

# The Christian Sun.

Devoted to Religion, Morality, the diffusion of useful Knowledge, General Intelligence, and the support of the Principles of the Christian Church.

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"THE LORD GOD IS A SUN AND SHIELD."

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## THE CHRISTIAN SUN

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### EVILS OF CREEDS. THEIR ORIGIN.

My Christian Brother—By the earnest solicitations of very many who have read our last conversation on the all-absorbing theme of *Christian Union*, I am induced with your permission, to resume the subject in the same friendly manner that our investigations were then concluded. You remember I presume, that we arrived at the following conclusions, that unhappy divisions have long existed in the church, that sin is the cause of those divisions, and that the effect would never cease until the cause shall be effectually removed. On these points there is no disagreement. But perhaps my brother is not willing to admit that human creeds, especially his favorite one, are sinful, or constitute the very cause which prevents the union we greatly desire. My object in addressing you at this time is not to anathematize your Christian character, nor hold up to public derision your religious opinions, but to convince you, if possible, by scriptural evidences, fair and legitimate reasonings, that the saints can never be gathered into one harmonious church until all human legislation to govern them is abandoned. Will you listen with patience and impartially judge on the weight of my arguments when you have heard them? Then I will proceed to offer a few reasons why I think man-made creeds should be rejected by every branch of the true church.

They are imperfect in their origin. What is the ostensible object of a creed, discipline, confession of faith, or rule of church government? My brother will admit they aim at the highest and most sacred of objects. They prescribe to man his religious faith; tell him what he must believe, and how he must conduct in this life, that he may obtain eternal life beyond the grave. To accomplish this great, this glorious, this immortal work, they should be perfect in all their parts. And to give them this divine character their author, or authors, should be infallible, or divinely inspired. Hence, on being called upon to subscribe and pay implicit obedience to any system of faith, our first inquiry should be, from whence did it originate? Is it of human or divine origin? Was its originator divinely qualified and authorized to do this work, or did it originate in the ambitious mind of an imperfect and misguided man, who assumed a work which is the sole prerogative of the immutable God to dictate?

Does my brother say that the author and framers of his creed were divinely inspired, or infallible men? If not, then why do you make their decisions the rule of your faith and conduct, and the criterion by which you judge of the Christian character of your dissenting brother? Can you tell why? But if you say they were infallible; then where are your evidences of this assumption? Can you produce one? I call for them; nay, the divided church and a lost world demands it at your hand; and you will present them cheerfully if you have any to give. God does not require faith of his creatures in his own word without giving the most infallible evidence that it is true. He wrought signs and mighty wonders to prove to an unbelieving world the divinity of both the old and new dispensations. And if the creed-makers had the same evidences to attest their systems, then we would as fully believe them as the word of Moses, the predictions of the prophets, the perfect law of Christ, and the preaching of his apostles. But they have neither, neither can they produce such evidence. Then my brother, why believe your creed? Did its author prove its divinity by working miracles, such as healing the sick by his word, opening the eyes of the blind, giving hearing to the deaf, cleansing the leper, curing the palsy, casting out devils, raising the dead; and has he sealed his testimony with his own blood, and risen triumphant over death? You know this has not been done. Not a miracle has ever been wrought in confirmation of the inspiration of creed-makers. Unless we call the conflicting doctrines their systems of human folly teach the strife they have engendered, the divisions they have caused, the corruptions they have produced, the anathemas, persecutions, tortures and death, which have followed in their train, unless these are miracles, they are without such evidence.

You will not understand me, my brother by

these remarks, that I question the piety or impeach the motive of the great reformers, so called. The motive of a good man is undoubtedly always pure, he may however, err in judgment, and commit an act most fatal in its consequences. The physician may design to heal, yet for the want of skill administer that which will kill his patient. The framers of man-made creeds in legislating for the church of God undoubtedly had commendable objects in view—they wish to guard against heresies, and unite the true saints in one church—but they depend upon their own wisdom to devise the plan, upon human strength, to accomplish this divine work. They were fallible men, unauthorized and unqualified to give laws to the saints. Hence they have failed in their praiseworthy object. Instead of shutting out heresy they have securely hedged it in; and instead of uniting they have raised the cold walls of party strife between the lambs of Christ. You will admit that every good and wise man is not divinely inspired to legislate for God's children: none have ever possessed this right since the days of the apostles of Christ. If one has this right why not all? Why not open the wide door, and say to every disciple, legislate for yourself, form your own religious creed. The rule that would justify the framers of one human creed, would authorize the existence of as many as there might be found persons disposed to form one.

