

THE CHRISTIAN SUN.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 1877.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, REV. J. T. WHITLEY.

CORRESPONDING EDITORS, REV. C. A. APPLE, HOLY NECK, VA., REV. W. S. LONG, GRAMM, N. C.

OUR PRINCIPLES.

[EXTRACT FROM THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.] We may well afford to dispense with all those doctrines and tenets which set the brethren at variance, and to take the following primary constitution as the ground-work of our organization, viz.: 1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. The Pope of Rome, or any other pretending to be head thereof, should be regarded as that man of sin and son of perdition, who exalteth himself above all that is called God.

2. The name Christian is the only appellation needed or received by the Church. All party or sectarian names are excluded as being unnecessary, if not hurtful. 3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

THE HEALTH OF DR. WELLONS.

We are just from the bedside of Dr. W. B. Wellons, this Thursday, Jan. 25, 12 o'clock M., and report with gratification that his condition is no worse than it was a week ago. He is very weak and suffers much with his cough; but there is no special evidence of any rapid decline. Let prayer continually be made in his behalf.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—No. 2. FURTHER HISTORICAL NOTES.

The sources from which to draw information for a sketch of the early history of the Christian Church are exceedingly meagre and unsatisfactory. We have before us O'Kelly's "Apology," a small book written in antiquated and somewhat affected phraseology, in imitation of the books of Chronicles in Scripture. This is the chief source from which we draw. "Asbury's Journal," the "Life and Times of Jesse Lee," Guirey's "History of Episcopacy" and other books are also before us. Yet none of them gives a detailed and satisfactory account of the movements of James O'Kelly and his coadjutors at the time of their separation from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The following is from O'Kelly's Apology: "And it came to pass after these things, [i. e. after the transactions of the General Conference in Baltimore] we appointed a conference at Piney-Grove, in Chesterfield county, to confer on the present distress. We met according to appointment, and conversed on the subject of Church government. We unanimously condemned the Episcopal government; but desired union with the people. And the method we pursued for the purpose, was, we proposed an address to the bishop individually, for him to consider our distress, and give us to meet with them on the occasion. We told him we only requested that the present form of government might be examined, and tried by the Scriptures, and amended according to the holy Word. By so doing, we hoped that a permanent plan for union might be established: As for the time we would cheerfully wait! We elected men to carry in our address, and then adjourned until December." The Conference mentioned above as being held at Piney Grove was probably held in the early part or middle of the year 1793. The details of what occurred during the intervening months we cannot ascertain. "And it came to pass on the twelfth month about the 25th day of the month, we met, pursuant to adjournment, at Manakin Town, to receive the answer from Francis" [Asbury.] This Conference at Manakin Town was held in December 1793, if we may rely upon the accuracy of a statement made by the author of the "Life and Times of Jesse Lee." "Our friends made report that his answer to us was, 'I have no power to call such a meeting as you wish; therefore, if five hundred preachers would come on their knees before me, I would not do it.' The answer sounded in our ears like the voice of Rehoboam. Therefore all hope of union was sunk. Nothing remained but to thy tents, O Israel! The door to the negotiation was shut. Therefore, a separation, or slavish subjection, was unavoidable. And we unanimously chose the former. We formed our ministers on an equality,

