

Mrs Mary S. Walton.

THE

GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

CONDUCTED BY

T. FANNING AND W. LIPSCOMB.

VOL. I.

NASHVILLE, JULY, 1855.

NO. 1.

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WITH the hope of rendering some good service in the cause of truth, we very respectfully submit to our brethren and the public, the claims of "*The Gospel Advocate*." Whilst we sincerely rejoice that there are several able journals published by the brotherhood, we are happy in believing, "there still is room" for many more. Our first labor, therefore, will be directed to the subject of a more extended circulation of papers, periodicals, and books, devoted to the Christian religion, with the view of fostering in society a spirit of religious investigation. Convinced that the sources of spiritual light are exclusively confined to the Scriptures of truth, we entertain no hope of profiting in the least degree, our contemporaries or posterity, but by encouraging sincere enquirers to read, compare, understand, and believe the word of life, as set forth in the divine oracles.

We look not for religious improvement with a people given to "hearing and telling new things," as were the idolatrous Athenians; or to such as hearken to the dictates of the flesh, and the dreams of a bewildered imagination, as to the voice of God; and from the utter failure of at least fifteen hundred years' experimenting, we can anticipate no good result from religious speculation. Since the "beloved John" closed his earthly career, no item of moral instruction has been added to the store of man's spiritual light; and nations, churches and peoples, have advanced in civilization, intelligence, and high moral refinement, in exact ratio of their approach to the ancient record, denominated the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Wherever men can be influenced to read and examine religious subjects in the light of the Bible, as a necessary and invariable result, they become believers in Christ; and so long as the converted can be inter-

ested in the examinations of the Holy Scriptures, pious and devotional feelings spring from grateful hearts, and a heavenly "growth in grace and the knowledge of the truth" embellishes their lives. Whilst, then, every thing in moral and spiritual improvement depends upon *oral* and *written* instruction, it rightly becomes all who fear God and desire the happiness of their fellows, to ponder well the weighty obligation which rest upon them to serve faithfully and profitably their age and country.

Dear brethren, in the labor of enlightening the public mind, we must be at fault. The cause of Christ is not prospering as its friends have a right to expect; or in a manner, we fear, that is well-pleasing Heaven; and if "the Church" is really "the pillar and stay of the truth," we who profess to be its members, owe it our best exertions. These are to be put forth, in the first place, by suitable *oral* and *written* instructions to the public in general, and Christians in particular; and secondly, in such pure and beautiful lives as shall speak in convincing tones to an anxious world.

In these introductory suggestions, we intimate not the particular subjects we expect to discuss, and which we believe demand most attention. Our object is, first of all, to convince, if possible, the reader of the momentous importance of correct religious knowledge—to respectfully indicate its only true sources, and the weighty obligations resting on Christians to call public attention to them.

Without the co-operation of our brethren, we cannot hope for success, and we most affectionately ask them to consider well not only their duty, but their high privilege in aiding to "sound out the truth" of God to our perishing race. Each member of the Church may render valuable service by well-directed religious conversation; but more can usually be accomplished by the introduction and circulation amongst our acquaintances, of such publications as may be calculated to attract the earnest to a candid and satisfactory examination of the Holy Scriptures. We are happy to know, that scores and thousands have been turned from fables, the flesh, and Satan, to the service of the Blessed, through the zeal of humble Christians; and whilst we are convinced that the intelligence, civilization, and morality of the world depend for existence upon the manifestations of God in his word, we feel that we cannot be sufficiently anxious for the success of spiritual truth. We are, however, almost ready to fear that many, from the opposition they have met, are so much discouraged that they hesitate to ask the world to hear the preached word, or read our periodicals.

Brethren, there is no cause to be ashamed of our position; and if we act well our part, success is sure. In addition to the service we hope to render to the Church and the world by the publication of "The Gospel Advocate," we anticipate much happiness in cultivating the acquaintance of the brethren; and it is our fervent prayer, that we may be enabled to establish a work which shall prove eminently useful to the world.

T. FANNING, }
W. LIPSCOMB, } *Conductors.*

THE NAME OF OUR PAPER.

MEN speak idly and irreverently, when they affirm "There is nothing in a name." There are words and names, which, from their association, are the source of infinite mischief in the world. Hence the anxiety of men to stigmatize each other with opprobrious names; as, "Shaker," "Quaker," "Campbellite," etc. Politicians and religionists are equally adroit in turning to account every advantage offered from offensive names; but it is singularly strange, that few study or appreciate the value of sacred, or even appropriate names. God's power to save the Jews was in his name as recorded at Jerusalem; and there is a name under these heavens in which can be found life, save that of Jesus, the despised Nazarene. Whilst we are free to admit that names, apart from their associations, are meaningless and empty sounds, we are free to say, that no corrupt people cleave alone to the sacred styles of the Bible. True, the vilest wish to appropriate some of the sacred designations of the New Testament to consecrate their own "outlandish" names, but all that is imported by the divine vocabulary they despise.

In constructing a name for our paper, our first study was to find a style that would smack of nothing immodest or immoral; and secondly, we endeavored to select a name which would express, as nearly as possible, the work we have in view. Hence "The Gospel Advocate," which we mean to say, that if a God has been revealed in this universe, if there is a moral truth in heaven or on the earth, and if men have a right to speak with even the certainty of belief upon spiritual matters, there is something in the world, but not of the world, called *The Gospel*, through which the obedient are saved, and the wicked are condemned. If these are correct conclusions, we think we see peculiar fitness in employing a name for our journal which offends no good man, and expresses a labor worthy of the purest beings in ex-

istence. We claim not the right to advocate any measures of our own, neither the claims of any party; but we regard our position as entirely catholic. Our work is to defend the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ against the assaults of the enemy, whether covert or avowed; and we can meet all who do in fact acknowledge the authority of the New Testament, on common ground. With us the Gospel is everything or nothing. If true, all good men will, sooner or later, unite under its ample folds; and if false, we can have the consolation of pleading for the cause which has done more for the amelioration of the condition of the world than any other.

Hence the appropriateness of the name, "Gospel Advocate."

We doubt not our friends will properly consider the dignity and value of their labor in advocating the high claims of the Gospel, even in the circulation of our humble sheet. Every effort to turn the attention of the world from men, and all *their* works, to the sacred institutions of God, must result favorably.

EDITORS.

THE CIRCULATION OF OUR PAPER.

WHILST we are anxious to serve, to the best of our ability, the brethren and the Churches, we are equally solicitous to benefit the world. But our success depends very much upon the character of the exertions of christians, to circulate the Gospel Advocate amongst their friends out of the Church. Many of the members of the denominations, and men of the world, are unnecessarily and injuriously prejudiced against us, for want of correct information in regard to what we really teach. The arguments necessary to remove most, if not all wrong impressions, touching our true position, are contained in the writings of our brethren, if they could but find their way to the eye of such as are disposed to read. Seeing with the eyes, as in the days of Horace, if not "five times better than hearing," it carries with it much greater weight of authority to most minds. There are hundreds and thousands of the members of the respective parties, and members of no party, who would willingly subscribe for and read our paper, if the brethren would respectfully and *confidently* ask them to do so. Much, also, might be done by distributing our works gratuitously by the Churches.

If christians could but feel the force of the obligations that rest upon them, their zeal in the cause would be very great. From present indications, however, we are encouraged to believe that the disciples will take a lively interest in our paper.

T. P.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CORRESPONDENCE by letter, is admirably calculated to excite religious interest amongst brethren. Our selfishness, our pride, and our idleness, sternly and relentlessly oppose religious effort, and whenever they gain the ascendancy, their victim dies to all good influences. There is scarcely a disciple of Christ to be found, who has it not in his power to communicate some valuable thought, if he would but make the trial. We ask our brethren to report to us what may occur in their respective circles; and we feel assured, that, should they do so, the religious interest of the churches will be much increased. We hope, dear brethren, you will think not of style, or even of grammatical blunders. Write as you see things, and as you think, and you will be understood. The most fastidious can anticipate nothing more. We are especially desirous to receive the reports of evangelists and churches. Brethren, we hope to hear from you often, and would be glad to receive essays on all subjects connected with the Christian institution.

