

Missionary Column.

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Church of Christ in Oregon.

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All communications relating to the employment of evangelists, protracted meetings, co-operation in securing pastoral work, etc. all pledges of assistance with requests for the same, and all business properly coming before the Board will be addressed to the Cor. Secretary. All collections, payments of pledges, etc., will be addressed to the Treasurer.

We seldom do so, but we must publicly commend the example of those two faithful disciples from Oregon who, true to the Master, passed by those piles of brick and stone, to find an obscure upper room in the great city, where to hand in their letters of commendation from their western church home. Would to God such faith and devotion characterized more of those who find themselves in the great cities. Our Lord's cause would prosper more. [See correspondence in No. 4, HERALD]

From France now comes the encouraging news. The people are ready to have the pure truth of the Gospel. A noble work is being done by Bro. and Sister Delaunay. A large number of brethren, taking no standard but the Bible have been found in Rouen and other neighboring towns who extend a hearty invitation to our missionaries to aid them in the work of spreading the Gospel. So the good work goes on.

Brethren, all over this coast, Are you doing anything for the spread of the Gospel? What? If nothing of your earthly sustenance then commence. Some are afforded this opportunity. The following blank you may cut out and fill out with the amount you propose to assist this year and inclose to the Cor. Secretary as above. In due time write to the "Treasurer" on important business." It will be faithfully used.

PLEDGE.

I hereby promise to pay to the Treasurer of the State Missionary Board of Oregon, during the year 1883, the sum of dollars for the purpose of evangelizing, payable in three installments, namely on the first of April, July and October.

Name.....

Address.....

"Combine or die" is the advice of good old Bro. Prof. S. K. Hoshour of Indianapolis, to the small congregations. Cooperation of small congregations in the employment of preachers is to his mind (and why not to all minds?) the only way to prosper. Try it, try it, or die.

Report from Bro. Rains.

LEAVENWORTH, KAN.

Jan. 19, 1883.

Dear Bro. Floyd:

Last Lord's day at our morning service we had 4 additions to the church in this city; 1 confession and 3 by relation. We are much encouraged and the outlook is bright for a good work.

F. M. RAINS.

The Passion Play.

An intelligent theatrical manager once associated himself with the enterprise of the production in this city of the so-called "Passion Play," which is the New Testament story presented in a coarse dramatic form. But when the project was met by a storm of popular objection and it was understood that the performance was one that could not but violate the religious sentiments of the community, that manager—Mr. Abbey—to his immediate loss, but undoubtedly to his ultimate gain, abandoned the project.

But now this project comes up again, and once more it is proposed to put the Savior upon the stage. The story of the New Testament in dramatic form behind the footlights, with a background of colored fire, is a spectacle that can have no other possible effect than to put in gross comparison with common-place things a theme that most men and women hold to be sacred. It may satisfy the morbid curiosity of the feeble minded, but that is not the end which the legitimate drama has in view. The mental and moral condition of a man who can even coax himself to receive money as the price of making a travesty of sacred things is a mystery difficult of comprehension. Everybody wants gold, to be sure, and is willing to do almost anything to obtain it, but that word "almost" constitutes a kind of military "dead line" beyond which it is exceedingly dangerous to pass. There is a class of subjects which every one who indulges in the luxury of self-respect handles with becoming modesty and reverence; but Mr. Morse rudely pulls the curtains of the holy of holies

aside; and, purloining the very horns of the altar, takes them to the nearest pawnbroker and sells them for cash. We have always supposed that the bag of Judas with the thirty pieces of silver therein might hang within reach of the passers-by and remain forever untouched; but the times are so out of joint that stealthy fingers grasp it and avaricious eyes gloat over the coveted prize.

In some countries, and certainly not the least religious countries, this play is regularly produced on the stage, and in at least one of the capitals of Europe is always played in seasons of Christian festivity. And this is a common argument advanced for it—that because it is played in Madrid it should not be offensive here. But the same argument might as well be advanced in favor of bull fights. It is perhaps a fact which grows out of the cultivation of religious ceremonials and shows, and all external exhibitions of religion in Catholic countries, that these things are regarded in a spirit so different from that with which they are looked upon in Protestant countries. Perhaps—to say it without intending offense—it may be that the mind of the many is in one country more childlike than in another, and that a lesson can only reach the intelligence effectively by a bold appeal to the eye.

In Spain, in Italy, and in those Alpine countries where this spectacle is at home it is simply a survival of the mystery play of the Middle Ages, and it survives there simply because the mass of the people in those countries have advanced but little if they have advanced at all, from the condition they were in when the mystery play was a legitimate vehicle of religious instruction. It is still the most effective appeal to the religious sensibility of races of men of the obvious variety, who are without those conceptions of the mind in virtue of which an indelicate spectacle becomes offensive.

In a Protestant country there is no field for such a show as an element of religious instruction, and therefore if produced it can only be as a curiosity and as pandering to the taste for spectacular sensations, and for that reason its production would be a gross outrage upon public decorum. It can only be a most dreadful kind of acted blasphemy to put before the people the actual crucifixion of Jesus Christ with

the stage machinery. However it may be in other protestant countries it is certain that in this country the theatre is contemplated as upon one side and religion upon the other, and as things to be kept very resolutely apart. People who mention the name of the Savior only with awe, can, perhaps scarcely conceive of a greater sacrilege than to see this whole sacred subject trailed in the dust behind the footlights, and there are enough of these to make it proper for all persons concerned to consider their opinions.

We are not over squeamish in matters of this sort, and have always advocated a large liberty, under the conviction that an educated people are amply able to protect themselves; but we confess to a degree of shrinking when some stage-struck pedler or tinker proposes to assume the role of the Savior of mankind and to simulate the sorrows and agonies of "the wayfaring man of grief" before an applauding audience and with the impressive accompaniment of a fiddle and a bass drum. The world is bad enough, but we do not believe the people can find either pleasure or proper excitement in such things.

Mr. Morse's project is to be deplored in every respect. There is no good reason for his perseverance, not to say obstinacy, but there is very good reason against it. It is a reckless defiance of public opinion for the purpose of making money, and every dollar thus made will be red hot, or our knowledge of spiritual geography is lamentably defective. But it is evident that he is not to be deterred by the sense of propriety that affected Mr. Abbey. In that case it is well to remember that public decency hereabouts does not turn upon his yea or nay. This show, like every other, must have a license from the Mayor, and the Mayor, not Mr. Morse will be held responsible if this performance takes place.—N. Y. Herald.

The soldier and the sailor have seasons when they are "off duty," when they are released from the responsibilities that belong to their station; but this is never true of the Christian. He is instructed to "put on" the armor, but never to put it off; he is supposed to be a minute man, always watchful, always ready, always equipped. Such is the duty and privilege of every Christian. One great trouble with the church to-day is that too many of its members are "off duty."