

Communications.

Our Troubles.

NUMBER VI.

We again call the attention of the readers of the P. C. MESSENGER to

OUR PREACHERS.

Christianity, with all its facts, truths, commandments, ordinances, and promises, is founded upon a divine constitution; this constitution contains the decrees and ordinances of God, being the result of his wisdom and foreknowledge. Before he undertook to devise the scheme of human redemption, all time and eternity were mapped out before him. There was no necessity for God to experiment, nor did he ever err in any of his decrees, or have an occasion to change, alter or modify his ordinances in order to the accomplishment of his purposes, nor would he do so to suit the capricious desires of all in earth or heaven; but all his decrees and ordinances, composing the constitution upon which his scheme of redemption was founded, are as immutable as himself.

We know nothing of any decree or ordinance of God, except we find it written in the Bible, and whenever we find one written in that book, we believe it with our whole hearts.

Now God has decreed and it cannot be changed, that the preacher should be the great human instrumentality, in his hands, in the conversion of the world from darkness to light, from Satan to God. Paul says to the Corinthians: "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness (simplicity) of preaching to save them that believe." I Cor. i. 21. Another ordinance making it necessary that there should be a preacher, in order to the conversion of the sinner, is found in Rom. x. 13, 14, 15, and reads: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" The above is the strongest manner of expressing a negative.

To accomplish the great purpose God intended should be brought about by his preachers, it was necessary, in the beginning, to make them supernatural, for a natural or uninspired man could not receive the things of the spirit until they were revealed to him in a natural way. Paul says: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual (supernatural) judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we (supernatural men) have the mind of Christ." Rom. i. 14, 15, 16. It was therefore necessary that the first preachers should be so qualified that they could receive thoughts direct from God, though they were not clothed in words. These spiritual gifts, however, were to cease when the revelation was perfected, as there would be no longer any necessity for a direct communication from God, after he had taught us all that was necessary for our happiness here, our tranquility in death, and our eternal happiness beyond the grave.

Paul says: "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledges, it shall vanish away." I Cor. xiii. 8. These spiritual gifts were given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ, until the church came into the unity of the faith and of the knowl-

edge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Then all these supernatural gifts were to, and did cease, in accordance with the decree of God. Then, from and after the Apostle John upon Patmos, received the last law of Christianity and revealed it to man. There being one God and father of all, one Lord of all, one spirit, one body, one faith, one baptism and one hope, no man was ever called of God as was Paul and others; but this work was assigned to the church, and during the last eighteen hundred years it has been the duty of the church to send the glad tidings of salvation to a lost and ruined world, by the preacher, who must in all his teaching, confine himself closely to what is taught by the revealing spirit in the Bible.

But I must take another recess, or my production will not be read.

HENRY THOMAS.

San Jose, Cal., Dec. 1, 1877.

Sectarian Jealousy.

The history of the past two hundred years presents a formidable array of religious sectarians, shifting and changing amidst revolutions of different characters, struggling to hold their position in the world with all the tenacity and zeal necessary and worthy of a better cause, sometimes expanding and at other times contracting in a ratio as the good of the party seems to require. If there is one thing above all others that sectarianism is now jealous of, it is the efforts of many lovers of the truth who are laboring to restore the ancient order of things. For nearly a century this effort has been the object of sectarian jealousy and fear. They first locked us out, then seeing the people would have the truth as taught in the Bible, they then thought to meet the disciples in discussion, and also to send forth a host of warriors, who should from the lecture rostrum, expose the efforts of restoration; this is occasionally kept up yet. But today there is a kind of peculiar formation of compromise, such as would, if fully adhered to, stop at once all research and investigation, and although sectarian jealousy would still exist, a silent warfare in a somewhat indirect way would still go on.

Sometimes matters come to a focus and the contrast is fully shown, and the real angry spirit of jealousy stalks forth ferocious as a lion, and invincible as the laws of the Medes and Persians, which are said to "change not." At such times it is impossible to get either favors, sympathy or investigation.

We saw this fully demonstrated at Cincinnati, Iowa, recently.

We were called there to hold a series of meetings, having been there last spring—reported in MESSENGER of April last—when we baptized 12 persons, some of whom were converts and members of these sectarian churches, which action on our part seems to have fully aroused the clergy of the Congregationalist and M. E. churches so much so that we were not allowed to preach to the people in the house owned by said parties, nor could we get the M. E. man to say what his reasons were, but we did continue to preach in a hall, in said village, to a respectable and exceedingly attentive audience, four of whom obeyed the Gospel, and seldom have we found a few disciples more thoroughly of the same mind and judgment.

