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Marion F. Harmon
*Messenger Publishing Company*

Oscar P. Spiegel
*Messenger Publishing Company*

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Gospel Messenger

Devoted to the Cause of Christ in all the South and throughout the World.


John A. Stevens

State Evangelist of Mississippi.
Biography Department.

John A. Stevens,
State Evangelist, of Mississippi.

The subject of this sketch was born in Titus county, Texas on Dec. 26, 1857. His father was named George W., and his mother's maiden name was Mary Vann, both of whom came from Georgia, their parents coming from South Carolina. Geo. W. and wife moved to Texas in 1850. They belonged to the Primitive Baptists.

When the more progressive, missionary Baptist church came into existence, both families went into it. John A. Stevens was born of Baptist parents and reared and educated in that faith. Bro. S. is six feet, one inch, tall, weighs 170 pounds. Bro. Stevens gave his heart to God and joined the Baptist church in 1875. He preached his first sermon as a Baptist preacher in Sept., 1878, being then in his twenty-first year. When he turned the keen logic of his young and vigorous mind upon the sacred page for the purpose of telling it to others, with the help of Ezzelles Great Legacy then a new book, he soon found thirty or forty reasons why the Baptist church was a stranger to the New Testament. He kept studying. He says: "In the spring of 1880 I rode a bay horse fifteen miles, alone, through the forest that I might find a church of my faith, of my love and my hope. When I came up to the country church in the woods, my heart leaped with joy when I said to myself, 'Here I will get my liberty; I never had it before.'"

When Eld. E. H. Smith gave the invitation our subject stepped forward and united with the Baptist church in 1883. He was duly ordained by Con- cord church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on the church. His health got worse and he went to San Antonio for one year. While there his health was restored and one hundred and forty-five members were added to the little band of thirty, during the year. This carries him up to the end of 1890 when he became State Evangelist of Mississippi on the 1st of Jan., 1891. This position he has held ever since with the exception of a little less than two years spent with the Walnut street Christian church in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Aside from this Mr. Stevens has held some independent meetings at different places, but has never been out of a position, nor has he ever sought a position. He of course has had to decide what course to take, but work has always been abundant, and the pay all he desired. To offer him several hundred dollars above what he is getting does not seem to affect him at all.

He has made a few changes as seen above, but he says "They were God's changes, not mine—hence full of wisdom." He says: "I never risk my judgment with anything heavy without taking God into my confidence."

Again, Bro. Stevens is a financial success in every way known to the writer. Speaking of preachers getting paid, he says: "Our churches pay for results, not for efforts. Churches will not pay much for having prejudice removed but will turn their pocket books wrong side out for additions. It is hard to contemplate, but we must learn to have additions or pay will be neglected."

His Strong Points.
1. Much general information well remembered.
2. A large vocabulary.
3. Oratorical and painting power.
4. Keen logic and kind-heartedness.
5. An excellent voice well trained.
6. Earnestness without measure. Mr. Stevens has had over 3,000 additions to the church. He believes in preaching three hours and some times over an hour. His enthusiasm and word pictures are often terrible. In great meetings he seems to get beside himself. In cooler moments it is hard to make him remember the horrid pictures of death, hell, and meaness, that he only one hour ago has drawn. After all this expenditure of nervous force, he will have his people sing, and he will exhort at internals, he will beg and plead with men for a half hour to forsake their sins and come to Christ. When asked why he does so, and so, he replies, "all I know is that I am in earnest about it."

The Gospel Messenger remains at the low price of $1.00 a year. Cash in advance.
Movements of the World.

Wonderful things happen these days. Most astonishing news comes from Memphis, this state, that the retail liquor dealers have met and have decided to obey the law and close on Sunday. The real truth is the liquor men know that there is a sentiment crystallizing in this country against their business. They know better than anyone else that if they do not stem the tide of public sentiment by appearing moral and sanctimonious themselves, their craft of getting money through the vices of the people will soon be outlawed. But it is one thing for an association to resolve, and another to have the man who left all conscience behind when he went into the business obey it. "Can a leopard change his spots?" Can the liquor business ever deceive the most simple-minded and make them believe there is a single redeeming feature in it? So long as one poor woman's or one orphan's wail is heard, this traffic will be an outcast with the mark of Cain on it.

A French paper at Quebec, Canada, called L'Electeur, recently opened up its columns for a free discussion of the question as to how far the church can control its members. A Mr. Davis contributed an article in which he took the ground that the church should control in matters purely in the province of conscience, but that the state must be supreme in matters purely political. His contention was that the church had no right to dictate how electors should vote on the school question. This at once called forth the thunders of the bishops. They have forbidden every Catholic to do anything to with the paper. This, of course, caused the paper to suspend, and the publishers have sued the bishops for damage. No doubt a Canadian court will not dare to make a verdict against these ecclesiastical potentates, but it will serve to bring the question to a climax, and God will yet raise up another Martin Luther, who will free the remnant that his former Luther did not reach. The plan of the Catholics in America is to favor Republican government, and then gradually gain control of the conscience of the voters, elect their measures, and take control of everything.

As a direct result from our successful issue with Great Britain on the Venezuela controversy, our merchants are preparing to gain for themselves the entire South American trade. It really looks as though the English government had made some very serious blunders on this line. But the whole thing simply shows to what extremes our competitive system has gone. It is not our purpose to condemn this system, for we know of nothing better to take its place. But it will be beneficial to us to see where we stand. Individuals are in an almost death struggle with each other; associations and combines are doing likewise. In short, the world is a great checker board; England, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and America are the principal players. Every move they make is intended to gain control of commerce.

