

### WHERE DOES CO-OPERATION BEGIN?

It begins first with the individual disciple of Christ, and in the second place, with the church of which is a member. Each disciple of Christ must be taught the necessity of co-operation in preaching the gospel to the whole world and then made to feel that it is his individual duty to assist in the good work to the fullest extent of his moral and financial ability. That church whose members have been thus taught, other things being equal, is ready coöperation. On the other hand, it is useless to talk of coöperation or to urge it on the part of that member or that church which has not been properly educated on the subject. We had just as well commence now, as any time, to learn the important lesson that other things besides charity begin at home. That church which is not perfectly united in the same mind and the same judgment and whose members do not coöperate among themselves, is not likely to do much in sounding out the gospel. The trouble with most of our missionary work is, that, the plans adopted and carried on by the leaders, are too far in advance of the churches. We need to bring the team back and hitch it onto the load. Before the preachers talk too much about County, District, State or United States coöperation, they should see to it that the members of their own churches are actually engaged in coöperating among themselves; for if a mistake is made at this point, the work will prove a failure from first to last. It matters not how strong our desire may be to send the gospel to the heathen or how loud we may call for the money to support those who have the faith and courage to go, our efforts will all be in vain unless the churches are first Scripturally instructed and set in order. If a church is not willing and ready to help itself it is not likely to render much aid to its weak neighbor. The coöperating spiritually dying or dead churches is not an every-day occurrence. While it is true that the love of money is said to be the root of all evil, it is none the less true that money must lie at the foundation of much of our missionary work, and the missionary work must be carried on by some kind of coöperation. But what can be expected of that church which is not willing to set itself in order and support its home work? It is not only un-

scriptural and weak, but it is silly to talk about sending missionaries to foreign lands, or to any other land, while the home ministry is turned away with only the crumbs which fall from the rich brethren's table.

There are but few churches among us that are doing their duty at home, much less being in a condition to do mission work. There should be a general spiritual resurrection in this respect all over the country. Then and not till then; may we expect that union and coöperation so necessary in converting the world.

### FAITH ONLY.

Some of the disciplines and confessions of faith tell us that the doctrine "that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." This statement of man's justification may afford some comfort to those who have been incorrectly taught on the subject; but the apostles and primitive Christians evidently saw the matter in quite a different light. Let us hear them. The apostle James asks this question: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" And then he refers to the case of Abraham, and shows that he was justified by works, as well as by faith, when he had offered his son upon the altar, and further, that by his works was his faith made perfect. If a man therefore is justified by faith only, he is justified by an imperfect or dead faith. Besides, on this principle the devils themselves would be justified, for we are distinctly told that they "believe and tremble." But look at the two following statements of the case; the discipline say: "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." The apostle James says: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Now reader, which will you accept?

Now that man is justified by faith, the Scriptures expressly teach; but it is nowhere said that a man is justified by faith only. It is also taught that man is justified by works, but not by works only. Hence Paul says: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But he does not say we are justified by faith *only*. The word "only" is added to complete unscriptural theory. It should be

dropped from such a connection with faith, for we have no more right to say that we are justified by faith *only* than by any other one essential. We are said to be justified or saved by works, by grace, by the blood of Christ, by the name of the Lord Jesus, by God, by baptism, etc., but it is not said that a man is justified or saved by either of them alone. We could, as properly say that we are saved by baptism only as by faith only, but the word of God does not so teach. We are freely justified by all of them together, and not by any one to the exclusion of the others. So we conclude with the apostle James; "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST THE PLACE FOR CHRISTIANS.

God peopled the ocean with the finny tribes; the purple mullet and gold fish shimmer and gleam, as in sportive play they drag the seaweed through the mermaid's cave and the dolphins tumble in glee above them. The water is their home; out of it they die.

No less does the eagle feel the freedom of the air and sunlight as he sails proudly out of sight into the heaven that bends so blue above him; the lark trills her roundelay and rises up to meet the sun, for as God's creatures they have the air as their abode. Away from it they perish. God has appointed that the spiritual home of his children shall be in Christ; out of him spiritual death is inevitable. But to be in Christ is to be in his body, which is the church bearing his name, for it is he "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." If we dwell in the church and "walk in the spirit," we shall enjoy a vigorous and happy life; just as the denizens of the sea, in coral groves underneath the green billows fill the full purpose of their being.

A voice comes over the snow-crowned mountains asking, "Is it not possible for a Christian to live out of the church?" Do you not see the danger as you look about you! Who would be a mollusk of so little vitality that it may be possible to sustain a declining life for a short time out of the native element! Lukewarm Christians may show signs of spasmodic activity though away from assembling in the house of God for months, but experience without exception

shows that spiritual death is inevitable.

Why should God have instituted the church if it were not a necessity? If one man can live the Christian life without it, another can and all can. Or if one is to be saved in the church and another out, then God is partial.

In the days of Abraham the system of salvation suited to the infancy of the race was very simple. A fuller code was given when Moses led the sons of Jacob away from the leeks and garlic into the trials of the wilderness; but now we dwell in the light, "the house of the Lord, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth," is ours. In this church, which is the body of Christ, dwells the spirit of Christ which is the only life giving spirit in the kingdom of God. Hence he who is rightfully in the church is in communion with this Spirit and has life, while he who is without the church has no spiritual communion and will surely die. \* \* \*

### Selections and Comments.

THE PROPOSED REVISION OF CREEDS.—We notice there is still some discussion concerning the necessity of a revision of creeds. If this discussion should lead to the abandonment of all human creeds, we think great good would be accomplished. Human creeds must be devisive in the very nature of things, since they are finite in their comprehensiveness. No man or organized set of men can concoct or comprehend a system larger than the combined scope of their own minds. And this being true it must be evident to all that their systems will be applicable to such persons only as are equal or inferior in mental capacity to the author or authors of the systems. Consequently superior minds cannot be accommodated by these human inventions. Hence we must conclude that in order to meet the wants of the immense variety of mind, the number of creeds must be very great; unless we can find one which is equal to the requirements of the highest as well as the humblest intellect in all the world. Reasoning *a priori*, we would expect just such a creed from an author whose attributes are infinite, and from none other. And as the Bible is the work of just such an author, it is logically demonstrated to be the only book that is adapted to every creature as a sufficient rule of faith and prac-