My brother will not contend that the authors and framers of human compositions to govern the saints were perfect or divinely inspired men, nor that they had a divine warrant from the word of God to legislate for his church. You will admit that none but the King has a sovereign right to give laws to his kingdom: it is the province of his subjects not to make laws, but to obey them. It is the duty of children not to give rules to govern each other, but to unite in paying implicit obedience to the laws of their father. And the sheep and lambs should not attempt to rule the flock, but hear and obey the voice of the shepherd. Hence human laws have originated in an invasion of the high prerogative of the King of heaven, the Head of the Church, the Shepherd of the flock. Their authors have taken their seat in the temple of God, showing themselves to be Gods;—have stretched out their dividing sceptre over the once united and peaceful kingdom, and a train of evils for centuries past have followed, from which the good of all classes turn away with disgust, and weep at the folly and depravity that has caused these evils. You must acknowledge, from these facts, that human authoritative, creeds are imperfect, if not sinful, in their origin. Hence you should reject them. But another reason why you should renounce them is, they are imperfect in

### THEIR CHARACTER.

The fruit partakes of the nature of the tree that bore it, and the water of the fountain from whence it flows. Hence if the point is established that the authors and framers of authoritative laws for the government of the church, were fallible uninspired men, the conclusion is irresistible that their productions also must be imperfect. If, therefore, the first position is proved, the second must be correct as a matter of course. But lest my brother should still entertain doubts on the justness of my conclusions, I will offer, in their justification, a few more evidences. That all ecclesiastical human laws are imperfect is evident.

1st. From their disagreement with each other. My good brother knows that harmony and union are indispensable characteristics of perfection; and that disagreement and divisions are striking traits of imperfection. God is perfect. And why? Because he is infinite in wisdom, power and mercy, and is unchangeable in all his attributes. The highest perfection marks all his acts—undisturbed harmony reigns throughout his unbounded empire. His word is perfect in all its demands, instructions, promises, and threatenings; it is one unbroken, harmonious revelation, of eternal truth,—designed to save the sinner, make the man of God perfect, and serve as a perfect law for the government of the true church.

Can we say this in truth, of human laws? My brother well knows we cannot. He knows that their whole history is one of strife and divisions. Disagreement, bitter wrangling, and confusion have taken the place where heaven-born union, and god-like harmony should reign. The conflicting doctrines, laws, and worship, taught and enforced by the different creeds, have been brought into unholy collision with each other, and against the truth of God. And the war of carnal strife is still, like the angry elements, raging between them. This is but a faint picture of their imperfection. And does my brother know that the imperfect features of his own favorite creed are seen upon the painting?—that it has produced its share of the imperfect work to which I have alluded?—and that it is still a co worker with its bickering neighbors in perpetuating those evils? Abandon it then, before you become changed into its imperfect and sinful likeness.

2nd. They have undergone changes. Truth never changes. Like its immutable author it is now, and eternally will be, what it ever has been. It needs no revisions, additions or diminutions, to suit its benign blessings to the varied wants of sinner and saint, under all circumstances, in every country, and age of the world. It is not a time-serving policy, conforming itself to the covetous and sinful desires of a corrupt and fluctuating world, and the growing pride of a divided and apostate church. It changes not its dress to suit the fashions, modded and remodded in councils, synods, conferences, or assemblies, but yesterday, to-

day, and forever more wears the same spotless robe that was fashioned in heaven and finished on Calvary.

