Gospel Messenger.

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

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CURRENT TOPICS.

A. S. MOORE, MEMPHIS, TENN.

The whole country will sympathise with President McKinley in the loss of his aged mother. Perhaps no one is so much interested in a man's progress and promotion in this life as is his mother, and to see her son useful and honored by his countrymen must be a source of gratification to any mother. It was well that Mother McKinley was permitted to live to see her son installed in the highest position in the gift of his people. Nor did the President forget his mother on the day of his exaltation, but permitted her to share the honor and happiness of that occasion, as was meet that he should do. We do not know that Mother McKinley was in any sense a remarkable woman. She was just such as thousands of other American mothers, intelligent, patriotic and devoted. She was a representative of the true type of American womanhood.

Immigration has begun to increase, and it is probable that there may be some legislation during the present meeting of Congress looking towards its restriction. This is a serious question calling for wise treatment. Foreign immigration affects the social, economical, and moral problems of this country. America has ever been an asylum for the poor and oppressed of earth, but there is danger of overrunning the asylum and destroying it with the riffraff and scum of the Old World.

Booth-Tucker, leader of the Salvation Army in America, is engaged in a great colonization scheme. He says he is going to establish "a chain of colonies that will belt the country with help." In twenty-three different Southern and Western States he has secured tracts of land ranging in size from 1,000 to 4,000 acres, which he purposes to divide into blocks of five and ten acres each, build on each block a cottage, furnish the place with the necessary stock, and then induce some poor family from the city to go and occupy it. After a time the place will be sold to the family on such terms that the poorest can afford, and in this way he hopes to relieve the overcrowded cities and to furnish the poor with needed help. But this scheme is intended especially for the fallen who have been saved in their city meetings and desire to lead a righteous life. It is a great scheme, and we cannot but hope that it will meet with some degree of success.

A PROTEST against the appointment of Attorney General McKenna to the Supreme Court bench, has been sent to the President from Portland, Ore., signed by two United States judges and several State judges. The ground of the protest is the alleged lack of qualification for such a position. It is suggested, however, that the fact that Mr. McKenna is a Catholic may have something to do with the protest. Another suggestion is that the railroad is at the bottom of the opposition. In any case, President McKinley is likely to do as he pleases about the appointment.

And now the Methodist Church has been holding a "Congress." It seems that somebody is bent on something. When preachers can't air their views in their denominational meetings, they get up a "Congress," and then they have air enough and to spare. This Methodist Congress, held in Pittsburgh, discussed, among other things, "Evolution and Revelation," and "The New View of the Old Testament." In speaking of this Congress, The Outlook says: "The paper by Prof. H. G. Mitchell on 'The New View of the Old Testament' had before been condemned, as we understand it, by resolutions adopted by other Methodist bodies, but it was received with marked approval by this body." Now we expect somebody to arise and say that this Congress has no ecclesiastical authority, and that its utterances are of no significance.

This item from Christian Work is significant: "It is a deplorable fact, as certified to by the Central Presbyterian, that 1,242 Southern Presbyterian Churches did not report 'a single profession of faith during the past year.' 'Upon this picture of unfaithfulness,' says the editor, 'with its want of faith and prayer and effort, it calls every one of us to gaze until we are filled with shame and confusion of face, and with new vows bring forth works meet for repentance.' Our Southern friends are not alone in this respect." Has The Central Presbyterian properly diagnosed the case? Is it a lack of faith, prayer, and effort? Perhaps some of these churches are very staunch in the Presbyterian faith. Perhaps some have put forth strenuous efforts and have prayed without ceasing. At least we know churches of other faiths of which this much is true. The spirit of evangelism, of fraternity and of adaptation counts for much. Times change and so do methods. Christianity is flexible, but sectarianism is often fixed. The wide-awake church will study conditions and try to so adjust itself as to be able to meet them in the spirit of Christ and of true service.

It seems that the Sultan of Turkey has invited the New York Herald to "send a competent commissioner to investigate the Armenian massacres." Rev. George H. Hepworth has been chosen for that work and is already on the ground. What is intended to be accomplished by such an investigation does not appear, unless it is an attempt to whitewash the name of that infamous ruler. It is too late to really do any good, for from one to two hundred thousand Armenians are dead and few are left in the locality of the massacres to demand justice. No nation is back of this investigation, and there is no promise of repair. Dr. Hepworth may make an honest investigation, but much material that should be brought into evidence has been removed. Then, it cannot be expected that he will fare any better than others. Miss Barton was restricted in her work and the English commissioners were not allowed to investigate in their own way. Besides, Mr. Bennett, editor of the Herald, has accepted favors from the Sultan, and that would stand in the way of any adverse criticism from that quarter. The investigation seems to be in the interest of the Sultan and not of the Armenian.
The following clipping is from the Baptist and Reflector, this city, which by the way is a fairly good paper of the kind. It says:

"The question comes: Suppose a Campbellite should apply for membership in a Baptist church and state that when he was baptized he was regenerated and was baptized with the distinct understanding that his baptism would be for the purpose of expressing that fact and not to secure regeneration, should he be rebaptized? We think he should. Three things are necessary to the validity of baptism. (1) The proper form. (2) The proper subject (including the proper authority). The proper form is immersion. The proper subject is one who has repented of his sins and believed on Jesus Christ, and has been regenerated by the Holy Ghost and now desires to be baptized to show forth these facts to the world. The proper administrator is one who has the proper authority back of him. That authority, we believe, is a true Church of Christ. In the case mentioned the first two of these pre-requisites were present, the proper form and the proper subject, but not the third, the proper administrator, because lacking the proper church authority. We think the person ought to be rebaptized. As indicated by our review of his book is another column this is the view which Dr. Dargan of the Seminary would take of the matter. This is also the view which would be taken by the great majority of Baptists all over the South."

The case in hand is a "supposed" case you will observe. I am glad that this gentle editor deals with a hypothetical case. I never have heard of a man or woman obeying Christ under the labors of a Christian preacher, who was baptized with the distinct understanding that his sins had been previously forgiven. Neither did I ever hear of a man being baptized by a Christian preacher in order to secure regeneration. Suppose? Yes, let it rest with a supposition. If such a case is on record, it was all the outgrowth of that teaching which was itself yet in the wilderness. Who ever heard of a Christian preacher expostulating on the power of baptism to secure regeneration?

