

Communications.

Communication from Waitsburg.

WAITSBURG, W. T.,  
Feb. 11, 1879.

Editor P. C. Messenger:

DEAR BROTHER,—Having noticed that you in your good judgment have thought it not best to publish our Waitsburg letter, we therefore, the committee, present you with the second, hoping it will be published, as we are unintentionally upon our part interested in the subject matter reported from W. T. and I. T. So far as the Paradise church has reported we are interested as members of the body.

As a committee on evangelizing we are interested in the action of Paradise church referred to Missionary Board. The Missionary Board sustains the action of Paradise church with regard to our beloved Bro. Amos Buchanan, but remember they represent no organization in Paradise until recently under the labors of Bro. C. J. Wright.

The Disciples on the north side of Snake River are represented in the report you have published as being unorganized, scattered like sheep without a shepherd, ready to give up in despair. Under these circumstances we do not believe they have dealt fairly with Bro. Buchanan. If they have reported their true condition in that locality we doubt their divine right to exercise church discipline. We do not think they are even in a condition to grant letters of commendation. And the manner in which the letter has been treated and the case managed, proves to the satisfaction of every Disciple on this side of the river that they were wholly out of the harness. Without a dissenting voice they gave Bro. Buchanan a letter of commendation. The church ordered it, but there were one or two members absent, who went to work and kicked the harness all to pieces, they broke up the whole body, and had it not been for a Bro. Wright they would have still been running. We can not particularize, our sympathies are with Bro. Buchanan.

We can not afford to sacrifice our best preachers on a lay out from first to last so ridiculous, we want them to know it too. No one can judge properly of any matter without first hearing both sides. We are in possession of private letters, the spirit of which is in exact harmony with their reported condition. We are willing to throw the mantle of clarity over all human imperfections, and in doing this let the light of God's dear Son shine on the heart of all.

No band of disciples disorganized can exercise church discipline, according to God's law. To exercise church discipline according to divine rule the spirit of our Master must take the lead, so that love will be manifest in all that is said and done. When a church has acted according to this rule their decision is final; no appeal can be taken to a higher court.

After the committee had employed Bro. Buchanan, on his letter of commendation, and after he had gone over the field they had assigned him, he then went home to see his family, the elders called on him at once demanded back the letter they had given him; the only reason they assigned was that they had not signed their own names to it, but they ordered the clerk to write it and give it to Bro. Buchanan, which he did. Bro. Ellis was down and said the letter was all right if the clerk had the right to put the names of the elders to it. Bro. Ellis was an elder and present when the letter was granted.

We want the Paradise church to know, and every other Disciple, that for the manner in which [they managed the case referred to, we are not in sympathy with their action. We want them to know also that we are at present opposed to a more extended

coöperation. We believe in church coöperation, and in the future we will use our means to build up church organization. We do not believe in coöperating with Missionary Societies, especially when they are ready to endorse the action of brethren they represent as being unorganized.

They have published their action as legitimate and proper, and for this reason we want a reply published.

Could they do right? did they do right? think you, kind reader, while they were scattered like sheep without a shepherd, ready to give up in despair. It would only have been by accident if they did. This Paradise church has been under the care of Bro. Matheny, why such a state of things obtained we are not permitted to say; he has been employed as their teacher for two or three years. It is well known to all parties that Walla Walla, the oldest and richest part of Eastern Oregon is to-day a wreck so far as our common cause is concerned, over the ambition too of contended teachers. This evil we must overcome if we ever prosper as disciples of Jesus. But how shall we control this evil by building up church organization and holding our preachers and teachers responsible to them. The church must raise in her divine majesty and require the fellowship and coöperation of our preachers and teachers. Until this is done the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel will be deprived of its primitive power and glory in this beautiful country, the home of thousands. We are willing to use our means to honor God in building up church organization, for it is made by our Master the pillar and support of the truth. We can not furnish home and protection to new converts without church organization, no one can not enjoy the religion of Jesus without it.

We ask no contention over any matter, but we are willing to contend for the truth as it is in Jesus Christ our Lord. We ask you not to publish anything we have said contrary to our blessed religion. You will please return this if you think it not safe to publish. We will publish elsewhere.

By order of Committee,  
J. P. PERKINS,  
W. P. BRUCE,  
THOS. J. HOLLOWELL.

To show that as a committee on evangelizing we mean nothing but fairness and right we will therefore submit the following proposition to the elders of Paradise church. We will appoint a committee of five elders from different congregations to hear what charges they have sustained against Bro. Buchanan. The elders that belong to the church that Bro. Matheny organized in Paradise will please bring the case he referred to the Missionary Board before the committee we have selected. Do this before the June meeting. Bro. Buchanan will be present as defendant; no other preacher will be permitted to take any part. Already their good reputation has been soiled in this matter. We as a committee representing the interest of the Disciples in annual coöperation will cheerfully submit to the result reached this way.

