

CHRISTIAN HERALD.

EDITOR:

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Our New Volume for 1883.

With this number the CHRISTIAN HERALD enters upon its thirteenth volume. As to the amount of good the HERALD has accomplished on the Pacific coast during the past twelve years, we leave for the brethren to decide. We are now concerned more especially with its present and future prospects. It is quite evident, however, that its influence for good has been sufficiently felt during the past that the brethren are willing to sustain it for the time to come. We came to Oregon and took hold of the HERALD, believing that the brotherhood of the coast wanted a good paper published at home and that they would rally to its support, and we are happy to say that so far we have not been disappointed in our high expectations. Everything points to the better. Almost every mail brings us words of cheer and encouragement; and not only are the old subscribers promptly renewing, but new names are coming in from all parts of the country. Many of our agents are also showing considerable interest and zeal in behalf of the HERALD. One agent in a few days after our postal card notice, sent in two post office money-orders for \$56.85. These names were all sent from his own town. We call this business. While we do not expect this much from all our agents, yet we are always glad to have a prompt response to our calls both for renewals and for new names. We do not believe that our agents and the brethren generally are actuated by any selfish spirit or party zeal in their efforts for our paper. They work for it because they feel that such a paper is a moral necessity on this coast, and is hence one of the very best means of building up the cause of Christ in this part of the country. It is estimated that there are at least 20,000 brethren in California, Oregon and Washington Territory, and that many others are coming from the Eastern States and settling among us almost daily. It is not too much to say, therefore, in view of the future of this great Northwest, that on this coast is one of the very best points in the United States for the publication of

a first-class religious paper. If it were nothing more than a matter of policy with us in publishing such a paper, or if its aims and purposes were no higher than the defense and advocacy of some of the modern

forms of sectarianism and party strife, the sooner it ceases to exist the better it would be for the people. But when we see the ignorance, superstition and sectarian opposition even among many professing Christianity, it should stir us up to a renewed effort in setting forth the true principles of New Testament Christianity, and in restoring to their original purity the faith and practice of the primitive churches. There is no better way of doing this than through the medium of a wholesome religious news paper. Seeing then that these things are true, our duty in this respect is plainly to be seen. But Editors, like other people, will make mistakes, and the man who supposes he never makes any, should never presume to occupy the Editor's chair. That is no place for him. While on the other hand the subscriber who expects to find perfection in a religious paper expects to find something that does not belong to his own selfish nature. These are unreasonable men, and for this class no Editor should attempt to write. We cannot speak for all Editors, but so far as we are concerned, we take an infallible Book as our guide; we have our own convictions of right and wrong, subject of course to correction and modification, and we advance straight forward without turning either to the right hand or to the left to please this one or to satisfy the unreasonable demands of that one. We know no policy in matters of right and wrong. But after all, we expect to encounter unjust critics and fault finders. There have been chronic grumblers since Adam and Eve were justly driven out of the garden of Eden, and the supply is still equal to the demand. But as we have made a rule to mark all letters coming from this source, "Dead Heads," and lay them aside to take care of themselves, we do not anticipate much trouble from that class. We are glad to know that they are remarkably scarce on the coast.

And now brethren, we have written these few lines for your encouragement. We can say truthfully that we enter upon the New year's work with a light heart, feeling that our hands will be held

up and our good work sustained by a noble band of sisters and brethren on the Pacific coast. Let then the fruit of our labor during 1883 tell for the good of our Master's cause.

Church Going.

We are in receipt of some letters from brethren wishing to know what must be done in case the members of a given congregation do not go to church only when the preacher comes to preach for them. We would answer in a general way that such brethren need to be taught their duty in this respect in the light of the New Testament Scriptures, and it is a part of the preacher's business to so teach them when he does come. The church that does not know and realize that it is the duty of all her members when not providentially hindered to assemble themselves together on the first day of every week, has lost sight of one of the primary objects for which the churches of Jesus Christ were organized, and have set at naught some of the plainest and most important exhortations and commands of the New Testament. Such a church can not grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in fact is unworthy of its name and existence. There may be times and circumstances under which it is not always practicable to meet every Lord's day, for so it was with some of the primitive churches. The church at Jerusalem was scattered abroad and the members went everywhere preaching the word. But such cases are very rare, and are only exceptions to the rule. Of these exceptions, we are not now writing. We are speaking of those churches who have ample opportunities for assembling and who do not feel obligated to do so, and hence, through mere indifference, neglect this allimportant duty. In Hebrews the Apostle says to the brethren, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." What was written for the Hebrew brethren was written for our admonition, and this passage comes to us with the force of a command. Now in the next verse the Apostle gives us a reason why we should not neglect the assembling of ourselves together, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there re-

maineth no more sacrifice for sins." We believe that this passage refers to one of the manifestations of the unpardonable sin. Hence we hold that a wilful and continued absence from the assembly of the saints is a clear indication of this fearful sin.

How then can a church, or any number of brethren absent themselves from the house of the Lord and at the same time do their duty as Christian men and women? And again; such brethren evidently have a wrong conception of the primary object for which the primitive churches assembled. There is no evidence that their custom was to meet for the express purpose of listening to a sermon preached by a Paul, Apollos, Cephas or some other good brother; but on the contrary, we are told that the disciples came together upon the first day of the week to break bread. This is the object for which churches now should meet, and like the churches under the direction of inspired men they should do it on the first day of every week. It is true that these churches sometimes had preaching on such occasions, but this was rather a secondary matter than the essential part of the worship. To suppose that a church can not come together on Lord's day and worship God acceptably and that they are not morally obligated to do so, without a regular preacher of the word is present to discourse to the people is not only unscriptural, but it is absolute folly. Until our brethren get rid of this Roman Catholic idea of Priest, or "Pastor" worship, we have but little hope of seeing the churches of Christ as prosperous as they might be otherwise. It is certainly a good thing for church members to listen to good preaching, and attentive listening under some circumstances is a part of the worship. But listening alone, like faith alone, is dead. The brother who expects to go to heaven on what little service his ears may render him will, in our humble opinion, make a poor showing in the day of judgment. There is no one who prizes the value of good Gospel preaching more than do we, for we learn that the Gospel-treasure was committed into earthen vessels to be carried to all people and nations, and Paul truly asks; "How shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall he preach except he be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of