But let this be as it may, the funny thing about the answer to the question in the above quotation is the third division, or "proper administrator." Now our "Campbellite" immersion is the proper form, and if we were regenerated and saved by the Holy Ghost before baptism that would be a pretty good salvation for the ordinary "Campbellite," but as we have not been immersed by the proper authority, which, being interpreted means by a Baptist preacher, why we are not fit for the fellowship of a Baptist? That looks to a man up a tree like putting a Baptist preacher's "authority" above the Holy Ghost's regeneration and salvation. Say brother, if the saved man is not baptized by the right party, is he saved at all? If not, isn't that baptismal regeneration, or baptismal salvation, according to your theory? But if baptism has no vital connection with salvation, why need so much authority vested in the man who performs a non-essential thing? Or why insist on an essential way of doing a non-essential thing? I can see why there must be a proper subject, for Jesus specifies the one kneeled in the administrator? Then you constitute yourself that authority. But according to Dr. Whitsett, the authority idea is somewhat exploded, is it not? We don't ask these questions to be asking, but we just want to know a few things, and as our Baptist brother has the proper authority—not all authority I suppose—he can inform us poor "Campbellites." We have had some inclinations along
W. E. Ellis.

W. E. Ellis, for two years the successful and universally beloved pastor of the Linden Street Christian Church, Memphis, will become, with the New Year, the pastor of the Vine Street Christian Church, this city. Bro. Ellis is a Kentuckian by birth, is thirty-six years old and vigorous in body and in mind. He is a graduate of the Kentucky University and a patient, persevering student. He is a strong preacher, a good pastor and a culturally Christian gentleman. Bro. Ellis is a man in whom every brother finds a warm and loving friend. He loves all of his preaching brethren and has for them words only of encouragement and kindness. In coming to the Vine Street Church, Bro. Ellis enters work with a large, refined and educated congregation. This is a warm-hearted, united and appreciative people. We predict for Bro. Ellis and the Vine Street Church a service, together, that shall glorify our Merciful Father.

Bro. J. E. Spiegel who has labored so successfully at Anniston, Ala., during the past year, has accepted the work at Decatur and is already installed in his new field.

Bro. David R. Piper, who has labored faithfully for some time in Greene County, Alabama, has accepted a call from Hartsell, same state, and will enter work there in January.

BRO. Jo Severance, of Kentucky, stopped over in the city recently and spent an afternoon with us. Jo is bright in mind, warm in heart and sound in body. He carries sunshine wherever he goes and does everybody good. Long may he live to preach the gospel—Heaven's good news to the earth.

There will be no paper next week. The editor will busy himself making preparations for a better paper next year. The Gospel Messenger has a bright outlook for the future and we have every reason to expect that its friends will be multiplied during the coming year. We wish for our readers a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year.
EVANGELISTIC DEPARTMENT.

STEVENS' PARAGRAPHS.

When you speak of men who write a hard hand to read, always put M. Kendrick down as head of the class. His postoffice is Kendrick. So the first and last words of his letters are both Kendrick. A young lady said last night that she could never tell which was the top and which was the bottom of Bro. Kendrick's letters—that they looked like they would read one way as well as the other.

The church at Meridian is happy and full of hope and S. M. Bernard has a deeper hold than ever on that people. May God ever hide that growing church beneath the shadow of his everlasting wing. It does my heart good to hear such reports as come from Meridian by private letters.

Alabama has some originality. A country brother recently asked O. P. Spiegel to return thanks by simply saying: "Look in your plate."

Bro. W. H. Sandy is authority for the story that one of our pioneer preachers was holding a meeting in Tennessee where the prejudice was high, but where a good many were obeying the gospel. It seems that there was a low-down drunken rake in the community, and the enemies of the meeting hired this rake to join, and be baptized. For so doing, they promised him whiskey enough to get drunk on, a shoulder of meat and a bushel of corn. The thing leaked out, and the old preacher got on to the bargain. The fellow confessed and came with others to be baptized. The old man's ceremony in that particular case was the following: "In the name of a shoulder of meat and a bushel of corn, I will put you to the bottom as sure as you are born."

Our meeting at Selmer, Tenn., was one of great pleasure while the weather was for the most part, the very worst, at the same time to come in heart touch with such people is a "joy forever." Our home was with Bro. R. D. Anderson, till his mother-in-law, Sister Kerr, sickened unto death. There is no man living who has a larger heart than R. D. Anderson.

When Sister Kerr grew so ill that it was not practical for me to remain longer in his home, I went to the comfortable home of Bro. Millard Sipes. The very name Sipes is sufficient when it comes to the question of entertainment. Millard is a son of G. W. Sipes of Adamsville, and I never saw a Sipes that had a small idea in his head.

The Adamsville meeting with twenty-four additions was also badly hurt by ugly weather. But our stay with G. W. Sipes and wife will never, never be forgotten. Bro. Sipes and wife are getting old, but they can inspire a preacher to say more good things and do better work than any two people I ever saw.

Another thing at Adamsville especially striking, was the tenderness of the hearts of the people. I wish our Mississippi people had a few more tears to spare. There is power in tears. Nor were the Selmer people hard hearted, for after a few days, it was common to see the audience, as it were, bathed in tears. I shall ever remember my trip to Tennessee.

For the benefit of our Mississippi State Board, I will say that our trip to Tennessee paid all expenses and the salaries of both evangelist and musician, besides leaving a good many dollars to the credit of the Mississippi Board.

The State Evangelist of Mississippi worked six weeks in Tennessee during the last year, for which he has received $325.00. Nor there any sign of a contract, or even any suggestion of such a thing. This amount was simply the free-will offering of the people, and could and would have been much larger, but for the fact that I told them of the small salary that I was getting in Mississippi, and that our State Board got credited with all I received above the salary they paid me. Nor is the State Board of Mississippi to blame for my not getting more, for they pay me every cent I will have, and have offered me $300.00 a year more than I would take. M. F. Harmon, as an ex-member of the Board can testify to this fact. This being the case, is it not a little hard to be accused by a certain newspaper of belonging to a class of men who are in the ministry for what money they can get out of it? I can resign my position to-day and make three dollars to where I now make two, and do possibly better than that. But, by the authority of the eternal God, organized missions are right, and I will work where I am till in the judgment of our Board, or in my own judgment, a better man can be found to fill the place. I will do this if I starve to death and rot without a grave.

Cotton is low and money will be a little scarce the coming year, but I have not a fear of lack of funds to carry on our work. The people of Mississippi are the most loyal on earth, and will come to the front with their money and pledges when we call on them. We will call loud and long in January. I want $1000.00 for State Missions during January and I believe it will come.

A fine plan for 1898 would be for us to get an offering for every birthday in the church. Send one cent for each year that you are old. If, for instance, you are fifty years old, send fifty cents: if twenty, send twenty cents, etc. It would be grand if we could get up a system of this kind. All names will be published in Messenger if desired.
If you want to give a Christmas gift to our work, or a New Year's gift or a birthday gift, send it to John A. Stevens, Jackson, Miss., or to Miss M. Hallie Cozine, Meridian Miss.

"Chimes from the Mystic Land" is a little booklet of poems written and published by our own little Fannie Kimzey, of Tupelo, Miss.