T. F.

THE CHARGE OF INFIDELITY.

Much evil, in religious controversy, springs from a misapplication of terms. We wish, therefore, to take great pains in the use of words, terms, and phrases which we may employ in the examination of all subjects in regard to which serious differences can possibly arise. "A word fitly spoken," said Solomon, "is like apples of gold in pictures of silver;" and yet, idle words are the source of great mischief. Perhaps no charge has been more loosely made by the religious pugilists of our fair land, than that of infidelity. It seems to roll upon the tongue of many as a sweet morsel, when the only meaning that can be attached to it is, an honest difference, not in the facts of religion, but in mere opinions, which have no connection with religious subjects. A waggish preacher, it is said, defined "*Heterodoxy*" to be "*your doxy*," and "*Orthodoxy*," "*my doxy*," and, if we are not mistaken, the charge of infidelity in many that make it, means only a difference in religious standards. Mormons charge infidelity upon all who doubt the genuineness of their new revelations. Shakers, Quakers, Swedenborgians, and modern Spiritualists commit the same error. Dogmatists, bigots, and men of wicked temper in all parties, are evidently guilty of making like false accusations. Yet, we deem it proper and right to make the charge of infidelity and sustain it. In Christology, infidelity simply implies the adoption of any other standard of right than the Scriptures

of truth; and in our investigations, we shall feel free to use the term in this sense.

Believing most devoutly that God has furnished his erring creatures of earth—in both matter and form—an infallible standard of belief and conduct in the Scriptures, we shall feel no hesitation in charging infidelity upon all who adopt other standards. With a clear understanding of the meaning of the charge, we can entertain no unkindness towards those who make it against us. God has given men license to be governed by any rule they may select; and should any adopt their *conscience*—their god within—as do Neologists, as their standard in morals, or any fleshly appetite, the charge of infidelity may plausibly be made by them upon Christians for preferring the Bible; but in that event, there is an understanding, and no one will likely be deceived by it. Men, however, who do really regard the word of God as the only correct standard in morals, should be most careful as to insinuations against each other of so gross a character. The Lord will not hold such guiltless.

T. F.

SALVATION IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

IN glory and benevolence, the gospel of Christ excels every other message from God to man. It addresses him in his present state, clothed as he is with suffering, sin and death, and offers to him a way of salvation, plain, simple and perfect. To him, as heir of mortality and misery, it presents conditions of life and peace. Intended for his understanding, it addresses him in the clearest and most intelligible terms; presenting to him facts, requirements and motives, perfectly adapted to him as man. Its truths, teachings and duties, are not left matters of doubt or uncertainty to any one who, in the deepest sincerity of heart, desires to know the plan of salvation offered in the Oracles of God. It is an open and direct insult to God, to believe that he could address to man any message not perfectly adapted to his capacity and wants. Nothing but man's blinded ignorance, or rebellious arrogance, could ever have spread over the world so blighting and destructive an error, as that which teaches that the word of God, of itself, is not a full, sufficient and ample Guide and Instructor, for man, in all things that pertain to a better life.

In view of the divisions among men in regard to the plan of salvation presented in the word of Heaven, we deem it proper in the beginning of our labor, to make a clear and distinct statement of the conditions of salvation, offered in the gospel. We propose to give the

views of no party or sect of men in the universe, but hope by the guidance of Heavenly Truth, to be able to point out clearly the teachings of our Saviour and his Apostles, on this greatest and most earnest and important of all subjects. We believe that there is offered to man a way of salvation, perfect in simplicity, harmony, wisdom and love, and full of the richest blessings for all who receive and obey its Heavenly facts and precepts.

The gospel presents to the world one fact—reveals one august and mighty Person, even Christ, the son of the living God. In a word, the gospel is a presentation to the world of a Saviour, in the person of the Son of God. It presents to man's belief, Christ with all the events of his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection, and ascension to his Father. The first announcement of his mission to earth was made by an Angel from the court of Heaven, to shepherds watching their flocks by night. It was joyous tidings to the men of that day, who waited for the fulfilment of the promise of God. "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." This undoubtedly was the first announcement of a Saviour's mission to this earth. Though in the promise to faithful Abraham, and by the holy prophets of God, he had long been foretold, and was anxiously expected as the hope of Israel by the devout Jews, *now* for the first time was he announced as a Saviour *born into the world*—a complete fulfilment of all the promises, prophecies and types that had foreshadowed his coming. Born in the deepest humility, he spent his life to the full age of manhood in an humble pursuit. At about the age of thirty years, he was announced to the world by his forerunner, John, as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" was baptized of him in Jordan, "fulfilling all righteousness;" received the Spirit of his Father in the shape of a dove, and was acknowledged of Him as "my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Thus consecrated to the work of his Father, he spends on earth three years in teaching his chosen disciples and followers the principles of his reign and nature of his kingdom, attesting and verifying by the miracles which he did, that he was the Son of God. Though peaceful and benevolent in every action, he was finally betrayed and condemned to death to satisfy the ravings of an infuriated mob. Yet as he had foretold to his disciples, he rose from the grave on the third day—the first born from the dead—having conquered death and the grave, and "brought life and immortality to light." Having thus suffered for the

sins of the world, and "being made perfect through suffering, he became the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey him." Thus having offered himself as a sacrifice to put away sin, and being raised from the dead, and having ascended on high and "entered into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," the only salvation offered to man is through *his name* and by *his authority*. The only sovereign remedy for all diseases and maladies of our sinful and dying race, is through the name of Christ, "the Lamb that was slain," "the Prince of Life, whom God raised from the dead." The only power possessed by the Apostles to heal the sick, to make the lame strong, or perform any miracle, was through the potent name of the Son of God. Peter said to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, "In the *name of Jesus of Nazareth*, rise up and walk." To the astonished multitude he said, "His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong." There is no moral or spiritual power in any means or instrument on earth, apart from the name of Christ. "Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in his name, among all nations." Paul to the Philippians, speaking of Christ's "obedience unto death" for our sakes, says, "wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "God hath made him both Lord and Christ." "He who was made a little lower than the Angels, God has crowned with glory and honor, and has put all things in subjection under his feet." "He is the captain of our salvation, made perfect through suffering"—"a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Salvation is offered to the world through his name alone. Peter, in the presence of high priests, rulers and elders, by whom the Lord Jesus had been condemned, boldly declares to them, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Men, in order to salvation, then, first of all, must receive Christ—must receive him as he was manifested to the world—a Saviour sent from God, as the great Ambassador of Heaven to man. To regard him as a mere man, or even as the greatest man, is blasphemy against his whole life, mission and purpose. Such regard rejects him, rejects God the Father that sent him, and leaves man entirely bereft of the remedial and redeeming power of the great sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of the world. Christ is the Author

of salvation, and the Testator and Lawgiver of the New Covenant, and being such, the only pardon and justification to the world is through his name, and by his authority. W. L.

A TOUR THROUGH GEORGIA, ALABAMA, AND MISSISSIPPI.

WE are not unconscious that an indiscriminate report of travels often savors strongly of egotism and the ridiculous; but we find no means of doing good which may not be abused. In travel, though ample opportunities are offered for making useful observations in relation to the *general* moral aspect of affairs, it is not so favorable for critical conclusions. But as all *our* work is to be relatively considered, it is devoutly hoped a few incidents of a "flying trip" through some of our most flourishing Southern States, may not be without interest.

