

The Progressive Christian.

BRETHREN'S P. P. CO.

"LEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION."

\$1.00 per Annum, in Advance.

VOL. I.

BERLIN, PA., FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 1879.

NO. 9.

POETRY.

Bethlehem and Golgotha.

In Bethlehem the Lord of glory,
Who brought us life, first drew his breath,
On Golgotha, O bloody story!
By death he broke the power of death.
From western shores, all dangers ceasing,
I traveled through the lands of morning;
And greater spots I nowhere saw
Than Bethlehem and Golgotha.
O hear! what profits all thy kneeling,
Where once he laid his infant head,
To view with an enraptured feeling
His grave, long empty of its dead?
To have him born in thee with power,
To die to earth and sin each hour,
And live to thee, this only, ah!
Is Bethlehem and Golgotha.
From the German of Ruckert.

Essays and Selections.

For the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN.
A Question.

BY HOWARD MILLER.

The Brethren Church is divided into Districts; thus, the Western District of Pennsylvania is one of twenty odd districts of the church.

The Western District of Pennsylvania, has, say, 4050 members and twenty-four churches. Now each of these churches that has a question or a resolution to receive official disposition, sends a query to the District Meeting, which sends or does not send it to the Annual Meeting for final disposition, advisory or legislative. This, I believe, is, in short, the way the work is done.

Now, suppose a congregation in council is asked to send a query to the Annual Meeting, condemning anything, for instance, the publication of this paper. One man frames and brings it before the church. It is passed and sent to the District Meeting. Now, to the delegates at the District Meeting the "bill" may be a very innocent looking piece of work. It may simply deplore the existence of any new media for the productions of schisms, and asks the Annual Meeting to "legislate" against them.

The church of fifty members, wherein it originated, may have been largely in ignorance of the meaning of the query; and with the characteristic disposition of the church, as a body, to sit like a log over the issue of the hour, it passed as the wish of the entire congregation, when, perhaps, only one understood it.

Coming before the District Meeting and passing that body pretty much as it passed the council, it is now made to seem the voice of the whole district, which really knows not a word of it. Going to the Annual Meeting it is hustled through, and now it seems to be the voice of over fifty thousands, who are hereby legislated for, and in no true sense of the word have they been represented.

It was in this way that the Church Extension project was queried by the districts last year, and it was proven that in one district the remonstrance carried by the vote of one man, who, to put it in plain English, as the explanation given by the party, was too Dutch to know what he was doing in the English discussion and vote that followed. Think of sending a lot of men to Washington to make laws on that plan! The delegation from Florida presenting a bill, that is, "pass it, pass it, pass it, and it is passed," and the first knowledge California has of the law regulating the color of the paint to be used on their houses is when the sheriff comes along ordering them to paint according to law or be ejected. About how long would the people of the United States stand that kind of work? Well, we as a church have stood it for a good many years. Who knows what laws are in preparation for time by some interested party in some work of the Brother-hood?

Why not have these District Meeting queries all printed in the church papers a month ahead of Annual Meeting? Why not give the widest publicity, and the freest expression of opinion by all, as all are to be affected by the decisions? Or, in other words, what is the use of doing anything "in a corner"? The average wits are very slow. They have to handle, taste, and bite on an idea, so to speak, before they can see through it, and if the government of the church is democratic in principle, it is aristocratic in its legislative department, and despotic in its executive.

The question I ask is, why can we not have these queries to Annual Meeting published ahead, for home discussion?

Ecclesiastical common law is very little understood in our church, and a principle as broad and comprehensive as the gospel itself may be, by Annual Meeting, utterly ignored by statutory provisions got up in the interests of avarice or ambition, as, for illustration, the query of last year making it obligatory on agents to "see" the Bishop before going into his bailiwick for subscription purposes. It may be that where it originated all the wisdom of the district was in the Bishop's head; but hereabouts the people are supposed to be able to act competently, without having this writ of *de hancio* etc., legislated against them.

