

time enough for us to obey it. This it has not yet done, and this it can never do. The day of Moses and of Israel has passed, and so we prefer to follow Christ. On the mount of transfiguration the Lord summoned Moses and Elijah from the unseen world to appear in the presence of the Christ that He might show to such blind guides as the *Signs of the Times* that the time had fully come that these representative men of the law and the prophets should lay down their authority at the feet of the Son of God. Hence the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

PERSONAL MENTION.

Bro. Isaac Errett, of the *Christian Standard*, who has been sick, is again able to resume his usual amount of labor on his paper.

We are sorry to note that Bro. H. T. Morrison has returned to his home in Waupun, Wisconsin. He will still write for the *HERALD*.

We are glad to note that while Bro. F. G. Allen of the *Old Path Guide* is still confined to his room, his general health is improving. The pen of Bro. Allen is much needed in these unstable times, and we hope he will yet be spared to do much good for the cause of Christ.

"THOU SHALT LAY IT ON THE TABLE."

This positive command refers to the contribution that is taken up by the churches on the first day of the week. This command is found in the same chapter and verse where it is said, "The deacons, after the administration of the Lord's supper shall carry around some nice little silk-lined contribution baskets and wait on the audience." They are both found in the first chapter and the first verse of *Expedients*, and the one is just as binding on the churches of Christ as the other. Although commands highly esteemed and faithfully observed by many, yet the Lord never intended that either of them should become a test of fellowship or an occasion of discord among his people. Unlike most commands, the one may be obeyed to the exclusion or neglect of the other. Indeed, as they are somewhat antagonistic in their form of expression, it would be difficult to see how both of them could be obeyed at the same time in the same congregation. It is the *spirit* of

of the command rather than the *letter* that is to be observed. Seeing then that the two are equally binding, and that the letter of neither is necessary in performing the desired act, it follows that the *manner* of the whole thing is left to be governed by the circumstances and the sound judgment of the churches. Whatever therefore is in harmony with the law of the Lord and will be for the greatest good to the greatest number in carrying forward the financial portion of the Lord's work is the *manner* of giving that should be adopted on the Lord's day.

Now that all Christians are required to give something of their temporal goods to the Lord's cause, and that the laying by in store for this purpose is to be done on the first day of every week, we think is expressly taught in the Scriptures. And that each one is to give willingly and according to his or her ability is equally plain. The apostle Paul says: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2. Here is the example of the primitive churches, and we fully believe that it ought to be followed by all our churches. But it is not stated whether this contribution is to be laid on the table or whether some one is to take it up from the audience. But as either is Scriptural, we decidedly prefer the latter for several reasons. In the first place, but few will go forward and lay their money on a table. There will always be some in an audience who have but little to give, and they do not care to make a public demonstration of it by going forward and laying it on a table before so many observing eyes, whereas they would be free in a quiet and unobserved way to drop this amount, however small, into a basket presented to them. Besides, some are too diffident to go to a table even with a large sum. Strangers by this plan will, as a rule, give nothing. In the second place, it is more orderly in the house of God. Let our churches give the basket system a fair trial, and we venture the statement that they will not soon abandon it. But we believe the table plan will result in only a few of the more able doing all the giving, and will invariably cripple the financial ability of the churches.

BEING BORN AGAIN.

A Baptist minister has recently preached a sermon on the above subject in the Central Baptist church, Atlanta, Ga., and by the request of the church the sermon has been published in the *Christian Index*. The following is an extract we take from it:

Neither has Christian baptism any part in, or essential relation to, the new birth whatever, though a misconstruction of the phrase "born of water" in John 3: 5 has led many to imagine that baptism is closely allied to the new birth. The most pains-taking study of that part of the Scriptures has convinced me that the only reason why that phrase is supposed to mean baptism, is that the word "water" is used. To reasoning people that is not reason enough. The introduction of the idea of baptism is not at all essential to the topic, or the spirit of the conversation, nor would it serve, in any way, to make the Lord's words contain a sensible answer to the question which burst from the amazed and wondering Nicodemus. In fact, it would only serve to still further mystify him, while it was the Lord's purpose to make clear that which he had said already, and which had not been understood. Observe the relation of the two parties. Nicodemus had come to the Lord Jesus for instruction. It was one great part of the Lord's gracious work to make things plain to our understanding. During the conversation the Lord suddenly unfolds the necessity of being born again. His amazed listener most naturally supposes this to mean a repeating of the processes of nature in the birth of the flesh, and says so, while he demands an explanation. It being the Savior's object to explain a mystery by answering and removing this false impression, how could he accomplish this object by repeating the very words which he had already used, and then only adding to it another new condition? The man would have been left still amazed and still clinging to his own error. The Lord's answer *must* be explainable as being directed to remove the difficulty under which Nicodemus labored, for, on concluding it, he says, in effect, "Now, marvel no longer." Therefore, if paraphrased, his answer would be, "Nicodemus, it is not a mere repeating of the natural birth, for *except a man be born of the flesh, and also of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It is needful that a man be born of the flesh in order to be a man, but if this were repeated it would only be still the same, for nothing but flesh, with all of its evil propensities can be born of the flesh. Only that which is born from above is of the spirit and fitted to see and enter into the Kingdom." This is the only construction of our Lord's answer, which relieves the

mind of Nicodemus of its insoluble problem, and after speaking it, the Lord, as though he had really relieved him, says, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." Then he proceeds to speak of the real mystery, and assures Nicodemus that it will always remain a mystery so far as its methods are concerned: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." To add certainty to plausibility in this construction of the phrase "born of water," it is only necessary to remember that, in the language of the Bible, this is very common form of expressing the idea of the natural birth. It is not a figure of speech, but rather a technical form of expression for the birth of the flesh, and as such will be readily recognized by all who are even tolerably familiar with the science of human physiology. For instance, examine the first verse of the forty-eighth chapter of Isaiah; the tenth verse of the nineteenth chapter of Ezekiel, and many others easily found by aid of a concordance.

REMARKS.

As this sermon was published by the request of a leading Baptist church, it is to be supposed that its views and criticisms are fully indorsed by the Baptists in that section of country. Hence we notice it briefly.

1. The speaker thinks the phrase "born of water" does not refer to baptism for two reasons; first, because its "introduction is not essential to the topic, or the spirit of the conversation," and second, because it would have only served to further "mystify" Nicodemus. But we answer that this depends altogether on the idea one has of the design of baptism. If we are willing to accept the Scriptural doctrine of baptism, along with faith and repentance, for the remission of sins, then it will be seen that its introduction is as essential to the topic as that of the Holy Spirit. But when one wishes to get rid of this idea, of course it is easy to see that it is not necessary. But how could the introduction of baptism mystify Nicodemus any more than he was already mystified? It was not the mention of baptism that mystified him, but the simple declamation, stated in the third verse, that "except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God." It was the *fact itself* and not the statement of the means through which it was to be accomplished, that mystified and astonished him. Besides, how could the mention of baptism mys-