

The Christian Advocate. GALVESTON, TEXAS. THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27.

DEATH OF REV. STEPHEN G. STARKS.—That fine face which makes no noble a picture in the Methodist Pulpit, South, is in the dust. Bro. Starks is dead. The Church will mourn his loss. He was President of the State Female College near Memphis, Tenn. His last words were: "I die in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!"

Dr. Wharton, Editor of the Northern Methodist Quarterly, publishes in the New York Tribune a long reply to the Advocate and Journal, upon the change of the slavery Rule of the Northern Discipline. He complains that the audience of the Advocate and Journal "are compelled to hear what Dr. Stevens has to say without the privilege of an answer," his article having been excluded from the paper. He advocates the third process of changing the Rule so as to make it condemn all actual slaveholding—against the two extremes, one of which is for a change by a majority vote, and the other against any change at all. He thinks a change of the Rule would be a great moral power for the Church, while, at the same time, slaveholders would be kept in by localizing the administration of discipline. Good men are driven to strange shifts when they over-estimate only make a sin where none has been declared by the perfect law of God.

A correspondent of the Cumberland Presbyterian paper, writing from Texas, says he was helped in a meeting by a Methodist preacher who does not believe that all the religion is in his own church. The help he prayed for was his help: "May God prosper him on his circuit, and give him many stars in his crown of rejoicing." If these two brethren had got into a controversy about doctrine they might have filled columns with their dispute; but this little item showing their brotherly love is worth more than all their arguments could have been. Christians are not required to convince the world by their arguments, but by their union.

KANSAS CONFERENCE.—The session opened on Tuesday, at the 23d September, and closed on the 26th, Bishop Paine presiding. One preacher had died during the year, Rev. A. Malice, and two or three had been inefficient by affliction; about twenty were enabled to do full work. The increase of membership had been 295. The Sunday School department had more than doubled the statistics of its usefulness.

Bishop Morris, says the Western, in a brief address, before reading out the appointments of the Delaware Conference, remarked that of all the places to be filled, he considered a circuit the most pleasant and desirable. He said he had done the best he could for the preachers in assigning them to these best appointments, but they could not all be so accommodated, as there were not circuits enough for all; and the rest would be obliged to take up with stations and districts.

By the way, when was there a moral better pointed by the "Infernal Machine" of Rev. L. M. Lee, in the October number of the Home Circle? And then, Mrs. Cross's article on the "Poetry of Girlhood," worthy of the sweet theme, and those "Old Papers of an Old Preacher," by Dr. Hinkle, and Mr. Bird's "Glances at some of God's Creatures," remind us to say, after a second reading, that those who do not take the Circle, but look to the North for their magazine reading, go farther and worse than we of the home folk school. Let them join us in the support of our own periodical, for one year, and we will answer for the result.

Speaking of a controversy at Anderson, the Galveston News says: "To us it appears but the result of the loose and unguarded use of language in moments of excitement." To us it appears to be, in great part, at least, the result of an ungenerous haste on the part of the Baptist editor to criticize and condemn a protracted meeting held by another denomination, while it was yet in progress.

Obituaries should be accompanied by the name of the writer. Several now on hand are laid over because this requirement was overlooked.

We do not "refuse" to publish an obituary which we fail to copy from another paper. The excuse is, that we do not see it.

The closest attention does not always prevent mistakes in proper names.

The Rev. BISHOP.—It will be seen that our New York correspondent advises Texans to go into the little big business. Big bugs do not pay, we understand; but, according to his showing, a smaller variety of the same species is quite remunerative.

HEALTH.—There was but one important marked yellow fever, in the Sexton's report of this city for Monday. Since then we have nothing more to report.

At Houston there were seven interments from all diseases, on Sunday, and four on Monday forenoon.

GALVESTON DIRECTORY.—The enterprising proprietors of the Galveston News, W. and D. Richardson, have just issued a Directory of the city for 1859-60, with a fine map, a brief history of the island prior to the foundation of the city, the successive mayoralties and councils to the present time, provisions of the present charter and ordinances now in force, together with a history of printing in the city, and some account of public institutions, improvements, commerce, &c. The volume contains 90 pages, is neatly bound and printed, and as it is a credit to the city, we hope it may prove a profit to the publishers. It is only one of many evidences that the latter are men of the useful, public spirited, devoting and executing type. As such, they deserve the respect and encouragement of all the friends of improvement.

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.—City Lots and Land on West Bay, for sale by John Tronson. Balances and Seales, L. Stephenson & Co., Boston, Manufacturers, Agents in New Orleans, Mobile and Savannah. New Fall and Winter Goods, for ladies and gentlemen, and plantation use, a fine stock, by Howard & Burkhardt, Galveston. McKenzie Institute.—Card giving time of commencement, terms, &c.

METHODISM.