These infractions of common law could never have been entertained for a moment if they had been submitted to the crucial test of a common examination by the multitude.

A strange and inexplicable feature of our polity is in the regarding the decisions of Annual Meeting as gospel, and then, in the next annual council, repealing them by the substitution of annulling or conflicting decisions thus

practically saying that we may be observing as gospel, to-day, what a year hence we may demonstrate a fallacy, or we may substitute error for truth.

There was a time when the Annual Meeting arrangements served the purposes of the church as a Legislature. When Eastern Pennsylvania and the Cumberland and Shenandoah Valleys held the greater part of the church, and railroads and newspapers were in the inventors brains yet, then the Annual Meeting would do its work. Now, the church is a terribly straggled out organization, from Philadelphia to Oregon, and the present devices for legislative action are exceedingly clumsy.

I know that it is exceedingly heterodox to make this statement. The prevailing theory is that the managers of the Annual Meeting are entirely beyond the pale of criticism, and can, by no means, learn anything more; and nobody knows the untruth of this better than the Annual Meeting itself.

There ought to be a better understanding of the scope of the Annual Meeting and the class of work which it may or may not do.

Bad queries creep in, actuated by what, if subjected to the common test, of examination, are of bad motives, as, for illustration, the attempt to take the hymn book profit from the Huntington printers.

When weak men feel that their little dignity is being hurt, or their ambition likely to be run counter to, they rush to the Annual Meeting with a demand for "legislation" against the author of their troubles.

It is a cardinal principle of the doctrine of the church, that we abjure all connection with secret orders and secretism, yet do we not get up our queries as practically in the dark as if they were sworn to be so? What knowledge has my nearest neighbor got of the doings of the Iowa District Meeting? If he were not affected by them, it would be none of his business; but they do affect him, and he is compelled to submit in Jerusalem to an edict issued in Rome and enforced by a resident procurator. I think I have a nice sense of justice; I believe I can distinguish the honorable from the dishonorable; and I believe I am right in pronouncing a fraud that principle which enables the voters of your county to go to the polls and legitimately elect to the Legislature a man who can not legitimately hold the office. Or, to be plain, we of Somerset county can, by our numerical strength, elect a member of the House of Representatives, and we do it; and then we turn in and destroy the vessel of our own manufacture, and punish him for what we have done.

Like the story of the man who figured on the per centage he made from the investment of a cent and a yield of one dollar and a-half from it, who was helped by a neighbor's suggesting that it ran out of arithmetic into petty larceny, so our tender of an office which the acceptance thereof subjects the unfortunate to destruction runs out of ethics into larceny.

I am led to believe that if we did everything before the people in the public press, we would be saved these contradictions and the imposition of these laws so destructive of the best interest of the church.

If we picture tables groaning with plenty, food in abundance, and warmth and light, while outside are the thousands fighting, shouting, shrieking and dying without hope, we will have our condition. Add to this the grave discussion if the table-cloths shall be turned down or under at the corners, if one button, two buttons, or no buttons at all shall be on the waiter's clothes, while just beyond lie the dying multitude with food in sight, and we will have a good illustration of our workings. If an unfettered press and a compulsory publication of plans and policy were the rule instead of the exception, these sad sights would be less common than they are. The public criticism of the methods of the church has always been a forbidden fruit, and the word has been passed down the line that it is better to obey than to question, better to submit than to reason.

This day has about closed, and a new era has dawned when men and women may reasonably require that they shall be consulted before they are legislated for.

Elk Lick, Pa.

For the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN.

Example For Imitation.

BY MISS JULIA A. WOOD.

This example is found in the holy Bible. In Exodus, chapter 35, you will read of willing hearts and large donations. All Moses had to do for the erection and furnishing of the tabernacle was to say: "Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord; whose ever is of a willing heart, let him bring in, an offering to the Lord; gold, silver and brass; etc." Nothing more was required for the collection of all those costly materials. What a contrast between that and our present days' necessarily numerous and laborious agencies. Here was a simple, noble command. A command was indeed issued on the subject, but individuals were left free to give or not as they pleased: "Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it."

