

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"GO YE, THEREFORE, TEACH ALL NATIONS."

VOL. X.

MONMOUTH, OREGON; FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1880.

NO. 21.

Pacific CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,

Devoted to the cause of Primitive Christianity, and the diffusion of general information.

Price Per Year, in Advance, \$2.50

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Mr. I. G. Davidson is our Advertising Agent in Portland.

Entered at the Post Office at Monmouth as second class matter.

Theological Discussion.

Dear P. C. Messenger:

In the *Oregonian* of May 5th appears an open letter of N. Doane, under the above heading, in which the writer speaks of a proposed discussion between himself and one S. Monroe Hubbard, to be held at Sheridan, in Yamhill county, commencing June 2, 1880. He proceeds, by giving the proposition to be discussed, which is couched in the following words, to-wit: "Immersion of a proper person in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the only Scriptural Christian baptism."

Now, the question with myself is, in what way or manner is the cause of truth to be benefited, and light and knowledge imparted among the people by the discussion of any such enigmatical proposition as the above? Why insert the words "the only" in discussing immersion? If Mr. Hubbard teaches and practices immersion, he should be willing to appeal before a competent jury, and prove from the Scriptures, that immersion of a proper subject in water is Christian baptism, which, if so proven by the word, should be an end to all controversy, by those who love the truth, as to the action of baptism, because, under the Christian economy, we have "one baptism," not three or four baptisms. Therefore, if any one believe in and teach any other baptism, should he not in all reason and justice, be required to affirm directly, and prove from the Scriptures, the existence and truth of such baptism? Will an enlightened public be satisfied with four or six days' discussion of any such double headed, such affirmative, negative proposition, ostensibly under which Mr. Hubbard appears as the champion and advocate of immersion, but really not so at all, because no one denies immersion. Again, ostensibly Mr. Doane, would appear as the champion of affusion, but really not so, because he affirms nothing—absolutely nothing—under their proposition.

Again, let me ask is this the way to bring out and establish truth, one disputant affirming everything even negatively, the other denying everything even affirmatively, if such things be possible. Will thinking people be satisfied, will light and truth be shed forth by any such indirect methods—either aggressive or defensive? Rather will they not demand that each disputant affirm directly his teaching and practice. Mr. Hubbard then would be required to prove directly from Scripture, that immersion

of a proper person in water, is Christian baptism. But say you Mr. Doane would not negative that proposition, because he and his church practice immersion. Very well, if he would not deny that proposition, then is it not clear, as demonstration, that immersion is not the point in issue, in the proposed discussion, and therefore it is not the practice of Mr. Hubbard and his church, that is to be in issue, and per consequence, the word immersion is not rightfully or properly in their proposition. Seeing then that immersion is not in controversy at all; just take that word out of the proposition, and what, let me ask, is there left? Moreover, immersion, not being in controversy, Mr. Hubbard would have nothing left to affirm, and Mr. Doane, under the proposition, has not agreed to affirm anything, and finally, what is all this war of words in the proposed discussion, to be about? Is it not manifestly about the practice of Mr. Doane and his church, viz.: about sprinkling water, upon either infant or adult, and calling it Christian baptism. Most clearly, this is the question, and no ordinary amount of skill in the wording of propositions can successfully hide it from the intelligence of the people. Therefore, let us have an affirmant, and respondent, to this, the real issue, in order that light may be shed forth, our minds informed, and some good result from the investigation.

CRITIC.

Polk County, May 10, 1880.

Prudence Papers.

LOCATING PREACHERS.

There are "ways" of locating preachers, and there is a "way" of locating preachers.

This is one of the "ways." A person of considerable zeal, some knowledge of Scripture and of a short purse comes and wants a "location." The brethren have been without preaching for some time, and, as they never (?) meet unless a preacher comes along, they are very thirsty for the healing fountains. He holds a "good meeting," "several accessions." He preaches his best, of course. They must have some one to preach for them. "We will look about us and buy him a farm and build him a house, and pay him something for staying indefinitely." Very indefinite, that! He preaches for them a year or six months, or less or more. He engages in his secular calling, necessarily as he has a farm. Soon, too soon, it seems his cruise of oil is exhausted. He repeats and repeats. He goes through (?) the Bible—some like the boy through college, in one door and out of the other. Somehow, the congregation is not fed. They understand how to enter the kingdom. They wonder if they are to be left at the "brink of the river" for all time, while so eagerly desiring to roam through the green pastures, into the valleys of humility, and up to the mountain top to view the promised land. No! Keep close to the water.