THOS. J. HOLLOWELL,  
J. P. PERKINS,  
W. P. BRUCE } Com.

The greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution; who resists the sorest temptations from within and without; who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully; who is the calmest in storms; and whose reliance on truth, on virtue, and on God is the most unflinching.

"Alone, yet not alone am I,  
Though in this solitude so drear;  
I fell my Savior always nigh,  
He comes the weary hours to cheer,  
I am with him, and he with me,  
Ev'n here alone, I cannot be."

Withdrawal of Hugh B. Rice.

OAKLAND, CAL., Jan. 30, 1879.

Editor P. C. Messenger:

At a called meeting of the Committee of the Central Christian Church located at Oakland, Alameda Co., Cal., to consider the letter received from Bro. H. B. Rice, of which the following is a true copy:

WEST OAKLAND, CAL.,  
Jan. 10, 1879.

To the members of the Central Christian Church of Oakland California:

Since I am at present considered as a member of your body and as a minister in good standing among "the Disciples of Christ," (as you think it right to call yourselves), and since I have recently changed my views concerning the commonly received doctrine of the immortality of man, the state of the dead, and kingdom of God, I feel it my duty to withdraw from your body I would not willingly or knowingly misrepresent you. I desire ever to do towards others as I would have them do towards me. I disclaim all unkind feeling and avow the most friendly emotions towards you all personally. I have received only generous treatment from the church of which you are members, and cannot therefore be moved to this stand from any but the strongest convictions of duty, these convictions are based on a careful and independent examination of the Book of God, in the honest desire and full determination to accept its teachings, at all hazard, while then I reject your teaching on the subjects specified as but the teaching of men, making void the word of God. I have the warmest and most charitable feelings for you all personally.

I beg you to consider this resignation and withdrawal from you, as a religious body, as positive and final.

Most respectfully,  
HUGH B. RICE.

After due consideration of the substance of said letter, the committee came to the following conclusions:

That H. B. Rice has gone out from us, not being of us, as clearly shown by said letter. We do recommend that the church withdraw its fellowship from H. B. Rice, and that his name be dropped from the church book.

And we further recommend that a copy of the above proceedings be forwarded to the *Christian Standard* and *CHRISTIAN MESSENGER*.

C. E. LLOYD,  
Geo. F. CHILD,  
D. F. EVANS, Clerk.

Bits of Wisdom.

We know not the worth of water till the well is dry.

They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts.

In refraining from being mean to others you are good to yourselves.

Mean souls, like mean pictures, are often found in good-looking frames.

What we learn in our youth grows up with us, and in time becomes a part of the mind itself.

Politeness is not a sign of wisdom; but the want of it always leaves room for a suspicion of folly.

Earth is our work-house, and heaven is, or ought to be, our store-house. Our chief business here is to lay up treasure there.

Never be discouraged by trifles. If a spider breaks his thread twenty times, he will mend it as many. Perseverance and patience will accomplish wonders.

The mind has a certain vegetative power, which cannot be wholly idle. If it is not laid out and cultivated into a beautiful garden, it will of itself shoot up weeds or flowers.

The great art of conversation consists in not wounding or humiliating any one, in speaking only of things that we know, in conversing with others only on subjects which may be of interest to them.

Eloquence, when at its highest pitch, leaves little room for reason or reflection, but addresses itself entirely to the fancy or the affections, captivates the willing hearers, and subdues their understanding. Happily, this pitch it seldom attains.—*Hume*.

Gates into the Psalm Country.

BY CHARLES S. ROBINSON, D. D.

It has fallen to the lot of the writer to spend much time in the course of the last fifteen years in the study of the songs of general devotion which the Christian churches are singing. Two interesting conclusions are quite clear: the richest theology, as well as the highest experience of spiritual life, finds its way most swiftly and most permanently into the hymns of the time; and those periods in history that ere most prolific of excellent hymns—hymns that stand use and continue through the ages—are what might be called the revival seasons of Christendom.

For wisdom, pithiness, and force, religious hymns are to the church what proverbs are to the nations. They show the high-water mark of pious intelligence and fervor of their generation. And no one will ever go sweeping through the "gates into the Psalm Country," and have proper zest of appreciation, until he has learned to bear in mind that even these inspired songs were revival songs, and now remain as registers of the best life God's chosen people lived.