This may be one prominent reason why the means for our newly organized Missionary Enterprise succeeded no better.—That this operation was not sustained and carried on by purely free-will offerings. In instances it seems it must have been grudgingly given. As an objection, some raised the pitiable excuse that they would not support a cause (the cause of Christ) because some one or two connected with it did

not compare to a dot, in externals, with "the order of the brethren." Be that as it may, the cause being undoubted, by scriptural, and under the supervision of a number of the tried, good old ones, their christian love should have inspired their hearts to attend more to things of higher importance. Order in all things is good; but it is so sad to notice in this direction, the paying tithes of the three paltry herbs, while the weightier matters of the law are neglected.—"judgment, mercy, faith." Matt. 23: 23. It should not be so. Consider seriously and quickly upon your course and act as the followers of Jesus. How unlike the Christians of old, they did not seem to be more busy in commenting upon the man than they did about supporting the cause. The cause they knew was for the Lord; and their unfeigned love and trust in Him, constrained them to bring a superabundance into His treasury. We read in Chapter 36, "and they brought yet unto him free-offerings every morning." They kept it up from day to day, and how long they would have continued, if not constrained from giving, no one can tell. What a different state of things we find now! Application and earnest appeals are made, and the greatest urgency used; the people are waited upon. But, oh, how little do Christians now bring to the treasury of the Lord. How small a proportion of the money used for the work of the Lord is brought! No; it has to be sent after; and then comes the trial for drawing money out of the pockets of unwilling and complaining people. They raise objections to "this way, that way, this thing, that thing, and the other thing." It seems that they have trembling fears as to the right use of their money. Ah, now I see clearly—*you love your money, do you?*

Our hearts are so "deceitful" saith the Scripture; and where SELF is nicely enwrapped, it will whisper to you that it needs one thing when if the "candle of the Lord" searches it out, it is in fact something else. Where duty demands the place of pleasure and selfishness, that subtle, sly, cunning, artful, old SELF will fool us, sometimes. Hence the necessity of watching and praying, searching the heart, and keeping it with all diligence.

The money of some people is as much talked over as if it were their idol. Take heed! Examine your hearts; for the "love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith." 1 Tim. 6. The ancient Christians were forward to give their money. No speculations; no whispering about the prospect of a downfall. What means so much speculation? In some things we are told that "the wish is the father of the thought." I do not know how it was in this connection. But I do know there was far more talk from some than earnest work. A "multitude of words" will perish, while *bona fide* deeds, even if few and faithful will work wonders. The Christians of old seemed to talk little about their good works and did much.

When a notice was received to cast into the treasury of the Lord, their love for the will and command of their Heavenly Father was all-sufficient to constrain them to bring forward their free-offerings. They might have raised objections, too, as to the probable or possible mismanagement of their precious things. Will not so, they gave "too much." Noble-hearted Christians—loving and trusting God, who surely rules earth, air, and heaven. So we should imitate their exemplary course. After a notice is received; and that, too, according to Scripture, we should bring forward our free-will offering and not wait for others. Each one attend to his or her own duty, and let others—laggards—do as they will. Our duty is to God first, and man second.

The church does stand still and do some good; but it does not "go about doing good." The labor and trouble (our present day necessities) connected with giving is either productive of sparing offerings, or it is berated, or severely let alone. Shameful for Christians! Some people act as if they are under no obligation to attempt anything which God may, might, could, would or should do without them. He who gave His people water and bread by miracle, could have miraculously furnished all that was necessary for the tabernacle, just as he can now convert the heathen without the help of men and means. But he did not choose to do it, and now he does not choose to save the world without employing human instrumentality. He evidently approves the use of means.