She is a poor girl, frail and weak of body, but in my humble judgment, Mississippi has never produced a mind so perfectly and naturally poetical. Like Isaac Watts, the hymnist, the child simply cannot help being a poetic dreamer. If I were some wealthy man or woman God knows I would take her to my home and make her comfortable and let her dream and write till she died, which, from all appearances, will not be long.

She has no money nor anything else on earth but her talent. Nor has she any physical strength to speak of, and yet she is so absorbed in unselfish devotion to her church and her God, from whom her day dreams come, that she longs to help in building a Christian Church at Tupelo, a splendid town where we have never had a church.

In order to raise a few dollars to give to the church she has printed a few of her poems in a dainty little booklet and asked the brethren and sisters to buy it. I don't know the price. Send her twenty-five, fifty cents, or one dollar. It all goes to the church anyway except a few dollars for printing. If you want to do something handsome for her individually, do so, and you will help an obscure girl who will be felt in the world of rhyme, if her hundreds of productions now in manuscript are ever published. Poverty alone holds back her best productions because they are long and expensive to print. But the little booklet will give you an insight into her talent which you will never forget.

Send all orders to Fanny Kimzey, Tupelo, Miss. The following is the preface to the little booklet written by Sister Fanny herself:

"With an earnest prayer that they may earn some dollars for the Christian Church, we hope to build in Tupelo, I have arranged these poems—not too good—not too bad. If now and then they fail to follow the stereotyped rules of rhyme, know that therein lies the author's glory, having purposely paid no attention to rules—they clip my wings—and while some day I hope to reach a nearness to perfection in verse-making, these were not arranged for the eyes of "higher critics," but for the loving hearts of our brotherhood."

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**AM I A FACTOR?**

I fear a large portion of professed Christians do not ask themselves this question. I hardly need remind you that in every cause there must be factors; in every movement there must be movers. Now my dear reader, if you are a member of the Church, the body of Christ; why are you such? What part are you doing in the work of the Church? Are you a factor in the great cause of humanity, which is Christianity? Are you one of the movers who move the movement started by the Son of God? It is well for us to stop and ask ourselves these questions concerning ourselves. Are you studying the word of God, that you may grow in knowledge? Are you active in Christian work, that you may grow in grace? Are you teaching a class in Sunday school, or taking any part in the social prayer meeting service, or helping in the Lord's Aid Society? Or are you letting the preacher do all the work in prayer meeting; simply entertaining you with a beautiful lecture on that evening? If you can sing, do you sit in the part of the house where those sit who do the most of the singing? thereby lending your voice to swell the song that goes up to the great white throne? or are you sitting in the back part of the church, too modest or bashful to come down and sit near the front with the others who show that they are anxious to be factors in making the service of worship impressive to those in attendance, thereby lifting them, as well as yourself nearer to God? Why are you in the Church anyhow? What good accrues to you from your connection with the people of God? I would hate to be connected with any movement, commercial, agricultural, political, educational or religious, and be a mere drone. I would not like to be a beneficiary without doing any of the work. If you are consecrated to the work of the Church, and if you desire to get the greatest possible blessing, you will work in the Church with the same degree of zeal you show in your business, household or social affairs; and your reward will be proportionate; your blessing will be larger and better, because better in kind. Whenever you hear of Christians backsliding, you may know that if they were ever sliding in the forward direction they had to come to a full stop before taking the reverse course. I know, and so do you, plenty of good people in the Church, who would scorn to receive food, raiment, or shelter, without giving something in return. And yet these same people will complacently accept and receive all the blessings of the Church, and not render the Lord anything in return for all his benefits. Now whenever you ask yourself the question, "Am I a factor in the salvation of the world?" please put yourself in a position to answer, Yes. And if you are doing anything in this line; how are you doing it? Are you trying to do the work alone, or are you cooperating with your brethren in the work of saving men? Are you one by yourself, or one with all other disciples, thus responding to the request of Christ in John 17: 21. Now, please do not regard the writer as asking you these questions. I want you to propound them to yourselves, and give the answer to yourselves and to your God.

**MIGAH COMBS.**
THE WEST TENNESSEE CONVENTION.

The Georgia Robertson Christian College is now the pride of the Christian churches in West Tennessee. It is a magnificent structure, large, convenient in arrangement, desirable located at Henderson. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Bro. Hall L. Calhoon. His subject was "The Indwelling Christ." He treated his theme in his own inimitable way, clear as light, simple as truth, scriptural in authority, convincing in logic, and strengthening "the inward man" of all who heard him.

The address on "Education," delivered at night, by Prof. McDougal, was timely, up to date and showed that he had studied independent normalism to real profit. Its scope was ample, its contents suggestive, and its comparisons and contrasts of the old and the new way were just. On Wednesday morning attention was given to a symposium on "Our Work," led by R. P. Meeks. A. I. Myhr and W. H. Sheffer were his fellows in this conference, and all three of these consecrated, informed men made us feel that each is a workman that needs not to be ashamed of his work. Following this, the writer made a talk that seemed to be well pleasing to his friends in Christ. The time in the afternoon was consumed in a most helpful way in a conference on "Church Helps." Prof. Brown, of the college, discussed colleges, B. Harderman spoke for the young people, James H. Brooks presented briefly some phrases of the Sunday school, W. H. Sandy made a splendid talk on papers, and A. I. Myhr paid his respects to that subject that will not depart, the women. His "Queens" are doing a fine work. "Help those women," let them do their part in all of life's work. In the evening of this day an audience of about 600 assembled in the large college hall to hear the sermon by Bro. Sheffer on the subject—"Christ's Mission Our Mission." It is sufficient for those who know Bro. Sheffer for me to state that he was at his very best. The four leading points in the discourse are (a) man is to manifest, or represent Christ, (b) to obey God and his Son in all things, and (c) like the Christ to seek and save the lost, (d) and to lose no time in warranting over the "methods," but rather see that all are the best available methods at any particular time. After this Bro. Myhr, being full of the work, made a "telling speech," a collection was taken, and we went to our homes to rejoice in the enlargement of our sweet fellowships. I could not remain over the last day. The improvised program was (a) a missionary experience meeting; (b) a meeting of the women, for the women, and by the women, and the men who might be pleased to attend; (c) platform speeches, and a formal dedication of the college, provided all necessary arrangements could be made. I trust these three sessions of the convention accomplished what its friends and the friends of this institution hoped for.

THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.

In conclusion, it is "a consummation devoutly to be wished" and a blessing to be prayed for earnestly, that others, as our beloved Bro. Robertson and his good wife, will devote reasonable amounts of their possessions to promote the educational interests of our people. We hope to see this institution at Henderson fill its hundreds of pupils full of the spirit of missions, for be it known among all men that a "religious journal," a school or college, a teacher or preacher, a book or magazine, that fosters anti-ism is a blight to our fair land, a curse to the cause we plead, and completely misrepresents the Christ whom we claim to serve.

