

3. *The Disciples require this penitent believer who has confessed Christ, to be immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.* Is there a body of Christians that will not receive such an one as a baptized believer? This action is really not in dispute. Though there are individuals who may question the validity of immersion, I know of no denomination that does not practically admit that this is Christian baptism by receiving those into their fellowship who have been thus baptized, though they practise something else for baptism.

So far I think it is clear that the position of the Disciples is purely undenominational, hence unsectarian, and those who come to us from the denominations come into the freedom of the gospel, while those who go from us become entangled in the yoke of bondage.

### PREACHING THE WORD.

JAMES DICKIESON.

On page seven of the April CHRISTIAN Bro. R. W. Stevenson has written his opinion of "The Minister and his Calling." He says, "It is as reasonable to expect doctors, lawyers or professors to make success of their respective vocations and spend every day at the mechanic's workbench or the farm, if they have one, as for a minister of the gospel to preach the gospel and spend his time at the workbench or on the farm. They might succeed in making one or two passable sermons on first principles, as is sometimes the case, but a fiddler with only one tune soon ceases to be interesting."

May I be excused for asking the question what has caused Bro. Stevenson to write the above. Have any of those who work as mechanics, farmers or fiddlers been trespassing on his ground, taking from him the glory that is attached to the work of preaching the gospel of the Son of God to fallen men and women. If this is the reason I think he should rather glory that such men, filling those humble positions, are able to speak a word for their Master "in season and out of season," so that the glorious gospel of our Lord and Master may be sounded from pole to pole, that men and women may hear, believe, and turn to the Lord, and be eternally saved. This should be our prayer. In times past the teaching of the sacred scriptures by the Disciples on the Island was done by men who worked at the bench or on the farm. Churches were established that lived in harmony and peace while the brethren edified one another.

Times have now changed. Each church must have a minister to explain the word of life to the saved, while the brethren (*the saved*) sit idly looking on. When we consider the many advantages that we are enjoying at present, we are led to ask: How is it that the cause is not progressing on the Island faster than it is, having five ministers giving their whole time to the work? The cause is not making the progress that it made in times past. Something must be wrong—either the brethren are leaving too much for the minister to do or they are not using the fiddle as they ought.

### INFLUENCE OF LITERATURE.

O. B. STOCKFORD.

Literature, in the strict sense of the word, consists of those writings which have become permanent through the impression they have made upon a large or influential number of people. Hence the literary works of the leading and most popular authors of a nation often either determine or reveal its history. While portions of such writings are great factors in moulding the character of a people, other portions reflect pretty accurately their leading peculiarities. The noblest and the meanest thought, the best and the worst passions, the most distinctive characteristics of a nation are clearly delineated in the literature its writers produce and its masses read. I am referring now to general literature, and not particularly to those writings which are directly historical. These facts will be abundantly exemplified by comparing the history of the foremost nations with their literature.

It seems to be natural for an intelligent people to give enduring expression to their best and most distinctive thought. And so all great people have had a literature. No nation has ever wielded a mighty and lasting influence over the affairs of humanity whose people have not been controlled, to a great extent, by some literary work or works. Even people who are not, strictly speaking, literary or intellectual, may be almost entirely governed by literature—for instance, the Turk by the Koran, and the Chinese by the writings of Confucius. If these statements are facts—and I think an appeal to history will prove them so—then literature has much weight in the concerns of men.

It has been truly said that the history of the Bible is the history of God's people. It contains most accurately the history of the Jews and the early Christians. Besides this, however, the record of the treatment this Book of books has received from men is that of its believers also; and its teaching has determined, to a remarkable degree, the course in life of those who accept it as a guide. The fortunes of God's people must necessarily be bound up with the revelation of his will to them. It is impossible for the Christian to grow Christlike without learning of his Lord through his written Word. The study of no book or books can be substituted for that of the Bible. We must obtain all religious knowledge directly or indirectly from its pages. Indeed there seems to be a large portion of this knowledge which can only be obtained directly from the Holy Scriptures. In a peculiar sense they may be said to be the source of all true religious literature. Not only should nothing be promulgated that is not in accordance with them, but nothing should be advanced as the will of God which is not found therein. They contain an inexhaustible mine of instruction, in which the student always finds some fresh truth to reward his efforts. There is a spiritual blessing obtained through the perusal of these holy

writings which can not be obtained elsewhere.

But although the Bible is thus the source from which we must derive all knowledge of the will of God, yet we may be aided in our studies of the Word by the writings of those who, through superior talents and great devotion to its searching, are able, at times, to facilitate—both by a consideration of external evidence and by exposition of inner truth—the knowledge to be acquired therefrom. In our search for truth we may reasonably expect to profit by the writings of intellectual men and women, of honest purpose and impartial mind, who have devoted the best part of their lives to its study. Among the writings which are thus profitable we may class those of the leading authors of the Disciples of Christ. The professed aim of these men—and I trust that it is an aim in deed and not in word only—being solely to seek after and practise God's will as revealed in his word, they may be expected to afford the Bible student much aid. The literary works of these men breathe a spirit of freedom which it would be difficult to surpass. While they contain errors—as all human productions must—yet I think we may be justified in supposing that the writings of those who are not bound by any statement of belief apart from the Great Authority will help the Bible student considerably. It would be hard to find men who are less biased or enslaved to set opinions than our representative writers. Who can read the candid expositions of these men without being strengthened thereby? The spirit of loyalty to truth which will be found permeating them will alone repay their perusal. Their sincere treatment of Bible subjects must impress fair-minded persons as being at least an impartial attempt to expound the truth.

There can be no question as to the ability of these men. Reference to the effect they have had in controlling the religious thought of the century will determine this. Many of the interpretations advanced by our pioneers which, at the outset, were considered unorthodox by able Christians, are to-day endorsed by leading religious thinkers. As an example of this we may cite Alex. Campbell's distinction between the law and gospel which is now recognized by many of the foremost advocates of Christianity. Some of the positions taken by the promoters of our movement—for instance, that respecting the necessity of Christian union—have been adopted by many Christian bodies.

We are a Bible people, and as such plead for its reception as the only authority to which we can go to know the will of God and of his Son. But we are not thereby precluded from obtaining any outside help toward the better understanding of the book. Taking the Bible as our fixed and certain standard, we cannot go astray while seeking other good literature to aid us in our studies. The true Disciple of Christ must always be loyal to his Bible. To it he must resort as the end of all controversy. But he may