Each of the clergy were absent most of the time, and many of their members sat on a rough pine board to hear us, while the church built by their means was securely locked up, and the mice and crickets were enjoying a feast on the carpets so recently put there by money donated by the people in general. Yet the people seem to enjoy listening to the things that pertain to the kingdom of Christ, while the preachers, doubtless, felt

thankful for the ability to display their courageous jealousy by closing doors against us. Several excuses were offered for the M. E. church, chiefly that he was from Ireland and not accustomed to American sociability, but we remember that Christianity is the same the world over, and the trouble is that said preacher is a Methodist first and last, and therefore disposed to do just what would be done a hundred times oftener than it is only for policy sake. We don't blame the man but the system. How can a man who is wholly given to sectarian theology do otherwise? He knows he dare not undertake to defend it in discussion. What else could he do? Our only mystery is why others don't do like him, which we can account for only on the fact that it will as in this case, cause much of the temporal support to pass away, but this man is both jealous and zealous enough to suffer for his cause. We did think of asking him to take up courage to defend his theology, but on reflecting we thought it rather unreasonable to ask a man to do an impossibility. Methodism is too corrupt a theory, to be susceptible of a fair defense, and when a man, otherwise good, is fully absorbed in it, he is zealous, jealous and treacherous, to that degree that he is incapable of dealing fairly with anything which opposes his precious theory, and is as thoroughly blinded to the true import of the Gospel as any sectarian of the past eighteen centuries, such an one glories in sectarianism, and never calls it in question, and can not bear to hear others do so. We have witnessed enough in the past ten years to irresistibly conclude that such is the case with all who have enough sectarian zeal to teach the theories, yet we are still hopeful for that class who were Christians first, and unfortunately carried into this Babel of sectarianism afterward, and are so confused as to find it difficult to see their way out, and our prayer is that a continuous study of God's word will enable them to learn more perfectly. But of the former we can only say as we would to a man who desired to fill a keg with wine when it is full of water, "If you preserve your wine in that keg you should first pour out the water." So must the mind filled with the chaff of sectarian theology; it must be empty before it can receive and retain the truth as it is in Jesus. It was so in the days of Jesus, Peter and Paul, and will continue to be so till truth attains to an universal victory.

Fraternally yours,

S. H. HEDRICK.

Fairfield, Iowa, Nov. 30, 1877.

The Four Ministries.

AN INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE.

BY D. F. MANIRE.

In the New Testament we have an inspired history of four supernatural and divinely-attested ministries:

- I. The Ministry of John;
- II. The Ministry of Jesus;
- III. The Ministry of the Apostles;
- IV. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit.

By these four ministries the Gospel plan of salvation was fully developed, and permanently established.

The ministry of John, and the personal ministry of Jesus, were both of short duration; but the ministry of the apostles through their testimony has never ceased, and that of the Holy Spirit is perpetual.

By these two continuous and contemporaneous ministries, the kingdom of God has been brought down to us through the ages, and will be carried on from conquest to conquest until the Lord himself shall come in power and glory to raise the dead, and judge the world.

These ministries are inseparably connected. They are but different agencies in the development and advancement of one and the same great

plan of salvation through Christ Jesus our Lord.

The ministry of John led to that of Jesus. The ministry of Jesus opened up the way for the ministry, both of the apostles and of the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the apostles, and that of the Holy Spirit, were essential each to the other. They therefore began at the same time, and will continue, as complements of each other, to the end of the Gospel Age.

As ministers, John is the Harbinger; Jesus, the Messiah; the Apostles, the Witnesses; and the Holy Spirit, the Advocate.

All these facts we propose to develop as fully in the sequel as we may be able.

I. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

Its Objects: 1. To revive in the hearts of the Jewish people the expectation of the long-promised Messiah, and to quicken their desire for his immediate advent.

2. To prepare, or make ready, a people for the coming Messiah and his rapidly approaching kingdom by preaching "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

3. To identify the Messiah when he should appear, by signs given from heaven; and then to introduce him publicly as such to the children of Israel.

John's ministry was wholly preparatory. It was the voice of a harbinger, crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

John had fully accomplished his ministry when he pointed out Jesus of Nazareth both to his own disciples, and to the people, as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

II. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

Its Objects: 1. To assert and establish his claim to the Messiahship. 2. To continue the work which John had begun, by preaching the Gospel of the approaching kingdom, and preparing the way for its full establishment on the earth. 3. To die the death of the cross, and thus make a perfect and final offering for sin. 4. To rise from the dead in vindication of His divine character both personal and official, and in demonstration of his victory over death and the unseen world.

