

Our Sunday School Examination.

What! a Sunday school examination, who ever heard of the like? Well, why not examine a Sunday school on the Scripture as well as other schools in arithmetic and grammar, &c. If examination is a stimulus to greater efficiency in one it certainly is in the other. Well, we have lately had a written examination in the Santa Rosa Sunday school, embracing the Scripture passed over during the third quarter of the year, beginning with the thirteenth chapter of Acts and closing with the twentieth chapter. The examination proved to be such a success that we present it for the benefit of other schools. It was announced each Sunday for two or three Sundays previous what would be the scope of the examination and how it would be conducted. We then had written out for the appointed day, a number of questions on slips of paper; the questions embracing all the principal points of geography and history connected with Paul and Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Ephesus, Miletus, &c. The questions having been numbered were distributed promiscuously through the Sunday school, giving each two slips. The superintendent then calls for No. 1, who rises up and reads aloud the question and then the answer. Then No. 2 is called, and perhaps arises in another part of the house, and answers, and so on.

The greatest interest prevailed among old and young, so much so that when it was announced that time was out and not all the questions answered, one says: "Let us meet this afternoon." Another says: "Next Sunday." We suggest to the schools everywhere to try the experiment. If you have only a dozen or two it will work just as well, as if there are scores.

Brotherly,
J. DERHAM.

Santa Rosa, Cal.

Our Troubles.

SAN JOSE, CAL., Oct. 15, 1877.

Bro. Stanley:

If it meets your approbation, I will send you, for publication in the PACIFIC CHRISTIAN MESSENGER, a few short articles, the object of which will be to present for the consideration of churches some of the difficulties and obstacles now in the way of the prosperity of the church of God in California. At the same time ask that, if possible, they be taken out of the way; so the Gospel may have free course, and the churches again resume their lofty position on that eminence where God decreed his kingdom, founded upon his divine constitution and governed by his holy laws, should stand.

The first great obstacle in the way of the prosperity of the church of God, as it appears to me, looking from my stand-point, is

COLLEGES.

Looking in this direction from a proper stand-point, a wise and good man would say: The church in California should have one first-class institution of learning, located at some suitable place, well endowed by the brotherhood, governed by a competent board of curators, who would elect as president thereof some prominent preacher, who had distinguished himself by long years, as a first-class instructor and disciplinarian, and a full faculty of professors, who are not preachers, but teachers, then let the brotherhood support that college, and we have a success, and only one preacher taken from his proper place in the Lord's vineyard, and a better corps of teachers. For surely all other things being equal, the man who devotes his time to teaching only, will be a better instructor than he who divides his time between teaching and preaching.

When I first visited California in 1871 there was but one college under our control in the State, and surely one is as many as our membership can support well. The preachers were all at work in their places in the vineyard. All the churches had preaching and were prospering; and the Gospel was sent to destitute places. I thought our future looked bright. But when I returned in 1876 I found four colleges, the chairs filled by preachers and other preachers huddled around waiting for vacancies. The churches mostly forsaken and dying for want of the bread of life.

When I look at our colleges with the present surroundings, failure stands most prominent, and on their account the churches wane. Can anything be done? Or is it too late?

May the God of heaven help us.

HENRY THOMAS.

From the Examiner.

The Dance of Death.

If the readers of the Examiner wish to see the "bottom fact" that underlies fondness for any or all the forms of modern dancing—the bottom secret of that fondness—a secret that lies embedded in the bottom stratum of our nature, let them read the following terribly plain and candid exposure of it, made by a gentleman of high culture, who writes over the signature of William Harman, and by a lady of literary eminence, whose name is withheld all under the above fearful caption, "The Dance of Death."

THE BALL ROOM.

Having invited the reader to accompany him to a fashionable party, the author describes the arrivals, the magnificent apartments, the costly decorations, the priceless pictures, rich laces, and so forth. He introduces to our notice "a tall and radiant maiden, with a face so pure and passionless in expression that the nudity of bust and arms, and the contour of limbs, more than suggested by the tightly-clinging silk, call for no baser admiration than we feel when looking upon the representation of an angel." To the Apollo in a "claw-hammer" coat, who bows low before her, she sweetly smiles assent as he records her promise for the first and other waltzes upon his tablet. Various other people are presented, and the dancing begins. When the work of the evening fairly sets in, and the dull element has gone home, our author leads the reader quietly to the ball room.

"Ha! the air is hot and heavy here; it breathes sensuous gusts of varying perfumes, and no wonder, a score of whirling scented robes stir it into fragrance. How beautiful—but you look aghast, my friend. Ah, I forgot those are not the rude country folks of your youth. You are dazzled—bewildered. Then let me try to enliven your dulled senses with a description of what we see.

