

PLEASANT HILL, July 22, 1877.

Bro. Stanley:

Our congregation seems to be more prosperous than at the time of our last report.

For the last three weeks the average attendance in the Sunday school has been ninety-eight and, as a natural result, our morning meetings have been well attended.

We were favored, on last Sunday, with two of Bro. Burnett's good discourses. He had been absent for six weeks, on what he was pleased to call a vacation. We learn that his time has been well improved during his absence, but he returns to us looking much worn; yet he seemed to forget the weakness of his frame while in the sacred desk.

Brethren and Sisters, who are readers of the MESSENGER, let us not forget to aid our ministers with our prayers and our means, ever remembering that the laborer is worthy of his hire.

With the prayer that we may all consider well our obligations to God, and so labor in this world, as to find our names written in the Lamb's book of Life at last in the prayer of Yours in Christ,

A. H. BECKWITH.

DANCING.

THIRTY THREE REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT ENGAGE IN IT.

1. It leads to expense in dress, to late hours, to the neglect of moral and intellectual culture, and to various evil practices.

2. Dancing, more or less, leads in contact with promiscuous company and impure atmosphere. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

3. It mars social intercourse and unfits the mind for real, useful, substantial enjoyment.

4. Dancing unfits the mind for serious reflection and prayer.

5. The most wise, considerate, judicious and devotedly pious, in all ages, have looked upon dancing as amusement not only as useless, but of decided evil tendency. "Be not conformed to this world."

6. Those who delight in the ball room or dancing parties are generally fond of the wine cup, novel reading, and the card table.

7. Dancing is a favorite amusement of the savage nations and usually forms a very important part in the worship of heathen Gods.

8. Social home dances, as advocated by some Christians are but the stepping stone to the public ball-rooms and theatre—the top round of the ladder that leads down to the pit. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, but the simple pass on and are punished."

9. Dancing-masters and dancing-mistresses are generally of low standing in society, not even welcome at the homes of their pupils as guests. They are classed as theatricals of loose habits, whose morals will not bear scrutiny, and whose language is often very contaminating and corrupting.

10. The freedom between the sexes in certain kinds of dancing is exceedingly immodest, as admitted by those who engage in it, and often results in the most serious and pernicious consequences.

11. Dancing is a most useless art.

12. The evils flowing from dancing, and from inspiring children with the dancing mania, may be summed up in pride, folly, irreligion, and excessive love of pleasure, and finally in a loss of the soul.

13. Dancing as now practiced by the sexes as an amusement, is unscriptural, and those who introduce it into the Church are "diseased members," and should be healed or amputated, and thus save the body.

14. No instance of dancing is found upon record in the Bible, in which the two sexes were engaged in the exercise either as an act of worship or amusement. Neither is there any instance on record of social dancing for

amusement except that of the vain fellows, devoid of shame, or the irreligious families described by Job, which produced increased impiety and ended in destruction; and of Herodias, which terminated in the rash yow of Herod, and the murder of John the Baptist.

15. Who came to Herod's blood stained throne To seek forbidden joys? Who reveled there in crimes unknown, Bedecked with gaudy toys? A Dancer.

Who came in haste to kingly court To do a monster deed, To lift the Roman ax in sport And see the Baptist bleed? A Dancer.

Who bore away the good man's head, Like viands on a plate, Exalting that a saint was dead To glut her mothers hate? A Dancer.

16. The preparation for the dance is an outward adorning, not of good works, but of costly apparel; all this display is not of a meek and quiet spirit, but of pride and tumultuous vanity.

17. No Christian can attend such places without receiving spots from the world. And the Apostle James says, "Keep yourself unspotted from the world."

18. The scripture gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness. If dancing pertains to life and godliness, something must be given that authorizes it. Where is it?

19. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks unto God and the Father by him." Col. iii. 17. This demands the glory of God as the object, as well as the authority of Christ, for what we do. Does dancing do this?

20. Those who practice dancing do not think of appealing to scripture for authority. If they will dance therefore in the absence of authority either direct or indirect, the sooner they are given over to the world the sooner will the church be relieved of their pernicious example and they cease to practice deception on the world.

21. Christians are commended to let their light shine; that others seeing their good works may glorify our Father in Heaven. Has the dancing of Christians ever converted a soul to Christ? Rather has their light been turned to darkness, and no church has ever succeeded where it has not disciplined against it.

22. The Bible contains a revelation of the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and the apostle says, "they who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."—Dancers do all these things.