JAMES H. BROOKS.

ALABAMA FIELD NOTES.

O. P. SPIEGEL, BIRMINGHAM.

Some few fear the "change we have made" may not work well at first. We have made no change. We have an Executive Board or Committee to see to the work put into their hands by the Convention. I am still Corresponding Secretary. I expect to preach more sermons, baptize more people, locate more preachers (of course I only mean to put good men and churches in correspondence with each other—they make their own trade), write more letters, and raise much more money for State Missions than during any previous year. So we go right along without any change except to get better as we advance. Instead of traveling all over the State during the whole year, paying out much money on the railroads, and retaining as my own all I collect for State Missions, I am to evangelize in and around Birmingham during 1898, where I can enjoy, for a year, home-life and get at least an occasional glimpse of my wife. For this work the Birmingham church will gladly support me. All money collected for State Missions will be wisely expended in supplementing good men in important fields and holding special meetings as far as it will go. Witness now, brethren, if during 1898 there are not more sermons, more baptisms, more churches established, more houses built, more work of every kind done than ever before. And then our next convention—well, such a one as it will be! You have never seen one like it yet. Why, even A. McLean, who has attended conventions around the world, and who delivered such a powerful sermon in our Birmingham Convention, writes me today to tell him when and where our next convention will be held, that he cannot afford to miss it, and that he wants me to be certain and notify him in time! You see he has been about enough to know what a good thing is when he has been in it.

It may be interesting to know that of the $1,900.00 contributed this year less than $500.00 was given purely for missions. From this deduct your Evangelist's necessary traveling expenses, postage
and stationery, and only about $300,00 was re-
ceived by him from our missionary treasury. His
other receipts were for meetings held, and that al-
most altogether in destitute places. This is the oth-
er side of the picture. But this year let us raise at
least $1,200 for missions only. We can do it. I
guarantee that if you will give the money, you will
be more than highly pleased with the results an-
nounced at our next convention.

Beginning January first, there will be a monthly
statement of every cent received published in the
Gospel Messenger. This will inspire greater con-
fidence. The disbursements will also be published.

Now, friends, a word for the Gospel Messenger!
I have known for years that J. M. Watson is one of
the best newspaper men in the United States. I
have known him from boyhood. He has always
been noted for his piety, his zeal, and his scholar-
ship. He is making for us one of the best papers
to be found anywhere, among any people. Pick it
up. Read it closely. Compare it with other
papers, in quality, make-up and price. Where it
is circulated our work is easy. Send him one
dollar for it. Get others to subscribe. If you
know a poor man or woman, or an orphan disciple,
send them the Gospel Messenger, a year, as a
Christmas present. They will appreciate it and
you bind them, for all a rule you will never again
read it. They are rich.

Then, not least, I shall have three or four
articles on "City Evangelization" to begin with the
first number in January. I want you to see them
and either agree or disagree with the ideas I shall
present. Don't lay your old papers away, unless
you bind them, for as a rule you will never again
look at them. Give them to someone and mark
a special article or editorial.

Our tent meeting at Citronelle moves on nicely.
Good audiences are attending. Hope to reach home
for Christmas.

A happy Christmas and prosperous New Year,
to all of our readers, to all of our friends, and to all
the disciples throughout the world.

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flexible cloth.$.75

Per dozen, by express, not prepaid.$7.20

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Cincinnati, Ohio.
BAPTISM, COMMUNION AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The bone of contention among the different religious denominations at present seems to hinge on the three points indicated in the above caption, and the legitimate discussion that is being conducted, chiefly in the undenominational press, cannot but result in inestimable good for the true church. The most formidable command of Christ was, "follow me," and the unprejudiced mind cannot deny that the "meek and lowly Nazarene" was buried beneath the sunlit waters of the historic Jordan; hence he who follows for the sake of doing the will of "the Saviour of the World" must naturally conclude that "burial in baptism" cannot be construed to mean a few drops of water taken from a tumbler. The independent Christian world is fast coming to see the real significance of baptism by immersion and the day is not far distant when the Christian world will applaud the multitude who have so long maintained the true decree of Christ that cleanses the world from sin.

Communion is another question that has bred many differences and dissension, but again public sentiment is about to establish a unit. The Baptists have for years maintained "close communion," rigidly barring the church from those who do not happen to share all their versions of worship. However, it now seems apparent that this strong fabric in their organization is about to collapse. At the recent Baptist Congress held at Chicago, Rev. P. S. Henson, one of the leading lights of the church renounced in emphatic language his ordinance in the church curriculum. His views were applauded by a large constituency and have caused widespread discussion among all denominations. We believe that the Baptists will yet come to the conclusion that their deacons are not competent to judge the Christianity of man. The following from the New York Independent is a comparison of the Baptist Church twenty-five years ago and now:

Recall 1875. Those were the days just before the exodus of the young Baptists who preferred peaceful liberty outside to war inside the denomination. Dr. Behrends was then pastor of a Baptist church in Cleveland, and Professor Wilkinson was now graciously smiling on him as a young sentimentalist with whom patience must be exercised, and now thundering away on the duty of obedience to the command "Be immersed." Dr. Pentecost was still a Baptist pastor, and so was Dr. Bridgman. When such men as these, and Dr. Jeffery and Mr. Banta ventured to attack close communion, then Dr. Bright brought up a battery of Baptist guns against them. He declared that there were in the whole Baptist denomination scarce a dozen close communicants. From the theological seminaries at Upland and Rochester the cannon belched forth on the rebels, and blew some of them out of the denomination. It seemed for a moment as if the hopes of increasing fellowship were destroyed... Now it would be almost as hard, among our Northern Baptists, to find a representative minister who would stoutly defend close communion as it was then to find its confessed opponent.

In the current issue of the Outlook (congregational) we find the following editorial which so well expresses our sentiments that we adopt it as our own:

No baptism of any kind is a prerequisite to the communion. The only prerequisite is love for Christ and loyalty to him. It is probable that always the vast majority of those who love and are loyal to Christ will be baptized. But it is certain that always there will be some loving and loyal souls who will never have received baptism, neither by immersion nor by sprinkling; neither in adult age nor in infancy—neither, that is, in apostolic fashion, nor in that adopted by the church at a later date. The church has no authority to exclude anyone from the communion table. The only invitation which Christ authorizes is that which he used: "Do this in remembrance of me." The door to this memorial Supper he has opened to all who love him and are loyal to him; and the door which he has opened no one has a right to close. And each disciple is to decide for himself what love and loyalty require; it is not to be decided for him by others. This is the position of the English Baptists; this is the position toward which the Christian Church is gradually tending; and the recent discussion in the Baptist Church congress indicates that the Baptist Church in America may yet lead the way toward this more spiritual and less legalistic view of the relation of baptism to the Lord's Supper, and of both to the Christian life.

