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A RELIGIOUS MONTHLY.

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OCTOBER, 1888.

WHAT'S THE ODDS?

What's the odds what church a man belongs to? is a question often asked, and the answer, of course, implied in the question is, "There is no odds;" "It makes no difference." And yet the questioner would limit his statement to Protestant churches, and even among these he would reject some as not being fit to join. He would most likely explain that his remark held good in regard to the leading Protestant bodies in this country, and that among them it is a matter of indifference, or nothing more than a question of taste or convenience, or old time association, as to which a believer in the Lord Jesus should connect himself with. And a man who holds such views is often counted broad-minded and charitable, while a person holding and expressing contrary views is frequently considered narrow and un-Christian. But strange, and yet not very strange, to say, few, if any, who hold such views are thoroughly consistent with themselves. Seldom will you find a man equally anxious for the prosperity of other churches and his own; nor often will you find one who rejoices as much when people join other churches as when they join his own. The so-called union revival meetings are a conspicuous illustration of this. During the progress of the meetings all seems harmonious, but towards the close and at the close, the great question is not, "Are the people being saved?" but, "Will they join our church?" And very unseemly is the strife as to which church shall get the most new members.

Sometimes we hear of, or meet with, a Disciple who thinks it does not matter what church a person belongs to. Generally speaking, the Disciples hold that it does matter what church is joined—what creed is adopted—and that the New Testament should be called in to decide the question. And further, that only so far as the New Testament speaks are we authorized to speak on matters of fellowship and conditions of salvation, and where it speaks we are bound to speak—we have no option in the matter. And that therefore the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is required to enquire, before associating himself with any religious people, whether their teaching and their practices are in accordance with the Scriptures. If he finds them to be so, it is his duty to unite with that people; if he finds them to be not so, it is his duty not to unite with that people.

But it may be asked what is a man to do who lives where there is no congregation holding to what he believes to be the Scriptural order. Shall he temporarily or permanently cast in his lot with that body which seems to him to be nearest the truth? A common answer to this question is, "Yes, certainly." But is that the correct answer? Should a man who believes that believer's immersion is the only Christian baptism unite with a church that practices infant sprinkling? Can he do so and be faithful to the Master? Can he do so without being understood to hold that men may make the word of the Lord of none effect by their tradition? We maintain he can not, and therefore he can not become a member of a Pædo-baptist church and remain a Christian. In other words, by associating himself with such a church he, in effect, declares that there is no use in being a Christian, that a person need not serve and honor Jesus Christ unless he deems it for his own present comfort and convenience.

It does matter what church a man belongs to. A Christian may not join a church that does not follow the teaching of the Saviour and His apostles, or that teaches or practices that which

is contrary to the Word of God. It is not enough that a man should identify himself with some church calling itself a church of Christ, and be known as one who is on the side of Christianity in a general way. He must be where he can be with a good conscience, where his influence exalts the word of the Lord, and not where he must logically be held to believe and to endorse that which he knows to be contrary to the truth of the gospel. In regard to untaught questions, a man may exercise his liberty of opinion and action, but in regard to that which the Lord requires, His disciple is free only when he obeys Him. There is much need of careful thinking on this subject, and conscientious scrutiny of what the Scriptures teach. For it can never be a matter of indifference, when the Lord has a way for us, whether we walk in that way or not. It is not a trifling matter then what church one joins, it may be a matter of salvation; the Saviour says: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in His own glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

NOTES.

Bro. Crewson's address is changed from Baysville to Huntsville, Ontario.

Have you sent a contribution to aid in supporting the foreign missionaries this year?

Contributions from Ontario to Foreign Missions since last report:—F. W. Baughman, Guelph, 50c.; J. A. Gaff, Toronto, \$5.00.

The selected article, headed "The Kentucky Work," is worthy of careful reading and consideration.

The Board of the Wellington Co-operation met at Everton on the afternoon of the 30th ult. It was decided to use this year's proceeds of the bequest made by the late Sister Scott, to assist the church in Guelph to retain the services of a laborer. We have not been informed of the amount of the bequest.

Superintendents of Sunday Schools are particularly requested to send their names and addresses to Bro. C. Sinclair, Collingwood, or to Bro. C. A. Fleming, Owen Sound, that blanks may be sent them to report the work of the year on and be ready for the next Annual Meeting. If your S. S. Superintendent does not read the EVANGELIST, please call his attention to this note.

We notice that the question whether a church has a scriptural warrant for excluding persons guilty of certain offences is receiving considerable attention at present. One of the ablest treatments of the subject we have seen is that by "H. M." in the *Christian Standard*, and which we re-publish on the first page of this number. For clear thinking, cogent reasoning, honest treatment of the Scriptures, fair treatment of opponents, thorough mastery of his subject, commend us to "H. M."

THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT enters upon a new volume with the September number. Some new and striking features in its attractive table of contents call for special mention.

A "New Testament Supplement" contains the first four of a series of forty Inductive Studies on the Life and Times of the Christ based on the Book of Mark. They will attract the attention of all Bible students, covering as they do the Sunday School Lessons of the coming year. These studies are broad in scope, clear in method, stimulating in treatment, adapted to all who desire to study. Henceforth not only those who wish to keep up with O. T. investigation but also all who are interested in the New Testament will find this periodical suited to their needs. We predict for this series of studies wide popularity.

Two series of articles helpful to students are begun in this number. Dr. Nordell contributes the first of several studies of O. T. words, discussing the terms for "man" and "woman." The most valuable parts of Dr. Weber's great work on the Eschatology of the Talmud are presented in a condensed translation by Dr. Stevens of Yale. The new commentary on the Psalms by Cheyne is made the subject of a critical review by Dr. Curtis of Chicago. An eloquent article on the Literary Study of the Bible illustrated by a criticism of the book of Amos, will be found stimulating.

The other departments, editorial notes, book-reviews, current O. T. literature, etc., afford helpful information. The subscription price of this increasingly valuable journal has been placed at \$1.50 a year (ten numbers). THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT, New Haven, Ct. William R. Harper, Editor.

We have another stirring letter from Manitoba this month. We would be glad to have such every month. We trust our brethren scattered throughout Manitoba and the North-west will not let us Ontario Disciples alone until we have done all we ought to do for those regions. Thus far we have fallen very far short of our duty. We would be obliged to Bro. "G. A." if he would send us the names and addresses of those nine or ten school teachers, as well as of any other scattered Disciples he knows of in the North-west.

The Disciples in the State of New York have had no Evangelist in the general field during the past year. Bro. O. G. Hertzog is Cor.-Sec'y of the State Board, and is engaged building up the cause in the City of Rochester. The following from the MISSIONARY WEEKLY informs us that Pennsylvania has done likewise: "The State Evangelist resigned, and his resignation was accepted, and the office will be discontinued, and in lieu of it will place a man in the City of Erie." The brethren in those States, after long experience, have come to this conclusion. The most of the denominations came to the same conclusion years ago. Let churches and individuals send in their contributions, and one hundred cents of every dollar will go to the mission-points.

"You will please find enclosed One Dollar—our subscription for 1888 and 1889. We are sorry it was not sent sooner; we would miss the paper very much. Hoping soon to see it grow into a weekly and that God's blessing may rest both on you and the EVANGELIST, I remain your brother in Christ, ———." Such is another evidence that our labors as publishers are appreciated. We thank the brother for his remittance and for his kind words. Those of our friends who think we should stop the paper at once when the time for which it is paid expires will see by reading the above that such a plan would not work. The rule we have adopted is the best known to us; it is fair to us and our readers.

It is often asked why so few of our churches contribute for mission purposes. More than one-half give nothing for missions—either home or foreign. Why is it? The fault we believe lies almost altogether at the door of the preacher who ministers to the flock. We believe the churches would all contribute for missions if taught that it was their duty to do so. Let it be remembered that a church which is destitute of a missionary spirit is destitute of a Christian spirit. An anti-missionary church is an anti-Christian church. The spirit of Christ if possessed by his professed followers prompts them to do as he did and as he commanded, "Preach the gospel to every creature."

The Sixth volume of Alden's *Manifold Cyclopaedia* extends from Bravo to Calville, its 635 nicely printed pages including 120 illustrations. Along with its manifold number of words and topics treated briefly, there are many extended articles, as for instance, Brazil, seven pages; Breach-loading Guns, eleven pages; Bridge, eleven pages; British Museum, ten pages; Brooklyn, five pages; Buddhism, fifteen pages; and California, sixteen pages. The Cyclopaedia well deserves the enthusiastic commendation it is receiving from all sides; it is certainly THE Cyclopaedia for popular use. Rev. Dr. Wright of Milwaukee, evidently voices the thought of many when he says: "I may in all truth and soberness quote its first word as expressive of my sentiments in regard to your wonderful work; its comprehensiveness, its cheapness, etc.—'Bravo, yea, Bravissimo!' Its small handy volume, contrasting so greatly with the usual bulky, unwieldy volumes adopted by publishers of Cyclopedias, is a very pleasant characteristic, and undoubtedly adds greatly to the usefulness of the work, as stated by Dr. Hasty of Indianapolis, who says: 'I have the American Cyclopaedia, but reference is made to the *Manifold* so far as I have it, ten times to once to the former. It is a marvel of compactness and completeness.' The publisher sends specimen pages free to any applicant, or specimen volumes, which may be returned if not wanted, for 60 cents for cloth binding, 75 cents for half morocco, post-paid; the better binding is particularly commended. JOHN B. ALDEN, Publisher, 393 Pearl Street, New York, 218 Clark Street, Chicago.