It is generally expected that there will be nothing done on any of the great and absorbing political questions now before the people until the McKinley administration gets control of the government. Though this will be only a little over six weeks, it will be quite an uneasy waiting for the friends of Cuba and those who favor immediate action with regard to the Armenian Massacres. But it is perhaps no more than just that the new administration be given the privilege of shaping its own foreign policy. The man whom McKinley may appoint to the State Department will no doubt find his position an exceedingly trying one. It is now quite generally supposed that it will be either Senator Sherman, of Ohio, or Senator Allison, of Iowa.

Christ told his disciples to wait until they should receive power from on high. This implies that they were not sufficiently prepared for the task before. It is not for us to say exactly how many changes were wrought in the disciples by the indwelling of the Spirit, but none were more manifest than that they were changed from negative to positive characters. The Peter that believed in Christ, but sought to do it with caution, and even with compromise, if need be, is now the positive and steadfast Peter, who stands before the highest court in his land, and says with a remarkable brevity and firmness that he is working in the name of Jesus. What could they do with such a man? Letting him go confirms him in his work; threatening him is a concession of his power. Imprisonment and punishment are but a demonstration of his power. We in our day would say surrender to him. But a proud Sardanapalus or Pharaoh, never!

The creeds in our day are not dead, but, like some old man whose body is diseased, they are sensitive to every cold wind that blows. The truth might, perhaps, be better expressed by saying that the sectarian world is very apprehensive of danger, and has spies posted at every turn of the road to watch for some stray idea that might be labeled as heresy. The latest heresy that has been thus caught and labeled was found running astray in Ian McClaren's famous book, "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," in which he expresses his belief that if a man can be kind to a dog he has some inherent good in him. Strange as it may seem, this is interpreted to be directly opposed to the doctrine of original sin.
Correspondence =  =  
Things Hard to be Understood.

B. F. MANIRE.
(Continued.)

11. The Foreknowledge of God is another one of the things hard to be understood, over which men puzzle their own minds, and by which they so often try to perplex and annoy others. Not being able to fathom its profound depths, to scale its sublime heights, or to measure its limitless extent, many, we fear, appeal to it only to worst it to their own destruction, and pervert it to the confusion and injury of others.

Now what the Bible says concerning the foreknowledge of God is just as intelligible as what it says concerning the power or wisdom or mercy of God. The trouble is this, however, as in so many other cases, is that men are not content with the simple facts and plain statements found in the Scriptures, nor with the practical information that may be gained from the Bible, but attempt to become wise beyond what is written, and far beyond their own very limited capacity.

The finite mind is utterly incapable of fully comprehending the Infinite Mind; hence the foreknowledge of God will ever remain a wonder and a mystery to men as long as they are in this state of being with all its limitations and imperfections. The future and eternal state only can unfold all the mysteries of the Divine wisdom, and portray in all their splendor the perfections of the Divine character. The foreknowledge of God is doubtless a theme of wonder to the angels in heaven, and may be such to the redeemed throughout the cycles of eternity. Whenever man can put himself in the place of God, and look down through all time and all eternity, as God does, then he may fully comprehend the foreknowledge of God, but not till then.

Men in their puny efforts to handle this great theme confound the foreknowledge of God with his purposes, or what they are pleased to call his decrees; and then they conclude that this foreknowledge, which in their judgment necessarily involves an irreversible decree, has, unchangedly fixed the character and destiny of every human being. They thus divest man of all responsibility, make him a mere machine which moves only as it is propelled by some outside and irresistible power, and place him under an inexcusable fate both for time and eternity. The Scriptures, however, do not make any such statements concerning the foreknowledge of God in its bearing on human responsibility; nor do all the facts therein presented concerning God and man warrant any such conclusion.

12. The difficulty is frequently presented in this way,—"If God knows that I am to be saved, then I can not possibly be lost; and if God knows that I am to be lost, then I can not possibly be saved." The very manner in which this difficulty is often presented shows that it is regarded as absolutely unanswerable; yet no man ever imposed on himself, or tried to impose on others, by a flimsier sophism. It tacitly and insidiously takes for granted the very thing to be proved, and that is, that God by a simple act of foreknowledge has unalterably fixed the destiny of all men without any reference whatever to their character and conduct in this life. This utterly false assumption not only lies at the basis, but is the very core, of all the false reasoning that is so prevalent on this subject. Whenever it is admitted, as the Scriptures abundantly teach, that the foreknowledge of God takes in the character and conduct of men as affecting their destiny, the very bottom is knocked out of this difficulty.

The teaching of the Scripture being true, God does not, never did, and never will foreknow the destiny of any man separate and apart from the character and conduct of that man. Therefore the destiny of mortals does not and never did hinge merely on the foreknowledge of God concerning that destiny. Man is a responsible being, made in the image of God, largely endowed with will-power, and therefore capable of choosing; and his destiny hinges to a great extent on the decision he makes in accepting or rejecting the salvation offered to him so freely in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, all of which the Scriptures most clearly and abundantly teach. And we confidently affirm that the foreknowledge of God, apart from the means of salvation, has no practical bearing whatever on the decision any man may make; and therefore does not form his character, shape his conduct, or determine his destiny.

13. It is a significant fact that men rarely, if ever, reason in this way with reference to the affairs of this life; yet the foreknowledge of God takes in all these affairs as well as those of the life to come, and has just as much to do in determining them. And should any man so reason in any given case, he would be regarded as partially, if not wholly demented, and would be treated accordingly.

Does the sick man say?—"If the Lord knows I am to get well, I can not possibly die; and if he knows I am to die, I can not possibly get well; all the diseases on the one hand can not kill me, and all the medicine on the other hand can not cure me." And reasoning thus, does he refuse all medical aid and risk the consequences? No, indeed! He sends for the physician, and takes the remedy prescribed, decree or no decree, without ever thinking that the foreknowledge of God has any thing to do either with his own conduct or the result.

