

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"GO YE, THEREFORE, TEACH ALL NATIONS."

VOL. XI.

MONMOUTH, OREGON; FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 1881.

NO. 3.

Pacific CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Devoted to the cause of Primitive Christianity, and the diffusion of general information.

Price Per Year, in Advance, \$2.50

All business letters should be addressed to T. F. Campbell, Editor, or Mary Stump, Publisher, Monmouth, Oregon.

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Notices in local columns 10 cents per line for each insertion.
Yearly advertisements on liberal terms.
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Mr. I. G. Davidson is our Advertising Agent in Portland.

Entered at the Post Office at Monmouth as second class matter.

Swearing, or Taking an Oath.

We have not examined all the Scriptures which bear upon this subject, but think we have adduced enough to justify the conclusion with which we closed last week. We think that a great need of the present day is a conviction of the sanctity of an oath, or promise.

In every department of life, both public and private, there is a laxity, or want of conviction that is alarming.

One of the crying sins of our time (and there are many) is that an oath may be taken, or a promise made, and broken, at our pleasure. At the demand of real or supposed interest, false testimony may be and is given under oath, promises are made and not kept. The solemn marriage vows are taken, and the courts appealed to, and their authority invoked to release from vows which should be sacredly kept. Persons pledge themselves in the various temperance organizations of the day, and then break the pledge, or oath, at pleasure. Men solemnly pledge themselves in the church, to a life of service and devotion to Christ and his law, and then serve themselves wholly, and find excuses for going back to the world, seeming not to realize that there was any promise, or pledge in the matter. Men take the oath to serve faithfully in public office, in the county, state, or national government, and then use all their ingenuity to advance their own interests, at the expense of that which they have sworn to protect and defend.

What we need then is teaching that will impress upon all the nature and sanctity, of either oath or promise. Teach men that their promises are witnessed by God, and that they will be held to strict account as to the manner of keeping them. That they are not to be lightly made, nor carelessly broken. Eccl. xii. 13, 14. The fear of God, (the beginning of wisdom) is a higher motive than the fear of the pains and penalties of perjury. If all men realized as they ought, that God was a witness of all their acts, and especially of their oaths, they would not be so indifferent about keeping them. We believe that it is a part of the mission of the church, to impress and enforce this upon the minds of men, and we think it can be better done by teaching men the nature of an oath, than by teaching them that it is wrong to take an oath. In the mind of every God fearing man, He is really the witness to the affirmation, and it cannot seem to us wrong to state in words what is or should be in our minds.

The impression that it is wrong to take an oath, we think, has come from a hasty and partial consideration of two Scriptures, without any attention to others bearing upon the same subject. We believe this method of drawing conclusions from the Scriptures to be fraught with so much of evil that we call attention to it here, though it is only indirectly connected with our subject. All the errors in religious teaching have their origin in this wrong method. It is a prolific source of division in the Christian world. A conclusion is drawn from some passage, or passages of Scripture, and is announced as the teaching of God's word, when it is really not so, and the mistake would not have been made, had the entire testimony of Scripture upon the question been taken and considered. The present question is a case in point. Much of the text preaching of the day is an illustration of it. The jarring creeds of Protestantism are also illustrations of the same thing.

The true method of learning from Scripture, is to gather together all the passages that speak of or refer to the same thing, and draw our conclusions from them all. We believe that if this were done by the entire Christian world, error and division would flee away, and the friends of Jesus would be perfectly joined together. The objection that the Bible teaches so many different and opposite things would be removed, for it is only by scrapping it, that any support can be found for differing teaching. The different teaching, in regard to the conditions of the pardon of sin, or present salvation, comes from a partial examination, or consideration of Scripture. By taking isolated passages there is apparent support for the idea that one condition is the all important one, and in this way some plant themselves on such ground. Hence the idea, or teaching that faith is the all important and only condition of salvation. How much better to find every thing that is mentioned in the word of God, in connection with our salvation, and the divinely inspired arrangements of the items, and to accept and follow that. It would bring order out of the present confusion, replace the present repelling discord by persuasive harmony, and give the church a power over the hearts of men which she cannot exercise while her divisions continue. This we believe is also true of the differences about baptism. A consideration of all the Scriptures relating to it, will lead all to the same conclusions, for it is only by a partial consideration, or a denial of the reference in some passages, that the correct conclusion can be avoided. All would be agreed on the question of the work and influence of the Holy Spirit, if all that is said about it in God's word, were taken into the account.

