

From Record and Evangelist.

1. Where and by whom was the "Mourning Bench" originated? 2. Do you not think it a probable outgrowing of the Romish confessional? Please answer through the Record and Evangelist  
J. C. McR.

1. I am not able to say who first introduced and used the "anxious seat," or "mourning bench," but I know it is an invention of quite modern date, and belongs to the age of Methodism, and to the American Continent. Nothing of the kind was practiced by the apostles, or the early Christians, or any body of Christians for the first seventeen hundred years of the Christian era.

2. In answer to the second query I will present the reader with an article from the pen of Elder More, the popular editor of the Baptist Record, a respectable organ of the American Baptist publication and Sunday School Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This is a part of a series of articles on the "Aspects of the present revivals in the churches," and No. 6 of the series. This Baptist preacher says:

"At the close of the last article, I intimated, that in this, I would state my objections to 'anxious seats,' as operating injuriously on the religious character of the inquirers themselves. To this, then, I shall now address myself.

"I may safely take it for granted that the religious character of a religious man is beneficially or injuriously affected, according as his religious opinions are correct, or incorrect; and this being assumed, I can see great danger of his embracing erroneous religious from the practice in question. It has been already stated, that those under religious concern, are urged to take the 'anxious seat,' with a view of committing themselves on the side of God and religion. And were this all, the following observations would be without foundation. But it is not so; they are urged by this act to ask the prayers of God's people, on their behalf. Now, I am far from intimating that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man is without avail; and as far from forgetting that where even two such agree, as teaching any one thing they shall ask, they have a gracious promise for their encouragement; neither do I forget that inspired men ask the prayers of the churches on their behalf.

"The danger, in the case before us, arises from the moral condition, at the time, of those who are encouraged to ask the prayers of Christians. Their condition is one of extreme spiritual ignorance, and of this, they are just beginning to be sensible. The sense of their ignorance expresses itself in the inquiry, 'What shall we do?' 'What must we do to be saved?' If they put not forth virtually these questions, they are not properly to be considered 'anxious,' and hence, the 'anxious seat,' is not their place. But if they make these inquiries, what answer do they receive? 'What shall you do to be saved?' Why, ask the prayers of God's people, by coming to the 'anxious seat,' says the minister.

Now, the minister is the religious teacher, and he teaches them, (unwittingly, I acknowledge) another way of salvation than the true one. They receive the impression that God's people are mediators, between them and himself, and that there is not 'One Mediator only.' Is this teaching calculated to exalt Christ, in their estimation, as the only foundation of the sinner's hope? Will this teaching produce a race of Christians, of the class of him who, on his way to the stake, said, 'None but Christ; none but Christ?' In such teaching, I ask, where is the blood?

"But this subject has other aspects. If ministers of Christ will thoroughly reflect on the tendencies of this practice, it will, I am certain, be speedily abandoned. It may startle some of them to learn that, by this measure,

(not a new one, as will soon appear,) they are preparing the way for one of the grossest abominations of papal idolatry to overshadow the land; howbeit, they mean it not so; 'neither cometh it into their heart.' I allude to the worship of saints. 'Strike but hear me,' as the Grecian said. Brethren, cast not this paper aside, under the conviction that the writer is mad; but accompany him to the page of history, and trace with him the actual origin of the worship of saints the papal church; and you will say, 'How like this is, to this.' Idolatry in the church of Rome did not raise at once. There was a day of 'small things,' which was overlooked; and behold! Whereunto did it grow? But to the page of history is our appeal.

"The actual origin of the worship of saints is as follows: In the Third Century, Tertullian, an illustrious pastor of Carthage, holds the following language in his work *De Penitentia*: 'It is necessary to change our dress, and our food; we must put on sackcloth and ashes, and must renounce all comfort, and adorning of the body, and falling down before the priest, implore the intercession of the brethren.' Here is the origin, both of mortification, penance, etc., and of saint worship. 'Behold,' says De Aubigne on this passage of Tertullian, 'Man turned aside from God, and turned back upon himself.'

"Now, I ask whether, so far as the practice in question is concerned, there is not identity of import in the expressions, 'Ask the prayers of God's people;' and 'implore the intercession of the brethren.' But the latter is shown, by the pen of history, to have been the origin of 'saint worship,' and, for what the former shall bring upon the churches, the ministers of the present age will be responsible. 'Consider of it, take advice, and speak your mind.' Judges xix. 30.