Suppose the farmer should reason in the same way, and in consequence thereof refuse to plant or cultivate; would the foreknowledge of God bring
about the same result as if he had planted and cultivated? The veriest simpleton knows that it would not; yet in all such cases God foreknows what will be the result of every man's labor. He also foreknows what will be the result in any case, if a man does not labor; and these two are very different results in the foreknowledge of God as well as in actual life.

The commander of an army, however numerous, well disciplined, well supplied, and well disciplined his forces might be, who would reason in this way, would insure the defeat of his army, the disgrace of himself, and the destruction of his country; yet the Lord knows the issue of every battle before the conflict is joined.

Many other illustrations might be given to show the utter fallacy and folly of this kind of reasoning, but these are deemed amply sufficient. In all the world there is only one character who reasons in this way in reference to the ordinary affairs of life, and whose conduct is consistent with his reasoning. That character is the do-nothing, good-for-nothing sluggard; and Solomon tells him to go to the ant and learn wisdom.

14. It may be said in answer to all this, however, that in such cases as these which have been adduced as illustrations, the results are under the control of fixed natural laws, and can be produced only by the use of the means which God has established in the economy of Nature. Exactly so. This covers the entire ground in both cases. All spiritual blessings are under the control of equally fixed and unchangeable spiritual laws, and can be enjoyed only through the use of the spiritual means which God in his love and mercy has foreordained in the spiritual world for this very purpose, all of which in both cases is in exact accordance with the foreknowledge of God. The principle is precisely the same, only the means used are different in adaptation to the different ends to be attained.

In the one case, the means used are physical, and therefore adapted to the attainment of physical ends; in the other, the means used are spiritual, and therefore adapted to the attainment of spiritual ends. In both cases, the foreknowledge of God takes in the means to be used as an indispensable factor in the attainment of the end. And as the foreknowledge of God does not destroy, set aside, or overlook human agency and responsibility in the one case, so it does not in the other. As in accordance with the foreknowledge and foreordination of God in the kingdom of Nature, men must plant and cultivate and reap in order to the possession and enjoyment of a bountiful harvest of earthly fruits; so in accordance with the foreknowledge and foreordination of God in the kingdom of Grace, men must believe in and obey the Lord Jesus Christ in order to the enjoyment of peace and pardon here, and continue to love and serve the Lord in order to the enjoyment of endless happiness hereafter.

Commission and Progression.

There seems to be a tendency among some of our churches and some of our preachers to practice the baptist doctrine of "Once in grace, always in grace." And I attribute it to the use, or perhaps abuse, of the commission as recorded by Mark 16: 16. These preachers visit these churches from time to time and teach them little else than the scripture just alluded to. Then they go away and do not visit them through the week to teach them and get into full sympathy with them. They leave them as sheep without a shepherd; thus saying by their action "These have been saved, and are certain of Heaven." The writer prefers to use the commission as given in Matt. 28: 19, 20. Because 1st, it is more comprehensive; covers more ground, is progressive. 2nd. The language in Mk. 16: 16 is claimed to be an interpolation, by a number of bible scholars; prominent among whom is Bro. J. W. McGarvey. 3rd. It does not sound like the language of Jesus, and it does not go far enough. It says "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." While the language in Matthew not only admits of, but is suggestive of progression. (Don't get frightened at that word,) "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This undisputed scripture forbids the error, that men do not require to be taught how to be Christians, or how to be Christlike after they have been baptized. The writer is one who believes that if the church of Christ is ministered unto properly, so that the membership will be spiritually edified, and so they will "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," we would not have to ask sinners to come to Christ. They would be only too eager to come and cast their lot among such people, and go with us on our way to God and to Christ. Two young preachers with whom the writer conversed recently along this line of thought, said that they had not done so, but that hereafter their efforts would be more in line with the injunction in the last verse in the book of Matthew.

Perhaps the attractiveness of the commission in Mk. 16: 10 lies in the fact that there is a penalty in it. Some people can not be reached without threatening them, but those people, I fear, are far from the kingdom. Let us not try to scare people into the kingdom by a "He that believeth not shall be damned:" Let us not endeavor to frighten them by appealing to their fear of the devil: but let us preach Christ to them so as to make Him so attractive that they can not resist Him. The commission in Matt. tells the apostles what to do

THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.
and does not say what will be the effect on those who hear: it makes no promise and speaks of no penalty to be inflicted. This sounds like Jesus; leading, not driving. While the language in Mark appeals to the sympathies of those who are always on the lookout for rewards, with a weather eye on the penalty: and appears to have been added to Mark’s story of Jesus by just such a man; and is loudly preached by a number of preachers of the same spot and stripe.


Paul stayed a year and a half in Corinth, two years each in Ephesus and Rome, teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence no man forbidding him, (at Rome.)

When Aquilla and Priscilla found Apollas at Ephesus, and heard him preach the Messiah, only according to John the Baptist; and no doubt preaching, “The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,” (Mk. 1: 4), “They expounded unto him the way of the Lord more perfectly.” Apollas was probably going to the length of the commission as per Mk. 16: 16, and Aquilla and his wife went farther, and dealt with him to the full extent of the commission as per Matt. 28: 19, 20.

While Mk. 16: 16 is truth, every word of it; it is unfinished and crude: and if we stop where it stops the product of our preaching will be crude. While our Savior says to us, that if we will go to the extent of the last two verses in Matthew, He will be with us always, even unto the end of the world. If he is with us, then let us do those things in teaching and edifying the churches, that will keep him with us.

Micah Combs.

South Kentucky Field Notes.