[Those are not the editor's mark; they are mine. They stand for the empty seats in the church for some weeks after the audience learned the preacher's sermons by head.]

So that preacher has to sell out and (pocketing the cash for the house and lands) go and commence anew. He came up to his agreement—like the man who preempts, plants his patch

of potatoes on his farm, according to the law (of the land) and raises them next morning according to the law (of gravity). Some of the congregation are a little "sore" and think Bro. X. Y. Z. did not do just right, but grant him a little to "go," not according to the commission.

I do not think this picture has the proper coloring for any known cast. It may be overdrawn. Perhaps you know of several congregations throughout the land that have been crippled in their efforts by such work, unwise work on the part of the church, though entered into with the highest hopes. Some of the "outsiders" thought he was to stay an indefinite time. He did. What are you talking about? Silence those cavilers who forever prate about the propriety of things. The merchant sells you a barrel of sugar and on the debit side writes after your name, "some dollars and cents." You say immediately, "He needs more of the latter than of the former," but spelling it differently.

Moral—The children of this world, &c.

SILAS, JR.

Methods in the Sunday School Concert.

And to begin with, What is a Sunday school concert? A Sunday school concert is not a Sunday school concert at all; nor indeed is it a concert of any sort. The fact that its name indicates an exercise quite unlike its nature has often stood in the way of its appreciation and acceptance by those who had no wish to introduce "concerts" into their Sunday school work. How then came the Sunday school concert to have such a name? That is a question very easily answered; and one that it is worth our while to answer just here.

In connection with the revival of foreign missionary work, in the early part of this century, a monthly meeting for concerted, or united, prayer in behalf of missions came to be very generally observed, both here and abroad, on the first Monday evening of each month. This meeting was at first called "the monthly concert of prayer for missions," but before long its name was abbreviated into "the monthly concert." After Sunday schools had acquired prominence as a religious agency in the American churches, the second Monday evening of each month was in many places observed as an evening for concerted prayer for Sunday schools, and the meeting on that evening came to be known as "the Sunday school concert." It first came into general notice, so far as we can learn, from northern New York, and it was given a national prominence by its recommendation, in the fall of 1824, by the Board of Managers of The American Sunday School Union. Its observance was for a time well-nigh co-extensive with the Sunday school in the United States; and it was even recognized, as early as 1832, "in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, along the Mediterranean, and at missionary stations of India, Ceylon, and the Sandwich Islands." Prayer was its main feature. There can be little doubt that a blessing came through it to the Sunday school cause in this country.

After a time both concerts of prayer were changed from Monday evenings to Sunday; and gradually the "Sunday school concert" was changed in

its nature, objects, and methods, without a change of its ambiguous name. From being a meeting of prayer for Sunday schools, it came to be a meeting of prayer with the Sunday school, and finally a meeting of the Sunday school and its friends for general exercises; including the devotional, the hortatory, and the recitative. For the past twenty five years the "Sunday school concert" has had larger prominence in New England and in the West than elsewhere throughout the country, although it has been by no means unfamiliar to any section of the land. In many places it is held in the early evening, at an hour suitable for the attendance of the children; in many others it is held in the afternoon. It often takes the place, for one Sunday in the month, of the ordinary second church service of the day; and in very many communities it is counted the most attractive, and one of the most impressive and profitable, services of the month. Of course there are abuses of this agency, as of every other good thing. The dramatic feature has sometimes been introduced, to the serious detriment of the service; and again undue prominence has been given to individuals—very young children and others—in their recitations; while miscellaneous selections—prose and poetry—have often been preferred to Bible texts. But aside from all this, there are advantages in a well-conducted "Sunday school concert," with appropriate devotional exercises, and topical Bible readings and recitations on the part of young and old alike, which are not to be found in any other form of religious service; and on this account it deserves careful consideration by all who are yet unfamiliar with its best methods, and its largest influence for good.