We turn now to another thought connected with our subject, viz.: The forbidding of the careless and irreverent use of the names, or attributes of sacred things. There can be no doubt that our Savior strongly condemned this. It is a thought for the careful and prayerful consideration of Christians. Do we not too often use expressions which are forbidden? I knew a preacher who used this expression, "God bless your soul" so often in his preaching, as to preclude the possibility of its being always used reverently. It attracted the attention of his hearers so much, that for a time, it became the expression of

a number of the careless and indifferent ones. It seems rather hard to say, but we cannot call it less than profanity in the pulpit. We think the expression, "God knows" may be, and often is used carelessly, and hence profanely in the pulpit, and out of it, by Christians.

If we cannot enforce our thoughts upon the attention of the people, or have them believe what we say without the use of these and other expressions of like character, perhaps it would be better for us to say nothing. The great prevalence of profanity in our times should arouse the Christian to his duty to bear continued testimony against it. This he cannot do unless he is free from even the "appearance of evil," in this respect.

R. H. MOSS.

Monmouth, Or., Jan. 14, 1881.

Who Have the Truth?

Brethren and Sisters in Christ, readers of the Messenger:

During many years in the past I have been fully persuaded that, as a Christian organization, we have more Scriptural evidence for our faith and hope than many others; and knowing that we professed to live nearer the teachings of the Bible than many other religious bodies, I have rested too contentedly upon these conclusions, failing to daily and prayerfully search the Scriptures to see whether these positions were really true. More recently I have been constrained by the providence of God to study with more zeal this Book of books; and to my surprise, I find a number of truths that hitherto had been unobserved. I am also disappointed in failing to find a number of doctrines proven by the word of God—doctrines that I fully believed were therein recorded.

Taking the Bible as my only rule of faith and practice it necessitates me to better inform myself in reference to its true teaching. Of late I have asked myself the question: Who are right? the Disciples or the Sabatarians? I have been taught and did believe that the New Testament clearly sustained the position that the "first day of the week" is "the Lord's day;" that the apostles, by their examples, taught us to observe it sacredly to the Lord. Here is an important point. Those who observe the seventh day as God's holy Sabbath, declare this to be an error, and as our people generally hold that Christ and his apostles taught us by their example to observe sacredly the first day. Thus we observe two classes of religionists stoutly opposing each other, both taking the Bible alone for their guide. I have therefore endeavored to carefully examine for myself, and the result is with me as follows: I cannot find one commandment from God, Christ, or an inspired man to observe the first day of the week in a religious manner; neither can I find one text which speaks of the first day of the week as the "Lord's day" or "Christian Sabbath." I cannot find that Jesus' followers observed that day as unto the Lord; that is, they did not observe the day as sacred time. The first disciples held religious services on different days of the week; but a day cannot be kept holy if God has never made it holy. Consequently conducting religious services on any day would not constitute the day holy time. Our Lord's meetings with his disciples after his resurrection was