J. W. GANT, ELKTON, KY.

I came to this place (Crofton) last Saturday to fill Bro. W. B. Wright’s appointment. On account of the inclement weather, the audience was small Lord’s day morning, and was completely rained out Lord’s day evening.

I always enjoy my visits to Crofton. I preached here several years, organized the congregation, and aided in raising the money to build the house of worship. During my ministry at Crofton it was my privilege to baptize a large per cent of its present membership. This work as is generally known was done under the auspices of the South Kentucky Association.

There are now sixteen congregations in this county (Christian) one-half of which were organized by the South Kentucky Association. All of this work has been done within the last fifteen years.

All we ask is that the tree be judged by the fruit it bears. If it bears good fruit let it stand, if not cut it down. This is our argument in favor of organiz- ed mission work. Bro. Wright is quite popular with the Crofton people.

Congregations that give to mission work never give one cent less for work at home. Some people appear to think that if a congregation gives any thing to the missionary cause or the Orphan’s Home that it will give just that much less to the support of the home preacher. This is a great mistake. At least it is not in harmony with my experience. The more people do abroad the more they do at home.

Some people as they become more able to contribute, become less willing to do so. Covetousness gives us more money, and more money makes us still more covetous. At least that appears to be true of some people.

Before any one should refuse to contribute to any cause in which is involved the salvation of souls, he should ask this question: “What would be the result if every person in my condition were to refuse to contribute anything?” If you have any hope that the cause will succeed, is not your hope based upon the belief that others possess a more sacrificing spirit than you possess? What do you say now, and how will you answer this question at the judgement bar of God at the last day?

Since I aided Bro. Wright in a meeting at this place about four months ago the Harbinger of death has visited this congregation, and taken with us all confidence no man forbidding him, (at Rome.)

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in behalf of our aged and helpless preachers and their dependent ones, scores of whom had served the church of Christ twice the number of years that old horse had served his master, but whose care was not so well assured as was his.

I instinctively asked myself can it be that a worn out family horse is entitled to more gracious care than a worthy worn out preacher. It was a merciful provision for the ox that he should not be muzzled so that he might be refreshed as he walked in the furrow. "DOTH God take care of oxen only." What of His care for those whom He hath appointed to be ministers of His boundless Grace? What saith the Spirit, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel?" Let those whose hearts are touched by this "memory" send an offering for the better care of our worn out preachers. "The Master cometh and calleth for you." He cometh in the person of the suffering messengers. What answer will you make to his appeal in their behalf?

"In as much as ye have done it unto one of my little ones ye have done it unto me." Send offerings to my address.

A. M. Atkinson, Cor. See'y.
Wabash, Indiana.

The Christian Quarterly.

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2. You need the Christian Quarterly in your study that you may have the best thought from the most vigorous minds and Godly men among the disciples of Christ.

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G. A. Hoffman,
Columbia, Mo.

Report of First Christian Church.

UNION CITY, TENNESSEE.

From Jan. 1st. to Dec. 31, 1896.

These reports from the various departments, elaborated and itemized, were read in the presence of the congregation Sunday morning, Dec. 27. Here they are much condensed, and many interesting features are omitted.

Y. P. S. C. E.

Present Membership ........ 39
Total Amount of Contributions $32 66
Amount Given to Missions .... 23 00

JUNIOR S. C. E.

Present Membership ........ 46
Total Amount of Contributions $19 10
Amount Given to Missions .... 15 00

C. W. B. M.

Present Membership ........ 24
Total amount of Contributions $29 36
Amount Given to Missions .... 15 45

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Present Membership ........ 155
Total Amount of Contributions $156 39
Amount Given to Missions .... 16 75

LADIES AID SOCIETY.

Present Membership ........ 40
Total Amount of Collections  $334 35
Amount Given to Missions .... 110 00

CHURCH TREASURER.

Total Amount of Contributions $1 958 10
Amount Given to Missions .... 42 50
Grand Total of Contributions $2 540 41
Given to Missions ........... 222 70

REPORT OF PASTOR.

Sermons Preached ............ 154
Addresses .................. 6
Funeral Services ............ 13
Marriages .................. 9
Additions at Union City ...... 97
Elsewhere .................. 57
Loss by Death and Letter .... 8
Net Gain in Membership ...... 89
Present Membership .......... 373

There are besides this many indications of growth and progress that cannot be expressed in figures, much has been given to charity not indicated here. Notice that every department is in fellowship with missions. Each department is out of debt, with a small amount in the treasury. The church has met every cent of its current expenses, and has something left. To the Christ be all the glory.

W. H. Sheffer.
INVESTIGATION.

There is no way of becoming acquainted with our duty to God or man, except by investigating the authorities on the subject. A people who cease to be investigative, cease to grow and fail to ever become great. One last tribute recorded in God's word to the memory of the Bereans was that they studied or investigated daily, to see whether the things taught them were so. There are two classes of people in regard to investigation: One who accept without investigation and the other who reject without investigation. One class is no better than the other. The first has our sublime play, the latter our supreme contempt. A man's "orthodoxy," "soundness," or "loyalty," have never been with us a sufficient guarantee to prevent our looking into the truthfulness and accuracy of the things taught.