It is not so with error, or rules of faith and conduct prescribed by imperfect mortals. They are not now what they have once been. All have been changed in some respects, and some bear but little resemblance to their original features. If they were perfect at first, the least change stamps them with imperfection now. But if they are perfect now, then, before the change they must have been imperfect—if they are perfect now, they will change no more. And if they are perfect now, then they must all harmonize in doctrine, worship, and government. My brother knows this is not the case; matters of fact, in every creed and party church, contradict it. How then can you, as a conscientious Christian, longer support them?

3rd. All admit they will be laid aside. Do you think, my brother, that the union of the saints, for which you so fervently pray, will ever be consummated while party creeds are in force? You do not. You are confident that they must all be laid aside before this happy era can be ushered in. You are right, and are not alone in this just conclusion: the saints of every name and party agree with you. They are devoutly praying, and looking for the destruction of party walls, or creeds between Christians. Is not this an indirect admission of their imperfection? You must say it is; for nothing which pertains to the perfection of the church will be laid aside when it attains to its highest state of union and perfection.

(To be continued.)

### COMMUNICATIONS.

For the Christian Sun.

Bro. HAYES: I have been spending a few weeks in Chester county, Pa., and have had the pleasure of visiting quite a number of the Christian brethren in that section; and supposing you to be interested in all that appertains to liberal christianity, and the spread of the "Christian connection," I communicate to you the following:

About three years ago, Charles H. Plummer left this city where he had been engaged for several years in the noble enterprise of editing and publishing a union Magazine, called the "Christian," and settled in Nottingham Township, Chester county, Pennsylvania.

Then, there were but a few who had ever heard of the friends who worshiped God under the simple Bible name of "Christians;" and what little was known only served to inflame the deep seated prejudice of surrounding sectarianism, under the most unfavorable circumstances. Brother C. H. Plummer resolved in good strength to build a church. In the meantime, the most violent persecutions commenced, and just in proportion to Bro. Plummer's success, the wild storm of encompassing sects howled around. Still the work went on, and through the perseverance and patient suffering of Bro. P., and the worthy co operation of many warm friends the Church went up—and now their stands upon a gentle sloping hill a very neat brick Chapel called "Mount Olivet." The congregations on the Sabbath are large and respectable. In the basement of the Chapel is a spacious room in which meet a large and very flourishing Sabbath school, under the management of brothers Scott and Steele, members of the "Mount Olivet Church."

It is really astonishing to see the work that has been done here in a few years, and it is no flattery to say that few men would have undergone the toil, persecution, and suffering of almost every kind which Brother Plummer has endured, and still endures to a considerable extent.

Why, would you believe it? The Presbyterians and Episcopal Methodists in this region denounce him as a "Heretic" ay more, "an Infidel!" and refuse to fellowship him, even as a man! And more yet, have declared "that under no circumstances would they give him a night's lodging. The mildest name I can call this by is, PROTESTANT POPERY."

No man can tell the power of Sectarianism so well as he who has felt it. I have felt it. It is an Iron-armed monster, gives no quarter and knows no mercy.

Thank God, the men are alive that will help carry Sectarianism to its grave, already dug. Its cup of iniquity is nearly full, and Hell from beneath is moving to meet it, as it returns to its native home richly laden with the murder—spoils of eighteen centuries.

If all the blood it has caused to be shed could be collected, it would float the *Naves of the world!* If all the tears it has caused to run down from the eyes of anguish-rung hearts could be collected in clouds, they would refresh the earth with rain for culture!

If all the crushed hopes, chilled sympathies, agonizing cries, and death-wailings, which the spirit of Sectarianism hath caused, could unite in uttering one shriek, it would make the world quake from centre to circumference.

