.

Sad has it been for the church that between the close of the first century of the Christian era, and the year 1888, so many have been placing themselves in the room of the apostles—sometimes in two's and three's, sometimes hundreds and thousands, to agree and legislate in reference to spiritual and divine things, and O, how many things which are not spiritual nor of divine authority.

There is nothing in my estimation which strikes such a heavy blow to the exalting one man, or his exalting himself above all others; as this: Where two or three, etc., (any two or three of you), I am in the midst.

Where is the pre-eminence? One was their Master and all they were brethren.

If all men claiming the name "Christian" had been always willing to follow the teachings of the men, who, clothed with heaven's authority, had a right to "agree," to "bind and loose," and with whom Jesus was in mighty power, brotherly kindness and charity would have filled the hearts of many thousands, who, because of mistaken zeal, met in fearful strife on fields of battle, or were either the victims or the agents in fiendish persecutions.

Much corruption and innovation would have been kept out of the church, and the name of Jesus would have been magnified in the enlightening of many minds now in darkness and under the shadow of death.

O. B. EMBRY.

Montague, Jan. 24th, 1888.

"FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST."

Here is a whole volume compressed in this little sentence. It is virtually saying that Christianity is Christian or Christ-like—that religion is a religious life. Paul is saying in this that his life was regulated and controlled by Christ; that he reproduced the spirit, the purposes and life of Christ. The basis of this life is fellowship—a vital union with Him who is the true and living vine. This sacred union enables the Christian to say, as did the Apostle, "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

To possess and perpetuate this ideal Christian life, we must abide in Christ. This is the noblest life possible to man and well worthy the ambition of anyone. It offers to us the loftiest hopes and the sublimest attainments. The importance of this life should lead us to give our most earnest attention, lest we should come short of it. The danger to which we are most exposed, is the mistake in taking the cause for the effect, i. e., the adherence to law for the life. We forget there is no life in law, law is the medium of life. To say there is no life without law, is as true as that law is not life. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God gives the increase—the life. While it is true there can be no life or increase without the planting, it is equally as true that the planting is not the life. "But if we adhere to the law will we not have the life?" that depends on how we adhere or attend to it. Everyone knows that care must be taken how, when and where we sow, if we would receive an increase. A bungling way of sowing will not produce a harvest. It is possible to have a form of doctrine without the power, hence the need of being very careful how we attend to the form of doctrine. As there is a possibility of obeying the form or the law and not have the power or life. We make no