We are glad, indeed, to read these spiritual discussions. The seed sown by the Christian Church is about to blossom forth into fields of ripened grain, and the harvest will soon be ready for the reaper.

E. G. HARRIS,
Carrollton, Miss.
Editor Democrat.

THE other day I saw a girl busily working some sort of a figure in a square of linen with colored silk. I knew she didn't like to sew, and wondered why she was doing it. I soon discovered that she was making a Christmas present for some one.

I wonder how many of us have thought to prepare some little token for those we love? You say, "Oh, it takes money to buy so many presents." Let me give you a better recipe than that. Take a heart full of love, a little willing toil, a grain of patience and an ounce of wit, and stir them together, and you will have a nicer batch of Christmas presents than money can buy.

I mean make something with your own loving hands, and, though it may be crude and inexpensive, it will be better appreciated than some brave piece of bric-a-brac, spic, span, brand-new from the store. Try it and see. There is yet time.—The Morning Guide.
MISTAKES (?) OF CHRIST.

If the findings of the "Higher Critics" are to be accepted; if the position of denominationalists is right, and the philosophies of Calvinists and Universalists are sound, then, without doubt, some mistakes must be charged up to Jesus Christ.

1. We know of no other Jonah to whom the Lord could have referred, than the one spoken of in the book of the Bible which bears his name. Jesus said as Jonah was three days and nights in the whale so would the Son of Man be three days and nights in the earth. But, now, since Jonah was not in the whale at all, because there was no such man, the story being simply a fake, by some wonder-monger, our Lord was evidently mistaken in assuming what is not a fact.

2. Jesus said that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. He must have included his own kingdom in the remark, for he afterwards prayed earnestly that his disciples should all be one, as he and God are one. But denominationalists claim that it would be a misfortune to Christianity for all Christians to belong to one church. Rev. Charles A. Berry, whom a late Inter-Ocean style "The English leader of evangelical federation," said in Chicago, Nov. 22nd: "I am opposed to unification in one church, in one creed, in one authority." He makes no exceptions. Therefore, if that "one church" should be the church of Christ; its "creed" Christ; and the "one authority" the authority of the Lord himself, Berry is opposed to it. Has he not discovered that Christ's kingdom can stand while divided against itself, and therefore, that Jesus was mistaken? But how does Rev. Berry prove it? "Because." Because what? Why, "it would bring about tyranny worse than that of the old Catholic Church."

Think of it! Jesus Christ a tyrant, and who wants to be ruled by a tyrant? But how does Berry know that it would bring about tyranny worse than that of the old Catholic Church? Is Christ worse than the worst popes of the old Catholic Church? Hardly that; Berry will not say so. It was only a mistake, we should charitably say, when Christ decided upon just one church. See Matt. 16: 18-20. Experience, which is a wiser teacher than Christ, has corrected his blunder and enables this man to know more than his teacher. Pity that the inspired Apostles had not discovered this mistake of Jesus in time to prevent their repeating the blunder. Brother Berry surely would not have written as the Apostles did on this question. Notice some things which, in the absence of the knowledge possessed by nineteenth century gentlemen, were unfortunately written by the ignorant Apostles: "Mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned and avoid them: for they who are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Rom. 16: 17, 18. Now, if the writer of this had known as much as the Rev. Berry, he would never have written anything like that, for it is liable to be understood as discouraging divisions which were not mentioned in apostolic teaching; such as Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, etc.

Again: "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." I Cor. 1:10. The Apostle does not agree here with Rev. Berry, as every one can see who cares to look; but his mistake (?) was in allowing himself to be influenced by what his Lord had said on the subject. Such mistakes are unavoidable by any one who, like the old colored brother, goes "purty much as de Book reads."

3. Jesus was once asked this question: "Are there few that be saved?" Luke 13:23. And he replied, "Many will seek to enter in and shall not be able." Luke 5: 24. But Universalists have discovered that everybody will be finally saved; and they say they can prove it. Of course, then, Jesus was mistaken. He was probably deceived by seeing that such contemptible and persistent hypocrites who would destroy the only source of their salvation, ought to be damned, and hence he supposed they would be. He spoke too soon. Universalism had not then been discovered. He was also mistaken, very naturally, in supposing that the unrighteous go into "everlasting punishment" at the Judgment Day, (Matt. 25: 46), because if all will be saved none will suffer everlasting punishment.

Upon the whole, isn't it a little risky to depend very much on what He taught, since it is discovered that He was wrong in so many things? The "Higher Critics," denominationalists and Universalists may be wrong, too, about some things. No telling what new discoveries are liable to be made that will upset everything. The Almighty himself has no show, when things unprovided for, spring up and corner him. If these new discoveries keep on, and a man wants to stay in with God, with Christ and the Bible, he would better, as Josh Billings said, not know so much than to know so many things that "ain't so."—J. H. P., in Christian Oracle.

He is worse than a sluggard who steals the labor of the dead.

The heart is the fountain from whence the tears of penitence flow.

Wise, indeed, is he who has graduated in the school of experience.

The lamb which persists in sleeping in the lion's lair should not complain.
REPORTS FROM THE CHURCHES.

ALABAMA.

TILLERY: Dear Brother Spiegel: Your note in the Gospel Messenger concerning me will cause people to think, that I am reading the Firm Foundation and believing in and practicing re-baptism as it is advocated in that paper. First, I do not read that paper; second, I do not believe in or practice re-baptism, but when a person wants to unite with us, if they have been baptized to obey Christ, and for the remission of sins, I gladly receive them. So please do not take me to be a re-baptism hobby-rider, for I positively say, I am not. So of Sunday schools; I favor all that are scriptural. So of methods of mission work: If it is scriptural I am a friend to it; if not scriptural I oppose it. As to Brother Reynolds, I believe he is a Christian, but I have no support for him after the progressive order. Please set me right, at least on re-baptism.

L. P. WHALEY.

SANDY CREEK: As I went to my appointment I passed through Notasulga. Saw many yellow flags, people gone from home, gates locked, great excitement. From this on, if you can make the people believe the devil has yellow fever they will forsake him and flee from him. I baptized a very prominent old gentleman at Simmons Cross Roads Sunday. He was stricken with paralysis six years ago. Can scarcely walk at all. Had not had his feet wet with cold water since the stroke. The people all wanted him baptized in his own milpond near by, so they would not have to carry the corpse very far. I told them I had never seen anyone hurt doing God's commands. One son would not see him baptized, thinking it would kill him. Everything worked as if God had a hand in it. When I got back to the bank with him, they sat him in a chair and carried him to the house, he and all his friends rejoicing together. I announced meeting at his house that night. Had a large audience and fine attention.

J. A. BRANCH.

MISSISSIPPI.

