

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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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 1882, your subscription will expire Jan. 1, 1882. 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.

Change of Address.

Bro. D. W. Elledge, recently of Howel's Prairie, has changed his residence to Douglas county. His post-office address is Payton Springs, Douglas Co., Or.

Prayer.

The Scriptures—Old Testament and New—are full of texts showing the importance and urging the necessity of prayer. Now are we without instruction as to the manner and matter of acceptable prayer. Jesus gave to his disciples a model worthy of imitation. There is not in any language a finer specimen of literature breathing a purer spirit of devotion. His own prayer, (John xvii.) addressed to the Father for the unity of his disciples and all those who should believe on him through their words, furnishes to all Christians a standing subject of prayer until the means there sought—the unity of the church—be attained and the end accomplished—the conversion of the world.

The apostle Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, ii. 2, instructs us very fully in the matter, style and effects of a good and acceptable prayer: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

In this apostolic classification of duty, four specific items are set out, deprecations, supplications, intercessions, and giving of thanks. Thus we are taught to deprecate evil—"Abandon us not to temptation, but deliver us from evil," to supplicate favors—"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"—to intercede for persons, as Jesus did for his apostles—"I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me," and again for the faithful—"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The apostle James, says: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." To give thanks for favors and mercies received. Paul expresses his gratitude in this style: "I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." Again, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing." Indeed, the spirit of gratitude, thanksgiving and praise pervades every part of the Living Oracles.

The order of arrangement in a prayer may not be important; and yet it

would seem most natural to follow confessions and deprecations, with supplications for pardon, mercy and grace; after these, intercessions for those for whom we ought to pray, and then, without being over-anxious about anything, we ought "in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" to make known our requests unto God.

For whom and for what may we pray?

The first point is answered by Paul: "For all men." The reasons assigned for the general prayer are two. First, "That we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty."

This is a matter of purely temporal, present benefit. We are to pray for those in authority, not only to propitiate their favor, but that, the government being preserved in purity we may participate in the peace and prosperity thereof.

Thus Jeremiah taught the captive Jews:—"Seek the good of the city, whither the Lord has caused you to be carried away captive; for in the peace thereof shall you have peace."

But the second reason is a more important one, looking beyond the temporal and the present, to what will be pleasing to God. The Apostle adds: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

It is then in harmony with the divine will to pray for all men; and this is surely the very best reason that can be given for doing anything. But examples of specific prayer for particular persons and special favors, as health, peace, grace, &c. abound in the apostolic writings. This gives us precedent for praying for the afflicted, for those in any wise distressed, and especially for those whom we love.

How delightful to bear them upon the altar of our hearts before the throne of grace!

The second point may be answered in very general terms;—we may pray for all things for which we can ask in faith—for which we can ask according to the will of God. We can ask in faith only for things promised; and ask according to the will of God only when the heart is right.

James tells us that we ask and receive not, because we ask amiss. If our Father in heaven knows how to "give good things to them that ask him," he knows how to withhold those things which would do us hurt, though we ask for them.

That our prayers are not answered immediately, or that they are not answered in the manner we expected, is by no means conclusive that God does not hear us, and will not answer our petitions. The Scriptures, Old Testament and New, abound in specific answers to prayer. Abraham prayed for a son, and Isaac was given, not immediately, but in due time. Jacob and Esau were the answer to the prayers of Isaac and Rebecca. Moses prayed for Aaron, and his life was spared. And on more than one occasion he interceded for Israel, and the people were saved from destruction. Hannah asked for a son, and God gave her Samuel.

David, in the Psalms, says: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God; he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry come before him, even into his ears." "I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications; because he has inclined his ear unto me: therefore will I call upon him so long as I live."

The Lord said unto Hezekiah, when afflicted with a deadly disease, "I have heard thy prayer, and have seen thy tears, and I have added unto thy days fifteen years."

Elijah shut up and opened the heavens by his prayers. John the Baptist was given in answer to the pray-

ers of Zacharias and Elizabeth. Jesus in person, responded to the prayers of thousands by healing their maladies and bestowing blessings.

The prayer of Cornelius was answered by the visit of an angel, and the Gospel preached by Peter. The prayers of the Disciples brought Peter out of the prison at midnight. Dorcas was raised from the dead in answer to the prayer of Peter, and Eutychus, in answer to Paul.

Blessings and mercies more than we could name, of all kinds, temporal, spiritual, and eternal have been given and secured to men and women in answer to prayer.

The first and greatest of all blessings is pardon. For this the Christian may pray. John says: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And James adds: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray * * * Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him; anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Jesus taught his disciples to pray for their daily bread, for the remission of their sins and for delivery from temptation. Elsewhere we are taught to make our requests known to God, and that he will withhold no good thing from them who love and obey him.

We may safely conclude, then, that as we are to pray for all men—enemies as well as friends; we may also pray for all good things, with the utmost confidence, that our Father will answer us in mercy, granting our requests where they would do us good, and withhold them where they would do harm to ourselves or to others. In this assurance "let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Church Trials.

We call particular attention to Bro. McCullough's article in another column on "Church Trials." Though we may not agree with his article in every specification, it certainly has the merit of a middle course between two extremes. If only Christians, full of love and guided by the spirit, were involved in a church trial there would be but little trouble in settling any case that might come up.

Unfortunately, it is generally bad men, without the spirit of Christ, who originate the trouble, and who have some selfish end to gain or sinister motive to accomplish.

The greater the confusion the better such parties are pleased, and to break up and ruin the church is a triumph in which they take great pleasure.