The public ministry of Jesus terminated at his death; for after his resurrection he appeared only to "the witnesses chosen before of God." His entire earthly ministry, both public and private, terminated some forty days after his resurrection, when he ascended up on high to be glorified at the right hand of the Father.

His personal ministry was to the Jews only, to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The labors of the Twelve, and of the Seventy, were also limited to the Jews during the same period of time.

In the last discourse which he delivered to his disciples before his death, knowing that the hour for which he came into the world was at hand, he uttered those gracious promises that open to us in all its fullness the ministry of the Holy Spirit; and these promises he repeated after his resurrection, and just before his ascension.

Forty days after his resurrection, having finished the work given him to do on earth, and the time having come for him to return to the Father, he solemnly and authoritatively announced that great Amnesty Proclamation, usually called the Great Commission, which opens to us the world-wide and age-lasting ministry of the apostles.

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES.

Its Objects: 1. To preach the Gospel of Christ to men of every nation in order to the conversion of sinners, and the permanent establishment of the Messiah's kingdom among the nations of the earth. 2. To plant churches, set them fully in order, and furnish them with everything necessary to the full development of Christian character; and thus prepare the Lord's people for the greatest usefulness here, and the highest happiness hereafter.

ness here, and the highest happiness hereafter.

While engaged in this work the Lord gave them many inspired assistants, who were called evangelists, pastors, teachers, helpers, &c., all of whom labored under the superintendence of the apostles themselves.

In the accomplishment of the work given them, the apostles through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, completed the revelation of the will and purposes of God concerning the human family. In doing this, they left no place for any successors in their Apostolic Ministry. Their ministry has been continued "through their word" from age to age, and will continue till the Lord comes.

IV. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

This ministry had a four-fold relation: 1. To the Lord Jesus Christ; 2. To the chosen apostles; 3. To the church, collectively and individually and, 4th. To the world.

Its Objects in relation to Christ: 1. To testify of him, and thus set him forth in his true character as the Son of God and Savior of sinners. 2. To glorify him on earth by vindicating his supreme Lordship, inasmuch he was already glorified at the right hand of the Father.

Its Objects in relation to the Apostles: 1. To bring to their remembrance all things Jesus had said to them during his earthly ministry. 2. To guide them "into all the truth," that is, all the truth not yet revealed. 3. To show them things to come, that is to bestow on them the gift of prophecy. 4. To empower them to speak in other tongues, to work miracles in confirmation of their own testimony and to impart the Holy Spirit to others through the laying on of their apostolic hands.

All these supernatural gifts were to some extent bestowed on their inspired co-laborer, except the powers to impart the Holy Spirit to others. This gift belonged exclusively to the apostles.

Its Objects in relation to the Church: 1. To be the ever-present, indwelling, life-principle of the church, as the body of Christ. 2. To dwell with and in the members of the body, to lead them in the way of life, help their infirmities, and conflicts of life.

Its Objects in relation to the World: 1. To convict the world of sin, its own sin, the sin of unbelief. 2. To convince the world of righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus as the Savior of sinners. 3. To warn the world of judgment, the condemnation of ungodly men.

In relation to the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit is a Witness and Vindicator.

In relation to the apostles, the Holy Spirit is an Endower with four-fold miraculous power.

In relation to the Church, the Holy Spirit is a Guest; a Leader, a Helper, and a Comforter.

In relation to the World, the Holy Spirit is a Reprover and Convincer.

Such is a brief outline of these four wonderful ministries which are fraught with blessings incalculable to the sorrowing sons and daughters of earth. It is our purpose to treat in detail of each and all; but of the last, the Ministry of the Holy Spirit, first.—Gospel Advocate.

The Divine Personality.

Mr. Cook is doing a good service in presenting to the rising generation the old arguments for the existence of a God, phrased in a new form. "The universe is a thought; there can be no thought without a thinker; therefore the First Cause is a Thinker," is simply a new way of saying, a design therefore a designer. It is Paley, modernized. But there are thousands of laymen and possibly scores of ministers who have not read Paley. It is well to reproduce him.

Nevertheless, this argument is powerful only within narrow limits. It leaves wholly unproved the sacred truth of the Divine personality.