The Christian church or church of Christ, which by the way were universally used as synonymous terms among us till very recent years, a distinction only being drawn by some among us till very recent years, a distinction only being drawn by some even now, has always stood for the openest and freest investigation of all subjects, and never to accede to any matter of doctrine or method of work that was not fully substantiated by the only court of appeal, the word of God. For this reason we never have, indeed never could, if any desired it, ever become an ecclesiasticalism. We have all room in heaven and on earth in which to grow. No man unvisiters can formulate our belief or set bounds to our liberty in Christ Jesus. We stand individually as branches in the true vine which is Jesus the Christ. Each one of us must give an account of himself to God. As a religious body we have always courted investigation of our faith and worship at the hands of our religious neighbors. Again: we have always been open to the reception of the truth, all truth, from whatever source it might come. One criticism however, I would put in right here, some are too afraid of doing anything that is done by any other body of people, for no other reason than it may have a tendency to be getting back to Rome. I am not afraid of my brethren ever falling in love with the "Mistress of harlots." The tendency of the worldwide is in the other direction. I am not ashamed neither intimidated by accepting any truth or any thing that is proper and right, for no other reason than for sooth, some body else may do that also. No one man, no body of men, in fact all en put together do not stand for or represent all the truth. Truth is eternal; truth is God's universal gift to man. It can only be had at the expense of diligent study and honest investigation.

Watch the Preachers.

This means You.

TEXT: "And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch." Matt. 15: 14.

1. Paul said: "So then faith cometh by hearing and by the word of God." Rom. 10: 17. Did you ever hear preachers say that faith comes by prayer?

2. James said: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Who is right?

3. Peter confessed: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt. 16: 16. Do the preachers now have to confess a living faith in a personal Savior, or a cold form of church doctrines?

4. Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16: 16; Peter said: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 38; and Ananias said: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22: 16. Are these passages favorite proof texts with the preachers you usually hear? If not, why? Jesus and his apostles taught sinners to believe the gospel, confess faith in a living Savior, repent of their sins, and obey the Lord in baptism, all in order to attain unto the remission of their sins.

5. "And they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Acts 8: 38. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. 6: 4. Do all preachers go with their candidates from baptism down into the water, bury them in baptism, and come up out of the water? If not, are they following the examples of inspired men?

6. Paul said: "There is one baptism." Eph. 4: 5. How many baptisms do you hear preachers talk about and see them practice in this age? Should we have more than the apostles had?

7. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women." Acts 8: 12. Who were baptized? Both men and women who believed. Where do you suppose the unbelieving infants were? Strange we are not told that men women and infants were baptized!

8. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts 11: 26. "Then Agrippon said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Acts 26: 28. Why can we not all be Christians only? But do not some preachers wear additional and unscriptural human names, and persuade people to do likewise? Are they following Paul's example?

9. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." Acts 20: 7. Do all churches now come together to break bread; or do some come to hear a sermon, others to hear a lecture, others to attend a concert? The object anecdotically was "to break bread."

10. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." 1 Cor. 11: 28. Are you taught to let every one pass a self-examination preparatory to the communion with the Lord? Has any one the right to invite to, or exclude from the table of the Lord? If so, where did he get this right?

11. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Cor. 5: 19. Did you ever hear sinners exalted to pray God to become reconciled to them? "Be ye reconciled to God is Bible language. 2 Cor. 5: 20.

12. Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." John 15: 5. Did you ever hear any one preach that "ye" has reference to modern denominations? The Lord said that each of his disciples was a branch, not each denomination.

13. In our dear Savior's prayer, he said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17: 20, 21. Have you not heard preachers thank God for the divisions among his people? But Jesus prayed for Christian union. The devil di-
vides, the Christ unitea. The closer the union among God's people, the easier the conquest over Satan's kingdom.

Please study the foregoing suggestions in the fraternal spirit prompting them, and **"Be not deceived."**

The following is self explanatory:

"Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Barrall requests your presence at the marriage of their daughter, Olivia, to Rev. W. H. Alford, Wednesday morning, January 20th, 1897. Bride's residence at 110 e'clock."

Bro. Alford is one of our Mississippi boys, and we had hoped to see him located in Mississippi. Possibly he will be working there before some months. Possibly some may not be able to harmonize this statement with the fact that the Sr. editor of this paper left Mississippi. Those however, who have read closely what we have said along this line heretofore will understand. As an editor and publisher of a great and good paper, we can serve Mississippi better from Nashville than from Jackson, Miss. Did I expect to make pastoral work my life work, I would that very minutely pack my little effects together and take the fastest train to Mississippi I could get. I say this in all good faith, yet with a full appreciation of, and a great love for my brethren of the other states that the GOSPEL MESSENGER is trying to represent.

Who wants a better paper than is found in this issue? Read our church reports and see how encouraging! Read our correspondence and see how rich and meaty. Our first page; good as the Standard's or Evangelist's or even the Firm Foundation's. Our editorials? Modesty forbids, but we think mighty loud. Our biography and photography department-contains a sketch of one of the liveliest evangelists of the South, or of any country. Well if this copy don't please you, nothing short of a Heavenly MESSENGER would.

Read "A memory of Athens, Ga." in this issue by Bro. A. M. Atkinson, and take heed. It is strange, yet it is true that whatever a man has nearest his heart, he can always find in the common affairs of life lessons to illustrate his pet theme. Bro. Atkinson is so full of this mission of love and mercy in which he is engaged, that he can turn most any incident to account for the mortal good of the aged preacher. The Lord is blessing him in this noble work.

We have received from Sister J. W. Crenshaw, of Cades, Ky., a copy of her beautiful little poem, "Christmas times in Ole Kentuck." It shows that Sister Crenshaw is a poet of no mean ability. Ordinarily we have but little taste for poetry, but this one catches us, as it brings into play a good deal of the old time negro character, which we always enjoyed studying.

We were late in mailing the MESSENGER to South, Kentucky subscribing members last week, on account of a delay in getting the mailing list of the Evangelist.

Difficulties incident to a change of paper, coupled together with other office changes, caused us to be two days' late last week. We will have a fine number next week.

Bro. T. B. Larimore is holding a good meeting in this city at the Line St. Christian church. Bro. L. is doing some fine preaching, as he always does: So far there have been 5 additions.