On Lord's Day morning, May the 13th, 1855, we set out from our pleasant retreat at Franklin College, to spend a few weeks in the South, and we passed the day with the brethren at Lavergne, Rutherford County Tenn. At 11 A. M., we delivered a discourse on the subject of "Good and Evil," in which we examined with some care the dogma of metaphysical theology, which maintains the idea of "*absolute* good and evil;" or, in other words, that there are certain deeds performed by the human family, which, *in themselves*, without reference to their agent or effect, are good or evil. We attempted, on the contrary, to show that acts are wicked, not in themselves, but from the intention of their agent and their tendency in society. We also labored to prove that our deeds are only relatively good—that there is no natural or inherent fitness in any religious performance which makes it absolutely good. The whole subject was illustrated in various forms, too elaborate for this brief and suggestive sketch. We cannot, however, in justice to ourself, as well as to the subject, omit giving an example or two explanatory of our teaching.

In the case of our first parents in the garden, we can perceive no natural property in the fruit of the trees which made one better or worse than another. So far as we are informed, all the trees of the garden were both "pleasant to the sight and good for food." The woman saw that the prohibited "tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes." Why, if good for food, and perhaps the most beautiful in all Paradise, did the taste of the fruit bring "death into the world and all our wo?" Was there any natural poison within? or were the seeds of death bound up in it? The answer is not diffi-

cult. The sin consisted in disobeying the Father, although Eve sincerely thought, no doubt, it was for the best.

Cain and Abel both performed sacrifice unto God, and we have every reason to believe both were sincere, and both hoped for a blessing; but why was the offering of one evil and the other good? Cain's might have been more valuable for food than Abel's, but it was rejected in consequence of being *Cain's* offering; that is, an offering made solely upon his own personal responsibility and philosophical fitness of things; but Abel's lamb was good because it was offered "in faith," and it was presented in faith, not from any inductive or deductive conclusion of his own, but because God authorized it. So much we have seen proper to say in regard to good and bad deeds; and, if we mistake not, these two examples furnish a key which will open to the mind the moral coloring of all our deeds.

We expect this subject will claim considerable of our attention in the management of *The Gospel Advocate*; and it is one, too, which we are most anxious for our friends to study.

In the afternoon, we delivered some remarks in the village upon the practices of the churches, we trust with good effect. Our object was to show that all our coldness, and most of our religious reverses, arise from a failure on our part to live in the manner prescribed in the New Testament. This subject, indeed, was the chief burden of our preaching throughout our tour, and we have no hesitation in saying that if the brethren in the every-day employments of life, in the family, and in the congregation of the saints, could be induced to become *pious*—godly men—thirsting earnestly for righteousness, complaints of formalism and want of spiritual life in our world, would soon be forgotten. All the logic and rhetoric of the earth will not answer as a substitute for holy living.

The brethren meet alternately at Laverne and Rock Spring for worship, and have our highly respected and faithful brother, Joshua K. Speer, as minister and overseer. Perhaps no man in Tennessee has labored more devotedly for the past quarter of a century in the vineyard of the Lord than Brother Speer, and he still evinces unabating confidence in the truth of revelation. We doubt not his labors will prove a blessing to the brethren. We are pained, however, to admit that the church at Laverne has been slightly troubled with the fable of modern Spiritualism, under the assumed phase of man's right to worship in obedience to the dictates of his own free nature; but we hope that time and prudence will heal the breach. If they should

fail, the only safety of the brethren will be in the executioner's sword of the Spirit. God has either *revealed* his religion in the Bible, or he has not. If he has done so, the plain records of Holy Writ decide all controversies; but if he has not given his mind, we are all as "free," in the words of the system, as the beasts of the field to follow our own "glorious instincts and tendencies."

At midnight, in company with fourteen of the members of our Senior and Junior classes, who had determined to accompany us for a few days, with a view of making observations in Natural history, we left Laverne on the cars for Chattanooga, and at 4½ o'clock on the morning of the 14th, the very polite conductor deposited us at the tunnel through the Cumberland Mountain, about 90 miles from Nashville. After examining the structure of this noble mountain, and the result of Tennessee enterprise in opening the first passage for "the iron horse" into the Mississippi Valley, we left on the Sewanee Company's road, for the purpose of ascending the mountain nine miles to the coal mine recently opened. We spent the day in investigations of vast moment to the student of nature, and returned late in the afternoon to rest the night at "Cowen," near the tunnel.

On the morning of the 15th, we took the cars at 4½ again for Chattanooga, and arrived safely at 8 A. M. Most of the day was spent in geological explorations, and our students were highly gratified in believing that they had learned the true exposures of that part of East Tennessee. In the afternoon they left for College, and we spent the evening in endeavoring to learn something of the religious interests of Chattanooga. We ascertained that our Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist friends have meeting-houses, and the Romanists are engaged in the erection of a superb edifice, which they call a church, from the beautiful metamorphic limestone which abounds in the vicinity. Of the spiritual health of the respective churches, we could learn nothing. Through the courtesy of our old friend and brother, E. G. Pearl, Esq., the present Mayor of the city, we learned that whilst the citizens are generally noble and generous hearted, the passion for trade and building, as by magic, a large city, has so engrossed their attention, that education, and of course moral culture, have scarcely kept pace with other improvements. We doubt not, though, that Chattanooga will, in a few years, become a very important point for every enterprise calculated to advance the temporal, intellectual, and spiritual wants of society. We found no church of the disciples, and heard of but few members in the vicinity.

Wednesday, the 16th of May, at 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ A. M., we bade adieu to Chattanooga, and soon found ourself in the high and healthful regions of North Georgia; and after a pleasant passage on the "Atlantic and Georgia Railroad" of, we suppose, nearly 200 miles, we arrived in Atlanta, at 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ P. M. We were happy to meet our old friend and pupil, Brother James McPherson, and to find a small congregation of disciples of the Savior under the instruction of our estimable brother, Dr. Hook, assisted by our promising young brother, A. G. Thomas. We preached at night, and also on the night of the 17th, to a small congregation, and we were glad to learn that the brethren of this surprisingly growing city are struggling through many difficulties to give the cause a permanent position. We pray for their success, and hope to hear of the triumphs of truth in that ancient State. Within a few years much has been done in Georgia for the cause, and through the well-directed zeal of many of the brethren whom we did not see, but of whom we heard a good report, we have reason to look for the best results. We were particularly gratified to find the brethren were generally anxious in regard to "The Gospel Advocate." There was a disposition to give the work a large circulation. We preached at no other point in Georgia, but we were fortunate in spending the time we had to spare, in a city which offered the best facilities for learning the moral condition of affairs in most parts of the State.

T. F. —

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

THE gospel of the apostles and martyrs, not of philosophers and free-thinkers, the gospel which Peter first proclaimed on Pentecost, which Huss preached four centuries ago, and Paul eighteen centuries ago, stands to-day as pure, fresh, and mighty for battle with error, as when the multitude cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" or when Agrippa answered Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." It is the same power of God unto salvation to-day that it was in the mouth of Peter and Paul, and all the holy apostles of our Lord. It is as mighty and effective as when it made the followers of Christ bold in the presence of rulers and kings, or when its glorious truths from the pages of a Bible locked and chained in a Romish cloister, strengthened Martin Luther's heart for that noble conflict with error and oppression.

W. L.

"He that doeth righteousness, is righteous."—*John*.

FIRST PRINCIPLES.

NUMBER I.

IN every science there are symbols which *must* be regarded as its elements. The letters of the English alphabet are the elements of the language, and the world is moved by the different combinations of these characters. There is no meaning in letters only as men agree that they shall serve a certain place in the various combinations of which they are capable. Whether the letters imply good or evil, is a matter solely dependent upon the *manner* in which they are placed with reference to each other.

Similar remarks are true in regard to figures in Arithmetic, Geometry, &c. So soon as the pupil can be taught the meaning of Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody practically, he is prepared for graduation in the English grammar. He possesses the key by which he can open and shut this vast store-house of knowledge at pleasure. The student who will carefully examine our modern chemical nomenclature, will find little or no difficulty in his investigations of this science of sciences. But without a knowledge of the elements, the letters, syllables, and words which express their combinations, the study of the sciences gives no satisfaction, and anxious pupils lay down their memorized books in mortification and disgust. And shall we conclude that there are no elements—first principles—in religion which demand the attention of the human family? "From long experience in teaching and most satisfactory observation, I am convinced that most of the failures in our schools of learning arise from a lack of attention to elementary instruction."