Perhaps a mere word of caution will be suffered here. Just now there is an epidemic of investigation concerning the authors of our familiar songs in the house of God. And so it will not do to mix up the psalms so confusedly as some do in quotation. It is but a few days ago that an intelligent minister in my study told me that he preached his close-of-the-year sermon from the "words of David," as he expressed it, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." It is really so hard to remember on call just who wrote a particular psalm, that one who feels insecure for a moment might be indulged in saying "the Psalmist," for young people are very sharp nowadays.

Two or three fixed points will cover most perils. The oldest psalm is probably the eighty-eighth; and that was made by Herman. The ninetieth, which we read so often at funerals, and which is the next in age, we composed by Moses. The seventy-third is the one in which the prosperity of the wicked is declared to have stumbled the author; and I do not know what Asaph, who wrote it, would have said, if he had heard a superintendent—as I did, not long ago—quote it as having been made by David. Half a dozen of these chief psalms will enable any preacher or teacher to master the ordinary difficulties of quotation, and so avoid mistakes.

Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the years of drought neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

We saw this brilliant figure as a literal fact, on our way to the Pyramids in 1866. All along the journey from the banks of the Nile clear on, the eye ranged over reaches of sand, white and waveless, interminably, till it touches those masses of masonry on the Ghizeh ledge. Near the river the soil is wonderfully prolific; but before long, the rich black mould begins to show the force of the fiery sun it scorches under. Deep seams and wide cracks are discovered in the surface. Along the banks tall palms shoot their stems up into the serene air. Most exquisitely have these been compared, knobbed and fluted as they are, to the shafts of Moorish architecture.

From their summits droop the graceful green plumes of foliage, hanging listlessly in the windless sunshine.

But now, looking in the other direction, and pushing our tedious beasts along, we found the sea of sand closing in around us entirely; and far as our vision could reach only one stretch of verdureless and waste whiteness could be discerned. The latest vestige of vegetation is a little hard, wiry plant, with a star-like radiate of yellow prickles all about its head, so horny and so keenly acute that even the leanest kind of Pharaoh's kine would not be persuaded to browse upon it. Our very donkey passed it superciliously by. This is the loneliest, most desolate, most lean and sorrowful caricature of a flower I ever saw. Yet that is the "heath in the desert; and those glorious palms just behind us, indolently sweeping the sky with their luxuriant branches, are the "trees planted by the waters, that shall not see when the heat cometh." Ah me, how fresh they seemed then in the hot air!

One can hardly realize how forcible these natural emblems become under the contrasted presence of them both; before his own eyes the splendid plumes of the palm by the stream-side, the emaciated meagerness of the heath out in the sand. I found myself quoting the psalm, because it was more familiar than the words of Jeremiah. I looked over at one particular tree,—I have a photograph of it entitled "Study of trees in old Cairo,"—and talk to it there by myself. I said: "You are kept close here, it seems; it is not permitted to you to walk out into the hard paths of the desert; you cannot stand in the spot where the heart is; it is impossible for you to sit on the rock with the pyramids. But you can have the best chance of them all. You are established—'planted.' You are nourished—'by the rivers.' You are fruitful—'in the season.' You are perennial—your 'leaf shall not wither.' You are happy—whatsoever you do 'shall prosper.'"

And then I remembered that three versions of the Bible, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Syriac, repeat the words of contrast, in order to intensify the negative: "Not so, the ungodly, not so." Whatever there is to the tree, just that is not to the chaff. That tree has no very great lines of shore; but it appears quite enough for all its needs. And what a small Bible David, who is supposed to be the author of this psalm, had when he talked of "meditating day and night in the law of the Lord."

The truest style of piety is that which is Bible grounded. And each of these will be reached by patient study of the revealed word. The tree grows in the night as well as in the day. "Not so, the ungodly, not so!"

The Laocoon.

The Latin poet Virgil has drawn a vivid picture of one of the scenes which hastened the fall of ancient Troy. The noble Trojan priest, Laocoon denounced the infatuation of his countrymen, when they determined to receive the monstrous wooden horse, staffed with Greek troops and princes, into the city. He tried every means to rouse his countrymen to a sense of their peril, and at last hurled his spear against the hollow fraud. But lest his passion might be effective, the hostile gods that helped the Greeks, sent two serpents over the sea from Tenedos, with crests dropping blood and quivering tongues that licked their hissing mouths. They made their way in the city at once to Laocoon and his sons, wound themselves in frightful festoons around their limbs, bound them in a group of agony which sculpture has made immortal, crushed and strangled them, and reared their crests and poisonous tongues over the brow of the patriotic priest, whose chaplet was black with their poison, and red with his own death. Thus the church of Troy was silenced, the serpents nestled safe under the buckler of the goddess in the sanctuary; the wooden horse was admitted, and that night Troy was in flames.—*Ex.*