T. A. Reynolds, of Frankfort, Ind., has taken charge of the Woodland St. Christian church, this city. He is a fine preacher, a splendid mixer, and we are expecting a fine year's work. His audiences Sunday were very fine both morning and evening.

There was a delightful little entertainment at Southern Christian College, this city last Friday night, given by Sister Lillian Armstrong's class in music. We are glad to note that this college is steadily growing, and we confidently hope to see the day not far distant when it will take rank with our foremost colleges.

We give this week a splendid cut of Bro. John A. Stevens, State Evangelist of Mississippi. Some of the cuts that will appear from time to time, will be furnished us by the party as in this instance, which will cause them not to appear uniform in size or style.

We club the GOSPEL MESSENGER to South, Kentucky subscrib- ers $1.00; to the State and the South for her liberality and consecration to the Lord's work, the deepest sympathy of her brethren and sisters everywhere in the loss of her life-time companion.

All who knew Brother Love spoke well of him. He had an unbounded confidence in men, and some of his associates took advantage of him at this point. He was kind-hearted and generous. All felt that when they were within the length of Father Love's cable toe they were near a true friend.

Such a life is an inspiration to the young. We shall miss his form and features, but the memory of this true man of God shall live on, and the wave of influence generated by him shall lash upon the shores of eternity, bearing many ransomed souls.

O. P. S.

Give Earnest heed.

The time for the March offering for Foreign Missions is at hand. The missionary force is larger, and the receipts will need to be corresponding ly increased. We must do three things this year:

1. Enlist 5,000 contributing churches.
2. Bring 1,000 churches up to their full apportionment.
3. Reach $100,000 in the receipts.

The Missionary Voice will be sent to every church requesting it. It should be distributed in each church preparatory to the offering. See that one copy reaches every family represented in the church. And the March Offering Envelopes will be furnished the churches. Place one in the hands of all the members. Order Voices and envelopes at once.

The watchword for the year is: An offering from every church; a gift from every member.

A. McLean, Cor. Sec.
E. M. Raines, Treas.
Box 507, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Reports from the Churches.

ALABAMA.

BIRMINGHAM: We had six additions yesterday. We hope for hundreds this year. In the afternoon I preached to a crowded house in North Birmingham. We have a beautiful little church building in this part of the city but no "local organization." We are engaged in protracted services in North Birmingham this week. The meeting will continue indefinitely. Bro. O. P. Spiegel will be with me part, or all, of this week. I have planned a vigorous gospel campaign for Birmingham, this year. Early this year Bro. Spiegel will spend four to six weeks with me. Early in the autumn I shall have other help. This year, we trust, will witness a great ingathering in this city.

J. M. Watson.

FLORIDA.

OCOEE: When the undersigned in these columns six weeks or more ago promised another missive he did not think of being silent so long, but it is now too late to apologize.

The Junior editor of the Messenger was with us in Southern Georgia about three weeks in November.

The meeting at Lake Park lasted ten days without any visible results. Four years ago Bro. Spiegel held a ten days meeting at this place which resulted in twenty-nine additions. Some who are in a position to know say this last meeting was a better one than the first. The good done in a meeting is not to be judged by the number of additions. Our experience was not quite that of a good brother who made the following report: "we had a glorious meeting, there were no accessions but we turned out six and a half days' meeting:~ At this place there was one miles distance) and had a three days' meeting."

We would be pleased at that meeting to have a representative of the Messenger, and in behalf of the brethren and sisters of Ocala I feel free to extend a cordial invitation and welcome to all disciples who may visit our state this winter. We want to see a "grand rally." It is only about two months off. All who can attend should address H. C. Graves, Ocala, Fla.

A. B. Herring.

KENTUCKY.

VALLEY STATION: I began my labors with the church here in November, 1894 which continued until January first, 1897 at which time I resigned. During the twenty-six months which I served the congregation, its active membership has almost been doubled. Our last service was rewarded by three uniting with us from the Baptists. May the work here still continue to prosper is my prayer.

W. H. Alford.

MISSISSIPPI.

JACKSON: The writer returned Saturday morning from a week's visit in Alabama "mid" the scenes of his childhood. Our "New Year's day," for the first time in eight years, he sat at his father's table. In the meantime many changes have taken place. Some, have made us sad, but after all we have reason to rejoice and be glad, for the Lord has been very good to us. La Gripe is no stranger amongst the inhabitants of our city. It will not be long until every body will be trying to convince every body else he had it worse than any body.

On account of the all day rain our audiences were small yesterday. But, while our audiences are always small when compared with some of our congregations, I dare say, they are as large at heart as can be found any where. The Lord is sure to bless this people's efforts, because, their "labor is in the Lord."

On Thursday Dec. 24, '96, the mortal remains of the wife of the late T. W. Caskey were brought to this city from her home in Texas, and after a short service conducted in the Christian church by the writer, peacefully and quietly laid to rest by the side of him whom she had loved and honored so long and who had preceded her only a few months. Sister Caskey was eighty-two years old and had been helpless for several years.

As I know of no one better prepared in every way to chronicle her life and fall on the field of battle than Bro. B. F. Manire, I would suggest that he do so.

We trust the Lord may "establish the work of our hands upon us!", during the year that His name may be glorified and our "deeds be blessed."

Walter A. Neal.

TENNESSEE.

NASHVILLE: Vine Street Christian Church: Good audiences yesterday at both services. There were two additions at the morning service.

R. Lin Gaye.

UNION CITY: A very rainy day yesterday. Small audiences. One addition at night. Our people are hopeful for the new year. Our motto is enlargement.

W. H. Shaffner.

CLARKSVILLE: Fine meetings yesterday. One added at morning service. Work opens up well for 1897. You have improved the Messenger. Success to you. A. M. Growden.