Often, to gratify an anxious parent, the child is flattered into the notion that he is master of the speller, when he comprehends not the meaning of its simplest principles; or that he is qualified to pass in grammar, before he has learned the meaning of the parts of speech. It is very remarkable, that a student who is permitted to pass over branches of study without mastering them at the first effort, very rarely can be induced to return to their investigation. Were it left to my choice, I would much prefer the instruction of a youth who knew not his letters, to one who had been taught carelessly for years. Indeed, there is something in a loose and unpointed style of instructing the young, which seems to wholly disqualify them for success.

In point of morality and Christianity, these suggestions are most appropriate. When the head is directed wrong in youth, it is a very difficult if not impossible matter, to bring the heart right. Never was



there a doctrine more false and dangerous than that which admits a good heart under the guidance of a faulty head. In the days of the Savior's peregrinations, it was necessary for men to "see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts," in order to conversion and healing.

It cannot be denied that there are individuals, families, and even churches in our world, almost, if not entirely, destitute of a knowledge of the true God, and especially of the principles and operations of his religion as developed by his Son.

Why are these things so? Have not the people heard preaching all their lives, and been taught the importance of prayer and various religious obligations from their very childhood? But their religious education has been of so *general* a nature, that no very special impression has been made upon the mind. Hence their incapability of giving a suitable answer to such as ask them for "a reason of their hope." All religions to them, from the lowest fetichism to the highest advancements in Christian spiritualism, are the same. Of many it may appropriately be said, religion to them is "without form, and void," and "darkness" hangs over "the deep" of their understanding. "They have eyes, but they see not; ears, but they hear not;" they have also understandings, but from their youth they have been taught to believe that religion is not for the understanding, and therefore, they are spending their lives in amazement at their own ignorance of the present and the profound gloom that spreads over the future.

All this, too, is the result of a failure to learn the first principles of religion.

The present efforts of "divines" to instruct the people in the beauties and sublimities of the *fruits* of religion, remind one of the folly of the charlatan, who prates eloquently in regard to the highest astronomical calculations to a people who know not the use of figures.

So much, I have thought proper to say, suggestive of the *importance* of the study of the first principles in religion.

And now, believing, in the fullest sense of the word belief, that the coldness in the churches, the discords and the astonishing indifference of the world on the subject of religion, arise from a want of correct teaching, and, of course, correct knowledge in reference to first principles, I do hereby promise my brethren and the world, that, in conducting "The Gospel Advocate," the Lord being my helper, I will, to the very best of my poor ability, labor to so lift the veil of tradition and vague and false impressions from the hearts of such of my readers

as need instruction, that they may not only "see men as trees walking," but comprehend the full length, breadth, and depth of at least the A B C of Christianity.

Contrary, doubtless, to anticipations, there are various preliminary questions which should be satisfactorily settled, before we can be prepared to examine any feature of the Christian institution. The Heavenly Father was four thousand years preparing men for the reception of Christianity; and a fifteen hundred years' apostacy into dark pagandom, has carried the world so far from the kingdom of heaven, that few, indeed, are prepared for a sudden approach to it. Every step in religion should be carefully traced, and yet no tracing can be useful if we are not ready for the examination.

Before venturing into the sacred precincts of the Church, we should contemplate man as he was, and is, and may be in the future; we should determine whether religion has to do with the flesh or spirit, or both; and, above all, we should endeavor to learn if there is, in the wide field of man's investigations, a simple and infallible test of truth—a rule of right conduct adapted to all; and finally, if there is to be found, in this universe, a perfect system of religion.

These points, it will be readily observed, involve many of the speculations of the age, and an examination of which we should not attempt to evade, if we desire to accomplish the greatest possible good. My purpose, however, is to notice every thing in contrast with what I regard infallible criteria of truth, and should I be fortunate in removing obstructions, I shall anticipate much pleasure in recording the elements of our holy religion. Should I be spared, I hope to be able to show, that, in the acknowledgment of the Christian religion, we are brought under a *creed*, the purest and yet sublimest of earth, and one which will be acknowledged by all the pious.

We ask not the reader to exercise patience; it is folly to think of any one deriving the least profit from religious investigations, who does not first reconcile it to himself to read, think, labor, toil, and struggle for light divine. It has its price, and *must* be paid. T. F.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

SINCE most of the mental and moral improvement of our race depends upon family culture and school influence, we promise to give much of our attention to the subject of education.

CONVERSIONS.

WHILST "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance," the saints on earth cannot fail feeling the greatest interest in the conversion of their fellow-mortals to God; and we shall therefore take pleasure in reporting the safe return of sinners to the Lord, as far as practicable.

BROTHER JAS. CHALLENGE, of Philadelphia, in a recent letter to us, says: "The church here has had an addition of 40 members, and the prospects are quite favorable."

This tried and faithful evangelist has the prayers and sympathies of all the brethren. No man of our acquaintance has labored more faithfully, and, indeed, successfully, to plant and sustain congregations than Brother Challenge, and few have been so poorly requited for their labor. There is in reserve a rich reward.

BROTHER D. P. HENDERSON, of Missouri, has given a good amount of labor in the city of Louisville, Ky., during a few of the past weeks, and he reports to a brother of Nashville, one hundred and ten conversions to God.

For many years Brother Henderson has labored as one of the ablest and most successful evangelists in the North-West. We hope he will visit Tennessee.

BROTHER LAMAR, of Augusta, Georgia, reports weekly additions, and from various sources of information, we are satisfied that he has more faith in the Gospel of Christ than in the stiff and formal philosophy of the times.

We hope the brethren will report the religious news, both good and evil.

REASON AND REVELATION.

MEN speak of reason and conscience as guides! They deify them as gods, and bow to their teachings with more respect than they deign, in proud rebellion, to pay to God himself. They regard what they term the monitions or dictates of conscience, with more attention than the teachings of God's revealed word. The whole experience of the past, however, teaches that an abandonment of authoritative revelation, and a wild hap-hazard pursuit of what is called "truth," (a strange misnomer,) meaning not what God has taught, but what is supposed to exist in the absolute nature of things, surely and certainly conducts to infidelity or mysticism, to transcendental and impalpable Spiritualism, or to open and avowed Atheism.

W. L.

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY.

BY PROF. F. M. CARMACK.

"All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

THE great object contemplated in the establishment of Christianity, was the elevation and perfection of human character. Man, of himself, was incapable of devising any means competent to rescue him from the consequences of error and sin; and therefore, God, in his mercy, sent his Son to the world for the purpose of establishing and consecrating with His blood a plan for his redemption. This constitutes the chief glory of the Christian system, and affords the highest motives to induce us to receive its teachings and obey heartily its precepts. If submission to the requirements of the gospel were enjoined upon us by the Ruler of the heavens and the earth merely as a matter of authority, having no reference to the good of man, even thus it would be our duty to yield implicit obedience; for we are his creatures—the workmanship of his hands. He is the source of all our blessings; we live, and move, and exist in him, and at his bidding we cease to be. Surely, then, he has a right to rule over his creation according to his own will. But when we remember that these requirements have been made not for the purpose of asserting the sway of a tyrant, but to secure the highest good to man—to exalt his being—to elevate his thoughts above the things that perish, and set them upon things that fade not in the heavens—we are forced to regard their Author not only as our Creator and our Ruler, who has a right to command our obedience, but also as our greatest Benefactor—our Father, who looks with pity upon the sufferings of his children. We should, therefore, be prompted by a sense of duty—by gratitude to God for his goodness—by our own true interests—by every aspiration that is high, and holy, and heavenly in its nature—to be attentive to his instructions, and comply cheerfully with all his requirements.

