

## CHRISTIAN HERALD.

EDITORS:

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## The Co-operation.—Retrospective and Prospective.

Everyone at the meeting of delegates, last week at Eugene, bears this testimony: The State Co-operation of 1882 was productive of much good. Its influence cannot, however, be fully understood by such a general statement. In whatever way it is considered, whether with reference to the immediate entertainment of those present, or with reference to the future of the cause in the State, we cannot refrain from expressing our great joy that in the good providence of God these Christian brethren were permitted to assemble in council. For years, in the State, agencies have been at work which had a tendency to retard rather than hasten the progress of truth among our brotherhood. It is needless to specify. It may be all summed up in this that were seemingly proving recreant to our trust, and discouragement was the result.

During the last eight months we have had several valuable accessions to our ministerial force. During the last year we have been more carefully surveying the ground, and preparing for action. So the prospect of making a grand onward movement presented quite an incentive for great effort. Nor was that effort in vain. Almost every one assigned to duty was there promptly and seemed to vie with one another in acting the noblest for the Master. Educationally, then, we can truly say the church is enriched. In council good will prevailed. Many subjects of importance were discussed. But chiefest among them all—that one which weighed most heavily upon every Christian's mind—was a more vigorous movement in evangelizing. How shall this be effected? Yes, but this question had been discussed sufficient. Now was the time for action. Quite a little contribution had come in. Some funds was in the treasury. A good evangelist could be employed, if we had sufficient funds. Why pass a resolution to instruct the Board to employ a person if it can not assure him of a support? The brethren were ready to

answer the question in the proper way. It was determined to secure from all churches represented pledges of money payable quarterly. In less than fifteen minutes sufficient was pledged (and from those who can be depended upon) together with the amount paid in to keep a person in the field nearly the whole year. This amount, we feel confident, will be doubled before six months. We rejoice to say this is a substantial advance.

Then came the discussion as to how best to secure the labors of the evangelist. Many wholesome truths were given and great earnestness manifested in such a work in our young and growing State. We rejoice to look forward upon the coming year. We believe the brethren of the valley are going to do grandly in the next twelve months. We rejoice at the good feeling which seems to pervade the hearts of his children. May God help us all to work in his vineyard, doing well what task he assigns us.

## Bible Study.

It is said that the Bible is not read by our brethren as much as it was in the "days of the fathers." I fear there is some truth in this very grave charge. In the early days of this reformation the brotherhood was composed almost entirely of men and women of independent thought and who were searching the Scriptures for themselves. They were, both naturally and from necessity, Bible students.

But in these days those biblical giants are almost all gone. They are gone, for the reason that the circumstances which called them out are no more. Nor can we call back those circumstances if we desire to. Every man can look to a time in his memory when he was innocent. However he may regret it, those days are forever gone. It now remains for him to make his manhood virtuous; thus making it brighter than childhood.

By attempting to bring back his days of innocence, he will make his life a useless failure. So we can make bright and glorious days for ourselves as a Christian people. But not by trying to bring back the strifes of fifty years ago.

We have passed out of that stage of growth and have not yet adjusted ourselves to our present condition. This is not a time when we can depend upon the force of controversy to drive our brethren

into Bible study. It must be urged upon them as a Christian duty. At our conventions, specially Sunday-school conventions, considerable is said about Bible study, but is there much vigorous effort made by the pastors to enlist their people in the study of the Scriptures? This is one of the demands of this age upon the preacher among our brethren. Among the Christian activities, to which he must urge his brethren in the study of the word of God.

But how shall we read the Bible? I once heard a very good and wise "mother in Israel" say that she seldom read the Bible any other way than by subjects. I thought then that that was surely a good way to read the Bible. Take for your subject, for instance, faith. Examine the Bible for the purpose of finding what faith is, how it is produced, etc. In order to do this readily, you will need a good reference Bible and a concordance. You can get both these in one book of convenient size by buying a Teacher's Bible. You can get a Bible of this kind at almost any price to suit you, from one dollar and a half to fifteen dollars.

But reading the Bible only by subjects has its disadvantages. In thus searching the Scriptures you are not very apt to find anything except that which you are looking for.

I know persons who read the Bible through once each year by reading three chapters each week day and five chapters each Sunday. In this way you will learn something of every part of the Bible. This is a very desirable thing; but not very apt to be done if you do deliberately sit down to read the Bible by course in this way, or in other way, of which I shall speak further on.

Some years ago, when I was just beginning my labor as a minister, another young preacher and I made it a rule to read a book of the New Testament through at a single sitting each day. In this way we became familiar with the thoughts of the New Testament writers. Try it, my brother; take one of the shorter epistles and be surprised, as I was, to find that passages which you had thought familiar to you have so much in them that you had not noticed. They assume a new light to you as you read them in this order and connection.

All these ways of reading are adopted for the purpose of finding

out what is in the Bible. This is well—very well. But you need as well to read the Bible to apply it to your own soul. I have known families to read the Bible through by course in their devotions. I have wondered what they did with such a chapter as the first of Chronicles. We need to read the Bible devotionally in the family and in the closet. This last is perhaps as difficult a want to supply as we will find. I sometimes must go to God with a sin-burdened conscience.

I want a Scripture to present me the words of God on this subject. I go oppressed with temptation. I go asking for strength. In all these I want God's answers from the Scripture. It is there, if I can only find it. Let me here ask a question. I know some will consider it unsound; but it expresses a want that I feel, and I presume others feel it as well as I. Can not some wise brother provide for us a reference book for devotional reading?

There is a plan of Bible reading which is valuable both for the obtaining of knowledge and for devotional reading. It is the International Sunday-school Lessons. Read the lesson with its context, and at the end of the seven years' course your Bible knowledge will surprise yourself. And it will be a knowledge of the whole Bible.

But I have noticed a habit among both teachers and pupils which makes the Sunday-school lessons nearly useless as a plan for Bible study. It is the habit of "cramming" every Sunday morning for recitation. The result can be seen at the review. The lessons which were learned only for the occasion are gone with the occasion.

I will suggest a plan for preparing the lesson. Begin early in the week, not later than Sunday afternoon. On Sunday study the lesson with the context. Study the words of any other book, with the dictionaries. On Monday study the lessons with its parallel passages, looking out all the references. On Tuesday study the lesson, looking up the dates and persons. Wednesday study the lesson with view to its leading thought and analysis. Thursday study it, looking for practical lessons. All this time your only helps have been Webster's dictionary, a Bible dictionary, a reference Bible and concordance. But on Friday take up all the helps you have, and get all the assistance possible. On Saturday, if you are a teacher, study the lesson with the