gave the lay-members a balance of power in the legislature; and left the executive business in the Church collectively. But fearing we should err again, as we were young hands in the business, we resolved to establish nothing we had done before another general meeting. So adjourned Conference." The next event mentioned by Mr. O'Kelly occurred in August 1794. These are his words: "Now it came to pass in the eighth month, on the fourth day of the month, in the year of Jesus Christ, 1794, the Republicans met in Conference in Surry county. We held conference with open doors, that all might hear and learn. And after much disputing, and several resolutions having passed, we discovered plainly the minority were much dissatisfied; and therefore I moved that the whole should be reconsidered, that all might be agreed, if possible. And it was so, that a committee of seven men were appointed to form a plan of government, and lay it before conference the next day. The committee met, and strove hard for union of sentiment, and although we sought it earnestly with tears, yet to no purpose. At length it was proposed that we should lay aside every manuscript, and take the word of God as recorded in the Scriptures. And it was right; because the primitive church had no government beside the Scriptures as written by the Apostles. But in order to lead the minds of the religious to the law and the testimony, having never been taught to search the Scriptures for Church discipline, we drew up a small sketch, as a guide, and a light to the connection, nearly on this wise: 'We learn from the book of God, that the Church in general includes all the real Christians in the world. Eph. 5: 25. 1 Cor. 12: 13, 14. Any number of Christians united in love, having Christ for their head and centre of union, constitutes a church. In the primitive church were twelve chosen ministers whom Christ called Apostles. Luke 6: 13. The same were chosen witnesses. Acts 10: 41. Those men were ambassadors, and possessed the keys of the kingdom, even the spirit of truth, which opened to them the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Therefore, Christ spake in them and by them; thus were they fully qualified, and authorized to write the last will and testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There were elders in the Church beside the apostles, who labored in the word and doctrine. Some of these could prophesy, speak with tongues, interpret, &c. But after those extraordinary ministrations had run their race, only one order of ministers existed in the church. Acts 20: 17. And it came to pass on the morrow, when conference had met, the brethren all present, the committee made report, and the saying pleased the multitude. Indeed, the people rejoiced at the consolation and gave glory to God for the light received." At this meeting the new confederation discarded the name of "Republican Methodists," declared the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only Head of the Church, repudiated the peculiarities of Episcopacy, and set apart elders to the work of the ministry by prayer and the imposition of the hands of a presbytery. The conference took measures also in refutation of a slanderous charge made against them by their enemies of disloyalty to the civil government.

THE CHRISTIAN ANNUAL.

The Annual of the Christian Church for 1876 is now ready for distribution, and those who are entitled to copies may look out for them in a few days. It contains the minutes of the Eastern Virginia Conference, minutes of the North Carolina Conference, proceedings of the Sunday School Convention of the Eastern Virginia Conference, ministerial directory, announcement of places where the Conferences will meet in 1877, and some other matters. It is a source of much regret to us that the minutes of the other Conferences had to be omitted. But, as those bodies at their last sessions made no adequate provision to defray the expense of printing, and as we could make no arrangements with the secretaries by correspondence, we were compelled to omit their minutes from the Annual. No one can regret the necessity of this omission more than we do; but we are not in the slightest degree responsible for it. It is hoped that all of the Conferences at their next annual sessions will make suitable provision for the publication of their proceedings in the Annual for 1877. The price of the Annual for 1876 is 15 cents a copy—the same price as heretofore. Had the book been of the usual size, the cost would have been greater. Never did the former publisher get back the money he invested in printing the larger book at 15 cents a copy. We do not propose to lose money on the publication; the price is put, therefore, at the reasonable sum of 15 cents. Those who have paid already will receive at once the number of copies ordered. If others want copies, they can be had at the price mentioned above, by addressing J. T. Whitley, Suffolk, Va.

"BROAD CHURCHISM."

Last week we entered a protest against the misuse of the term "Broad Churchism," as it is employed to convey a covert insinuation of heresy among our people. We stated, furthermore, that we had no objection to the use of the term as applied to our organization, provided it should be understood in its literal sense. Broad church, in opposition to narrow church, is in our opinion just what the church of Christ should be. Narrow churchism has been one of the most potent foes to the advances of Christianity. It is this narrow, self-seeking, Pharisaic spirit which has in every age been opposed to the all-comprehensive spirit of Christ. It was manifest in apostolic times, when some opposed the admission of the Gentiles into the church of Christ. When that point was settled, and it was seen that Christ came to save not only the Jews, but all mankind, then came the narrow spirit once more to demand that all heathen or Gentile converts should be circumcised according to the rites of Judaism. Even Peter who had seen the vision as he prayed upon the house-top, and had gone in obedience thereto, to the house of the Roman centurion, and had preached unto him Jesus, now began to waver, inasmuch that it required all the energy of the mighty apostle of the Gentiles to withstand the tide of bigotry which had carried away one of the chief disciples and apostles of our Lord. But it is scarcely worth while to multiply examples. The pages of ecclesiastical history furnish them in such abundance that one cannot go amiss to find them.

