

# PACIFIC CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"GO YE, THEREFORE, TEACH ALL NATIONS."

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## Pacific CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,

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## Correspondence.

### Our European Letter.

(REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE).

BERLIN, GERMANY, Sept. 8, 1879.

In a few weeks the people of Prussia will be called upon to elect a new House of Representatives, and already active preparations are being made for the contest. The Ultramontanes have issued their formed programme; the Government prints are warning constituencies of the fearful dangers to which they will expose themselves if they do not act as they are directed by the authorities, and the Liberals are doing what they can to meet the charges and insinuations of their opponents. Everywhere it is felt that the results are likely to be in some respects more important than any that have attended a general election since the Imperial Chancellor began his career as Prussian Premier. At the time the Liberals commanded an undoubted majority in the country and over and over again in the course of their struggle with the crown gave proof of their power. Even now they do not altogether despair of victory, and it is probable that if no special cause operated to divert the current of opinion from its natural course their most sanguine hopes would be realized. But they cannot disguise from themselves that the mass of the electors are at present affected by influences which are in the highest degree unfavorable to enlighten political ideas. In the first place, the personal authority of Prince Bismark is incalculably great. Whatever may be thought of him in other German States, the Prussian middle class almost idolize the statesman who, they know, has made their country one of the formidable powers in the world, and who sums up in his individual character, as they believe, all that is most enduringly excellent in the national temperament. The Conservatives are making the most of this advantage by impressing on the electors that the return of a Liberal majority would be a direct insult to the Chancellor. They even go further, and wisest since it is known that the Emperor will never willingly part with the Minister whose name will always be prominently associated with his reign, a Liberal victory would be a slight to the most popular of Sovereigns as well as to the most popular of Premiers. This is of course nonsense, but it does not follow that in the present temper of the nation it will be without effect. Another device of the Conservatives is to represent the Liberals as mainly responsible for the rapid growth of Socialism. A more groundless accusation has never been prepared against any considerable body of politicians, for the prin-

ciples of the most influential German Liberals are favorable rather to excessive individualism than to a communistic ideal. The fact is perfectly understood by the Socialists themselves, who, from the days of Lasselle till now, have looked upon Liberals of all shades, but especially "advanced" Liberals, as their chief enemies. The parties from whom they have at different times derived most encouragement are the Conservatives and the Ultramontanes, both of whom still occasionally throw out hints that it might not be disadvantageous to make some concessions to the Socialist spirit. But many members of the middle class give evidence of being to some extent impressed by the contrast of vigorous assertions as to the inevitable tendencies of Liberalism, and should great numbers of them listen more and more approvingly to these statements there can be no sort of doubt how the elections will go. For a time when Socialism was merely talked about, the middle classes seemed inclined to think that there might be something in it, at any rate they were not unwilling to indulge in a little mild patronage of its leading representatives. When its real power became apparent, there was a change of sentiment and now the mere suspicion of sympathy with the revolutionists would suffice to secure to defeat if more than half the Liberal members of the Prussian Parliament.

The semi-official organ in this city the *North German Gazette*, has some curious observation on a recent article in the *London Times* which contained a remark that during the negatives preceding the Berlin Treaty Germany always sided with the Western Powers and against Russia. "This statement," says Prince Bismark's organ, "is in most flagrant opposition to the facts, as recorded in the minutes of the Congress. It can, therefore, only be assumed either that the author of this article is totally ignorant of the Congress debates or that he judges it for the interest of his country to sow discord between Germany and the Slavists. The Russian journals should circulate lies respecting Germany's attitude at the Congress is intelligible, for they are concerned to cover Russia's faults and failures by laying the blame upon others; but an English journal has no such excuse."

LOUIS.

### Independent Societies.

One brother said he had in contemplation "a society independent of every other society or organization on earth."

Then it would be independent of the church. Should it not, to be consistent, be independent also of the Bible and of the Savior?

Paul said Christians were "complete in Christ," "thoroughly furnished to all good works."

Perhaps this brother did not mean as much as he said. Let us hope so, and wait to see.

C. K.

—Says Dr. Albert Day: "A large majority of the 4,000 cases of insanity which I have treated commenced their course of drunkenness by the use of what is termed light drinks, such as wine, beer, etc. I am fully satisfied that the use of light beverages is the initiatory step to a life of ebriety."

## Faith.

In a comment on Heb. ii. 1, I see this sentence as a conclusion in P. C. MESSENGER of Sept. 12th, viz: "Faith, then, is the foundation of our hopes, the clear conviction of things not seen."

This is a blessed truth, but it is not found in Heb. ii. 1, except so far as the last sentence is concerned; but if the last sentence be taken as explanatory of the first, then the whole is far from being what is stated in Heb. ii. 1. I give Heb. ii. 1: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is true that substance (sub-stare) literally means that which stands under—hence foundation, and its Greek equivalent *upostasis* (hupostasis) has the same radical meaning. But is the word used *literally* here? The context shows it impossible; for while faith is the foundation of hope it is not and can not be the foundation of things hoped for. The things hoped for are heaven and future blessings of the redeemed. These do not rest on faith as a foundation. That is, there will be a heaven, and the future joys will be, whether we have faith or not. We will not enjoy them without faith, I grant; but then, our faith is not the foundation of these things hoped for, holding them up.

The word rendered "substance" in Heb. ii. 1 is translated "confidence" in 2 Cor. ii. 17, and Heb. iii. 14. This is not the literal meaning I know, but the context of Heb. ii. 1, for the reason given above, will not admit of a literal meaning of that word.