Error can be overcome only by the counteracting influence of truth. The heart must be purified, to use the Apostle's language, "in obeying the truth;" and hence that significant question which Pilate addressed to our Savior,—*"What is truth?"*—becomes first in importance to every one who is seeking relief from the bondage of sin. And where shall the honest inquirer turn for information? Where shall he find the source whence truth and wisdom may be derived? In other words,

where may he find authoritative teaching? We maintain, that, if the word of God does not teach "all things pertaining to life and godliness,"—if it is not a lamp to the feet of the pilgrim who is seeking the land of promise,—there is no standard of truth, and we are left without guidance.

Our Heavenly Father has either revealed to man a system of redemption which sets forth certain conditions upon which he may be translated from a state of condemnation into one of justification before heaven, or he has not. All Christians admit that such a revelation has been given. That revelation is either set forth in such clear and plain terms that every one, with a fair translation of the original word into his own vernacular, can understand the terms of salvation which it offers, or the contrary must be true. Upon this point there is no agreement. It is maintained by the so-called liberal-minded of this age, that the great diversity of opinion which the world exhibits on the subject of Scripture teaching, is necessary; that it is absolutely essential that the Church of Christ should be split up into parties and factions, because persons cannot see alike in their examinations of God's word, and therefore they cannot walk together. To prove this, an appeal is made to the condition of the religious world. The question is gravely asked, "What shall we do with the vast multitudes of professed followers of the Son of God who entertain different views of the teachings of the Bible?" "Are we to suppose that they are ignorant or insincere in their professions?" We very readily admit that these differences exist among very good, sincere, and intelligent people; and upon the strength of that admission, an attempt is made to force us to the conclusion that they are necessary. God, we are told, has seen fit to give us a book whose teachings are capable of these widely different constructions, and we have no right to inquire why he has done so. Grant the justness of this conclusion, and there must be an end of controversy. God speaks with authority, and we have no right to reply against him, or to call in question any thing he has said or done; but surely we may be justified in pursuing our investigations far enough to ascertain what he has done.

We therefore call in question the truth of the position that the conditions of salvation are set forth in such ambiguous terms that all cannot see them alike. We say the *conditions of salvation*, for the principal differences among religionists, are in regard to these great principles of the Christian religion.

Let it be admitted that there are any conditions in compliance with

which we may become heirs to the promises of immortality and eternal life, and it can be maintained, without any fear of refutation, that those conditions are adapted to the understanding of every responsible being. If, then, there are any conditions, they must be positive and authoritative; and whoever refuses to comply with them must come into condemnation.

Whatever is essential to the salvation of one, must be essential to that of another; so that all persons, if they are saved through the gospel of the Son of God, (and we know of no other plan,) must comply with the same terms. Now, if the word of God is so completely enveloped in mystery that we cannot come to any positive agreement as to what the terms of salvation are, it follows that some, at least, must fail of apprehending truth on the subject, and must, therefore, be punished for not performing an impossibility. Such is the absurd conclusion to which this false assumption must lead. It makes God the author of religious partisanism, and of the consequent evils arising therefrom. It teaches that it is perfectly in accordance with his will that there should be perpetual strife and bitterness among those who read the same Bible, claim an interest in the same Redeemer's blood, and are seeking mansions in the same heaven! How does this comport with our ideas of the wisdom and benevolence of Him who so loved the world that he sent his Son to die for its redemption? Yet men, in their extreme *charity* and *liberality*, are willing to relieve the world of responsibility for the false dogmas and heresies which divide religionists, engendering, alas! too often, the very worst feelings and passions of human nature; and thus they throw the responsibility upon Him who "doeth all things well!"

Hence it is the popular doctrine of the age, and very soothing to the ears of many, that "whatever a man thinks is right, *is* right to him,"—that he has only to be fully persuaded that Mohammedanism, or Mormonism, or any other *ism* is the true system, and to follow out its injunctions, to be as sure of the joys of immortality as he who takes up his cross daily and meekly follows in the footsteps of the lowly babe of Bethlehem.

This at once puts an end to all authority in religion. True, the advocates of this erroneous doctrine tell us that there are conditions of salvation, but men cannot all see the *true* conditions, and therefore something else will do. If, in the wide field of dreams and speculative systems presented to his view, an individual should elect some form of Paganism, and devote himself to the worship of idols, his idolatry will

be consecrated as a means of his salvation; and the infidel, who spurns the idea of religion, and tramples the oracles of Heaven under his feet, as of no more value to the world than the wildest dreams of Arabian fable, will be exalted, through his infidelity, to reign in bliss with the Prince of Peace, whom he had insulted and despised.

Such are the legitimate results of the liberalism of the nineteenth century. It is a delusion to the world, and drives many a sincere and honest heart into the profession of open infidelity. So long as the idea prevails that the *revelation* of God to the world is a *mystery* (a contradiction of terms!) that needs to be expounded, there will be expounders without number; and those who are seeking to know the will of God will rely upon these, instead of going to the great source of light—the word of God. We would not be understood to object to teachers of Christianity. Their mission is a very important one; but when they are clothed by the world with authority that belongs not to them, they do much harm. When they assume the position of spiritual shepherds, having complete control over the faith and practice of the flocks they feed, they become *masters* of the Church instead of its *ministers*; and thus they must be regarded by those over whom they have supervision, as the standard of truth. Hence it is too often the case, that the individual who is anxious to know upon what conditions he may obtain “a part in the redemption which is by Christ,” depends solely upon the preacher for instruction, instead of consulting the oracles of heaven.

It is very evident that there can never be union and harmony in religion so long as men are to be regarded as the highest authority. How frail must be the hope that is based upon such authority! If the Doctors of Divinity hold the keys of knowledge, we have no protection against the baneful influence of false teachers. And are we to suppose that our Father has left us to grope our way in darkness and uncertainty, being forced to rely upon the authority of frail earth-worms like ourselves for guidance in a matter which involves the soul's eternal destiny? Nay; I thank God that there is higher authority in religion than “the words which man's wisdom teacheth,”—a standard of truth by which the “babes” in Christ can test the teachings of “the wise and prudent.” False teachers have been in the Church from a very early period of its history, who have exerted a powerful influence in leading the people of God astray. How far men are to be held responsible for the influence of false teachings and the prejudices consequent thereon, against the truth of heaven, must be decided by the

highest authority. That authority is the volume of truth—"the sword of the Spirit"—the weapon which Jehovah wields for the subjugation of the world. Men must cease to put their trust in human wisdom—must come like babes to the true source of light, and "receive with meekness the engrafted word of truth, which is able to save the soul." The sad Babel-like spectacle which the world presents, should be no discouragement to those who repose implicit confidence in Heaven's promises. Jesus must reign until all authority and all rule shall be subdued unto him. We look forward to a period in the unknown future, when the sincere shall become sickened and sated with dreams and vagaries—the unsatisfactory theories and speculations of men; when all shall honor God and honor themselves by bowing to the scepter of our exalted Priest and King, and acknowledge the revelation of his will which God has given to the world, as the only pure, deep, and exhaustless source of truth and heavenly wisdom.

SELF-CONTROL.

BY F. M. C.

THE greatest difficulties with which we have to contend in this life, are found not in the world around us—in external circumstances—but within our own hearts. It has been very justly remarked, that "the greatest victory of a man's life is not that which he achieves over his enemy, but that in which he subdues himself." How few ever achieve that great victory! Self-control is one of the highest objects, if not the highest, to be obtained in education; yet how few of the educated, so-called, can say to their passions, "Thus far shall ye come, and no farther!" How few have brought the discordant elements of their natures into such complete subjection that they can say to them with authority, "Peace, be still!" So long as any appetite or unhallowed passion is unrestrained, the soul is bowed down in the meanest servitude. No man who is thus subdued by the supremacy of passion, can feel himself secure. He is in danger, continual, imminent danger, for he is not a freeman—not master of his own actions. If there be but one unchecked passion, that one will subjugate the entire man, rendering every power of mind subservient to its ends. With what rigid self-denial, then, should we live, in order that we may bring ourselves into complete subjection to correct rule! With the mind thus rigidly educated, we may go forth amid the many temptations and allurements to vice which beset the pathway of life, with confidence, feeling that so long as we are masters of ourselves, we are masters of our own destinies.