NASHVILLE: Woodland Street Mission: Our work began with this church Sunday with preaching at night. On account of short notice, a small crowd was present. After this, services will be held after Sunday school, which meets at 3:00. This is the prettiest
Chattanooga, Highland Park: Since October last have preached regularly; visible results are not in numbers. Bro. Myhr says the spiritual growth is very noticeable. I preached eleven sermons at Rossville and baptized two. Organized a Sunday-school with sixty students. We had to call it a Union Sunday-school but we have the Supt. Herbert Taylor and most of the teachers, are our kind of people. We also organized a Wednesday night prayer-meeting which is well attended. Since I began a mission work there the Methodists have appointed a minister for that place but that only serves us for more work.

Bro. Myhr has promised to help me in a meeting there soon. The prospects are first class for Chattanooga. We had one addition last Lord's day. I was down with La Grippe last week but am up now. Bro. B. G. Woodworth of the Walnut St. Cong. committed suicide this A. M. In his son's store, was found dead with shot in head by Office boy. Cause, business failure. How uncertain is this world! but O, how sure and stable is God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee and trusteth in thee."

Your Humble Brother,

W. M. TAYLOR.

An Unfinished Life.

Fanny Harris Mayes entered the earthly life Jan. 13, 1877; the Christian life March 17, 1886, and the heavenly life Dec. 21, 1896.

At her favorite hour of sunset, on a bitter wintry day, when but twelve years old, she followed Christ into the cold waters of the Yazoo River. When asked if she was not afraid of being swept away by the current, she answered, "It would be a good way to die." Every day had its appointed reading in each Testament, and she read the Bible through every year. Every desire of her heart was made known to God, and she saw in every joy an answer to prayer. She did not wish to be alive when judgment comes; not because she dreaded the awful day, but because, since Jesus died, she wished to experience death also. Ev'ry hymn of heaven sang itself in her heart.

She did not live to complete her twentieth year, but young as she was, she cared nothing for foolish amuse- ment, and refused to go where the object of gathering was merely pleasure. She never saw a playing card, never had anything to do with dancing. She never saw a dance, never went to a dance. She did not live to experience death.

She did not live to complete her twenty-fourth hours later she joined the anthem. It was her beloved sunset hour when she passed through glory's western gate and walked in Paradise.

IN JESUS' ARMS.

Will he take us in his bosom? Will he fold us in his arms? Shall we wear the mitre, Shorn of its crimson washed away. Sheltered from this earth of storms? We at last will go to heaven, Where we'll really see his face; Oh! I never can imagine What we'll feel in that fair place. Only this I think—the sinners, With their crimson washed away. Could not rise from his dear bosom, But from entrance there would stay. How could I leave it for one moment, After there I once recline? That will there around me shine. With their crimson washed away. They for whom my heart was breaking Not for all those dear, dear Christians, For whom my heart was breaking. This "simple and heartfelt lay" was written a few months before the end.

FANNY HARRIS MAYES.
To Subscribers.

We rarely ever say anything in these columns about our subscribers "paying up." We want to say now in large type, once for all, that we not only want those in arrears to "settle up," but we are going to adopt a CASH IN ADVANCE system. Those over one year in arrears, will be dropped at once, unless they pay up. Pay up before you order the paper discontinued. We don't propose to publish a paper for people who won't pay for it, for such readers do not appreciate it. Again: Let us suggest to those who have the welfare of the MESSENGER at heart, that a paper needs something more substantial to operate on than "good will." We appreciate good wishes, but the mortal DOLLAR will go much farther in paying rents, printers, buying paper, paying postage, etc. &c. Are you a friend? This means U. We don't want to lose a single subscriber, but a name without the money is like "faith without works," dead, with a big D. Send money in any legitimate way, to

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Prayer meeting topic for Jan. 17—
Revivals—at Home and in Mission
Fields. 2 Chron. 30: 18-27.

Taking the word in its negative
meaning, a revival implies nothing
forced or unnatural. The underlying
idea is life—life full, abundant, and
beautiful.—R. O. Emest.

A revival is a work of God and so is
a crop of wheat; and God is as much
dependent on the use of means in the
one case as in the other.—Finney.

San Francisco, '97! Are you going?
The history of past conventions
shows each one to be better than the
last, for those in charge of the pro-
gram have the best obtainable, and it
is a responsible honor for any man to
be given a place on the program no
matter how famous he may be. More-
over, the committees on reception
matter, shows each one to be better than the
last, for those in charge of the pro-
gram have the best obtainable, and it
is a responsible honor for any man to
be given a place on the program no
matter how famous he may be. More-
over, the committees on reception

When George McDonald said that
"the lack of service is the mire of hu-
manity," he must have spoken from
wide observation. At all events, it is
true, as any lookout committee will
tell you. They have discovered that
the best way to interest indifferent
ones, and to make timid ones forget
themselves, is to give them some-
ting to do. It may be only to speak
to the stranger who takes a back
seat. It may be only to select a verse
for the new member who is afraid of
his own voice, and doubts his own
ability to select a suitable verse.
There are just such timid ones, fellow
Endeavorer, though you may not be
able to understand it; and you are
fortunate if you did not have any such
fear of yourself to overcome.

We wish that every Y. P. S. C. E.
would form a Junior society among
the children of their own church if
there is not one already. This
has come to be an important part
of Christian endeavor—to help the
Juniors and increase their numbers;
and see that its members are wide-
surely it is work that ought to be done.
Juniors and increase their numbers;
and see that its members are wide-

The obituary notice in these col-
umns of Sister Fanny Mayes is the
sister of our former office editor,
Brother Robert Mayes. Our prayers
and sympathies are extended to them
in their hours of grief.