not to celebrate that event, for his followers did not believe he had arisen. There is but one religious meeting recorded in the New Testament, as having been held on the first day. As this was a night meeting, and as the day—Bible time—begins at sunset, this season of worship was the evening after the Sabbath, and Paul and his brethren traveled all the following Sunday. That meeting was not held on the Lord's day, but on "the first day of the week." The Lord's day was and still is the Sabbath. Jesus worked on the first day, in connection with the Father, in making this world; when the Father rested the Son did likewise; therefore the seventh day is the Son's as well as the Father's, therefore the Lord's day. The first day was the one on which worldly reckoning was made. See 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. From the above and various other Scriptures I conclude that unless the Sabbath commandment is abolished, the proper day to be sacredly observed is the last day of the week. If however the decalogue is abolished, we have no holy time. Nevertheless I deem it my privilege to follow an old custom of resting from labor on one day of the seven. But seeing that the Bible does not warrant my observing the first day or Sunday, I am forced to the conclusion that "the law of God," but not the "law of Moses" is still binding. Christ honored the Sabbath. Luke iv. 16. Paul kept the Sabbath. Acts xviii. 17. The Sabbath was still in existence some forty years after Christ. Matt. xxiv. 20. Many times the Spirit of God calls it the Sabbath in the book of Acts, written some time after Christ. Genaiels waited upon God in attending worship on the Sabbath. I see no such record for the first day. Christ spoke (by his servant Isaiah) of a blessing which should be bestowed upon the Gentiles for keeping the Sabbath. Isa. lvi. 3-7. I find no blessing offered for keeping the first day. There is to be a revival of the work of keeping both the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus in the last days. Rev. xii. 17; xiv. 12. Christ is our copy. He fulfilled all righteousness; let us also be righteous in faith and work. He fulfilled—kept—the Father's law; let us do so. He kept the Sabbath, as well as the other nine; let us keep all the commandments, that we may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. The apostles kept the Sabbath. The Bible is our guide-book; let us know where, and when, and how it directs; may we study it as never before; light will thus increase, and we may advance to the perfect day. Are we observing all God's commandments? Grave question! We cannot afford to be mistaken. Christ will come to reward the faithful; they will ascend to the New Jerusalem. May we all be prepared to meet him at his coming.

I. M. JOHNS.

—Young people ought to know that the peculiar temptation of youth is to live too fast. They have such an affluence of vitality that they are prodigal of it. But by the time men are forty, they will discover that their energy and animal spirits proceed from a pond which will ultimately run dry, and not from a fountain which is inexhaustible. For as surely as they live too fast at first, they will have to live too slowly at last.

From Bro. Martin Peterson.
MOUND RANCH, JACKSON CO., OR.
Jan. 4, 1881.

Bro. Campbell:

By your consent, I will deliver a short discourse to the readers of the P. C. MESSENGER. I make my starting point Zeph. iii. 9: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent."

Notwithstanding the prophet had special reference here to the Jews, I think it equally as necessary for his people from among the Gentiles to have a pure language, as it is for those from among the Jews.

The question necessarily arises how is it possible for this to be the case? I answer, only by calling Bible things by Bible names. If this is done by "one consent," then, and not until then, will we have a "pure language."

As the word of God says nothing about Missionary Societies, Missionary Boards, a pastor or pastorate, organ or choir, in the congregation, we should by one consent, leave these out, in order that we may have a pure language, and all speak the same thing.

Brethren and sisters, what say you in reference to this matter? Do you, by "one consent," agree to our motto adopted in the beginning of this reformation, "Where the Bible speaks we will speak, where the Bible is silent we will be silent" in all matters pertaining to our holy religion? Speak out through our paper and let us know how many we have on the Pacific slope who are in for a pure language and with one consent determined to serve God in the beauty of holiness.

I am as ever your brother in the pure language of the Bible,
MARTIN PETERSON.

—As the sun is the centre of our solar system, so Christ is the Christian's sun and centre of desire. As gravitation holds the planets in their proper orbits, so love holds the trusting heart in the pathway of willing obedience. As in completing her solar circuit the earth receives the pleasing variety of seasons adapted to beauty and health, and to promote all organic life, so in our love service of Christ, there is a pleasing and useful variety of gracious and profitable experiences. Sometimes fierce storms sweep across our pathway to drive into the shelter of his promised grace. Sometimes the cold repulsiveness of the world's unbelief and sin chills us like a Winter's blast, driving us to the central, steady sunlight of our Savior's constant love, causing Spring time to burst forth in the Christians heart, and bursting buds of developing faith and love to expand into the fruits of Christian grace. But there is no winter in the sun. And he who has the son of righteousness in his heart will have constantly the Springtime of his abiding love.

—In Southern India there are 290,000 converts included in the several Protestant churches. An interesting conversion has taken place in Calcutta. Gopal Chunder Biswas, an elderly Hindu gentleman, and the head of a respectable family which has occupied an influential position in Calcutta for many generations, was lately baptized by the Rev. J. Hector. He was educated in the Free Church Institution.