The truth is, that the manifest and inevitable tendency of the age is towards a broad church. Some may say that this argues a tendency towards unbelief. With all due respect for their opinions, and with a frank admission of their plausible nature, we beg leave to express our doubts as to any such conclusions. To witness the great revolutions which the world has undergone during the last hundred years, and to imagine that the church, that mighty social and moral engine, can stand still amid them all, is to be very blind to, and very ignorant of, those laws by which moral force is regulated. All branches of human progress must in some sort keep pace with each other. We should no more expect theology to stand still, than we should expect the same of chemistry or astronomy. We should no more expect the church to continue always in the same methods, than we should expect that there would be no new processes in mineralogy or applied mathematics. We do not imagine that the science of religion is any more complete than most other sciences. Perhaps it is less so.—As it is incomparably the grandest and noblest of all sciences, so it is the widest, most far-reaching, and, in many senses, the most difficult and abstruse of all sciences. We do not know that the study of the Bible has been conducted to ultimate results, any more than has the study of nature. Antiquaries and explorers are every year finding new confirmations of the historical record of the Sacred Word. New interpretations, or modified ones, are constantly given to the sacred text by the logic of human experience. Christianity, while not departing one jot or tittle from its original purposes and principles, is found to be a very elastic thing. This, perhaps as much as anything else, proves its divine origin. It is fitted to all people and to all ages, to every order of intelligence, and to every grade of civilization. That men have misinterpreted it, is very true. The Ptolemaic system of the universe was wrong. But that was not proof that there was no system of the universe. Yet the Ptolemaic system contained some germs of truth, and in practice long subserved useful ends. Though wrong, it was tolerably well suited to the wants of the age. Men go along with it, until the state of human affairs demanded a better. Then Copernicus arose, and a new system was founded upon the ruins of the old. Newton took a great stride in advance of Copernicus, and later still, the theories of Newton have been greatly modified by more recent investigators.

So it has been, and is to be, with the church. In our advances we shall no more do away with the Bible, than we can do away with nature. Both are by the same Author, and equally indestructible. But the study of neither is exhausted. False theories have arisen in regard to both. These false theories have had their advocates. But they have been swept away in the grand march of human progress. We say the tendency of the church in this age is to be broad. That is one of the discoveries of the age. There is no littleness and narrowness about CHRISTIANITY, whatever there may be about some who profess themselves its followers. The fact is, brethren of every order, the world is moving, and we must move too, or

we shall be left behind and forgotten. What, Christianity be forgotten? No, not Christianity, but we who are too narrow-minded to see its scope and the breadth of its application. But are we to drift into Materialism and Unbelief? No, for that would no longer be Christianity. Depend upon it, the surest way to promote Materialism and Infidelity, is to refuse to move at all. The Church must not be afraid of the truth, no matter whence it may come. It cannot harm us. We are not bound to accept crude and unripe theories, but we are bound to accept truth whithersoever it may lead us. For one, we are not afraid of seeing religion approved by the advancement of human knowledge. It may destroy preconceived theories, but it cannot destroy the church; that is indestructible. If our organization be more in harmony with the age than others, then it is the more likely to make its impress upon mankind, either directly or indirectly. If it is a broad church, it is better than a narrow church. But we forbear for the present. A.

REV. J. W. WELLONS. This brother, who is one of the most useful and beloved ministers in the North Carolina Christian Conference, is now in Suffolk, on a visit to his afflicted brother, Dr. W. B. Wellons. We are much gratified to learn from him that his health, which has been very feeble for a year or two past, is now much better. On last Sunday morning he preached for the Suffolk Church a sermon which was highly appreciated. Besides his numerous other good works, Brother Wellons has published the best book of family prayers that we know of. May his life long be spared to the Church and the ministry.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

THE NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER for February, besides the excellent lesson notes by the editor, M. C. Hazard, has contributions by Rev. W. M. Taylor, D. D., Leonard Bacon, D. D., and Rev. C. D. Helmer. This magazine is the best of its class in the country. Adams, Blackmer & Lyon Publishing Co., Chicago.