WEST POINT: Thinking that the brethren and friends would like to hear from me as to my health, I write you a few lines. I have had a long spell; have been sick since the last of June and am still confined to the house. Can walk about the yard some, but am not able to do any work. I hope I am improving, though it seems slow. Some of the brethren and sisters have remembered me in a substantial way since I have been sick. The Lord bless them all. It is only half the truth to say that I believe the words of the Master when he said: "All things work together for good to those who love the Lord." Can't hope to be able to do much work before spring.

N. B. PATTERSON.

MERRITT: We had a delightful service on Sunday morning, Dec. 12th. Mrs. Oscar Nelson, recently of Birmingham, took membership with us. On Sunday night our Christian Endeavor Society, under the leadership of the minister, took charge of the regular service and conducted Father's Service. Following was the program: Introductory remarks by the minister; reading of the Springfield Ill., proclamation for Father's Day, by W. B. Harrison; an essay on the life of Thomas Campbell, by R. O. Smith; an oration on the life of A. Campbell, by J. T. Lawson; an essay on the life of B. W. Stone, by B. H. Grimes; an essay on the life of Walter Scott, by T. M. Humphrey. We sang: "All Hail the power of Jesus' Name," and the large audience went away with their eyes opened as to the grandeur of our plea and the greatness of our brotherhood, coupled with our unflinching loyalty to Christ.

S. M. BERNARD.

FAYETTE: In my letter of recent date I stated that the pastor of the M. E. Church of this place preached a sermon, in answer to my series of sermons preached during our protracted meeting, in the Presbyterian Church; and that the officers of his own church had refused him the use of their house of worship for this purpose. Of the correctness of the first statement I was positive; and as to the correctness of the second, I had evidence which I considered at the time perfectly trustworthy.

One of this minister's own members had stated to a number of persons in my presence that one of the officers would not give his consent for the sermon to be preached, and said member gave good authority for the remark. I afterwards heard it currently reported on the streets that the officers had refused to give their consent in the matter, and I did not remember having heard a word to the contrary. As a matter of course, not hearing it disputed by either side, I accepted this statement as being true until I heard it contradicted, since my writing.

I was then anxious to make proper corrections, and offered to do so immediately, on condition that the officers themselves deny it.

But the brother, being much angered at me for calling his sermon "weak," and accusing him of "crow fishing" (the truth will hurt sometimes), determined to get revenge. He therefore had every officer in the church, from the Sunday school superintendent down, who would, to sign a paper denying this statement, and this, with a two-column letter of his own, or signed by himself, he had published in our County paper.

I had never stooped to the secular press in dealing with this or any other minister, and if I had, I had considered myself able to cope with him without the strength of additional names. But he now makes it necessary for me to enter this field, where I feel so much out of place in such matters, or suffer the public to be misinformed. He stated to some of his officers, in order to get their signature, that I had refused to make correction about their refusing to allow him the use of their house.

But I made him confess in their presence that I had offered to do this, and he said: "No; if you won't retract the whole letter, I don't want you to write anything." From a man of this kind I do not hope for any fair dealings. May God forgive him, is my prayer.

W. W. PHARES.

SHERMAN: To the churches and brethren in Mississippi, greeting! By request of a number of brethren in whose judgment I have confidence, I have decided to evangelize during the year 1898. With this in view, I have called in all of my monthly appointments. It is my desire to hold protracted meetings in Mississippi. I ask the churches, and the individual members of the church to write me stating where and when they desire a protracted meeting. Do not hesitate to write because, you do not feel able financially to support a meeting. If you desire a meeting in your neighborhood or town, or in some other locality, where you believe good can be accomplished, write me about it. Don't wait, but write soon so my program can be made out early in 1898.

The Mississippi Missionary Society, since the convention in August, has sent me, through Brother John A. Stevens, $30.00. This amount was to assist me while holding meetings at Tupelo and Charleston. But the condition of the Society will not justify any appropriation for my support now.
It may possibly give a small amount sometime during the year. I, however, have no contract with the Society. I ask the churches and members of the church to write me what they are willing to give during the year, or send the amount in cash when you write. Don't wait till summer. It requires as much to live on in January and February as it does in June and August.

There are many towns and country neighborhoods where we have no churches, and where the people have never heard one of your ministers preach. The people living in those places are ready to hear the gospel preached, and many will obey. Do you brethren of Mississippi, love the souls of those people? I will see what you do, and that will answer the question. I hope to visit a number of churches in January and February, and take pledges and receive cash to help in doing Missionary work in Mississippi. Address me at Sherman, Miss., Box 5. G. A. REYNOLDS.

SOUTH KENTUCKY.

PEMBROKE: I preach regularly at Pembroke, Christian County, and Liberty, Todd County. These congregations hold their meetings last fall, with their regular preacher in the pulpit, and there were twelve additions at Liberty and six at Pembroke. The Lord willing I shall continue to preach at the same places another year.

T. D. MOORE.

TENNESSEE.

HENDERSON: We have enjoyed a feast of good things this week. The convention is over. Brother Myhr will give the readers of the Messenger a true report of results. I regret that I had to leave Mississippi, but thank the Lord I can go back again next summer when school is out. Brother Stevens and the churches have given me a cordial invitation. We clip the following from the Corinth Herald:

Rev. Sandy preached his farewell sermon to his congregation at this place last Sunday. He leaves to-day to make his future home in Henderson, Tenn. Brother Sandy has been with us now about two years, and during his stay at Jacinto has made many warm friends who will regret to see him leave. As pastor and as a citizen of our town he will be greatly missed by the members of his church and people of the community in general. We sincerely hope that the “lines have fallen to them in pleasant places.”—Seba.

There is more money for us elsewhere than there is in Mississippi, but we love the Mississippi people and are anxious to see the cause of our blessed Redeemer permanently planted in that State, and throughout the world. God bless the Messenger. It has changed hands, but the spirit is the same, and I hope and believe that it will ever be the same. A word to its contributors: Always remember the statement of the grand old Apostle to the Gentiles, as found in Rom. 8:9. Then in your articles try to reveal to the world that same loving spirit that was in Christ.

W. H. SANDY.

SOUTH KENTUCKY FIELD NOTES.

J. W. GANT, ELKTON, KY.

Have been too busy for the last week to send in my usual installment of Notes.

The Salem rally was the best meeting of the kind I ever attended. I think much good will result from it, but as Miss Sallie Graham has already written it up for the Messenger, I deem it unnecessary to add anything more on that subject. When these rallies are conducted in the interest of our South Kentucky work, as was the Salem meeting, they do a vast amount of good. I learn that an effort will be made to have such a meeting in Hopkins County. A mass meeting in that county would certainly result in good. Should be glad to have one in Todd County.