"How natural the progress is, in a mind spiritually enlightened, from asking the 'prayers of God's people' to the idolatry of the church of Rome, a moment's reflection will convince any one. The people on whose prayers the inquirer is taught to rely are his neighbors, acquaintances, and relations—persons whom he knows, from daily intercourse with them—have many imperfections, and are, indeed, very ordinary points; and he reasons, 'If their prayers on my behalf will be prevalent, how much more so the prayers of ministers, and if the prayers of saints on earth are prevalent, a fortiori, the prayers of those in heaven will be more so. If the prayers of common saints avail, much more will those of eminent ones, as Paul and Peter, James and John; and especially will those of the Virgin Mary avail. If saints, the best of whom have sinned, can be prevalent intercessors, much more angels who have never sinned.' Is not this progress to idolatry, probably downward though it be, yet natural to a darkened mind? and who can tell whither it will run?

"But I have yet another objection to the practice in question. It tends to produce in the after life of the convert (real or supposed) spiritual pride. He is supposed to have become a Christian, under the persuasion that prayers of Christians contributed to his conversion—they were intercessors with God, for him at the Mourner's Bench. But now he has become a saint; he is now promoted to the office and character of a mediator with God for others. Can he dispossess his mind of the thought that the prayers of the saints, and of himself among them, possesses an efficacy before God, as such? That their prayers stand in less need of the Savior's intercession, than those of sinners to render them 'acceptable?' I had almost said, must it not be the case, that the searcher of hearts reads in his spirit, some such expression as

this, 'God: I thank thee that I am not as other men are, not even as this sinner.' 'Stand by thyself; come not near to me; I am holier than thou.' And this evil, if it exist, is to be attributed to the errors of his first instruction; and it becomes his instructors to inquire to what extent they will be held responsible."

Such are the views of an intelligent Baptist preacher and editor, of the "anxious seat," or as it is more popularly called, the "mourner's bench," and its relation and tendency to Roman Catholicism. This answer is pretty long, but we could not shorten it without doing the writer injustice.

J. M. M.

Mosaic.

—Vassar College has two Japanese girls, Miss Stematz Yamgrva and Miss Shige Nagai.

—Sir Thomas Moore was the first advocate of liberal culture of women, and gave his daughters the benefit of his belief.

—Money is a bottomless sea, in which honor and truth may be drowned.

—A John Chinaman, being asked to become religious, responded: "To muchee kinds religion in Melican countree—too muchee gods for Chinaman."

—The King of Siam has a body guard of female warriors. It is composed of 400 girls, chosen from among the most handsome of all the ladies in the land. At the age of 13 they enter the service and remain in it until they are 25, when they pass into the reserve. Their weapon is the lance.

—The children of Cambridge, Mass., beautifully remembered the poet Longfellow's 72nd birthday, Feb. 27, by presenting him with a chair made of the chestnut-tree under which stood the smithy he has immortalized.

—Miss Francis E. Willard recently organized a society of six hundred pledged members of the students of Michigan University at Ann Arbor.

—Mrs. John Jacob Astor has spent nearly \$71,000 in ten years on the poor children in the various industrial schools of New York.

—President Grevy has but one daughter.

—It is a singular fact that in a Christian country like Austria a man should be fined for selling a copy of the new Testament. What kind of a Christian religion is it that opposes the circulation of a book containing the record and revelation of the doctrines of that religion.

—Dress in Burmah is regulated by law. Every article of costume or ornament is strictly defined, and if any of the lower orders usurp the insignia of a higher class, they may be immediately slain by the first person who meets them.

—We would advise all tobacco-users to buy their tobacco on credit, for a year or more, at least, if they can, and then when the bill was sent for it, and they were compelled to remit, reasoning by analogy, many of them would say: "Please stop my tobacco; times hard!"

—The *Friend of India* says: "but for English missionaries, the natives of India would have a very poor opinion of Englishmen. The missionary alone, of all Englishmen, is the representative of a disinterested desire to elevate and improve the people."

—The Seven Sages of Greece: Solen, Periandu, Pittacus, Chilo, Thales, Cleobulus, and Bias flourished about 592 B. C.

—The present Bing of Burmah has distinguished himself by the wholesale murder of his royal relatives. Actuated by jealousy, he caused to be executed summarily eighty-six members of the royal family.

—Rev. J. Hyatt Smith, who for

years has been an open communist, though professing to be a Baptist, lately capped the climax of liberality by sprinkling a dying Roman Catholic.

—THE LOGIC.—The danger of the church is not from such men as Underwood and Ingersoll. The most potent argument against christianity is not the sneers of an Ingersoll, or the misrepresentations of an Underwood, but the ungodliness of professing christians. Upon the other hand, the most convincing argument of the divine origin of christianity is not the logic of the eloquent scribe or orator, but the logic of godly life.—*Christian Index*.

—A Boston lady will exhibit a model of Solomon's Temple in wax at the Jewish fair. It is three feet and a half high—composed of wax flowers and corinthian columns of wax—twenty-five thousands flowers are used in its construction.