"A score of forms whirl swiftly before us under the softened gaslight. I say a score of forms, but each is double; they would have made two score before the dancing began. Twenty floating visions—each male and female. Twenty women, knit and growing to as many men, undulate, sway, and twirl giddily before us keeping time with the delicious melody of piano, harp and violin.

But draw nearer—let us see how this miracle is accomplished. Do you mark yonder tall couple who seem to excel the rest in grace and ardor. Do they not make a picture which might put a soul under the ribs of Death! Such must have been the sight which made Speusippus rave: O admirable, O divine Panareta! Who would not admire her, who would not love her, that should but see her dance as I did! Oh how she danced, how she tripped, how she turned! With what a grace! *Felix qui Panareta fruitur!* O most incomparable, only Panareta!

Let us take this couple for a sample. He is stalwart, agile, mighty; she is tall, supple, lithe, and how beautiful in form and features! Her head rests upon his shoulder, her face is upturned to his; her naked arm is almost around his neck; her swelling breast heaves tumultuously against his; face to face they whirl, his limbs interwoven with her limbs; with strong right arm about her yielding waste, he presses her to him till every curve in the contour of her lovely body thrills with the amorous contact. Her eyes look into his, but she sees nothing; the soft music fills the room, but she hears nothing; swiftly he whirls her from the floor, or bends her frail body to and fro in his embrace, but she knows it not; his hot breath is upon her hair, his lips almost touch her forehead, yet she does not shrink; his eyes, gleaming with a fierce intolerable lust, gloat, satyr-like over her, yet she does not quail, she is filled with a rapture divine in its intensity—she is in the maelstrom of burning desire—her spirit is with the gods.

"With a last low wail the music ceases. Her swooning senses come back to life. Ah, must it be! Yes; her companion releases her from his embrace. Leaning wearily upon his arm, the rapture faded from his eye, the flush dying from her cheek—exhausted, limp, listless, worn out—she is led to a seat there to recover from her delirium and gather her energies as best she may in the space of five minutes, after which she must yield her body to a new embrace."

A LADY'S OPINION.

The following experience is that of a lady whose name is withheld, but who has distinguished herself in literature and made a world wide reputation:

"In those times I cared little for polka or varsovienne, and still less for the old fashioned "Money Musk," or "Virginia Reel," and wondered what people could find to admire in these slow dances. But in the soft floating of the waltz I found a strange pleasure, rather difficult to intelligibly describe. The mere anticipation fluttered my pulse, and when my partner approached to claim my promised hand for the dance I felt my cheeks glow a little sometimes, and I could not look him in the eye with the same frank gaiety as heretofore.

"But the climax of my confusion was reached when, folded in his warm embrace, and giddy with the whirl, a strange sweet thrill would shake me from head to foot, leaving me weak and almost powerless, and really almost obliged to depend for support on the arm which encircled me. If my partner failed from ignorance, lack of skill, or innocence, to arouse these, to me, most pleasurable sensations, I did not dance with him the second time.

"I am speaking openly and frankly, and when I say that I did not understand what I felt, or what were the real and greatest pleasures I derived from this so-called dancing, I expect to be believed. But if my cheeks grew red with uncomprehended pleasure then, they grow pale to-day with shame when I think of it all. It was the physical engendered by the magnetic contact of strong men that I was enamored of—not the dance, not even of the men themselves.

"Thus I became abnormally developed in my lowest nature. I grew bolder, and from being able to return shy glances at first, was soon able to meet more daring ones, until the waltz became to me, and whomsoever danced with me, one lingering, sweet and purely sensual pleasure, where heart beat against heart, hand was held in hand, and eyes looked burning words which lips dared not speak.

"All this while no one said to me, 'You do wrong,' so I dreamed of sweet words whispered during the dance, and often-felt while alone a thrill of joy indiscribable, yet overpowering, when my mind would turn from my study to remember a piece of

temerity of unusual grandeur on the part of one or another of my cavaliers.

"Married now, with home and children around me, I can at least thank God for the experience which will assuredly be the means of preventing my little daughters from indulging in any such dangerous pleasure. But, if a young girl, pure and innocent in the beginning, can be brought to feel what I have confessed to have felt, what must be the experience of a married woman? She knows what every glance of the eye, every bend of the head, every close clasp means, and knowing that reciprocates it and is led by swifter steps and a surer path down the dangerous, dishonorable road."

There is not a man or a woman that has an ounce of animal nature about them that will not acknowledge that that is the solemn, solid truth. "But that is the waltz—the round dance—and we don't waltz," say a dozen male and female patrons of the dance. Yes, yes; but that bottom secret which here stands revealed in all its grossness is the inspiration of all dancing, polish it as you will.