RELIGION—AN INSTITUTION.

So long as religion shall be regarded as an abstraction—a product of the human mind—an off-shoot of the world's treacherous conscience, skepticism, infidelity, and downright atheism must abound in our fair earth. Whilst we rejoice in the belief that "man is the image and glory of God," (1 Cor. 11, 7) he is yet man—not God—and is independent of his Maker in no particular. In the language of one of Israel's prophets, we might exclaim, "O, Lord, we know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," (Jer. 10, 23.) The transcendentalism, however, growing out of the monodology of Leibnitz, and the pantheism of Spinoza, by insidiously spreading its shadowy influence over the world, through the various forms of mystic philosophy and mystic religion, has so bewildered, particularly, the mind of nominal Protestantism, that religion, for the most part, amounts to little more than unmeaning emotions, and oftentimes to the wildest and most ungovernable ebullitions of passion. Hence the unsteadiness and uncertainty of many of the religious movements of the age. In Germany and England, and even in our own America, many of the Churches are, as the crazy vessel before the angry wind, without rudder or compass, driven upon every merciless rock in the shoreless sea of man's shallow philosophy. The reason is most obvious—men have aspired to become Gods, and in their lofty flights of fancy, their heads have become dizzy and their hearts have grown faint. They have left behind the chart and compass of religion, and the mists of their speculation have so darkened and confounded their limited understanding, that no bright star of hope rises in their horizon—all objects are but flickering meteors—even the pale moon casts not her rays upon their night, but imperfectly, and Heaven's glorious sun regards them not. Thus it is with us all, left to ourselves. Instead, therefore, of religion springing from dependent, erring, and frail human nature, as our pseudo-philosophers, logicians, deists and skeptics are wont to maintain, it is an institution given for the light, guidance, and perfection of human nature. If humanity is right, it needs nothing—religion is useless, and all of our discussions in regard to it, are but an unnecessary consumption of time.

But the difficulty of most persons even of commendable learning, springs from a failure to clearly perceive the meaning of a moral institution. The word to *institute*, etymologically, denotes, to put, place, add, introduce, construct, arrange, &c.; and the word *institution* necessarily implies a want, a positive need in human nature. Hence, we

hear of the "institutes of medicine," meaning certain principles discovered in science for the regulation of our physical health; and we often speak of the "institutes of learning," by which we understand the principles, rules, and systems by which the mind is developed and stored with knowledge. In this sense, it is altogether appropriate to say schools and colleges are *institutions* for the wise regulation of man's intellectual powers, and without which he must *feel* his dark way with the lower animals of earth. History proves the value of institutions, and if I do not err in conclusions, the greatest intellectual disparities arise mainly from the different degrees of educational institutions in society.

In the moral world, all the differences, from the lowest idolater to the most cultivated christian, arise from the character of the respective institutions of religion under which men live. "The natural man," or man who has nothing superior to nature—external and internal—to guide him—the man, in a word, who is destitute of all religious institutions, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him,"—he is a savage; may be a wild man of the woods, and has not come under the *institutes* of "revealed religion, and of course can have no spiritual discernment." (1 Cor. 2, 14.)

Religion, in this view, may be pronounced good, better, and best; bad, worse, and worst, in proportion to the nature of its institutes or appointments. If the institutes, or systems, are defective, so must be all under their influence; but if good, the presumption is strongly in favor of their subjects. Therefore, no man can be just, or merciful, who bows at the shrine of mammon. Good intentions cannot sanctify a misguided deed, and no one can be bad who does truly live under the guidance of a correct religious institution. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree (one that grows in a poisoned soil) bring forth good fruit."

But the idea of religious institutions is most satisfactorily set forth by the Saviour and his Apostles. Paul speaks of "the strictest sect of our religion," his "conversation in the Jews' religion," and says he "profited above many his equals in the Jews' religion." These things he affirmed in contrast with another—a new and more spiritual religion, which he professed when he wrote. John the Baptist, though the son of a priest, and an orderly member of the Jewish Church, declared "the kingdom of heaven at hand;" and our Saviour said, "On this rock I will build my church." Thus it is clear that the phrase "kingdom of heaven" implies a religious institution, which is represented by our Lord as a house builded on a rock, whose foundation is sure.

To examine the subject properly, it would be necessary to give a full history of religious establishments; but in our introductory number, our intention is to merely shadow forth outlines for future labor. In justice, though, to the subject under consideration, it is proper to make a few points which may serve as guide posts in subsequent explorations.

For twenty-five hundred and thirteen years from the creation, as recorded by Moses, the only institution of religion was *patriarchal*. Neither did nations, or different families, assemble to perform religious service together. Each father, as the rightful governor of his own house, was authorized to perform such devotional exercises in the family, as the great Author of his being thought suited to his condition. He was the priest to sacrifice to God for his wife, his children, servants, and all under his immediate guidance. But this star-light age closed when families became qualified for church union. Fourteen hundred and ninety-one years before Christ, the patriarchs or fathers "were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized into Moses by the cloud and by the sea," and thus came under the heavenly institutes delivered by Moses, and constituted the first Church of God known in history. The institutes of this great national Church were embodied on Mount Sinai, and consecrated by the blood of sprinkling, and remained in full force to Christ. "The law and the prophets were until John," since that time Christ has been preached by all who have known the way of life.

The Jewish institution was but the shadow or miniature picture of a "better covenant," a more ample building, and one sufficient for the ingathering of the faithful of all nations. According to our computation, in the four thousand and thirty-third year of the world, the Church of Jesus Christ was planted at Jerusalem, in Palestine, and all the institutes were soon after submitted through men who uttered them by the dictation of the Holy Spirit. Since the "perfection" of this institution or Church, which was accomplished before the close of the first century, no other divine and authorized institution has been revealed. All others are but modifications and distortions of the original temple, and must sooner or later come to naught. The beauties, perfections, and glories of this heaven-modeled institution, we cannot now attempt to describe. Suffice it to say, that out of the Church, out of the vineyard, and out of the institution which Heaven has ordained, we can conceive not the possibility of performing God's work, or of being religious in any correct application of the term, and when the Lord shall come to make up his jewels, if we should unfortunately be found "without," we can have no introduction to the Father.

T. F.

FRIENDLY EXPRESSIONS IN REGARD TO THE SUCCESS
OF THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

WE are happy, and thankful to God to know, that the brethren whose opinions we have the best reason to respect, are generally favorable to the publication of "The Gospel Advocate." We take pleasure in laying a few of the kindly greetings of our friends before the reader:

1st. Bro. A. CAMPBELL says: "We are of opinion that such a periodical is needed in Nashville, and in Tennessee. The condition of things in the city and State call for not only oral, but written and printed materials of thought and action. The press, well furnished and guided, is a powerful auxiliary of truth or of error. If evil spirits use it in the projects of evil, why should not good spirits use it against fraud and imposture? Under the editorship of Elders Fanning and Lipscomb, we anticipate for it a large circulation and a liberal patronage."

2d. Elder JAMES CHALLEN, of Philadelphia, editor of "The Ladies' Christian Annual," in a letter of May the 29th, 1855, says:

"Bro. Fanning—I rejoice that you and Bro. Lipscomb are about engaging in the publication of the Gospel Advocate. It certainly is needed and will do good, and I hope will meet with ample encouragement and support."

3d. Elder B. FRANKLIN, of Cincinnati, Ohio, and former editor of the Christian Age, writes under date of May 17th, 1855:

"Bro. Fanning—Respecting your proposal to publish a newspaper, I can say that I think the move a good one. I trust you will meet the new phases of unbelief in such a manner as to do great good. I will furnish you a few short pieces, and every thing I can do to encourage your enterprise, I will cheerfully do. May you have abundant success."