NUMBER THREE—PRIMARY OBJECT OF THE UNION.—UNITED IN ORDER TO PRAY TOGETHER.

Prayer is the great means of "seeking the power of godliness." There is nothing more spiritual in its meaning than prayer. It deals with the unseen. We address nothing visible or tangible, and "take with us words" only that our own desires may be made more clear to ourselves. Here at once we come upon that double meaning of prayer which has sometimes given rise to controversy. As prayer itself certainly does have an effect upon the petitioner, some have concluded that this was the only design of its institution. Others, seeing clearly that prayer implies a hearing and answering God, have dwelt upon that sublime truth that the neglect of the other design, just noted. "The prayers of the one class are heartless and formal, the prayers of the other class are often incoherent, unpractical and fanciful. One of the commentators reads a passage of Scripture thus: "The preparation of the heart is in man; but the answer of the tongue is from God." This is to say, it is our duty to prepare ourselves to call properly, but it is God's to answer even the most appropriate and perfect prayer. No such prayer answers itself; the performance of the duty is not its own sufficient reward. Like the apostle, we have a "cessant" for bowing our knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; even that "we would grant, according to the riches of his glory" something which our own efforts cannot produce, nor our own worthiness claim, nor even our understanding fully conceive. We have wrongs which we cannot redress; spiritual sicknesses which the philosophies cannot heal; children that education cannot save; enemies greater than flesh and blood to overcome; capacities that nothing but heaven can fill; therefore, in praying we do not merely exercise ourselves unto godliness, but we fall with our weight of wants on the altar-stairs of Redemption.

"That slope through darkness up to God," and expect that he will send the veil of gloom and come down to help. We look for positive answers to prayer. In many cases these answers may not be visible, but they are always real. We may know that our prayers are heard. Any reasonable view of religion will teach us that answers which affect our own spirits are the most indubitable. "The spiritual state is David, "when I cried, Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." Such an answer to prayer is as unmistakable as any other conceivable. There is logic here: "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me: "But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer: "Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."

A quietist theologian, commenting on this passage, says he looked for David to come forward with the regular syllogistic conclusion, "therefore, I do not regard iniquity in my heart," whereas he bursts forth in praise; "now," says the sturdy doctor, "I like this logic better than Aristotle's—because whatever it be the premises it makes God's glory the conclusion." Our special use for the passage is to note Christian joy in God as the fruit of answered prayer. Everything like experience is excluded from those merely scientific systems of religion which are too anxiously concerned for the dignity of God to permit him the concession of granting answers to prayer. Such religions make a god of their own, very different from the hearing God of the Bible; also, they ignore the needs of humanity, construe Redemption into a kind of sacred sham, or deny altogether the Lord that brought them, in a mistaken zeal for His honor as creator. In acknowledging the efficacy of prayer, the Methodist must hold to the doctrine that there is one God and one mediator between God and men. Upon these grounds, the apostle exhorts men to "pray everywhere"—the one God being everywhere accessible, so that place can make no difference, and the one mediator being the only ground of approach, so that condition, not even that most appalling and universal one of all, represented in the question, "where shall I appear before God?" need present no hindrance. To this literal doctrine of prayer as being heard by the Father, through Christ Jesus, and positively answered by special and divine grant, the Methodists literally adhere.—On the other hand, whatever advantage may accrue from the dignity, the seriousness, the solemnly humbling and exalting tendency of an act, whatever, in a word, may be called its educational influence—these we enjoy as fully as others who do not go beyond them for fear that the God of Elijah should answer by fire, and thereby do discredit to His immutability.

We cannot see how answers to prayer imply "changeableness or shadow of turning" on the part of the Deity, if the prayers be answered in accordance with established principles of government. Doubtless, impertinence and earnestness of petition find their explanation in ourselves; and, doubtless, these qualities of prayer are often counterfeited; either they are assumed that we may seem unto men to pray, or they are hard and dry imitations of realities which existed when the true spirit of prayer was within us. But a right impatience is essential to prayer, and, as no discredit upon the character of God or upon our profession as Christians. Pith-speech, however, attacks prayer at this point; and we had as soon make the defence here as elsewhere. A sentence or two will be sufficient: Impatience implies frequency, rather than prolongation, though, perhaps, the principle is the same in either case. Take an instance. Suppose we pray, as the Psalmist did, for a clean heart and a right spirit; according to Christian theology, such a petition properly offered, should be granted. Why, then, do we pray often for it? First, because there may be intermediates between our present condition and the one we seek. We fix upon the latter as a positive attainment, but our prayers may be and often are answered in what seems to be a negative way; it is, a deeper necessity of the full answer is revealed; the spiritual powers are awakened; a powerful work of grace is going on within the heart of the petitioner, unrecognized by those who have stayed their attention upon the final object of his petition, and think that nothing is gained because he is still in pursuit. There may not be a colder mistake. Secondly, we pray often and earnestly, because no state of grace is final, nor ever becomes a past attainment. All religious experience is continuous; we are always being justified or sanctified, and frequent prayer is nothing more than the expression of a constant abiding faith in an everliving God.