The readers of the *Octographic Review* will remember that some time ago there were in that paper two articles on the church on Plum Street, Detroit. They were written by Daniel Sommer, the publisher of the *Review*, and they contained a glowing description of the church and its work. This note is not written to find fault because of any praise given to the Plum Street church; we do not find it necessary to discredit the work of that church; we do not hold it impossible for good to be done through the system adopted by it. We write to call attention to the untruthful statements made in the articles referred to concerning the church on Washington Avenue,

Detroit. The reader having faith in the knowledge and veracity of the writer would conclude that the last named church was almost, if not altogether, dead. Let any reader of the *Octographic Review* turn up the paper containing the first of the articles in question and he will find that the impression sought to be made is, that the work carried on by the church on Washington Avenue is a failure. We are in a position to say that it is far otherwise; that the statements made by the publisher of the *Review* are untrue. A church that has a membership of over three hundred, a flourishing Sunday-school, and two missions in the city is not a very conspicuous failure. A church which, in addition to supporting its own particular work, also contributes liberally to Home and Foreign Missions is hardly in a dying condition. Moreover, a church where the saints are faithfully edified and the gospel faithfully preached, so that the Christians are more and more abounding in love and in good works, and sinners are confessing the Saviour almost every week in the year is, we should say, scarcely ready to have its funeral sermon preached. If the writer of this note simply wished to make a point against a church that chooses to follow what is known as the self-edification system, he might tell of what he saw and heard in Detroit a few weeks ago. Dropping in to the church on Washington Avenue at a regular Lord's day meeting he saw a good congregation, heard a good sermon, and good congregational singing aided by an instrument. On the same day dropping into the church on Plum Street at a regular service, he saw a very small congregation, heard a very indifferent sermon, and listened to good congregational singing aided by an instrument. And if he were disposed to form an opinion upon what he saw and heard on that occasion, he might publish to the brotherhood at the Plum Street church is about dead, and hold it up as a conclusive proof that self-edification is a failure. But since he knows how unfair it would be to form and publish a conclusion without knowing all the facts, he prefers not to follow the example of Daniel Sommer. He possibly formed his conclusions from what was told him by others; if so, he is not thereby excused. And further, we should be sorry to think that there is in the Plum Street church one member mean enough, and untruthful enough to say such things about the church on Washington Avenue as Daniel Sommer has written. Let the readers of the *Octographic Review* be on their guard and be slow to receive what Daniel Sommer has to say concerning brethren and churches who do not choose to follow him. Daniel Sommer is evidently determined to make an impression—he is succeeding—there are several kinds of impressions—he is making impressions. If he sincerely wishes to further the cause of Christ, he should bear in mind every time he takes up his pen, that only truth can advance the truth.

CHURCH NEWS.

DORCHESTER.—Good news comes from Dorchester. Since Bro. W. D. Campbell began work there, Sept. 1st, quite a number have been baptized.

ERIN CENTRE.—At the regular meeting in Hillsburg Lord's Day evening, Sept. 16th, a young man made the good confession, and was baptized the following day.

WAINFLEET.—The church here was made to rejoice last Lord's Day morning at the unexpected restoration of Bro. Middleton to the fold. This good Bro. has, for reasons best known to himself, stood aloof from the church for some time—maintaining, however, a character above reproach. Bro. Middleton is a young man of considerable talent. May the Lord bless him and make him useful among the people.

Sept., 1888. I. BROWN.
I go home this week. My address for some time will be Warton, Ont. I will hold some meetings among the weak churches if an opportunity presents itself. H. J.

TONAWANDA.—Some changes have taken place in the church here lately. In the early part of the summer the members living in North Tonawanda withdrew from the church here and organized one there; shortly afterwards they engaged Bro. Robbins, of Illinois, to preach for them. Though many have considered this movement to have been somewhat premature, and therefore unwise, and have been trying to reunite the churches again, yet we believe they will succeed in their enterprise, for their pastor is a worker, and the members, generally, are not afraid to put their shoulders to the wheel. Bro. Talmage (who has been preaching here for nearly three years, and added very many to the church) left last week for New Castle, Pa., where he commences work immediately. Bro. Humphrey succeeds him.

Sept. 7th, '88. D. S.