4th. Bro. J. S. LAMAR, of Augusta, Ga., writes:

"Bro. Fanning—I need not say that I am much pleased with the paper enterprise. It will supply a deficiency which has been felt by us all. We need something that will draw attention to subjects long since familiar to the people of the North-west. It will afford me great pleasure to communicate, from time to time, such thoughts as may be deemed important."

We are happy to learn that the views of the brethren are so perfectly harmonious in regard to the necessity of discussing first princi-

ples. If we are not much mistaken, however, many who have imagined themselves far advanced in second principles, will have at least to review the first lessons of the Christian religion.

5th. Bro. W. G. Roulhac, of Hickman, Ky., speaks thus:

"Bro. Fanning.—On returning home yesterday, my son put into my hands your prospectus for the Gospel Advocate, the first intimation I had of the project. A paper, such as you propose, I think will be a useful auxiliary in this age of indifferentism to the positive religion of Christ; and I not only wish you success, but will use my best endeavors to aid you."

5th. Bro. Dr. S. B. ADEN, of Paris, Tenn., and long publisher of the Bible Advocate, says: "We have done much for the Harbinger, but will now try for your paper, and we hope it will be sustained."

Bro. W. B. LAWRENCE, of Alexandria, DeKalh co., Tenn., writes:

"Bro. Fanning.—I herewith send you a list of subscribers with the money, and I think such a paper as you propose is a desideratum amongst the brethren. We particularly need it as a medium of intercommunication in the Churches."

8th. Bro. LEWIS TILMAN, of Shelbyville, Tenn., sends thirteen subscribers "who are not members of the Church, but good citizens;" and says in reference to the reverses in Tennessee: "I look to you and Bro. Lipscomb to give a new impetus to the cause, through the instrumentality of the Gospel Advocate."

If the brethren will *thus* aid us, we hope, in the hands of God, to render good service in exciting our brethren and friends to greater religious interest. We wish to suggest it, again and again, that we desire our friends of the world to read "The Gospel Advocate," but we expect the paper to get its circulation chiefly through the exertions of the brethren. A little prudent and timely effort will secure all we desire.

These are certainly good authority for believing that our brethren, at least, feel much concern in relation to what may be accomplished by our paper. We also feel that we have reason to thank God for the interest exhibited by men who are not of us, at least in profession. We are encouraged to believe, that if, as conductors, we do our duty, success must follow.

T. F.

A QUIET mind is a protection against a vicious life; but no one can calculate the waywardness of a restless spirit.

REMINISCENCES.

Of oneself it is seldom comely to speak; and yet, no one can either speak or write without identifying himself with his performances. Although the worst and best of men live in their deeds when they are dead, and notwithstanding it is most disagreeable to have persons who are incapable of interesting us thrust themselves unbidden into our presence, it cannot be immodest to refer in a becoming manner, as did Paul, to the past, with the hope of the better serving those for whom we are laboring.

We presume all can say, most of our early religious associations recall the tenderest emotions; but there are others which we would gladly forget and bury forever. The reflection that some of the religious acquaintances of our early youth have contributed but little to the advancement of truth, is mortifying; the thought that by far the greater portion of the able and efficient laborers who, from ten to twenty-five years ago, stood side by side with us, have passed from earth, is indescribably sad, and impresses us very deeply with the uncertain tenure by which we still cleave to life; but when we call to mind the many very agreeable religious relations which, within a few years past, have been forever severed, particularly in Tennessee, we have no language to describe the deep agony of spirit inflicted upon us. We pray that we may never be compelled to speak of the past in terms which it merits.

In the month of January, 1844, we began the publication of "The Christian Review." Our success through an editorial career of four years could not have been more pleasant. The circulation of the work was truly encouraging, and our enjoyments in our monthly communings with our beloved brethren were much more valuable to us than worldly treasures. At the close of the volume for 1847, with a sincere conviction and hope that greater good could be accomplished, we cheerfully gave the paper to others. The history of the work substituted for "The Review" is well known and bitterly regretted. The error committed cannot be corrected—"there is no place for repentance." But we would gladly shroud the past in impenetrable night. We once more appear before our brethren and the world as a religious journalist, and whilst we ask the indulgence of all, we are happy in the belief that our labor in "The Gospel Advocate" will prove a blessing to many. It is at least our fond hope, that a renewal of our acquaintance with the brethren will prove a source of deep satisfaction and spiritual advantage to us. Will the brethren guard us from error and sin, and lend their aid in making our paper a truly useful work?

T. F.

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER.

In the April number of "The Christian Review" for 1847, we gave our readers a few suggestions from Dr. Tyng, in reference to the Holy Scriptures, which will bear repeating:

"The Bible itself is supreme. It does not need a ministry to interpret it—it does not tolerate a ministry to stand upon its ground. Every one, the highest and the lowest, the poorest cottage girl who sits by her door and knows nothing but the truth as it is in Christ—

A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew—

must read it for herself, and interpret it for herself, and is as truly responsible for the manner in which she applies its truth as the most learned of its readers. When I go to that book, God speaks to me. I need no succession—I go at once to the fountain head. It is not the man that speaks. It is God who speaks; and while he speaks to me, he speaks as if there were but one single Bible on earth, and that Bible an angel had come down and bound it upon my bosom. It is my Bible. It was written for me. It is the voice of God holding communion with my own soul, and never will I forfeit my right to commune with God. Nor is that communion to be held before councils or in open temples, or in the presence of popes and priests, and through the intervention of others. It is an act to be transacted in the most secret sanctuary of the Lord. No sects, no priestly interference can be admitted."

A PREACHER'S EXPERIENCE AND RESOLUTIONS.

Our esteemed brother, W. G. Roulhac, of Hickman, Ky., will, we hope, not be grieved at the use we make of a part of his letter of June 7th, 1855.

He says: "I have been at work with all the zeal I could command, and yet I have added but eight in two months; but they have been thinking men, and as a permanent good to any cause, eight such are better than a hundred that are moved by the power of sympathy.

"In my public ministrations, I take the position that Christianity is a *positive* institution, and I endeavor to show that God could not manifest his love to man only through positive appointments, and these must be received and obeyed to afford evidence of acceptance or pardon. In the application of these principles, I attempt to set the conclusion forth, that all else is delusion, begotten by our confidence in the traditions of men, or the result of superstitious enthusiasm. I am therefore not very

popular, and many of the brethren esteem me a much less preacher than they would, if I would reason less and exhort more. Our manner of preaching, in my judgment, has undergone of late years a change for the worse; too many, through an ardent desire to please, preach in a very indefinite manner, but I wish to pursue an uncompromising course. A preacher's position is one of influence and fearful responsibility, and he cannot justify himself before the Lord in winking at any thing in opposition to the oracles of truth.

I desire the prayers of the faithful, that I may be able to do good in the kingdom of our Lord, and to withstand the temptations to which I am exposed in my calling."

The matters suggested are worthy of our profoundest regard. They are new to nine-tenths of our most enlightened population. T. F.

TO THE CORPS EDITORIAL.

RESPECTED FRIENDS AND BRETHREN:—We present you our sincere greetings, and feel that we much need your sympathy. An inspired writer has said, "No man liveth to himself," and we are sure no one should labor for himself. Editors have it in their power to do each other great service or great injury; and whilst we expect to record our convictions unreservedly, we desire to treat all with proper respect. We hope, too, that we shall be able to gain the respect of all good men. We are especially anxious, "without regard to differences," to cultivate the most friendly relations towards editors of religious newspapers; not that we hope to be satisfied with their teaching, or that they will be pleased with ours, but inasmuch as editors represent, to a good degree, the religious feeling of society, it well becomes them to exert their influence to remove from the public mind the destructive prejudices which so retard religious investigation. To our brother editors amongst the disciples, we would say that it is our highest ambition to deserve their confidence in "earnestly contending" with them "for the faith once delivered to the saints."

T. F.

A BEAUTIFUL sentiment is the following, by the celebrated Logan: "Over all the movements of life, religion scatters her favors, but reserves the choicest of her divine blessings for the last hour."

