

### ABSENCE FROM CHURCH.

In every body of Christians, we believe, may be found a class who think they neither commit wrong, nor lose much by absenting themselves from the stated meetings of their church. When the hour for church arrives, they either reconcile their feelings with imaginary difficulties, or content themselves with the idea that a sufficient number will be in attendance without them. Foolish conclusions! Though multitudes should be there, they cannot possibly claim the blessing for absent brethren; and while they openly disobey the divine injunction of "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," they also lose much more than they can possibly appreciate.

We are told by the divine historian that the disciples were assembled to talk of the crucified Redeemer, who as yet had not appeared unto them, and that for fear of the Jews the doors were shut, when to their astonishment their Master appeared in their midst; and "then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." He had visited them to cheer them in their present affliction, and to commission them as his messengers, and after having done this, he breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

What a happy meeting this must have been! How must the heart of each have rejoiced as he beheld his divine Master, as he heard the tones of that well-known and loved voice in consoling promises. But a shade must be drawn over this picture. One was absent. "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." Where was he? and why was he absent? While his brethren were rejoicing in the blessed certainty of an arisen Lord, he was, perhaps, alone doubting. He might have had good reasons, too, for his absence. It might have been an unpleasant day; he might have been indisposed; or he might have thought it a waste of time to spend an hour in talking of one whom he did not know whether to believe in or no. Be this as it may, he lost the blessing which those who had assembled themselves together received, and bitterly did he repent of it afterwards.

And now, did the disciples of Christ at that time really need a blessing more than they do now? We think not. And how are they to obtain this blessing? By remaining at home, and suffering their brethren to commune with their Redeemer for them? God has promised, that where two or three are assembled in his name, he will bless them. He has said, "In all places where I have written my name, I will come and bless you." Where is the minister who can look over his congregation, even upon that day, which is, as it were, fenced in from the regular course of time for the praise of God, without beholding many vacant seats, plainly indicating that the Thomases of his congregation are not a few? Why is this one absent? Perhaps a brother has offended him; but is this sufficient excuse?—On the contrary, it is utterly worthless; and not only worthless, but, you, because your brother has offended you, offer a direct insult to Christ, by so doing. He has advised us to sociality by the prayer given to his disciples. He does not command them to say, "My Father," when they pray, but "Our Father." By this we should learn, not only to cultivate the acquaintance of our brethren in the prayer-meeting; but also to cultivate a praying heart for all—that we should acknowledge one common Saviour in all we do and say, and assemble ourselves together that we may commune as to the best mode of promoting his kingdom upon earth, until it shall be "as it is in heaven."

### Thoughts on Revivals.

REV. JOHN M. DICKEY.

There is oftentimes, during a season of revival, a high degree of excitement produced, which, if not properly directed, is baneful in its effects. Man is so constituted that nothing of any importance is effected without excitement. But, such is human nature, that where the excitement exceeds a certain limit, it evaporates, and often leaves the mind in a more stupid state than before the excitement commenced. Converts brought into the Church under a great excitement, seldom do anything unless they are excited. If they do not degenerate back to entire conformity to the world, they settle down into a state of coldness and lukewarmness, entirely inconsistent with Christian character. They patiently wait until the next protracted meeting, or until the Lord shall revive his work. Then they are

again all life and zeal in the cause of the Lord, though, before, almost all the meetings of the Church were neglected, or attended to with but little interest, except the regular ministrations on the Sabbath, and oftentimes they were attended in a cold and lukewarm manner.

Another reason why some revivals of religion weaken, instead of strengthen the Church, is, because the members of the Church, in a great measure, cease to labour as soon as the revival is over. The minister settles down in his ordinary course of labour, the members follow his example; nay, they often take the lead, and are the first to return back to the old course of things. One reason why many of the revivals of the present day are not efficient in producing that good desired, is because the Children of the Church, are not properly trained up in a knowledge of the doctrines and duties of our holy religion. It is oftentimes the case that a large proportion of those brought into the Church in our revivals, are, to a great extent, unacquainted with the great doctrines of the Gospel, and the duties of our religion. Here, then, is the time for hard work; oftentimes, when it is entered properly, it is found to be hard work compared with the work during a revival. The farmer who has as much land under cultivation as he will be able to manage, will find his labour greatly increased, to have another large field added to it. So the minister before the revival, had seemingly as much to do as he was able to do; but he has a number of souls added to those for whom he must most especially labor, and many of these have so little acquaintance with the doctrines and duties of religion, that, if not carefully instructed in the first year of their christian course, they make but dwarfs in religion, or be among those who will not do anything only during an excited state of feeling.