If dancing be for recreation and the acquisition of grace of movement, why not have males to dance with males and females with females? Why mix them? That would be intolerably dull, and dancing masters and fiddlers, as professionals, would soon starve for the lack of patronage. And yet some professing Christians say, "Where is the harm in dancing? Where is the New Testament prohibition of it?" And even professed Christian mothers sometimes not only encourage their daughters to dance, but take part in it themselves. The Lord have mercy upon such.

J. A. D.

New England Yearly Meeting.

The following is the report of the New England Yearly Meeting to the *Apostolic Times* by Geo. A. Lord:

This meeting was held with the church in Worcester, Massachusetts, commencing Friday, September 28th, and continuing over Lord's day. Quite a large number of brethren and sisters from other churches were present, yet quite a number of the N. E. churches were not represented at all.

The meeting was characterized by a spirit of love for Christ, and for each other, that was pleasing to see. And it was evident that every one was strengthened by the friendly greeting and words of encouragement received during the few days that were spent together.

Our work in New England is of the pioneer kind, the difficulties in the way of its successful prosecution are very great, hence we need all the encouragement we can get. And were it not for these meetings, when we can get together and talk over our hopes and fears, and plans for future work, I fear we should all get discouraged. But we go from these seasons of refreshing to our fields of labor, determined to work harder for the advancement of the cause of our Master than ever before.

The preachers present at the meeting were Bro. Wm. Bowzee, now preaching for the church in Worcester; Bro. W. A. Belding, of Trow, New York; Bro. Chas. Drake, of Albion, Maine; Bro. Howard Murray, of Swampscott, Massachusetts, and the writer. Dr. Belding gave us two of his characteristic discourses on the Lord's day, and others were delivered by Brethren Murray, Drake, and the writer of this. The social exercises were an important and interesting feature of the meeting.

God help us so to live and labor that we may all be prepared for the great meeting above. I should have mentioned that our venerable Bro. F. W. Emmons, was at the meeting with his tracts on the "fellowship" and other subjects by which he still does the preaching he is otherwise unable to do.

BELLS.

The invention of bells is attributed to Polonius, Bishop of Nola, Campania, about the year 400. They were first introduced into churches as a defence against thunder and lightning; they were first put up in Croyland Abbey, Lincolnshire, in 945. In the eleventh century, and later, it was the custom to baptize them in the churches before they were used. The earliest bell was established in 1078. It was rung at eight in the evening, when people were obliged to put out their fires and candles. The custom was abolished in 1190. Bellmen were appointed in London in 1556; to ring the bells at night, and cry out, "Take care of your fire and candle; be charitable to the poor, and pray for the dead."—*Pen and Plover*.

Be Courteous.

The following incident, from the *London Examiner*, will suggest to some officials the policy if not the propriety of cultivating a courteous style of reply to those who ask civil questions.

"A tall, gray-haired gentleman, lately went into one of the branch post offices in a western region. He asked some question relative to the registering of a letter of one of the girls in attendance, and was answered in a manner which he considered exceedingly sharp and rude. He repeated the question, however, not being quite sure that he was not mistaken in his supposition, and he repeated it very mildly. She answered him more rudely than before. He then made some remonstrance, and asked her if she thought that was a proper way to answer an inquiry in a public office. She said she thought she had been quite civil enough for him. He asked her, with an ominously increasing mildness of manner, if she would favor him with her name. She emphatically declined to do so. He then said he thought he would tell her his name, which, however, she declined to hear, saying that his name was no concern of hers. He calmly replied that he thought it was for his name was John Manners, and he was the Postmaster-General.

Rev. Mr. Muller, so well known to the American church as the author of the *The Life of Trust*, and the founder of the orphan home at Bristol, England has just arrived in this country, and intends remaining until spring. Mr. Muller, in answer to questions touching his work at Bristol, said, "That since the establishment of the orphan homes, he has never asked, directly or indirectly, aid of any man, but always through prayer of God. Nearly four millions of dollars have been given him, coming from all parts of the world. He and his assistants have now under their care over 2,000 orphans, at a daily expense of some \$600, nearly \$200,000 a year. Yet day by day, this vast sum is contributed so that there is no lack. "I undertook this work," says this man of great faith, "to demonstrate to the world that God, in the nineteenth century is as ready to hear prayer as He was in Bible times, and, by God's grace I have done it." Surely, Tyn-dall has not far to go for a prayer test.—*Metropolitan Pulpit*.

Says the *Record and Evangelist*: Free Masons in France have been for a long while doubtful as to the expediency of considering a belief in the Supreme Being as a necessity to the order. At a convention held recently an article of the constitution which ran thus: "Free Masonry holds to the principle of the existence of God and of the immortality of the soul," was changed to read: "Free Masonry holds to the principle of an absolute freedom of conscience, and to the brotherhood of mankind." We suppose "absolute freedom of conscience" means a conscience independent of God. The article is the baldest Atheism. It remains to be seen whether American Masons will continue fraternal relations with a society of avowed Atheists.