Still the truth in the section I speak of advances, and although Bro. Plummer has experienced much opposition, yet he stands a living evidence of what the grace of God can do on behalf of those who labor patiently in the work of the ministry. His principle opposition has come from the "Episcopal Methodists." This I do not wonder at, for the difference in government between the Methodists and Christians is so great, that when any of the former become acquainted with the latter, their attachments to Methodism grow cold, for the fact is, the Methodist people are open to conviction, when not under the influence of a

necessity-driven itinerancy, and the power of the Bishops. I am convinced that the vast majority of these people know but little about the government of the Methodist E. Church. It is almost as absolute as that of Rome! The people have neither representation nor power! The itinerancy elect the Bishops, he appoints his favorites to the best stations, the preacher appoints the class-leaders, &c. Is this not absoluteism? Who could believe that AMERICANS would submit to such a government? Nor is this all, the preachers beg money to build churches, and then have the deeds made out in the name of the CONFERENCE! Who compose the conference? The preachers only! Hence, the preachers are the owners of all the churches. Is not this a most stupendous system of fraud? These are facts; in illustration of which I give one example. A Methodist E. Church in Brooklyn city, New York, refused to receive the preacher sent by Conference, and called another by the unanimous voice of the congregation. When lo! THE CONFERENCE sued for possession, and the law of the land gave them the building, because the Deeds were made out to the Conference, and the people with whose money it was erected had to leave!

And so it is with nearly all the Meeting-houses of the M. E. Church, (there are only about six exceptions to this in the United States.)

There is another thing in which the people are knowingly and wickedly deceived, that is in respect to the works of Wesley, the present edition issued by the Methodist Book concern is spurious! I am prepared to prove this, and to show beyond a doubt in the very works of Wesley himself, that he was opposed to BISHOPS, and by inference opposed to the whole government of Methodism as now promulgated.

When God would visit his severest judgment upon a people, he scatters and divides them. The race of Methodism is run, God has scattered them. I do assert, that in my judgment, sustained by evidence, the Methodist sect were the originators in part at least, and are now agitators both North and South if not directly, yet indirectly of disunion. It is a fact worthy of note that two-thirds of the professors in South Carolina are Episcopal Methodists; and nearly seven-eighths of the Episcopal Methodists in the North are fanatical ultraists. So let them look well to their handy work.

The spirit of Bible Christianity that is sweeping noiselessly over the land, will, I trust, transform them into true sons of God. When bigotry and sectarian strife are dead, the union will be safe. O come quick, the hour in the Church of Christ, when every man who acknowledges "Jesus" to be the Son of God "in Bible language," will be received by all who name the Blessed, as a Christian.

In addition to the Mount Olivet Church, Bro. Plummer has established some four or five other "preaching stations," the principal of which is at a flourishing little village called Lewisville, where, recently through the instrumentality of Bro. James Scott, a Free Meeting-house has been erected; serving the double purpose of school-house and Church—the Church room being in the second story. Thus through the unwearied perseverance of Bro. Plummer, the "Christians" in this section have gained an influence and respect which places them very nearly on a par with (as far as numbers and respectability are concerned) the sects around them.

One thing I observe among the "Christian Connection" generally, which in my humble judgment is a proper subject of reproof, viz: "The laborer is not worthy of his hire"—so many seem to think. I am opposed to large salaries and costly Churches, but the Brother who performs the duties of a Pastor, should receive a fixed salary, be that large or small, which should be promptly paid at the times appointed, this course, experience has proved to be the best, and has the warrant of scripture. The amount of salary to be regulated by the ability of the Church, and not as some think according to the necessity of the Pastor, who, if he does not receive enough to sustain himself in respectability becoming the office which he holds at one place, should as soon as circumstances will allow, remove to some other station if he choose, like Paul to labor with his own hands and thus make up the deficiency very well. This however does not release the brethren from their obligation to minister of their carnal things to the support of those who labor in spiritual things. Very much evil has been done I think, by persons preaching at their own expense, and encouraging the no-pay-principle. Thus encouraging a bad spirit in the brethren towards those who are of necessity compelled to demand a support.

Brother C. H. Plummer by his amiable and Christian course, has drawn around him very many who had previously hindered the Christian cause; and I doubt not but that in a few years, if he continue where he is, there will be an abundant harvest gathered in to swell the ranks of the sacramental hosts that travel upward and onward to the New Jerusalem.

Yours in truth, union and Love,  
GEORGE F. GORDON.  
Philadelphia, Aug. 25th, 1851.

For the Christian Sun.

OUR PRINCIPLES, let not the preachers, or Churches relay their efforts; our principles will sweep the world. The doctrine is invulnerable, and the spirit must triumph; but let us not be impatient; God might have made the world in a day! but the hurry not being great, he took a week.