23. True gentility and etiquette are found in the church and not in the ball-room. The most accomplished lady and gentleman in the world are those who have been educated in the Church of Christ. Their manners spring from a pure heart.

24. If dancing is not as bad an evil as other Christians do, then it is bad, and for the same reason, stealing may be in harmony with principles of Christianity, because it is not as bad as murder. Where did Christ or the apostles license us to do bad.

25. Dancing causes brethren of strong, as well as weak consciences, to offend, hence it ought not to be indulged in. "But when ye sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." 1. Cor. viii. 12. "Then said he unto the disciples, 'It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come.' It were better for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." Luke xvii. 1, 2.

26. Dancing is not a healthful exercise. Much disease and many deaths follow the excitement heated rooms thin clothing—long continued exercise—drinks—untimely eating and sexual excitement. So physicians say, "Where men and women are left free to act in accordance with the true principles of Christianity, they have healthy bodies and clear consciences."

27. We are to "glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his." Has any Christian ever been known to glorify God by dancing?

28. Among the works of the flesh named by the apostle Paul: Gal. v. 19 and 20, is reveling. Reveling is noisy mirth; and has been so regarded by the best authority, both prose writers and poets, in all ages. Byron says: "There was a sound of revelry by night And Belgium's capital had gathered then her beauty and her chivalry, And bright the lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.

On with the dance! let joy be unconfeined." Paul has said that they who do such things cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The church may retain them for policy?

29. Dancing is idolatry. And an idol to which dancing Christians (?) are closely bound, or they would not indulge in it. Read McKnight's translation, 1. Cor. x. 7. "Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to dance.' In King James the word 'play' occurs, but if you will turn to Exodus xxxii. you will find that it was a 'dance.' The apostle says nothing about the Golden Calf, but speaks of dancing and calls it idolatry.

30. Dancing is contrary to the spirit and genius of Christianity, and those who engage in it should remember "That whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap of; he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. vi. 7, 8.

31. It is a love for the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1. Jno. ii. 15.

32. A good brother, perhaps a preacher, says the scripture does not prohibit dancing. He says "Thou shalt not dance" just as much as it says "Thou shalt not play at cards," "Thou shalt not run horses," or "Thou shalt not play at billiards."

33. Finally those who are not professors of Christianity do not consider the "ball-room" a suitable place for a Christian professor.

JUDGE DERRICK'S Santa Rosa, Cal.

Lifeless Churches.

A contemporary begins an article on this topic with the declaration: "That there are too many lifeless ministers, and, as a natural consequence, too many lifeless churches in our midst, needs no argument." This is a plain and pointed charge against the ministry, and, if true, should create no little alarm and agitation.

A lifeless church! What a contradiction in idea! A name to live, yet dead commissioned to give life to the world, yet without its power in itself. It is a waste, a desolation not pleasant to contemplate, and an offense to the Lord of the vineyard. How prayerless, how inactive, how indifferent, how destitute of benevolence, how unconcerned about the safety and prosperity of Zion! It is not enough that a church care for itself, or its minister having a place and a living care for himself. The extension and building up of God's inheritance, the conversion of the world, should be ever before it, and eat into activity every capacity to do good and win souls to Christ. Its life-giving power should be felt in the community, and felt in the great work of Christianity in which it has its part to perform. The paper from which we quoted the first remark, contains an extract from that living worker in a living church in London, Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, which is sharply set to the mark.

"Have you ever read Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner'?" I dare say you have thought of one of the strangest imaginations ever put together, especially that part where the old mariner represents the corpses of the dead men rising up—all of them

dead, yet rising up to manage the ship; dead men pulling the ropes, dead men steering, dead men spreading the sails. I thought, what a strange idea that was. But do you know I have lived to see that time. I have seen it done. I have gone into churches, and I have seen a dead man in the pulpit, and a dead man as a demon, hold a dead man holding the plate at the door, and dead men sitting to hear. You say, "Strange." But I have. I have gone into societies, and I have seen it all going on so regularly. These dead men, you know, never outstep the bounds of prudence—not they; they have not life enough to do that. They always pull the rope slyly: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." And the dead man in the pulpit, is he not most regular and precise? He systematically draws his handkerchief from his pocket and uses it at the regular period, in the middle of the sermon. I have seen the minister preaching, without a particle of life, a sermon which is only fresh in the sense in which fish is fresh when it has been packed in ice. I have seen people sit, and they have listened as if they had been a group of statues—the chiseled marble would have been as much affected by the sermon as they. Do you think that God will ever bless a church like that? Are we ever to take the kingdom of heaven with a troop of dead men? Never!

