

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

T. F. CAMPBELL, EDITOR.

MISS MARY STUMP,
OFFICE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

FRIDAY, JULY 30, 1880.

Will Subscribers please notice the date following their names on the paper? It tells the time when your subscription expires; thus, if the date reads 1881, your subscription will expire Jan. 1, 1881. If the date after your name is a time past, you are in arrears. Please remit a little before your time is out, if possible.

Bro. Waller's meeting at Amity, on the second Lord's day in July, resulted in four additions; two by confession, one by letter and one by relation.

Bro. Waller preached to a large congregation at McMinnville on last Sunday.

Send in reports of your meetings, brethren. A postal card will tell us what you are doing, and cost you only one cent and two minutes writing.

The Return to Primitive Christianity.

When God had completed a habitation for his children and placed them therein, he pronounced all superlatively good.

From that pure, primitive state man fell by transgression, wandered away from a Father's love and became exposed to ignorance, misery and death.

A remedial system was inaugurated in the hands of angels, who, though they "excel in strength," had no sympathy in man's weakness, temptations and folly. When they failed, the system was changed, and, instead of angels, were introduced, under the Mosaic dispensation, prophets and priests who, though they could sympathize with their fellows, were without strength and unable to save.

From these long, sad lessons man is taught that no reliance for salvation can be put in either man or angel.

In due time, a Father's love combined more than an angel's power with more than a man's sympathy in the person of Jesus who came as a Prophet, sent from God—a light into the world to dispel our weakness, a Priest—himself the victim to expiate our sins, and a King with "all authority in heaven and in earth" to deliver us from the power of death and to give us eternal life.

As the "Great Teacher," he matured the system, perfected or "finished the faith" and delivered to man "The word of his grace which is able to make him wise unto salvation."

Of this word it is said that it "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The sufficiency of the Scriptures to enlighten the world and guide the church was fully demonstrated in the apostolic age and the centuries immediately following. But the unholy alliance between Paganism and Christianity, in the beginning of the fourth century, led on to the dark ages in which tradition was substituted for the Bible; pagan superstition for faith; and Jewish and Pagan rites for Christian ordinances.

Early in the sixteenth century, Luther and his co-workers wrought that great Reformation which gave the Bible to the people. The revival of literature, the advance of science, and the great religious upheavals all tended to push forward the progress toward intellectual light, political freedom and religious liberty.

The purpose at that time was a reformation of the church, bringing it back to primitive grounds of simplicity and purity.

The masses of the people, were not prepared for so bold a step and a stride so long as would carry them at once from their human traditions and pagan ordinances to the simple faith and practice of christianity. They had been accustomed so long to look to a man as a leader in spiritual matters, it was not possible they could at once turn to Jesus and follow him. They wanted a priest to intervene; so they followed Luther, and hence, became Lutherans.

Calvin formulated his views of the Scriptures, and many adopting his theory of the Bible, instead of the Bible itself, became Calvinists.

Wesley organized the Methodist church on what he supposed to be the true meaning of the word. But his theory makes Methodists.

Others, in like manner, attempted to reform a reformation until great confusion resulted in the multiplicity of sects and parties.

Nevertheless great good had been accomplished in exciting inquiry and stimulating research. The spirit of individual liberty and personal responsibility had been awakened. The people were reading the Bible and preparing themselves for another advance.

Early in the nineteenth century the thought came up in the minds of many good people who were deploring the schisms and divisions in the household of faith that it was more reasonable and far easier to reconstruct the church "upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." For it was evident that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Since creeds and systems and doctrines of men had wrought all this confusion, would not a rejection of all these together with all traditions, and a full and complete return to the ancient order of things as taught and practiced in the days of the apostles restore that harmony, peace and unity which the primitive church enjoyed?

A careful examination of all the constitutions, of all the parties in christendom showed that no one of them, nor one formed from all of them, could ever serve as a basis on which to establish the church so as to restore union to the people of God, peace to the world, and success to the Gospel.

It had long been affirmed that "The Bible was the religion of Protestants," and it seemed strange why the Bible should work no better results. A little reflection, however, shows that it is not the recognition and adoption of a good rule, but its actual use in practice that secures the good sought. The conclusion is inevitable that the Bible alone, unencumbered with human systems, can reform the world and save the church.