The Christian who is guided by love will make any sacrifice, consistent with Christian character, rather than do violence to the church of God.

He will suffer long, and yet be kind. He will be ever ready for the peacemaker; and ever willing to compromise, in which case he will be ready to make the larger concessions. He will search out such scriptures as the following, and pray God to give him grace to walk in their light: "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." Luke vi. 27, 28. "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. * * * Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not * * * Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in

your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans, xii. 17-21.

Living and acting in the spirit and light of these and similar scriptures, he seeks not for a text to sustain him in an obstinate course marring the peace of the church.

But the man who cares not for the cause of Christ nor the harmony of the brethren, will become a great stickler for principle. He will tell you that he would yield to the influence of the peacemaker, but he can not sacrifice principle; not knowing that the leading principle in Christianity is, "Peace on earth and good will amongst men."

Such an one is sure to court sympathy and gain followers; and, unless the greatest prudence prevail and the wisest counsels govern, the shame and ruin of the church must follow.

The church should in no case become an open theatre of scandal, nor sink to the level of a police court in ferreting out iniquity and exposing the weakness of its members. The very weakest and humblest in the church can tell brethren what is right in any given case, and point to the scriptures which show them how they ought to act.

The apostle, in reproving the Corinthians for going to law, says: "If then ye have judgement of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." "Is it so," he says, "that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" "Now there is," he continues, "utterly a fault among you, because ye go not to law one with another. Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

When brethren make the glory of God, the honor of Christ, and the peace of Zion supreme in their hearts and minds, they will find no difficulty in settling their disputes. Only let them be prompted by love and led by the Spirit as becometh saints—only let them practice that charity without which all other spiritual gifts are but "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal"—and church trials will become tame affairs.

When trials cannot be avoided, they ought to be conducted by the church in such manner as to do the least harm, having a tender regard for the feelings and reputation of the brethren involved; and looking especially to saving the members to the church and re-establishing peace.

When the church has decided what course it will take in any given case to reach these results, no one ought to object; and the parties in the trial ought cheerfully to acquiesce in the decision, knowing if they suffer wrongfully for Christ's sake, and for the sake of peace, they will receive the richer reward hereafter.

—The Methodist Recorder says that "The man or woman professing godliness, who chooses not to unite with the Christian church, discards God's plan of saving men. The church is his vineyard, and, if we have the opportunity, we must enter it and work for Christ, if we would be saved." We know a great many professing Christians, who for trivial matters hold themselves aloof from the church and its work, and wonder why God is not blessing them spiritually.—Evangelist.

—Mr. John B. Carrington, of the New Haven Journal and Courier, the oldest editor in Connecticut, died February 11th,

Return to Primitive Christianity.

DISCUSSION OF LEADING PRINCIPLES.

[Selected.]
BAPTISM.

Immersion into water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the fruit of faith in the subject, is the most singular institution that ever appeared in the world. Although very common in practice, and trite in theory, although the subject of a good many volumes, and of many a conversation, it appears to me that this institution of divine origin, so singular in its nature, and so grand and significant in its design, is understood by comparatively few.

I beg leave to call the attention of the reader to it under the idea of the bath of regeneration.

In the outer court of the Jewish Tabernacle there stood two important articles of furniture of most significant import. The brazen altar next the door, and the laver between the brazen altar and the sanctuary. In this laver, filled with water, the priests, after they had paid their devotion at the altar, as they came in, and before they approached the sanctuary, always washed themselves. This vessel was called laver, and the water in it loutron or bath. The bath of purification was the literal import of the vessel and its use. Paul more than once, alludes to this usage in the tabernacle in his epistles, and once substitutes Christian immersion in its place—that is, Christian immersion stands in relation to the same place in the Christian temple, or worship, that the laver, or bath of purification, stood in the Jewish, viz: between the sacrifice of Christ and acceptable worship. In the Jewish symbols the figures stood thus: 1st, The brazen altar; 2d, The laver or bath; and 3d, The sanctuary. In the antitype or antitypes it stands thus: 1st, Faith in the sacrifice of Christ, the antitype of the altar; 2d, Immersion, or the bath of regeneration, the antitype of the loutron or bath of purification; and 3d, prayer, praise, and vocal worship, the antitype of the priests approaching the holiest of all. Now all Christians being made priests to God and made to worship in the place where the Jewish priests stood, Jesus Christ having now, as our great High Priest, entered into the most holy place, he has "consecrated a way" for us Christians; he has authorized us Christians to draw nigh to that place where stood the priests under the law. Paul's exhortation to the Hebrews, taken in the whole context, chapter x. stands thus:

"Brethren, we believing Hebrews are authorized to approach much nigher to God in our worship, than were the saints under the former economy. The people worshipped in the outer court, the priests officiated, at the same time, in the holy place—but we Christians stand not in the outer court, but in the sanctuary. Since Jesus, as our great High Priest, passed into the heavens the true holy place, he has made it lawful for us, or, consecrated a way new and living for us to approach as priests to the entrance of the true holy place, having had our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by faith in his sacrifice, and having had our bodies washed in clean water, in the bath of regeneration; we are now to draw near, with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith, and address Jehovah through the meditation of our great High Priest, in our prayers, praises, and thanksgivings." Such, I say, are general terms, is the import of Paul's exhortation to the Hebrews, based upon the fact that Christian immersion stands in the place of the bath of purification in that most instructive system of types or figures, which God instituted to prepare the way of this new and perfect economy.

But Paul, in connecting the bath of regeneration with the renewal of the Holy Spirit, goes no farther than the Lord Jesus himself when he said, ex-