Again, the word rendered "evidence" *eleyxos* (elegchos) never did mean evidence, and evidence is no part of faith either, for evidence, as we use that word, produces faith, and that which produces a thing can not be the thing itself. This word, in verb-form, means to convict or convince, according as it is connected or not connected with crime. The Savior said, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (not convinceth). A man is convicted when proved guilty, but he is convinced when he yields assent to a proposition.

I now give the rendering sustained by Bro. H. T. Anderson, the Bible Union, and critics generally, viz: "Faith is the confidence (or assurance) with respect to things hoped for, the conviction with respect to things not seen." This is full of meaning and comfort and beauty.

Observe that the two clauses "with respect to things hoped for," and "with respect to things not seen," limit the two words "confidence" and "conviction," making faith a peculiar kind of confidence growing out of the things hoped for, and conviction a special conviction arising from things not seen. I have a conviction that the three angles of a triangle are equivalent to two right angles, but I don't believe it, because it is not a matter of faith. I know it, from demonstration. I am convinced that there is an ink stand before me. I don't believe there is. I know there is for I see it; but faith has to do exclusively with things not seen, about which we hear or read.

Things not seen may be in the present, past, or future, but things hoped for belong exclusively to the future. Hence "the conviction with respect to things not seen" is the broader element of faith, and is, of itself, called faith in the Scriptures. That is when

one accepts as true a statement of any fact, belonging to the past, present, or future, he believes that statement; but whether he have any confidence with regard to anything hoped for, from the truth of the statement, would depend upon whether the fact received as true belonged to the future or not; if not, then he could not have any hope, nor any confidence with respect to things hoped for, simply because hope belongs to the future alone. Furthermore the confidence with regard to things hoped for comes through obeying the conditions on which the promises are based. The Christian has both elements of faith. Those among the chief rulers who believed what Jesus said (John xii. 42) and yet would not confess him had simply the conviction with regard to things not seen, but they, nor the demons, have any confidence with respect to things hoped for, because to the last no promises are given, and to the first no assurance, because they would not obey the conditions on which the promises of Christ were based, one of which was to confess him, which those rulers would not do. Think on this for the present.

O. A. CARR.

### Enthroning the Word.

Several times, during the State Meeting, Elder Wm. Lane (78 years old, and a preacher for nearly 60 years, able, clear headed and earnest), said he so venerated the word of God that he would at once preach and practice infant baptism, purgatory, counting beads, or any thing else, if it was shown that the Savior and the apostles taught it; and that he would cease, at once and forever, to teach faith, repentance, baptism, prayer, etc., if it was shown that the Savior and the apostles did not teach them.

This is the true ground. We may give our opinion outside of revelation; but we cannot labor to propagate it, or seek to enforce it on others, especially to the disruption or disturbance of the church, or to the wounding of even weak members.

It is a fact just now especially worthy of note, that the peace and harmony, the union and prosperity of the church have never been materially injured by differences concerning what is taught in the Bible. All the evil has come from differences as to what is not taught.

This is a fact fully proved by the history of the church and the present surrounding facts. Let us study and profit by these facts.

A few of us, at least, are disposed to stop where the Bible stops, and to resist and oppose the introduction of humanisms. We simply stand for the pure, sure truth, the confessed truth, all the truth, the perfection of truth; others disturb the church for the sake of matters the Savior and the apostles never taught, and which all admit they never taught. Of this we complain, not of their opinions, but of their disturbing the churches with them. If we are omitting or neglecting any Divine command or ordinance, let it be shown, and we will amend our ways. But let no man disrupt the church, or sow discord among brethren for a humanism of any kind.

C. K.

—Gossiping and lying are twin sisters.

—Experience is a torch lighted in the ashes of our delusion.

## The International Series of Sunday School Lessons.

This series of Sunday School Lessons has been before the world for almost seven years, and has had every opportunity for a fair trial. It has had much opposition, especially in the first years of the course; but the opposition has gradually given way and it is almost universally used by nearly every religious body.

I began the study of these lessons, and to use them in the Sunday school in 1872, and as far as I have yet learned, was the first to introduce them on the coast. I presume, however, that there were other Sunday school workers as enthusiastic in the work, and hence began with the Series.

My object in writing this is to state that the present year will close this course of seven year's study on the Old and New Testaments. And with the year 1880 another course will begin. I would like not only to recommend but to urge every Sunday school that has not done so to begin the study with the beginning of the new year. In fact I would suggest that they take up the present course even now and get under way by the time the next course begins.

I propose to give a few reasons why the International Series of Sunday School Lessons should be used.

1. It is a most systematic study of the Bible.
2. Better help is placed in the hands of teacher and pupil than heretofore.
3. It enables teachers to assist each other better.
4. It makes it possible for families to keep a particular line of Bible truth before them during the week.
5. It gives the preacher or pastor an opportunity to render greater assistance.
6. Assists superintendents in the management of the school.
7. Makes all Sunday school workers help each other.
8. It increases Bible students among old and young.
9. They are a formidable barrier against infidelity.
10. It has increased the study of the Old Testament.
11. It places the best helps in the hands of teachers.
12. It produces a stronger incentive to study when we know that on a certain day millions are studying the same Scripture.
13. It makes more working and better instructed Christians.
14. More accomplished in one week now than formerly in a months study.
15. Begets a good feeling of religious people toward each other.
16. Puts parents and their children to study the Bible together more than formerly.
17. The systematic study of the Bible makes better teaching and makes them more enthusiastic in their work.
18. The system is doing more to break down barriers of Sectarianism and unite the people of God than any other work.

The above are respectfully submitted to all Sunday school workers and all who are interested in the progress of truth. And if any brother or sister can present any thing reasonable to the contrary, I would be ready to hear from them.

J. DURHAM.