### Heart Religion.

One may have a very clear knowledge and a firm persuasion of the truths of the Gospel, and yet if these truths do not come in contact with his emotive nature, his belief will be icy and inoperative. A living faith must be a cordial faith, a faith proceeding from the heart. Without this there may be a determination of the will, a strong resolution to do right, but that resolution will assuredly falter, or will be fulfilled mechanically, by stress of conscience. Though feeling is fluctuating, and religious emotion is often transient and deceptive, yet we are never permanently interested in religion until it takes a strong hold upon our affections, that is, until the heart is in it, thoroughly and warmly engaged in the service of Christ, then is the intellect itself quickened in the perception of truth,—for the sanctified heart has a sort of intuitive discernment of the truth—and then, too, is the will nerved to carry out its own purposes; for the heart's desires are the motive power of the will. A purpose formed under the mere conviction of duty, is enlivened and invigorated when the heart is enlisted in its object. Just in proportion as the heart is engaged in religion, will the mind grow, in the knowledge of God and of Christ, and will the life abound in fruits of holy obedience. The great desideratum in preaching—whether to sinners or to saints—is to reach and move the heart. It was because of the hardness of their hearts that the preaching of Christ had so little effect on the Jews; it is because of the hardness of their hearts that the preaching of the Gospel has so little effect upon many who hear it at this day. How many hear of the glorious perfections of God and his government, of the unspeakable love of God in Christ, of the commands, the invitations and promises of the Gospel, of the glorious and the dread realities of eternity, who are never moved thereby to any appropriate conduct, because their hearts are not reached by these truths; and how many a Christian sinks into a dull, stupid and worldly frame because his emotions are no longer excited by the Gospel. The heart is the spring of spiritual life.—*Independent.*

### Pay your Minister.

1. *Pay him*, because it is the ordination of God, that those who minister at the altar, should live of the altar. When God sent you your minister, he laid you under obligation to yield him a support. The head of the Church is too just to call a man away from secular labors, for his service, without giving a precept for his sustenance.

2. *Pay your minister*, because you owe him, and the precept is, "owe no man." Har-

ring had the time of your minister, you can no more deprive him of his wages without sin, than you could the reaper of your fields. The money you have subscribed is not a charity, but a debt.

3. *Pay your minister*, that he may be worth paying. How can he give rich instruction, if poverty drive him out of his study, to dabble in the business of the world? How can he buy books and periodicals without means? How can he think and reason closely, if you allow his mind to be tortured with fears of debt and solvency, and keep him running from neighbor to neighbor to borrow money.

4. *Pay your minister*, so that he can pay his debts. The world expects ministers to pay their debts punctually. Not to do this is to bring a reproach upon religion. Can the minister be punctual, if his people withhold the means? The shoemaker, tailor, merchant, bookseller, &c., &c., must have their money, and will you compel your minister to defraud them?

5. *Pay your minister*, if you would keep him, or ever get another as good. It is a bad thing for a church to get the name of "starving out their ministers." We know some such churches. The curse of God seems to be upon them. Reader are you a member of such a church?

6. *Pay your minister*, because you have promised to pay him. Not to do it is to forfeit your word. It is a debt of honor as well as a law. Your minister has trusted to your word, thrown himself and his dearest interests into your keeping. Will you, can you, be so unjust, so ungrateful, as to compel him to lose, year after year, his pay, in part, one hundred dollars,—more or less.

7. *Pay your minister*, because you are able to pay him. How small is the pittance which falls to your share! With a little extra labor, a little unusual economy, how easily could you pay your minister promptly!

8. *Pay your minister*, at least quarterly, as it will be easier for you, and certainly better for him.

### The Birthdays of the Dead.

The birthdays of the living! They are ever hailed in the home circle by loving hearts, as glad and joyous seasons. At this moment we can picture the joy both of the giver and receiver of the simple birthday offerings of our youth. It might be but a fresh gathered rose, laid upon the breakfast table, a handful of spring flowers, or some inexpensive trifle, obtained from the savings of weeks or months out of our little store, but—it was a proof of love. It told as well as the pearl or diamond could have done, that the life of the beloved was precious, and that the anniversary of his birth was no trifle in our eyes. And not the birthdays of youth alone are welcome. When we see the lines of grey, streaking the soft hair, the step grow more feeble, the voice more faint, the elasticity of the spirit flee away, yet there is joy in our welcome, for are they not with us still? Yet more precious, that they need our care and watchfulness, and that we are essential to their happiness.

