

church, looking after the finances, and providing for the temporal wants of the poor and needy in their midst, are apparently satisfied with dispensing the bread and wine on the Lord's day, and that too sometimes after these emblems have been prepared by other faithful hands. The voice of these divinely appointed officers is not heard in the practical ministrations of the church, or if heard at all it is pushed so far in the back ground as to be of little benefit to those who most need it. This is not God's order. We believe the churches should see to it that the Scripturally qualified true and tried men of their number are ordained to fill these responsible offices, and then their work and voice should be properly respected and sustained by all the congregation. They should at once be accepted as the true leaders and representatives of the whole body. On the other hand, the officers should not only realize the responsibility they are under to God and to the body they serve, but they should come boldly to the front and assert their authority and fearlessly and lovingly prosecute their respective and official duties. By such a concert of action on the part of the church and her officers the Lord's work among men would be a power for good and a light to the world that could not be hid. This was the Lord's plan in the beginning, and that many of our churches are lacking just at this point, we have not the least doubt. We plead then for primitive ground in this matter, and ask the brethren to carefully consider what we write.

THE QUESTION OF THE DAY.

Loyalty to all the reasonable demands of the king is a virtue too often lacking on the part of many subjects, and this is none the less true in Christianity than in temporal affairs. Hence the question of the day is not so much one of fact as one of humble submission to the higher power. With many professed Christians the question is not so much what the great King has commanded, but are we willing to obey what we know to be the supreme will? They presume to sit in judgment on the Law giver, and accept or reject his counsel as may suit their fancies. Of course such a thing as disloyalty to the temporal king is at once set down as treason against the gov-

ernment, and such an one is regarded by the people as unworthy of further protection by the laws of the nation.

Now is not this principle just as true in religion as elsewhere? When the Lord commands he expects prompt and implicit obedience to all his commands. If this eternal principle is not adhered to by Christian people, then they are out at sea not knowing whither they drift. Our watch-word should always be, "Not our will, Lord, but thine be done." This is the spirit of our Lord and Master, and is the only principle that will bind us to the Rock of Ages. The spirit of "do as you please" in religious matters is taking entirely too deep a hold on the mind of many Christians. But we should keep the will of the King uppermost in our mind and heart and breathe that spirit of humility and devotion that becometh the children of God. This is required of us, and nothing short of a full cup of obedience will meet the requirement.

Selections and Comments.

THE FIG BLOSSOM.—The *Pacific*, San Francisco, says:

In one of his letters from Palestine, Dr. H. M. Field spoke of "the fig trees which were found in full blossom." Some old New Yorker, who is now living in Los Angeles, called his attention to the fact that in the country where the fig grows people do not see blossoms, and wants to know whether we are to trust the Bible or observation? Dr. Field has sent for information or accuracy to Dr. Post, of Beirut, his fellow traveler, and an ardent botanist, and is told, as might have been expected, that the blossoms in the young fig are on the inside. Evidently in the passage in Habakkuk beginning, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines," allusion was not made to any flower-like appearance of the fig in spring, but solely to the putting forth of that which would culminate in fruit. It should be added, too, that the original word has no necessary reference to floral appearance. The word means simply to "put forth," whether the result be buds or leaves or flowers one can see, or flowers one cannot see. So our Los Angeles brother who sits under his own fig tree may read his Bible without disputing either its accuracy or his own sight.

"FUNNY CALVINISM."—Under this heading the *Christian Intelligencer* says:

The funny man of New York *Times* will be the death of us. On

Monday last he said that Calvin taught baptismal regeneration and the Real Presence as distinctly as Dr. Pusey himself! Such gigantic jokes leave Mark Twain nowhere.

Just what is meant when Calvin is represented as teaching "baptismal regeneration," we are not concerned to know. But it may be of some interest to know that he *did* teach that baptism is for the remission of sins, and in so doing stood on apostolic ground in bold contrast to much unscriptural teaching on the design of baptism at the present time. Here are his own words. While speaking of the Lord's appointing it, he says:

For he commands all who believe to be baptized for the remission of their sins. Therefore those who have imagined that baptism is nothing more than a mark or sign by which we profess our religion before men, as soldiers wear the insignia of their sovereign as a mark of their profession, have not considered that which was the principal thing in baptism; which is, that we ought to receive it with this promise, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In this sense we are to understand what is said by Paul, that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the Church "with the washing of water by the word;" and in another place, that "according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" and by Peter, that "baptism doth save us."

A FEW FACTS.—The *Christian Intelligencer* gives us these significant statements:

Schools, 141,629—Retail drinking places, 143,115; Teachers, 222,042; Costing, \$95,403,000—Tipplers and drinkers, 4,666,000, who paid for liquor \$715,575,000. The churches in that same year gave for benevolence \$47,636,495. Compare these figures. The schools cost ninety-five and a half million dollars, and the liquor cost at retail seven hundred and fifteen and a half million dollars. Such facts ought to compel the people to voluntarily ordain a reform.

WISER THAN THE POPE.

Even the Irish Roman Catholics have risen up to the height of the great conception that they understand their own business better than the Pope does. He has written a letter to his dear children in the isle of saints, bidding them to abstain from all illegal measures to beat the British, and not to give their money to promote sedition. This command is a stunner. Their occupation is gone if they submit. What else do they care to do, if

they may not go "agin the government."

In this dilemma they have exercised their proverbial ingenuity to find some way to evade the Pope's precepts and go on with their little dying rebellion in their own way. They have always been taught that their religion was to guide and govern them in their civil and political relations, and they were right when voting, fighting and assassinating, according to the spiritual directions they received. They have been taught, and publicly during the recent agitation, that a few words from the priest could and would make a murderer as innocent as a babe. This awful doctrine has been the inspiration of crime, and has sustained the rebellion which is marked by such monster wickedness as makes humanity turn pale to read of it. And now the Pope writes them a letter telling them to be good, not to do such things any more, and to give no money to the leagues that are engaged in unlawful schemes. How shall they get on under such an order?

Easily enough. They have plumply taken the ground that the church rules the conscience and the life only in religious things: that it has no business to interfere with politics, and they will just do as they please in their little unpleasantness with England, and the Pope must confine his attention to his own business. Certainly they are right in asserting that there is no religion in murdering innocent men, and as their rebellion is carried on by secret assassination it is true that politics and murder are inextricably mixed. And thus it comes to pass that to be a "good Catholic" requires unqualified submission to the Pope, while to be a good member of the Irish League requires rebellion against the Pope. This puzzles even an Irishman, and it is fair to say that the Pope has to stand aside till the war is over. "The present distress" demands that the "good Catholic" should sin against the Pope, and when the war is over, the rebellious son will make his peace with his priest, and get absolution for a price. It is a mighty easy religion and works to a charm in the present emergency. —*N. Y. Observer.*

The honor of being the oldest English church in America is claimed by the old Friend's Church, in Benton, Va.