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TENNESSEE MISSIONS.
SUNDAY-SCHOOL DAY: For Tennessee missions first Lord’s day in April.
MISSIONARY DAY: For all Christian churches in Tennessee, first Lord’s day in October.

BOARDING in a First-class house is a luxury, when the charges are reasonable. When any of the friends of this paper visit Nashville, they can find such a Boarding house by calling on Mrs. S. A. McAllister, 204 s. High street.

Elam to Minton.
I know nothing of the speech made in the convention except what THE GOSPEL MESSENGER, as copied in the Gospel Advocate, said about it. I presume from what it says that Brother Minton made the speech. THE MESSENGER says: “He showed that they (the apostles and early disciples) evidently did not have a special plan for doing this work, but that they no doubt experimented until they got the best plan, and adopted this, adjusting it to the peculiar circumstances in each case. He cited Paul’s ‘experiment’ in 2 Corinthians 9: 13 as evidence for this.”
I referred in my letter to Brother Srygley only to “Paul’s experiment in 2 Corinthians 9: 13 as evidence” for the statement that the apostles ‘no doubt experimented until they got the best plan and adopted this,” etc.
The apostles never experimented at all about the work and worship of the church. They spoke, wrote, and acted by inspiration. They were forbidden to leave Jerusalem to begin preaching the gospel until endowed with power from on high. The Spirit was to teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever Christ had commanded them (John 14: 26), and to guide them into all truth, to take of the things of Christ and to show it unto them (John 16: 13, 14.) Paul’s letters to the various churches and to individual Christians are inspired. To the Corinthians themselves he says: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 14: 37.) Then his “order” to the churches of Galatia and the Corinthians concerning the collection for the saints upon the first day of the week, in 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2, is inspired, and therefore the command of God; hence, no experiment. God never works by experiment. This discredits inspiration and deprecates the wisdom of God.
But if the apostles “experimented” until they discovered that “the best plan” for helping the poor saints “in the peculiar circumstances” of the Corinthians and Galatians was for every one to lay by himself in store upon the first day of the week, was not the meeting itself on that day an experiment? If they “experimented” until they got the best plan for doing this, did they not experiment as to the “best plan” of worshiping, “and adopt this, adjusting it to the peculiar circumstances in each case?” Did they not experiment as to “the best plan” of setting the church in order with a plurality of elders, deacons, and other members? Then are not the apostles themselves an experiment, the church an experiment, and the whole affair an experiment? But we are told that the apostles not only “experimented until they got the best plan and adopted it,” but that they adjusted “it to the peculiar circumstances in each case.” This, being interpreted, means that even the apostles’ “best plan” for helping the poor saints, having been discovered by experiment, and not given by inspiration, may not be adjustable to “the peculiar circumstances”
of the present age, and therefore not of binding authority; hence we may experiment until we get the best plan, adjustable to our times. May we not attempt the change to the refined, aesthetic, and fastidious tastes of this enlightened and advanced age? Through this "experiment" hole may come the own waters of infidelity, and make the heart sick.

But should it be granted that the apostles did "experiment," I still deny that II Corinthians 9:13 is proof of the fact. Simply, because the word "experiment" occurs here is no proof that the apostles "experimented until they got the best plan" for doing that which the Holy Spirit guided them in doing. This use of the passage is what I lament.

I never said "the Revised Version contradicts the common version. It does not; but Brother Minton's use of the passage contradicts both versions. Says: "I wonder why the brother did not tell us that the part which contradicts the speech made in Nashville was supplied, and in the Gospel of Luke." I did not say what part of the passage contradicts his speech, for the reason that the passage itself and the entire context contradict the idea that Paul was experimenting or commanding an experiment of his own, when he had already given order by inspiration to the churches of Galatia and Corinth how to do. Will the brother say that I Corinthians 6:1, 2, is an experiment? The Revised Version of II Corinthians 9:13 is: "Seeing that through the proving of you by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all," if you are the supplied words, I presume, to which Brother Minton refers. But, while they are supplied, the word "experiment" in raising money worked, or for the libe- rality of the Corinthians? I doubt if any one except those who are "experimenting" with a "special plan" ever thought of giving to this verse any other than its plain, accepted meaning.

No, I do not especially desire to discuss.

I want, as I said, this society issue discussed by the wisest and best men on either side of the question—such as Brethren Lipscomb and McGeary. Let the discussion involve the real issue, and let it be in Nashville or Louisville; or, if the brethren prefer, let it be written and published in at least two papers, one representing the position of the one man and one side, and the other the other. If it be an open discussion, let it be taken down and put in permanent form. These men are more competent to discuss it than Brother Minton and myself. Their discussion would be more thorough, and have far greater in- fluence for good; but in the meantime, while arranging for this, Brother Minton and I can take a crack or two at it, as a sort of advanced guards, while the main army and heavy artillery are loading up and moving up. But, instead of the first proposition which he arranges for me to affirm, let me affirm, that "the church of the New Testament, as set in order by the Holy Spirit through the apostles, is the only organization necessary for the evan- gelization of the world."

To this Church I belong, and in it work, and am ready to affirm its all-sufficiency for the evangelization of the world. Then let the discussion be in the Chris- tian Standard, as well as in the Gospel Advocate. Let the publishing companies take care of themselves; I presume they are able to do so.

I am not set, either, for the defense of the Sunday school, as it now exists, a majority of the churches of Christ in Ten- nessee. What if Brother Minton should succeed in proving that there is as much authority in the Bible for the "Tennessee Missionary Society" as there is for the Sunday school, "as it now exists," etc., is of Bible authority; and this would require double work. We will let him off if he will prove that the society itself, "as it now exists," is authorized by the Bible, and therefore Scriptural.

"Now, brethren, if you want to discuss the question, the way is open."

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[The above is copied in this paper by verbal request.—Ed.]

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