N. SUMMERBELL.

For the Christian Sun.

COMMUNION WITH GOD. The church enjoys at the present time, comparatively little communion with God! The old Testament held out the idea that the gospelage would be peculiarly blessed by the prevalence of the Spirit, and the dwelling of God with his people. Jesus said to the Disciples greater works than these shall ye do! These things have not yet been realized! May the Christians claim the promise, and strive by faith and obedience that the church may draw nigher to God, where we can commune with angels, enjoy the miraculous influence of his spirit, and thus lead the way in return of the Church to an apostolic State.

N. SUMMERBELL.

"CHRISTIAN CONNECTION." This phrase, superfluous and contemptible is now regarded as the proper cognomen of the Christians. I hope that every true brother will reject as of human origin, sectarian in its nature, and altogether an unnecessary appearance. We claim to be simply "Christians," this is sufficient. "The," as a definite article may define the body, but we shall never be better connected, from styling ourselves the "Christian Connection." N. S.

OUR NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL HYMN BOOKS are a first rate article, a little too good perhaps to sell as low as some schools desire! But, they are quite good enough for Church use, and much better than some now in use; and I think that it would be a good plan for all churches, which have not preaching oftener than once a week, and are in moderate circumstances, to use the S. S. H. BOOK and see that all have them. N. S.

PRAYER. God's people were ever a people of prayer, the Preacher who is not a man of prayer, is a wolf notwithstanding he is folded with sheep. Do you pray in secret, with your family? If not self convicted by thine own heart do not attempt to justify thyself with deceitful lips! but repent and commence better life, or hide thy face for shame, and renounce the profession which you are now disgracing in your family and will one day before the world. N. S.

OUR BOOKS. Our Agents in different locations have now a good supply of Christian Books on hand, let the preachers see that the people are encouraged to procure and read them. My residence and the Depot of the Christian Book department for the West is on the 4th St. below stone St. Cincinnati Ohio. N. S.

"OWE NO MAN ANYTHING." Pay your debts when due, live not on the property of others; feel not excused by a Bankrupt law; or a compromise with creditors if you owe pay or let poverty and misfortune be your only plea. N. S.

SINGING is a Christian duty as well as a very interesting part of the worship of God; Angels sung when Jesus was born. The Prophets of olden times sung his praises, Jesus himself sung with his disciples. Christian parents should see that their children learn to sing, let them learn to read music. Do not neglect this. N. S.

Our Campbellite brethren very strangely assume that they and us are one, that they are far ahead of us, that we should unite with them, that we are one and the same people, that they cannot unite with us because we are Unitarians; that they are reforming that they have not changed, but are on the old ground, that we have changed and that we are the same old thing and will not change. N. S.

PROTRACTED MEETINGS. Revivals of religion have always been opposed by the cold philosophy but they are indispensable to the well being of the Church, and he who wins the most souls to Christ will ever be considered the greatest preacher on the earth, and be most esteemed by the angels in heaven. N. S.

LOVE THE BRETHREN. Love for the brethren should ever be manifest in our conversation and deportment; if we love them and by a coldness of manners convince them of the contrary, we act the part of hypocrites, if we do not appear to be born of love, and really do not, we should repent and seek to be born of love. Love should be the great predominating feature of the Christians. N. S.

For the Christian Sun.

Bro. HAYES: Our protracted meeting closed last night with the addition of 7 new members by experience, and the prospects are as bright as when we begun, but having no help at hand my preaching powers failed me, consequently had to desist.

The Christian cause is gaining ground rapidly and bids fair ere long to be the prevailing opinion, here its enemies are giving up the point, we want a preacher, we can support one handsomely and send him on, it is one of the best fields I know of, a smart man here can do much, and if you can send us one, you will confer a favor indeed.

Our Conference meets on Friday before the 4th Sunday in October, after which you will hear something more on the subject. We meet six miles below Milledgeville at Liberty Church.

Yours in Christ,  
JUBILEE SMITH.

September 1st, 1851.