GODEY'S LADY'S BOOK for February is here. A beautiful steel engraving embellishes one of its pages. There is the usual number of fashion plates, good stories, besides other interesting and valuable matter. Our lady friends will be charmed with this elegant magazine. Price \$3 a year. L. A. Godey, Philadelphia.

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY for February contains among other things, "Trout Fishing in the Rangeley Lakes," "A Winter on the Nile," "Nicholas Minturn," "The Lass o' Lowrie's," "How do I know what is the Bible?" Dr. Holland, the editor, is one of the most powerful writers in America. Four dollars a year. Scribner & Co., 743 Broadway, New York.

ST. NICHOLAS for February is simply splendid. It is profusely and elegantly illustrated. "The Artist-Soldier," "Pattikin's House," "The Stars in February," "The Peterkins at the Centennial," are among the many articles given. The boys and girls who get this magazine regularly are fortunate indeed. After reading our copy, we usually let some young friends read it. They are delighted. Three dollars a year. Scribner & Co., 743 Broadway, New York.

WIDE AWAKE is the only successful rival of St. Nicholas in the country. The February number of Wide Awake has been received. It has a number of beautiful and life-like illustrations. The stories and sketches are very good and will greatly please the young people. D. Lothrop & Co., Boston.

Rev. E. W. Beale, who has charge of the ministerial students of the Eastern Virginia Conference, writes: "Thanks to Bro. I. A. Kitchen, at Union, for a valuable box of provisions for the ministerial students. Who will be the next to do likewise?" A word to the agents appointed for the collection of funds, provisions, &c., for this purpose. Will you give the matter some attention? If you will, then these young men can remain at school; if not, they will have to leave, and the church suffer. I think I can most confidently recommend them to your liberality and the liberality of the church. They are worthy. Help them. What agent or friend will do as Bro. Kitchen, who is not an agent, but who feels interested in a good cause and has shown his faith by his works? Let us hear from you at once.

Our New York correspondent, J. E. Brush, Esq., writes us as follows: "My correspondents are informed that I have closed out my interest in the Hardware business at No. 4 Chat-ham Square, and will hereafter be engaged in the wholesale Fancy Goods line at 37 Walker street, New York." This change, we learn, goes into effect February 1st.

NEWS AND OPINIONS.

[NOTE.—We solicit, for publication in this column, items of news from the churches, and brief expressions of opinion from our brethren on matters of common interest. Write briefly and to the point. If you have news of interest, or a good idea, and cannot write with correctness, send along the news or the idea, and we will put it in proper shape.] Our thanks are due to W. F. Taylor, Esq., editor of public accounts, for a copy of the auditor's report.

Rev. J. K. Howell has accepted a numerous call to the pastorate of the Baptist Church at Kinston, N. C.

Bishop Kain, of the Catholic diocese of West Virginia, is but thirty-three years old. He is the youngest Bishop in the world.

There are ten members in the First Baptist Church of Richmond, whose aggregate ages amount to more than eight hundred years.

Col. John K. Connally, formerly a Virginia State Senator, was ordained to the Baptist ministry at Asheville, N. C., on Sunday the 31st of December.

A Richmond pastor, who recently had his salary raised \$500, devotes every cent of the increase to charitable objects connected with his Church.

John Wesley, during his active life, preached 40,000 sermons, wrote a vast quantity of hymns, and travelled nearly 300,000 miles on preaching excursions.

Rev. W. E. Munsey, D. D., the famous orator of the Methodist Episcopal Church, has been transferred from the Louisiana Conference to St. Louis, Mo.