HAD we eyes sharp enough, we should see the arrows of death flying in all directions, and account it a wonder that we and our friends escape them but a single day.—*Cowper.*

COMPENSATION OF PREACHERS.

"BROTHER FANNING:—I have proposed to our brethren in West Tennessee to adopt a *system* of evangelizing, and to work by system. The leading principle of which is, compensation according to the respective necessities of those engaged in the evangelical field, and not, as heretofore, enrich one and starve another out. This plan will encourage young men to preach, and exclude the carnality which always manifests itself in a preference of one for another. There are certainly as great differences in preachers as there are in hearers. I have known neighborhoods in which old Brother ——— can do more good than Brother Campbell, Brother Fanning, and Brother Roulhac combined; yet I know other places where old Brother ——— should not attempt to preach. It would be wrong, however, to starve him because he cannot please the fastidious. Christ died for all, and he is a worthy servant of the Master who can call the wicked to Christ as their only hope of salvation.

W. G. ROULHAC.

"Hickman, Ky., June 7th."

REMARK.—We are glad that Brother Roulhac has introduced this subject, and we hope the matter will be thoroughly sifted. If we mistake not, this is one of the "delicate subjects" which demands an examination.

T. F.

REVISION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

As intimated in our prospectus, it is our purpose to furnish our readers with whatever matter may seem to us valuable in regard to the "Bible Revision movement of the age." But to the friends of the enterprise, as well as to those opposed, we wish to say that we do not expect to approve of all that may be said and done on this subject.—Whilst we are ardently devoted to the movement, we oft times feel there is danger of irreverent hands being laid upon the sacred volume, and we rejoice also to believe that there is a strong aversion in society to trifling in so sacred a matter. Neither should we hope for the first issue from "the Bible Union" to be by any means a faultless version. That many things will be improved, few, if any, will deny; but that there may be portions left in obscurity, we presume most will admit. But without, at present, attempting to give our reasons for such a conclusion, we wish to say to our readers, we fear not the forthcoming revised edition will be a vast improvement, as a whole, upon that of King James, now in Protestant use, and we regard the question of revision

as one of most vital importance to all christians. In future numbers we hope to be able to record the progress of the work, and as the different parts may appear, we will take pleasure in calling attention to them. The friends of the measure owe it to the cause of truth, to exert themselves to the utmost of their ability, to remove the unnecessary prejudices which exist against revision. T. F.

HOW SHALL CHRISTIAN UNION BE RESTORED.

By individual effort. Every Christian must commence the work for himself, and pursue it with all the ardor of his soul. He must commence with his own heart. He must then cultivate more love for Christ—more love for his truth, more love for his disciples. He must banish from his heart all love for any tradition not within the Holy Scriptures. He must read the Scriptures, not to support his former views, but to learn the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He must keep every command, however contrary to the practice of his own sect. He must acknowledge no sect, but renounce them all, and cleave to those who stand by the Scriptures, alone.

If every genuine Christian would do this—if he would commence this work this day, and pursue it with the spirit of a martyr for one year, it would result in such an anniversary as has never been held in any age, in any country, or by any people, since the age of the Apostles.—*Christian Banner*.

S. E. SHEPARD.

Walk, as it were, upon the borders of the ocean of eternity, and listen to the sounds of its waters, till you are deaf to every sound beside.—*R. Hall*.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE following preamble and resolutions were adopted at a consultation meeting of the officers of the Christian Church, Memphis, Tenn., May 4, 1855.

PREAMBLE.

We, the officers of the Christian Church at Memphis, being convinced that the house which we are now using as a place of divine worship, is too small to accommodate the wants of a rapidly increasing congregation, and whereas, we are fully aware of the necessity of an effort

being made whereby a more commodious house may be provided for the accommodation and benefit of the people of this city, knowing from past experience that the individual means of our membership are inadequate for that purpose; and whereas, we believe that the Church at Memphis is looked upon by the brethren generally, as being one of the most important in the reformation, being situated at a point from which the principles of our most holy religion must be disseminated throughout the South and South-West,

Be it therefore, RESOLVED, That an appeal be made to the brethren of the Reformation to assist us in our endeavors to build up the cause of Christ in our midst, and as we consider that the most simple means will best promote the desired end,

Be it also, RESOLVED, That a committee be appointed to correspond with the Ministers of the Churches asking their christian aid and assistance, requesting that at as early a day as possible they will each deliver in their respective churches, a discourse on the advantages which may be obtained for the cause of our dear Redeemer by co-operation, and at its close, to take up a collection for the above mentioned purpose.

RESOLVED, 3d, That the same committee be empowered to receive any and all remittances which may be made to the Church for the purpose herein specified.

RESOLVED, 4th, That Editors of all papers and periodicals which circulate amongst the brethren, be hereby requested to publish these resolutions, so that our wants may be fully made known.

We, the undersigned, having been appointed, (at a consultation meeting, Dr. B. F. HALL, Pastor, presiding,) a committee to receive remittances and attend to correspondence, would respectfully request, that in making remittances, &c., brethren will address

THOS. LEECH,
R. H. LONG.

FRANKLIN COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT.

THE Eleventh Commencement Exercises of Franklin College, will take place in the College Chapel on Wednesday, July 4th, 1855. Several Addresses will be delivered by the Senior Class, and in the afternoon, the Young Ladies of Mrs. Fanning's School, will read Essays and give exhibitions of their skill in Music.

Both the College and the Female School, will open the next Session on Monday, Sept. 24th, 1855.

T. FANNING.

LADY AGENTS WANTED—LADIES' CHRISTIAN ANNUAL, VOL. IV.

JAMES CHALLEN, EDITOR.—ASSISTED BY A CORPS OF ABLE CONTRIBUTORS.

THE Fourth Volume of this popular and well established Dollar Monthly, commences with July, 1856; and will be improved in every respect. The work is devoted to a pure and elevated Literature, free from all denominational bias. Its patrons and contributors are to be found among all parties; as we aim to occupy the vantage-ground of a common Christianity in which all agree. We introduce

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PROSPECTUS FOR

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CONDUCTED BY

T. FANNING AND W. LIPSCOMB.

THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE will be devoted to the interests of the Church of Jesus Christ; especially, to the maintenance of the doctrine of Salvation through "the Gospel of the Grace of God." It will be the careful study of the Conductors to present in an intelligible form, the great and distinguishing principles of the Christian Institution, and affectionately enforce the observance of its heavenly practices; to give such reviews and notices of religious systems, speculations, books, publications, and sayings and doings of men, as may to them seem proper and useful, and to keep the reader advised of religious and educational progress. Their motto shall be, "*Open columns and free discussion of all questions calculated to advance the spiritual interests of Society.*"

Whilst they feel not at liberty to compromise the least "dot or tittle" of truth, they will regard it an honor to fraternize with all who fear God and respect his institutions, as developed in the Divine Oracles. The revision of the Holy Scriptures will receive special attention, and it is hoped the work will prove valuable, as a medium of communication amongst the churches and the brethren scattered abroad, particularly in the South-West. They make no special appeal for patronage, but desire to place the success of the work upon the service it may render in the cause of truth; and they confidently believe that the high sense of Christian responsibility felt by the brethren, will induce them to adopt the proper course in relation to the enterprise.

The work will be published in the City of Nashville, in monthly No's. of 32 pages each, neatly covered and stitched. The first No. will be issued July 1st, 1856, and the first Volume will close with the December or 6th No.

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Per Single Copy for 1st Volume, or 6 Nos.,
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Five Dollars.

The Publishers do not feel authorized to keep accounts, and they will therefore expect all who want the paper and are able, to send the money. Persons not in circumstances to bear the expense, will be furnished without charge.

All Christians are authorized Agents, and if the Conductors can have the co-operation of the brethren who feel zeal in the cause of Christ, the paper will soon gain a large list of subscribers. All Letters and communications should be addressed to the Conductors, or either of them, at Franklin College, Tennessee.

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