The birthdays of the absent! There is more bitterness in these. Somewhat we feel of a presage of that absence which knoweth no return. Still they are amongst the living. Though blue seas may divide us, they may cross those seas, and come to us again, unchanged in heart, uncooled in love. And until then, we breathe forth our birthday greetings, which we know their fond memory shall meet, though distance sever us for awhile. Thus we are consoled—for the absent may return.

But the birthdays of the dead! Where is our hope and joy in these? It is but a narrow stream that divides us, but that stream once crossed, who shall return? The shores of the heavenly world may not be very distant, but an impenetrable veil is drawn between that world and our mortal sight, and not a glimpse is given us of the angel band, whose feet are treading the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. Yet deem not the fond heart unresigned, that is bursting with emotion on the anniversary of the birthdays of the dead. They are in heaven, but we are on earth. Their spirits are purified from the world, but ours yet partake of worldly affection and earthly regret. We know that they shall rise again, but in the mean time they are hidden from our mortal sight; and we sorrow, though not as those who have no hope. Yet if there is one thought above all others which should console us, it is this—that they weep not. If they love us still, (and who can doubt?) it is with that pu-

rified love without dross, and without sting.—No regret, no cloud, no shadow of grief passeth over the birthdays of the redeemed. The aged and the weary are at rest—the faint have renewed their strength—the little ones are safe for ever. "For I say unto you, there angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven."—*Selected.*

### Thoughts about my Soul.

I am afraid I do not think about it as much as I should. I think too much about this poor body in which my soul lives, my friends, the world and things of time. I have done wrong; for good and bad men, angels and devils, the Father and the Son are thinking about it. If they had not thought more about it than I have done, it would neither be lost or saved.

I ought to think about my soul, for it will live forever, and these other things will not.—When the body, friends, the world and time shall have passed away forever, my soul will only have begun to live. The eternity of my soul will be as endless as the coming eternity of God.

I will think about it, for it is of infinite value, and not to think about it will be to lose it. How will I prize it? God's power made it; the divine image sealed it; devils destroyed it; Christ's blood redeemed it, and heaven saved it. It must be valuable. I will, therefore, buy the pearl, dig for the gem, and strive for the crown. It will be valuable when earth and time are gone forever, and nothing else to think about.

I cannot but think about my soul, for it will be either happy or miserable forever. The joys or the sorrows of my soul, through its endless duration, will fill up the volume of my thoughts more than all the universe besides.

If I don't think about it now, I must hereafter. It cannot be put off forever, and I may as well begin in time as in eternity; better begin now voluntarily. I must think about it hereafter, for my conscience and memory cannot die; justice and God will live forever; therefore, there is no pit of oblivion for me.

I now promise to think more about my soul. God and angels, men and devils have heard my solemn vow. And may it not be one of the thoughts of my soul in another world, that I thought so little about it in this.—*Vermont Chronicle.*

### Power of Prayer.

Christians have too little faith in the efficacy of prayer. With the full and abundant promises scattered through the Scriptures, with the copious illustrations gathered from their own experience, and the personal history of others, it is amazing how few Christians really pray, and how seldom prevailing prayer goes up from our churches. In seasons of revival, valuable lessons are often learned, but these are soon forgotten, and the query of the Saviour might be pressed with significance upon all our churches.—"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" We give a forcible illustration of the power of prayer, hoping it may quicken the spirit of prevailing prayer among many of our Christian readers.

"At the first annual meeting of the Society held in London, Mr. Fuller and Dr. Ryland preached in the Dutch church, Austin Friars. In his discourse, the latter adverted to the happiness of Dr. Carey, in having two of his sons, Felix and William, devoted to the mission; 'but,' said he, 'there is a third who gives him pain, he is not turned to the Lord;' then making a solemn and lengthened pause, tears flowing abundantly from his eyes, he exclaimed, in a shrill and vociferous voice, which seemed to exhaust a whole soul of feeling, 'Brethren, let us send up a united, universal and fervent prayer to God, in solemn silence, for the conversion of Jabez Carey!' The appeal was like a sudden clap of thunder, and the pause afterwards as intensely solemn as silence and prayer could make it. Two minutes, at least, of the most profound devotional feeling pervaded an assembly of perhaps two thousand persons. The result was striking. Among the first letters afterwards received, was the announcement of that conversion which had been so earnestly sought; nearly or quite synchronous with the season of fervent supplication."

### Man's Dignity.

I thank my Maker that I was not created an angel; for if I had been, right sure am I that, left to myself, I should have been among the fallen. I give him praise that I am a na-