It was painfully evident to every observant mind that the holiness and happiness, the spirit and power, the peace and joy of the Christian religion were lost or neutralized in the forms and ceremonies, the traditions and speculations, the bickerings and feuds of sects and schism; hence the effort to find a basis sufficiently broad and strong for all Christians from all sects and parties to dwell together in unity. The Bible alone furnishes such a basis; with every article of faith and every item of religious practice specifically pointed out in a, "thus saith the Lord," either in express terms or approved precedent.

In 1809 the first formal effort was made in a return to Primitive Christianity and since that time the principles involved have been proclaimed and very thoroughly discussed in these United States and wherever the English language is spoken. The united efforts of a few determined spirits, distinguished alike for talents and learning, piety and zeal, who set forth with the noble purpose of sacrificing everything to truth, and following her wherever she might lead, elim-

inated from the rubbish of tradition the pure principles upon which the Church of Christ can be united with honor to themselves and with blessing to the world, on which the Gospel and its ordinances can be restored in all their primitive simplicity, excellency and power, and the church made to shine, as a lamp that burneth, to the conviction and salvation of the world. Inscribed upon their banner was this motto: "Faith in Jesus as the true Messiah, and obedience to him as the Law-giver and King, the ONLY test of Christian character, and the ONLY bond of Christian union and communion, cooperation and fellowship, irrespective of all creeds and opinions, traditions and commandments of men."

More than half a century has elapsed since the ocean of religious feeling was stirred to its profoundest depths by the eloquence of those great leaders, who with tongue and pen, plead for "Peace on earth and good will amongst men," on the simple terms of the Gospel.

The older disciples are familiar with these discussions; but many who have been gathered in more recently, and the young who have just entered the church are not familiar with them. For the sake of these latter classes of readers we deem it advisable to make selections from those early discussions and give them to our reader in the future on this page.

Divorce.

The marriage relation is the most sacred and should be the dearest in this life. "He who made them at the beginning made them male and female and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." "Whosoever shall put away his wife except for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery; and whosoever marryeth her who is put away committeth adultery." Math. xix.

There is then but one justifiable cause for divorce, the unfaithfulness of one of the contracting parties. In this case the bond is so effectually severed that the innocent party may marry again without committing adultery. There may be other causes which justify separation, but Paul says (1 Cor. vii.) let them, "remain unmarried."

Now if our laws were so framed as to meet these requirements of the Scriptures, society would be free from the shame and disgrace of divorces at each term of court.

In the first case, grant a divorce, and permit the innocent party to marry again, but make the adulterer guilty of bigamy if he marry again; and in the second case, permit the parties to separate, and protect the liberties and rights of each by wholesome laws, but make it a criminal offence for either to marry as long as the other lives. This would work hardships on innocent parties in special cases.

But "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not," John xi. 50. In this case the evil would bear no ratio to the mischief resulting from divorces "for every cause."

In the first place, such stringency in matters of divorce would cause parties about to enter into that relation to be more careful. There would be no hasty marriages, seeing it would be for life.

Next, it would cause the married to strive to live in peace, since there would be no possibility of a second marriage, until the death of one of the parties. Families would not be broken up and innocent children made to share the disgrace of silly or wicked parents who could not or would not live together in peace.

There is no better test of the decline of morality in a community than the increase of divorces. It tells of the corruption at the very heart of all social permanence and moral worth.

It destroys the sacredness of the family relation, thus sapping the very foundation of civil government and social order.

Christians ought to look narrowly into these Scriptural requirements and insist on a strict construction and application of these salutary principles in the management of the church. However the civil law may presume to put asunder those whom God has joined together, by divorce "for every cause," Christians should hold none in fellowship who are, according to the language of Jesus, living in adultery.

The increasing applications for divorces, and the facility with which they are granted ought to be cause of alarm to every Christian, and to every lover of his country. It is conclusive of a moral malady preying upon the vitals of society which, if not arrested, must prove fatal.

Reports from the Field.

ALBANY, LINN COUNTY, OR.,

July 25, 1880.

Editor Christian Messenger:

We still live, and by the favor of God, intend to live in the future, to keep our faces toward Jerusalem, and not go backward, although we are sorely oppressed by the sects and by various forms of infidelity, yet we know in whom we have trusted, Christ is a present help in every time of need.