Rev. Dr. Bobbitt, senior editor of the Raleigh Christian Advocate, has been recently afflicted in the death of his venerable mother. May the Comforter soothe his sorrow.

Rev. C. V. Waugh, who was recently pastor of the Baptist Church, Modest Town, Accomac county, Va., has removed to Florida and taken charge of the Church in Gainesville.

The N. C. M. E. Conference has 163 travelling preachers, 236 local preachers, 56,171 members, 28,533 Sabbath school scholars, 58 parsonages, 935 church buildings, valued at \$72,330.

Rev. J. D. Ewing, a venerable clergyman of the Presbyterian Church, died at his residence in Rockbridge county on the 11th inst. He was the oldest member of the Montgomery Presbytery, being 89 years of age.

The Chicago Tribune says that the handsome sum of \$10,000 has been raised in Chicago as a fund for the maintenance and education of the two sons of Bliss, the evangelist, author of "Hold the Fort," &c., who was killed in the Ashtabula accident.

The Boston newspapers report that the arrival of Messrs. Moody and Sankey is awaited in that city with keen interest. The various denominations have cordially united in the preparations for their coming, and a large corps of Christian workers is ready to aid them.

The case of Rev. W. C. McCune came up before the Presbytery of Cincinnati on Tuesday, Jan. 2d, and at his request was deferred until the 5th of March. It will be remembered that Mr. McCune is under prosecution for some imaginary affront offered to Presbyterian traditions.

A brother, whose earnest desire to do good in the cause is beyond question, writes:

"My church seems very backward in taking hold of the general enterprises of our denomination. I have urged the matter publicly and privately, and never in my life met so much difficulty, and, with few exceptions, so little liberality. My brethren here used to respond with more generosity than they now do to calls of the same kind. I want subscribers to the SUN, and meet little encouragement. So with missionary, educational, and other work. I am afraid much of this is my own fault. Yet I know not what to do. Will the brethren pray for me and my church? I am in great distress."

Rev. John T. Kitchen sends us the following from Southampton county, Va., this week:

"The 2nd Saturday and Sunday in January, at Union, our first quarterly and communion meeting for the year was held. On Saturday a larger number than usual attended the business meeting. The Sabbath brought together a good congregation, many of whom sat around the table of the Lord. Union is one of our oldest churches and ought to be among the best in the Conference; but for the want of proper attention it is now in a waning condition. We have entered upon our labors there, praying and expecting that the Lord will revive us. Brethren, pray for us."

"I am making an effort to get the SUN into every family. If I don't do this, I expect to get it into as many as possible. If every present subscriber of the SUN would just try to get another, (and it can be done if the will is there) what a help it would be! I hope the local agents, to whom I have written, will not forget their duty. Brethren, please take an interest in this work."

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

PREPARED FOR THE CHRISTIAN SUN BY REV. C. A. APPLE. FIRST QUARTER.—LESSON V.—FEBRUARY 4, 1877. ELIJAH AND AHAB. I KINGS 18: 5-18. TIME—ABOUT 906 B. C.

NOTES.

During the period of Elijah's residence with the widow of Zarephath, the famine continued to increase in Israel. The most diligent search had been made for the prophet, but he was nowhere to be found. Concealed in the house of the widow, Elijah had wrought a wondrous miracle,—no less than raising to life the dead son of his hostess. This is the first instance of the dead being restored to life of which we read in the Scriptures. The reader will do well to peruse the latter part of the 17th, and the four first verses of the 18th chapter. After Elijah had been found in his hiding place, Ahab had demanded of him, and he presented himself once more to the king of Israel. He had not hidden in his house, but he had hidden in the heart of the Lord. The famine in Samaria had become very oppressive, and those who survived, had been driven to the extreme of desperation and misery. It may be supposed, however, that some supplies had been obtained from other countries during the long continuance of the drought; as we have no evidence that the rains had not fallen as usual in Judah and the other neighboring countries. Otherwise, it is impossible to conceive how any considerable portion of the people of Israel could have survived the dreadful famine which had so long prevailed. Perhaps those who were people of means, had managed to obtain some supplies from abroad.