Brother W. A. Gibson will leave Morganfield in a few days. He and his most estimable wife have certainly done a most successful work at that point. Brother Gibson has also done a good work at Union Town and Shiloh. In addition to his work at these places, he has done a good work at several mission points. He has had in his field, during the past year, about seventy-five additions. On account of poor health, he for the present will have to give up active work. We hope at no distant day he may be able to resume work again. I enjoyed my visit to Morganfield, very much. The Children’s Mission Band and the Ladies’ Aid Society made liberal pledges to our work. For the want of time I did not finish the canvass of Morganfield.

As I have but little time this morning, I must be permitted to close and reserve for next week the mention of several matters of interest which I desired to put in this letter.

Our treasury is empty and the preachers are calling on us for what we owe them. Brethren who owe on old pledges will please remit at once to George F. Street, treasurer, Elkton, Ky.

Brethren, have you canvassed your congregations for our work? If not, we sincerely hope you will do so at once.

IN MEMORIAM.

“Born, Lived, Died.” On Dec. 1st, the summons to “come up higher” came to Brother M. M. Martin of this city. He had scarcely reached the prime of life—aged thirty-two years, eleven months and one day. His illness was of less than a week’s duration, and when the summons came his friends, and especially his wife and two small children were altogether unprepared to give him up. He was born near Corinth Miss., and before he reached manhood’s estate he gave his young heart to Christ. He moved to this city about six years ago, and has been an honored employee of the Union Telegraph Office ever since.

To his heart-broken and lonely wife and little children we, with a host of friends, extend our sincere sympathy, praying that God’s richest blessings may abide with them in their sad and desolate hours.

WALTER A. NEAL.

Jackson, Miss.

How many happy hearts at Christmas time! and then, how many sad ones! Dear reader, don’t forget the poor little children who have scanty clothes and no money to buy toys.

The editor, much to his regret, was unavoidably kept away from the convention at Henderson, Tenn. Bros. Myhr and Brooks send interesting reports. Bro. Myhr’s report was received too late to appear in this issue.

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DEVOOTIONAL DEPARTMENT.

S. M. BERNARD, EDITOR, MERIDIAN, MISS.

THE TWO EVENING TRAINS.

The first train leaves at 5 p.m.
For the land where the sleep flower blows,
The mother dear is the engineer:
And the passengers sigh and groans.
The palace car is the mother's arms:
"The whistle a low, sweet strain;
The passenger winks and snores and blinks.
And goes to sleep on the train.
At 5 p.m. the next train starts
For the pleasant land afar;
The numerous cars fall on the ear.
"All abroad for the sleeping cars!"
But what is the face to this pleasant land
I hope it is not too dear.
The face is this—a loving kiss—
And it is paid to the engineer.
So I ask of Him who the children took
On His knees in kindness great,
'Take charge, I pray, of the trains each day:'
That leave at 5 and 8.
"Keep watch over the passengers," thus I pray,
If they are very dear:
And have special ward, oh, gracious Lord
Over the gentle engineer.
—Author Unknown.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Its Institution. Persons Present.

Andrew was there. We call his name and he answers "present," He is not at all boisterous. His manner is rather reserved for we have heard His voice very seldom in the four gospel accounts. In the first chapter of the gospel according to John, we find an account of the first appearance of Jesus to John, the immerser. John said: "Behold the Lamb of God," etc. When he said those words Andrew and another of John's disciples left him, and followed Jesus. When Andrew was sitting at the table bearing the emblems so sacred to us all, he probably allowed his mind to run back to the first time that he had seen the Saviour.

And now he was viewing the Lord when he had but few more days on earth. Yes, Andrew left all, even John the forerunner and followed Jesus. We find people all around us who refuse to do this. They are continually talking about the kingdom, for you. While they were there, the Philistines came upon them and the Lord thundered upon the Philistines and they were routed. As a monument to commemorate this victory Samuel placed this stone, saying: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," David was a man full of gratitude. God blessed him and he did not neglect to thank the Heavenly Father for it. Oh! that we might have more of the spirit of David in this respect. In speaking of ingratitude Shakespeare says:

"Blow, blow, thou bitter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
Because thou art not seen,
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Although thy breath be rude."

A Christian Only.

A sermon preached in the Central Christian Church, Dallas, Texas, Jan. 24, 1897. A tract of fifteen pages, embodying his reasons for leaving the Methodist Church and ministry and uniting with the Christian Church. The first edition was soon exhausted. A second edition now ready. Single copy 5 cents; 12 copies, 25 cents; 100 copies, $1.50. Published and for sale by the Christian Courier Co., Dallas, Texas.

1. I will try not to miss a single observance of the Lord's Supper during 1898.

2. I will keep posted on the mid-week prayer meeting topics and will try to get all the good possible out of these services. To this end I will supply myself with one of the neat topic cards published by W. S. Broadhurst, Box 646, Louisville, Ky.

3. I will give more liberally of my time, money and talents to the Church of Christ.

4. I will learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ next year than I ever have learned in any one year of my life.

5. I will work in every way possible for the success of the Gospel Messenger, which is the Moses of the Southland leading the people from the wilderness of sin and sectarianism into the "promised Land" which is full of apostolic truth.

When men stoop to curse, devils rise to praise.

The saddest grave is where living youth is buried.

One fault confessed makes the soul thrice-blessed.

A Christian Only.
CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR DEPARTMENT.
MISS ETHEL STRATTON, EDITOR, CLARKSVILLE, TENN.

HOW TO PRAY.

1897.


(A meeting of preparation for the week of prayer.

PRAY
Bear earnestly. Phil. 4: 6; Psa. 145: 18: 66; 22; Isa. 55: 6; 7; Deut. 4: 7; Matt. 6: 6.
 Humbly. John 5: 30; Eccl. 5: 2; Matt. 26: 39; Rom. 8. 26; Matt. 6: 10; Luke 11: 10-14.
 In Christ's name. John 14: 13, 15; 16.

The references given with the topic outline the elements of prayer. Of course, faith comes first, for without that we would never pray at all, nor could we pray acceptably.

Then, the spirit must be right, for the prayer that is only a form is like that of the Pharisee, who exalted himself, yet was condemned.

Pray in boldness; the confidence that John speaks of, as knowing that our prayers are heard. Here sometimes a great mistake comes in, for there are those who think their prayers unanswered when they are not granted: the child, eager for some favor, does not think its request unanswered when the mother says "no," and most of us have learned, and will learn, to thank God because he did answer some of our prayers with no. The hardest thing is to pray "thy will be done," and yet, no prayer brings such peace and comfort: for that, when it can be prayed sincerely, includes the deepest, broadest love and trust. And then, to find the most help in prayer, let it be without ceasing. There are times in every day when you need help; and you do not have to go down on your knees to ask it, for the whispered petition will reach the Father just as surely. Perhaps it is only a thought scarcely breathed into words, but if it has the spirit of prayer, is it not enough? Form the habit of praying in thought, as well as in words.