—Classes are about to be formed in St. Petersburg, for the instruction of women in medicine, and when their studies are completed, they will be attached to the medical staff of the Russian army. Some time ago the Emperor of Russia granted a charter to a university for women, and the Minister of War, having seen in the late war that the regular medical army staff was insufficient to attend the enormous number of sick and wounded approves of training women physicians for army practice.—*Harper's Bazar*.

Watch Ye.

"Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke xxi. 36. More than 1800 years have passed away since our Savior spoke these words to his disciples in his memorable address on the Mount of Olives, and to-day we stand just the same number of years nearer their fulfillment. Are we with our strong Scriptural plea, and our firm stand for religious freedom, heeding the warning, obeying the exhortation and appropriating the encouragement contained in these words? Or, are we allowing the "cares of this world" in their varied forms to draw away our minds from this truth?

Famine and pestilence are doing their devastating work in certain regions; Socialism and Communism are sapping the foundations of political safety in others, while commercial depression and stagnation of trade universally making "men's hearts fail them with fear." Peter foretells (2 Peter iii. 31) that "In the last days shall come scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of His coming?" To His disciples Jesus says, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." That which will fill the hearts of those, who have failed to heed His commands, with fear, will be a source of joy and gladness to his ransomed and waiting people.

The question is, do we individually occupy the position of worthiness spoken of by our Lord? Just so far as we do, so far shall we be ready for His return. We must not only know the practical truths of God's word, but believe and practice them, and this can only be done by those who, through faith in Jesus, have been born again and sanctified by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

One short passage (1 John ii. 28) sums up the whole matter, "And now little children abide in Him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Years may roll on before the glorious consummation so many are longing for is realized, and if so those who are most anxiously waiting for their Lord's return will be best

qualified to bring honor and glory to his name and good to his Church, and should death be their lot they will have most courage to meet the King of Terrors, and triumph most completely in the "Mighty to save."—J. E. L. in *Bible Index*.

Everlasting Consolation.

"Consolation." There is music in the work. Like David's harp, it charms away the spirit of melancholy. It was a distinguished honor to Barnabas to be called "the son of consolation." Nay, it is one of the illustrious names of a greater than Barnabas, for the Lord Jesus is "the consolation of Israel." "Everlasting consolation." (2 Thess. ii. 16). Here is the cream of all, the spikenard very precious, for the eternity of comfort is the crown and glory of it.

This makes an estate worth having, when a man may hold its fee simple in perpetuity forever. A man works to make money, and after toiling hard he finds himself the owner of it, and it is a consolation to him; but it is not an everlasting consolation, for he may spend or he may lose all his treasure, or he may be compelled to leave it. It can not be, at best, more than a temporary consolation.

A man toils hard for knowledge. He acquires it; he becomes an eminent scholar; his name is famous—this is a consolation to him for all his toil. But it can not last long; for when he feels the headache, or the heart-ache, his degrees and his diplomas can not cheer him. Or should his soul become a prey to despondency, he may turn over many a learned tome before he will find a balm for a broken heart. All earth-born consolations are, in their essence, fleeting, and in their existence, short-lived. They are brilliant and evanescent as the rainbow-hues of a soap-bubble. But as to the consolations God gives to his people, they fade not, neither do they lose their freshness. They can stand all tests—the shock of trial, the flame of persecution, the lapse of years; nay, they can even endure death itself. What is this "everlasting consolation?" It includes a sense of pardoned sin. A Christian man has received in his heart the witness of the Spirit that his iniquities are put away like a cloud, and his transgressions like a thick cloud. Union to the risen Lord is a consolation of the most abiding order—it is in fact "everlasting consolation."—*Spurgeon*.

SIMPLICITY IN LIVING.—To live simple, and to master and control our expenditures, is a sure need these hard times. The influences which surround us, the habits which we fall into as a second nature, all sway us in a dangerous direction. Every family and class seems to have caught hold of the skirts of the one above it, and to be desperately holding on to them. The best thing they can do is to let go—the only thing indeed which will give themselves comfort, or make their lives useful and happy. As soon as they commence to live regardless of the style in which these live who possess perhaps double the income that they do, will find that they have the means of living happily. The most needed reform is the one which it is incumbent upon many of us to carry out the coming year. We cannot sweep the whole street, but each can keep the mud from his own doorstep. If it is done regularly and quietly, others will soon follow the good example, and in this way many will be relieved of heavy burdens and cares. Simple living? To it even the great household question of servants will yield, because we shall not be sorely subjected to their exactions, when we are not dependent upon their labors, but have found out that we possess hands and feet that can minister to our needs.—*Country Gentleman*.