The lesson may be divided into three heads:

1. THE DISTRESS IN ISRAEL. 2. OBADIAH'S MEETING WITH ELIJAH. 3. ELIJAH'S INTERVIEW WITH AHAB.

1. THE DISTRESS IN ISRAEL.—V. 5.—"Ahab said unto Obadiah."—Some think that this Obadiah was the same with Obadiah, one of the minor prophets. This appears, however, to be very doubtful. Another person of this name is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 34: 12, as having been set by Josiah, king of Judah, as one of the overseers over the workmen who were repairing the temple. This may have been the prophet, or he may have been an entirely distinct individual from either of the two named. The person mentioned in the lesson text, was the governor of Ahab's household, and a very pious, godly man. How such a person should have held a high office under such a king, and in a court so wicked as that of Ahab, it is difficult to imagine. But it seems that God will have his witnesses almost everywhere, and that, for the good of his creatures, he seldom allows a government to exist, which is composed wholly of wicked and unjust men. The wise and pious Daniel was promoted to high authority in the corrupt court of the king of Babylon, and Mordecai and Esther gained a powerful influence in the licentious court of Ahasuerus. "Go into the land unto all fountains of water."—Nearly all the brooks had dried up, and there was but one river of any importance—the Jordan, and that probably afforded but little water. One cannot but wonder that any running stream was left. But it is well known to those who have studied the subject, that springs and fountains frequently draw their supplies from long distances through veins in the earth. For instance, there is an artesian well at Chicago in Illinois, which is thought to derive its water from the Rocky mountains, hundreds of miles away. The Jordan, though flowing through a barren country at the present day, where it seldom rains, is still fed and kept comparatively full from the melting snows of Mount Lebanon, whence the river takes its rise. So that it is possible, notwithstanding the extreme drought, that there might have been some few springs and brooks yet running in the land of Israel. "We may find grass to save the horses and mules."

—If men were perishing from thirst and starvation, of course, it must have been much worse with beasts. The king seeing the great importance of saving the animals, determined to make the most careful search for water and food to keep them alive.

V. 6.—"So they divided the land between them."—It was a question of life and death, and the king appears not to have been willing to entrust the matter to any ordinary person. So he went one way, and sent his chief officer the other. What a fall was this! The proud and haughty Ahab journeying for days and days under a burning sun over arid and rocky wastes in search of a little water and a plat of grass. Scarcely the burning desert of Sahara itself is more barren and dreadful in its aspect than

was the whole land of Israel at that time. II. OBADIAH'S MEETING WITH ELIJAH.—V. 7.—"Behold, Elijah met him."—Obadiah was overwhelmed with astonishment. He fell on his face, as in the presence of a superior being. V. 8.—"Behold, Elijah is here."—Obadiah could not at first believe the evidence of his own eyes. Though he saw the prophet before him, he must ask, to be sure whether it was really he, or not. V. 9.—"What have I sinned?"—Obadiah was conscious of the rectitude of his own conduct and purposes, and appealed to Elijah not to be angry with him; nor to class him with those who worshipped Baal. V. 10.—"There is no nation nor kingdom whither my Lord hath not sent to seek thee."—That is, no neighboring country.—"He took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not."—So earnest and importunate had been the search of Ahab after Elijah, that not satisfied with the mere assertion that Elijah had been found in his hiding place, he had demanded of him, and he presented himself once more to the king of Israel. He had not hidden in his house, but he had hidden in the heart of the Lord. The famine in Samaria had become very oppressive, and those who survived, had been driven to the extreme of desperation and misery. It may be supposed, however, that some supplies had been obtained from other countries during the long continuance of the drought; as we have no evidence that the rains had not fallen as usual in Judah and the other neighboring countries. Otherwise, it is impossible to conceive how any considerable portion of the people of Israel could have survived the dreadful famine which had so long prevailed. Perhaps those who were people of means, had managed to obtain some supplies from abroad.

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