Among other good resolutions make one in regard to good literature. Every Endeavorer ought to have some Christian Endeavor papers, and now is a good time to subscribe if you have not already done so. To begin with, there are the papers published solely for the Endeavorers among the Disciples of Christ, and other papers which devote part of their space to Christian Endeavor. Then there are the papers belonging to Christian Endeavor at large, and there should be at least one such paper in every society. If there is an information committee it should have the State paper, for almost all the State missions have an official organ. The prayer meeting committee in its work needs a paper which will help in preparing the meetings. The missionary committee ought to have the reports of the Indiana-olis conventions. And, when a supply of literature is secured, see that it is used.

Official Christian Endeavor statistics up to Oct. 30, 1897, show a total of 51,656 societies. The Presbyterians still lead, with 3,537: the Congregational churches have 6,614; the Disciples, 4,585. We still rank third, but can we not step up higher this year? Whenever we have a church and a Sunday school we ought also to have an Endeavor society. Every new society swells the total, but more than that, and better, it trains the young people for efficient service.

The Endeavorers' Daily Companion is a helpful little pamphlet combining the topics for the year with suggestive thoughts on each and a year book of Christian Endeavor.

Information committees, especially, will find it valuable in getting up their weekly reports. Here is a suggestion taken from the preface: "Your own thoughts are better for you than any one else's and will come more forcibly from your lips. It is best to look some weeks ahead and fix in your mind the coming topics, so that when you read or listen you may be ready to seize upon all pertinent suggestions. You will be astonished to see how many helpful thoughts present themselves to the mind that is ready to receive them."

We have received inquiries from corresponding secretaries as to what kind of reports we want from their societies. For them and all others to whom the Messenger goes we say send us items regarding anything; everything your society has done or is doing; how you conduct your business and consecration meetings; whether your members take part readily in the prayer meetings, and how you get the timid ones to work; how your committees work, and what they have accomplished; what missionary work your society is doing, and if you have any special work on hand, tell us of that also.

The Juniorsthe Christian Church, at Clarksville, Tenn., are thriving. They conduct their own meetings, very nicely; their president, with his violin, gives material aid in the music. At a recent meeting the officers presented Bibles to those of the members who had none of their own.

"We expect larger things of the Endeavorers the coming year." So say the secretaries of the Foreign Christian Society.

In 1897, Alabama had two Endeavor societies which contributed to the Foreign Christian Missionary Society; Georgia, three; Tennessee, four; Kentucky, twenty-two. There is room for the Endeavorers to do "larger things."

The Bethany C. E. Bulletins is a sixteen page quarterly, published in the interest of the B ethany Reading Courses, and sent to those who belong to circles, or who have taken the readings individually. The Bulletins for October says: "It is not the purpose of this educational movement in Christian Endeavor to organize reading circles within the societies, but rather to regard each society as itself a school, and to provide the means and methods by which it shall prosecute its studies. It is desired, therefore, that we encourage both study and saving interest in the readings, to secure for the society all necessary information, to conduct reviews at stated times, and to do whatever else may be necessary to make the readings of most benefit to the members of that society."

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THE GOSPEL MESSENGER.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

Christmas Bells.

Ring out ye joyous Christmas bells
"Peace on the earth; good will to men!"
Glad tidings of great joy proclaim
Through the busy Christmas bells.

With love and gratitude to God
Our hearts do overflow
We would that every human heart
Our Father's love might know.

To the nations now in darkness
Is a season when the natural tendency them, in indication of coming warmth
As the star of Bethlehem shone
Glad tidings of great joy proclaim.

Ring out ye joyous Christmas bells
Our hearts do overflow
We would that every human heart
Our Father's love might know.

The time of our annual Christmas festivities is at hand once more.
It is a season when the natural tendency of the mind is to turn backward and make a summary of the records of old Father Time. The present awaked object in the observance of this season is the commemoration of the birth of Christ; yet it is more than probable, from all the records obtainable, that the same season was religiously observed by the sun and fire worshipers of Persia more than twenty-five centuries ago; in other words, nearly as far back as can be traced in the written records of profane history. The exact age of the introduction of this annual festival is lost in the tangled meshes of antiqutity. The Romans most certainly found the observance of the season in vogue among the Gauls and Britons when they subjected them to Roman authority, an event which took place some decades before the birth of Christ. Of the religious festivals annually observed by these European pagans the one kept at the time of the winter solstice was the most imposing. It was celebrated in honor of the god Thor, "the prince of the power of the air." It was claimed that Thor governed the winds and the clouds; and that if he was displeased with the people he would cause lightning, thunder, and tempests, with excessive rain and ill weather, which would prove unpropitious for nature's productions for the coming year. If the wrath of Thor was appeased it was supposed that the coming season would be a fruitful one.

If the readers, especially the younger ones, will look at a map of our globe they will find that part of it first peopled by our ancestors all north of the equitorial orsolar circle. With their idolatrous superstition they naturally looked with reverence to the time when the sun would begin to move apparently toward them. On the twenty-first of December the sun was furthest from them, being then at its furthest southern declination, his vertical rays marking the tropic of Capricorn. That was the longest night of their year and the shortest day, the sun showing his face to them for the shortest period of time. From the time of the winter solstice, the 21st, of December, the sun gradually moves back toward his furthest northern declination, increasing the length of the days and heralding the approach of the fruitful seasons of spring and summer to all people in northern latitudes. These people, whose religion had originated in sun worship, naturally rejoiced when the great object of their worship began to turn his face toward them, in indication of coming warmth and fruitful seasons. This moving of the sun toward his northern declination, by warming the atmosphere, produced tempests, and excessive rains. This, by our ignorant ancestors, was attributed to Thor; hence their efforts to appease the wrath of this God.

The religionists who gave especial prominence to this festival among the Gauls and Britons were the Druids. This name is said to have been derived from the Greek drass, an oak; applied to them because of the reverence they paid to the oak, and the sacred mistletoe which grows on that tree. When the inhabitants of the countries where these religionists prevailed were led to accept what was then termed Christianity they were unwilling to give up their old festival in honor of Thor, hence a compromise was effected, and the festivities applied in commemoration of the birth of Christ. Later the Romish priests applied the name Christmas to this season of festivities.

When we read of Druids we are apt to associate their customs with an age later than that to which they really belong. The cause of this is that we are acquainted with the history of the countries in which they flourished as well as of modern history. Few people give much attention to the history of the countries of Europe prior to the Middle Ages; hence all things connected with these countries are limited to the time of the Middle Ages. All that we read of Druids, however, must necessarily be dated back to and beyond the period of the birth of Christ. Julius Caesar, some fifty years before the beginning of the Christian era wrote a description of the Druids of Gaul and Britain, giving an abundance of facts relative to their customs. A little more than a hundred years later these Druids were exterminated by Nero.

Emma Morton.

Christmas Records for Young Folks.

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