Among the simpler methods of recitation in the Sunday school concert "is the giving of texts beginning with a designated letter of the alphabet, or containing a designated word, or on a designated general topic. The subject of the "concert" is announced beforehand, and each person present is expected to repeat a Bible text within the limits of that subject. Bible characters, Bible localities, Bible narratives, and Bible doctrines, are named for illustration, or proof, by appropriate texts. The godly men or the godly women of the Bible; the good kings, the good prophets, the good children; or the bad ones; the lakes, the rivers, the mountains, the valleys, the cities, the trees and flowers, of the Bible; the fall of man and its consequences; the plan of salvation and its subjects; the tabernacle and its teachings; the commandments and their illustration; the prayers, the covenants, the buildings, the letters and letter-writers; the blessings and the curses, the invitations and the promises, of the Bible, are among the many themes chosen for miscellaneous "concert" recitations—where all can take part without a special individual assignment. But a better method than this is the assignment in advance of particular departments of a subject to different sections or classes, or individuals, for text recitations, so that all shall combine to illustrate and enforce a common topic with logical force and symmetry. In this way the chief benefits of the modern "Bible readings" are secured to all who attend the "concert," indeed the Bible reading and the "Sunday school concert" recita-

tion in its best form have much in common, and preparations for the two can be used interchangeably, as a reading or a recitation is preferred.

The Sunday school lessons of a month, or of a quarter, or of a year, often form an excellent basis for "concert" recitation. Thus, the life of Joseph, or Moses, or Elijah, or Daniel; the captivity and restoration of the Jews; the miracles, or the parables, of Jesus; the travel of Paul; or the history of the apostolic church, would, perhaps, present itself as a timely topic. And there are appropriate Christmas and Easter and Thanksgiving topics, such as Christ in prophecy and Christ in history; Christ's resurrection and its teachings; seed sowing and harvesting. Missionary duties and privileges can be most effectually impressed by topical Bible recitations in that direction. So in every line of duty or of doctrine. A familiar hymn sometimes furnishes a good topic of recitation. Each line of the hymn is to be tested by Scripture—according to a prearranged assignment of texts—and each verse is to be sung by the assembly when thus approved by the word of God. The hymns beginning "All hail the power of Jesus' name," and "Songs of praise the angels sang," are good specimens for experiment in this line. Bible questions to be responded to with Bible answers furnish another good variety in method of recitation. Admirable illustrations of this method can be found in G. Washington Moon's "The Soul's Inquiries Answered," and in "The Soul's Cry and the Lord's Answer," published by the American Tract Society.

Of course very much depends upon the skill and tact and studiousness of the person who attempts the arrangement of one of these topical Bible exercises for the "Sunday school concert." Great ingenuity is displayed by some of the pastors and superintendents who have had practice and success in this department of Bible work. Nearly twenty years ago, Mr. Trumbull, at present editor of *The Sunday School Times*, published in these columns a series of articles on the history, advantages, and abuses of the "Sunday school concert," with approved modes of conducting it. These articles were afterwards gathered into a small volume. Some ten years later, Mr. Trumbull prepared a larger and completer work, under the title of "Children in the Temple," covering the whole ground of general exercises for children, including children's services of worship, preaching to children, children's prayer meetings, and specimen exercises for the "Sunday school concert." We know of no book of a later date—or, indeed, of any other—that treats this subject with equal fullness. But in addition to all the helps that are accessible in permanent form, there is much of new material being supplied for Sunday school workers, in the specimen exercises for the "Sunday school concert," appearing month by month in *The Sunday School Times*. Our intention is to keep up the freshness and variety of contributions to this department of Sunday school helps.—S. S. Times.

—Dean Bickersteth of Lichfield will, it is expected, be the first bishop of the new Diocese of Liverpool. The income of the bishopric will be \$17,500.