I very much fear the should-be-love for the general missionary cause has been superseded by less binding temporal interests. Moderate them, and work more for the languishing cause of the Master, and if your selfish affairs engage too much of your time and money to give your efforts to this great and sacred work, don't try to hinder others. It is a burning shame upon any professed Christian to hinder the cause and command of Christ in any respect. Objections to some of its management should not place obstacles in the progress of the whole work. I do pray that God may so inspire all of our naturally deceitful hearts with so much love for His will and commands, (whether we fancy them or not) that we may soon act like the Example named in Exodus. We all have room for improvement, and the best we can do is bad enough; but by the help of Almighty God we can "grow in grace" and become "pure as He is pure."

Conclusively, let us all resolve to quickly "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," then God will bless our good works by an onward and upward movement.

For the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN.

To Bro. Harthey of Missouri.

Dear Brother: I love the distinctive principles of our church, and greatly respect our old brethren that contend manfully for the retaining of everything that savors of the mind of Christ; but when Sabbath schools are to be classed with the vanity of a bare mouthstache in the face, I cannot hold my peace. God's word says, "bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." You say, that is right, your own children. If you narrow down that text to one's own immediate family, it would necessarily cause me, and many others like me, "to lie as drones in the church, the very thing you are fearing, seeing you are slowly but surely losing power. If we are not fruitful in the nurture of souls, is that any reason why we should not be in the saving of souls? You may call this a foolish and unlearned question which the great Apostle exhorts us to avoid, but to us that are so situated it does not seem so foolish. Christ says, "go work in my vineyard to-day." He says work, not only to ministers, but to every one that calls him Master. Now what are we to do? go and see whether we cannot find some fault with some of our brethren or sisters? No, go and gather a few of our neighbors and friends' children together and tell them they were "slown in iniquity and conceived in sin," but that Christ had come and suffered and died for them. We should like to have this question answered, and in order that we may have the answer direct from God, I propose that we bring it before His throne. If we take Jesus who says "work" for our Advocate, and you take "Old Order," which says, "work not," for yours. Then let us hear what the Supreme Judge of the quick and dead says. Beforehand let us make our minds to abide by his decision. I have renounced the devil and if I am (unknowingly) yet serving him, I desire to be aware of it, so I may turn from the error of my way. The best time to test this, is on any Sunday afternoon about 2 o'clock, this being the time when we are prostrated before God in our sabbath school, asking Him, in sincerity, to give us humility, wisdom, and understanding, and to make the young and tender hearts susceptible of instruction. If this is Satan's work, plead earnestly with God to deliver us, before you ascribe the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil. Remember that Christ told the Pharisees, that that was the unpardonable sin.

J. C. CASSELL.

"Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death."

W. J. H. BAUMAN.

The above sentence fell from the lips of one of America's most renowned statesmen, and one of its most gifted and eloquent orators. And it was uttered when the prospect for liberty looked very gloomy. It was the utterance of Patrick Henry, of revolutionary fame. It had a thrilling and lasting effect upon the American heart. It has become the watchword of all liberty loving and patriotic hearts. It should be the motto of all devoted and patriotic citizens of the kingdom of Christ. The gospel is a perfect law of liberty. If the law is perfect, is not the liberty it causes perfect too? The apostle says, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free." Standing fast signifies firmness. Yes, firmness unto death, if need be. For "he that loveth father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, or his own life more than me is not worthy of me." Jesus the author of the above, is the author of true liberty.

In addressing certain Jews who believed he tells them that, if they continue in his words, they should know the truth, and the truth should make them free, and if the truth made them free then they should be free indeed. Liberty implies protection; mutual protection, and to know no man after the flesh. It is God's safeguard of equality. It seeks the good of all, and spurns none, whether high or low. It does not only protect the official characters, but it protects the humble peasant, as well as the king. The common people always love it. It's opponents for the masses are generally men in official authority. This we have found to be true both in church and state. In the church the principle of liberty should largely predominate. There should be mutual protection and respect. Every member ought to be protected in his or her rights. Every one's opinions should ever have a respectful hearing. I am just as liable to err as my brother or sister, and I have no right to unchristianize them for differing with me. Charity is the bond of perfection. It alone can establish that unity which the Savior prayed for, and the Apostles so earnestly enjoyed. Under the free institutions of America all enjoy the privilege to express their opinions; but not to compel others to submit to them. All are expected to be subject one to another, and the majority rules.