Bro. Roberts preaches for us once a month, the 3rd Lord's day in each month. Five united with the congregation last Sunday; four brethren and one sister, who confessed their Savior, and were baptized into his death, and rose to walk a new life, at our county meeting, held at Brownsville. May they read his word much and lean upon him who is able to hold them up in every temptation and trial, and may they continue faithful until death.

Bro. Alfred Powell still preaches for us on the 1st Lord's day in each month. We still keep up social meetings.

Bros. Whitney and Wolverton held a protracted meeting for us at Tangent, beginning on the fourth and running over the fifth Sunday in May. Although we had no accessions to the church, I trust the good seed which was sown will bear abundant fruit in the near future.

We organized a Sunday school in the early spring, with Bro. S. Slater as superintendent, and Bro. Isaac Hays as assistant superintendent. We have a good attendance, and a fair interest is manifested by all, which I hope and trust will do good in the end. "Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us as that the day of Christ is at hand."

Your brother,

JAMES M. CHURCHILL.

TANGENT, OR., July 27, 1880.

Bro. Campbell:

* * * * Farmers are very busy, crops look well, no complaint of rust yet, we have preaching twice a month by Bros. Powell and Roberts; have social meeting before preaching, and Sunday school after. We are trying to make arrangement for Bro. Whitney to preach at Tangent; if we accomplish our undertaking we will have preaching three Sundays in the month. There were five took membership with our congregation that were immersed at our county meeting. Health is very good in this part of the country. We like Cassie Stump's letters very much; children will sit and listen to them with the best of attention. Give my love to Sister Campbell and Sister Stump.

Your sister in Christ,

L. J. HOUCK.

—The cost of the engravings in a single number of either Harper's or Scribner's magazine, ranges from \$5,000 to \$8,000.

An Appeal from San Francisco.

The Church of Christ in San Francisco, to the brethren in California and elsewhere, sendeth greeting:

DEAR BRETHREN,—We desire to ask your assistance in an effort to permanently establish the cause of primitive Christianity in this city. At present we have no house of worship, and consequently no permanent meeting place, and we are convinced that the prosperity, usefulness and future existence of the church here, demand that we have a house of our own.

For the following reasons, we consider it to be of the utmost importance that any effort we may design to make to secure a house, should be made at once, viz:

1. Real estate is probably lower here now than it will be at any future time.

2. The cost of building material and labor is very favorable to the undertaking.

3. The abundant harvests with which you are blessed this year, by making money plentiful and times good, favor the movement.

4. The Woman's Home Missionary Society of California, having succeeded in establishing the church at Sacramento, are now ready to turn their entire attention to the cause here, and their assistance will be but little better than thrown away without the prospect of our having a house in the near future.

Such a combination of favorable circumstances can hardly be expected to occur again.

The amount required to buy a lot and build a house in the locality that we have in view is so small that it can easily be raised if the brethren will look at the matter right and each one give in accordance with his ability and the importance of the cause.

With \$10,000 we can purchase a lot and erect a small house that would answer our present needs. Of course, with more money, we could build a better house; but we have determined to limit our appeal to the above amount, because we believe the brethren can easily contribute it, and it is the least sum with which we can erect a suitable house and fully pay for it, which we propose to do, as we have determined to have whatever property we may get, free from debt.

In this State, the work of soliciting subscription will be put into the hands of the Christian Woman's Home Missionary Society, and each agent of the society will be supplied with a subscription list, and will wait on the brethren and friends of the church with which she is connected, and receive their subscriptions.

Brethren residing in other States, or in localities in this State where the Missionary Society has no agent, and feeling disposed to assist us, can address Bro. H. H. Luce, No. 14 Essex St., San Francisco, stating what amount they wish to subscribe.

The subscriptions will be due sixty days after \$6000 shall have been subscribed; so that if we do not succeed in raising that amount, no one will have anything to pay. But, if any prefer to make cash contributions, they can do so, and if we fail to raise \$6000, their money will be refunded. Due notice will be given when \$6000 shall have been subscribed.

In conclusion, brethren, we appeal to you, trusting to your liberality and love for the cause of our Savior, and feeling confident that you will not withhold your assistance from us if you can see any reasonable prospect of its being efficient in establishing the cause of our Master in this, the great metropolis of this State and of the Pacific Coast.

By order of the church, this the 16th day of July, A. D. 1880.

D. V. B. HALLAM, Elder.
S. STURGES, Clerk.