We want living ministers and a living hearers, and until we have such men who have got the very fire of life burning in their souls, who have got tongues of life, and souls of life, we shall never see the kingdom of heaven taken by storm. "For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."—Christian World.

A Short Sermon.

TO SOME CHURCH MEMBERS.

TEXT: "Cursed is every one that won't take care of No. one." Acts (of Paul's) first chapter and first verse. Unto you brethren who follow the above Scripture, I would offer a few suggestions.

In the first place, be sure that your name is on the church book; strangers, looking over the book, than can see it. Try to have it written in large letters, as it will be the biggest part of your profession.

In the next place, go to meeting once in a while; once a month if convenient. Be sure to go when a big preacher is to be there, and strive to be as conspicuous before him as possible. But when they make up a contribution for him, don't give anything unless you have a ten cent piece so mutilated you can't pass it anywhere else.

If you go to hear your home preacher, don't make fun of him until you get out of the house. It wouldn't look well. If you have aught against a brother or sister, tell every one else except them.

If the brethren want you to help pay the preacher, quote our text to them. "Cursed is he that won't take care of No. one." Let the preacher work like other people and preach too.

If any of the brethren want you to subscribe for a church paper, tell them you are too poor. Of course you must have the New York Ledger and it is all you can take; unless it be a fashion paper. If you go to prayer meeting, don't have anything to say. And if the elders reprove you for dereliction of duty, tell them you are as good as some one else. That will settle them. Oppose the Sunday school, missionary work, etc. They might cost something, but it will not be best to put your opposition on that ground. If you subscribe anything to pay, the preacher and see that you will feel it, do not pay it. Let it go; he won't sue you, but other creditors might.

Give the sects blows right and left. Talk loudly on the "first principles." You needn't say anything about Christian duties. Leave that for the preacher to talk about when you are not present.

The Bible says: "Bear ye one another's burdens," so construe that as to mean bear ye one another's riches and prosperity.

If you will carefully follow the advice given in this short sermon, then where the poor, trifling beggar Lazarus went you shall never go, but there shall be ministered unto you an abundant entrance into the eternal abode prepared for those who, clad in purple and fine linen, are simpatously every day and enjoy the good things of earth.—Christian Messenger.

An Indian Tradition.

Among the Seminole Indians there is a singular tradition regarding the white man's origin and superiority. They say that when the Great Spirit made the earth, he also made three men, all of whom were of fair complexion; and after making them he led them to the margin of a small lake and bade them leap therein. One immediately obeyed, and came out of the water purer than before he bathed; the second did not leap until the water became slightly muddy, and when he bathed he came up copper colored; the third did not leap until the water became black with mud, and came out with its own color. Then the Great Spirit laid before them three packages of bark, and bade them choose, and out of pity for his misfortune of color he gave the black man his first choice. He took hold of each of the packages, and, having felt them, chose the heaviest; the copper-colored one then chose the second heaviest, leaving the white man to choose the lightest. When the packages were opened, the first was found to contain spades, hoes, and all the implements of labor; the second enwrapped hunting, fishing and warlike apparatus; the third gave the white man pens, ink and paper—the engines of the mind—the moral, mental improvement—the social link of humanity—the foundation of the white man's superiority.

"THE BEST TIME.—A very dear and only daughter lay dying. She had been a very thoughtful, praying child, having professed religion at twelve years of age, and lived a devoted life. Now she was only waiting a few hours to go home. Severe pain at times almost took away the power of thought. Between these severe attacks of suffering, she looked back on her childhood's experiences, and forward into the blessed future, with equal clearness and joy, as she said: "There's a delightful clearness now." As I sat by her bed, we talked as her strength would permit. Among the many things never to be forgotten, she said: "Father, you know I professed religion very young—some thought too young—but, oh how I wish I could tell everybody what a comfort it is to me now to think of it." Reaching out her hand—fingers already cold—and grasping mine, she said, with great earnestness: "Father you are at work for the young. Do all you can for them while they are young. It is the best time—the best time. Oh, I see it now as I never did before. It is the best time—while they are young—the younger the better. Do all you can for them—while they are very young."

At the Vassar Commencement, Miss Culbertson, in her defense of a woman who enter the profession of medicine, said: "Statistics prove to us that even if they desire it, all women can not marry, as they are largely in excess of the male population, and even then the growing scarcity of estimable men renders it still more hazardous, if not impossible," a sentiment which elicited considerable applause.