In praying for others, we look to some definite end, as, for example, their conversion. But we are instruments of good to others by action as well as by prayer; and this constant pleading for the conversion of sinners is answered by the opening of means for our action upon them and by the increase of our moral power as workers together with God. In our experience, as in our external efforts, the Christian life is a warfare—at its best estate it is not a perfect rest,

but a constant conquest, of which prayer is the watchword. Hence, "spraying" with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," is not the token of failure, but of continuous success. It is not to be despised, however, that there is a mystery in prayer which, after all explanation, leaves its reason hidden, where the Christian most desires that it should be concealed, in the unfathomable depths of the Divine Mind. It suffices the believer to know enough to see that the secret is not contrary to his reason, and that it exceeds his understanding chiefly as a mystery of love.

With regard to social prayer—the primary object of our Christian union—it is to be remarked that our Christ died for the many; that fellowship or communion is one of the gifts of the Spirit; that religion implies joint-participation, and that this catholic spirit cannot be manifest itself in prayer. It was in prayer the Savior expressed the unity of the Church in the strongest terms—"that they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." It was when Paul "bowed his knees" that he saw most clearly the oneness of "the whole family in heaven and earth." Whatever of good belongs to association is completely elicited in united prayer. As that is the most perfect act of the one, so when the many participate in it perfectly, the purest union is realized. Thus—"We all partake the joy of one."

The common prayer we refer to is "United in order to pray together." Those, therefore, who forsake the place of social prayer violate the leading principle of Church fellowship. Nothing that any Christian may do will compensate for this neglect. No amount of worldly business can form an excuse; no abundance of labor bestowed elsewhere for the good of the Church—no amount of money given to the stewards; no zeal in defence of doctrine; no strictness of morality, nothing under heaven can be put in place of the believer's habitual presence with his brethren when they meet for prayer. Elsewhere they may need his money, or his character, or anything else that belongs to Christ; but not they want his presence. It will not do for him to stay away and send up his desires. There must be an assembling of persons with one accord in one place. And the great neglect of this duty is the reason of the largest portion of the backsliding, and hinders more than any other cause the efficiency of the Church.—When the social meetings of the Church are thronged, the set time to favor Zion will have come.

Finally: as our union in prayer is a complete fellowship of soul, and as it is a primary object of Church association, it follows that our intercourse should keep that holy and glorious end in view. We should never act in each other's presence that we cannot thereafter meet in prayer with full confidence and perfect harmony of spirit. Our walk before each other; our thoughts of each other; our language to and about each other—should all be sanctified by the consideration that we worship at the same altar, and should never be such as to hinder the heartiest response to each other's petitions. Happy is he, who "united" with his brethren, "in order to pray together," has never by voluntary absence, or by creating or fomenting discord, violated the principle of that union; and happy shall he be, who, having done so, turns again at the call, and, with quickened heart and repenting heart, seeks the circle of Christian fellowship to go out no more forever. If there be any persistent separatists, sensual, having not the spirit, let them not look for a portion when the Lord, pleased with that good and pleasant fruit of righteousness, the unity of his people, commands the blessing, even life forever.

FROM SOLE UNIVERSITY.

ED. ADVOCATE.—It may be gratifying to the patrons and friends of the Institution to know that our present session is progressing in a manner that is in several respects highly encouraging to us. During the first month more than a hundred names were enrolled, of whom "monthly reports" for standing in scholarship, deportment, &c., have been sent to their parents or guardians in different parts of the State, from near Red River to Brownsville. We can truly say that thus far we have not had a better set of students, nor closer application to study. In the numerical grading of the report ten is the maximum, and is rarely attained, while five and under indicate a very moderate degree and low grade of scholarship. In deportment, &c., "very good" is the maximum, while "decent" is low. Any further explanation or amplification in regard to the reports or anything else can be had upon application by letter.

Rev. Bro. McKinney, an experienced teacher from Springfield, recently elected tutor, has arrived and will enter immediately upon his duties in the Preparatory Department in conjunction with Bro. Kirby. The building is progressing well, the first story being about half up, built of stone from the neighborhood, of fine quality, and presenting a surface handsomely decorated. The style of the work is highly creditable to Mr. Sank's skill and energetic contractor, and is said to be equal if not superior to that of any building in the State. It might be supposed that the yellow fever being at Houston, Cypress City, and Hempstead, a case might be brought here, but this has not yet occurred, nor is it likely to occur, as passengers from those places are not permitted to stop at the hotel.

The illness of a lady in the suburbs of the town, who came from Hempstead a few days since, awakened some suspicion and created some alarm in the minds of the neighbors, but a note from the physicians saying that she had nothing but a chill and fever, and was better to-day, and that they would give prompt information of any case that might occur, allayed all apprehension. The strictest precaution will be exercised to prevent a case from coming here, but if one should be brought as has been done several times in former years, there would still be no danger to us, until one should originate here, which never has occurred.

Yesterday was a beautiful day; a fine congregation at church. To Bro. Perry's sermon the missions there was a liberal response to the amount of \$515. Bro. Glass, from Anderson, preached at night. Yours, in haste, W. G. FOWLE, Secretary of the Faculty, Sole University, Chappell Hill, Oct. 24, '59.

LOCAL PREACHERS' CONVENTION.

"The second Convention of the Local Preachers of the Methodist Churches in the United States, met in the Charles St. M. E. Church, Baltimore, Oct. 1, 1859. The first meeting was opened with reading the second chapter of 2d Timothy, singing, "O for a thousand tongues," etc., and prayer. A letter from Isaac P. Cook, President of the Baltimore Local Preachers' Association, welcoming the delegates, was read. Rev. Henry Slicer, P. E. of the West Baltimore District, read resolutions from the Preachers' Meeting of Baltimore "calling" the local brethren "with pleasure," and inviting them to fill the pulpits.

PRÉSIDENT.—THOMAS A. TARKER, Philadelphia Conference. Vice Præsidents.—Charles C. Leigh, of New York do; Dr. George C. M. Roberts, Baltimore do. Secretaries.—Wm. H. Kincaid, Pittsburgh do. Daniel T. Macfarlan, New York East do. Joseph Gatehell, of the New Jersey Conference, offered the following resolution, which was adopted: That the Local preachers of the M. E. Churches in the United States, whose standing can be vouched for by any delegate present, and who shall express themselves friendly to the object of this Convention, shall be admitted as delegates. The Baltimore Advocate says: "We hope the next Convention will be numerously attended by our brethren of the Church South. We are sorry that none of them attended the late meeting." The Sabbath services must have been pleasant. At 9 o'clock an experience meeting, one peculiarity of which was "a good deal of old-fashioned religious zeal," which the Northern brethren seemed disposed to charge upon them of Baltimore, while the latter argue that New York Methodism gave evidence that day of soundness of lungs as well as of head and heart. President Tarkerk preached at 11 o'clock from, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." At 3 o'clock, a large audience was present to hear short addresses from the delegates. The sacrament was administered, and the altar was surrounded four times by local preachers. At 7 o'clock addresses again—and thus, says the paper, a Sabbath of prayer, which will not be forgotten, a season of great grace and mercy from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Baltimore Advocate promises further proceedings next week. It has an able editorial upon the Local Ministry which we shall publish on our next issue.

THE TEXAS CONFERENCE.—The La Grange True Issue says: "The Texas Annual Conference will soon be held. Preparations are being made by our citizens on an extended scale to afford the members of the Conference and their wives, such a reception as they justly deserve."

Noticing the Home Circle, our British brother of the Canada Advocate makes a shrewd guess. He says: "That picture of the Mother of Washington, with the baby on her lap, is really delightful. We don't exactly know who the baby is, it is 'George' we presume."

EDITOR'S TABLE. "The History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century," called Methodism, commenced in its different denominational forms, and its relation to British and American Preaching, by Daniel Stevens, LL.D., N. York; Carlton & Porter.

We have before us the second volume of this work, embracing the period of 21 years (1770 to 1791.) from the death of Whitefield to the death of Wesley. It generally shows the same clearness of perception and skill in wording, exhibited in the title above quoted. We intend that for praise, as will be seen when we say that the title is a model in its way. Any reader who cannot see the propriety of making what people might choose to call the "Movement," subordinate to the fact of its being the "religious movement" of a century, which was probably the inaugural era of the "latter day glory," can pass into the book itself, where he will probably find much that he can understand. Others will see even in the title what is doubtless true, that Dr. Stevens has a very high and serious conception of its theme, which could hardly be better expressed than in the language of the venerable writer of Shoreham to Charles Wesley: "I make no doubt that Methodism, notwithstanding all the wiles of Satan, is designed by Divine Providence to produce the apostolic and Church authority. Something is to be added to the enthusiasm of an Episcopal minister who gave two sons to Wesley's Conference, and all of whose family were 'members of a Methodist Class.' But the millennium is to be introduced, and if Dr. Stevens can do anything to fill the prediction of Mr. Perronet, concerning his harbinger, he is quite willing to be so engaged. He is disposed to claim position for the subject of his historical labors; makes no doubt that Wesley used 'Society' and 'Church' as convertible terms, and has an appreciative eye for the practical signs of apostolic and Church authority. 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