Where God's Spirit dwells there is liberty, and here the above essential principles of mutual recognition, respect and protection must be recognized. Liberty of speech and of press, and even of custom, is very essential to progress and advancement. It gives the privilege to examine, to prove all things and to hold fast to that which is good. An interchange of sentiment and thought develops the intellect and understanding of men. The intelligence and the information on general topics which we find to predominate so much in the western digouts and sod shanties clearly demonstrate the above. We find a mixed multitude; men and women differently schooled are brought to-

gether, and the free and untrammelled exchange of thought and custom enables them to learn of each other. Hence their intelligence and mutual love and respect.

O brethren let us valiantly fight for that liberty which is the only safeguard to primitive christianity. We can but perish by trying. Without it we must perish anyway. Let them strike, but make them hear. Be aggressive in this thing. If we perish it will only be for a little while. We'll conquer though we die. For soon the joyful news will come; child, your Father calls some home. Soon we'll sing the song of victory, over on the other shore. Soon we'll stand among the ransomed of the Lord, with palms of victory in our hands. O let our watchword be: "Give me liberty or give me death." If we must die let it be facing the enemy. May God grant us grace not to use our liberty as a cloak for selfish purposes and self aggrandizement, but to love without dissimulation, even with a pure heart fervently. Cry aloud, spare not: lift up thy voice as a trumpet. "Tell my people their sins and the house of Jacob their transgressions."

Nora Scroggs, Iowa.

For the Progressive Christian
Honoring God and Man.

BY S. M. MINNICH.

A few weeks ago a discourse was delivered at — on the head "covering for the sisters. The text was 1 Cor. 11: 1-16, inclusive. The comments on these verses were clear and convincing, and were about as follows:

1. That the head of the man was Christ.

2. That the head of the woman was the man.

3. That every man praying or prophesying with his head uncovered dishonored his head—that is Christ.

4. That every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonored her head—that is the man.

5. That this "power" on the woman's head was not to glorify God nor herself, but it was (only) to glorify the man.

The preacher was in favor with "caps," but his text was against them. He seemed to realize this and left his text and roamed over sea and land to prove his position. He referred to the soldier's uniform, the policeman's badge, the Odd Fellows, and Freemasons' emblems, the colors of a ship, etc. And he argued that because the soldier had his uniform and the policeman orders had their emblems, the sisters must wear the sign of submission, which had been adopted by the church, and this was a cap. The preacher said the color should be white. In proof he referred to the great multitude that St. John saw standing before the throne, who were "clothed with white robes." And also to the "white horse" (Rev. 6: 2) that "went forth conquering, and to conquer." The last reference was given perhaps to prove the power as well as the color of caps.

In order to make white the only true emblem, I suppose, he cited the "black horse" of Rev. 6: 5, which was a symbol of devastation and woe. He said the black hat worn by women like the black horse was a symbol of destruction.

If the preacher would robe himself in linen, clean and white, and wear only a white hat, his hearers would honor him for practicing what he preaches, though they might not adopt his costume. The preacher had a very bad case and like the lawyer who twisted the law and the testimony to suit his case, so did our preacher. Better lose our case than to sacrifice truth to gain it.

I was taught in my childhood that it was a sin for a woman to sit in the congregation with uncovered head. And had my mother bowed without her cap I should have feared the Divine judgment. With these cap-glasses over my eyes I read 1 Cor. 11 chap., and knew the Bible was on my side. Then I thought the sister glorified God with her cap, now I see plainly that it is only the man who is glorified. Then I thought a sister dishonored God if she did not cover her head, now I know that caps on the head of young, thoughtless, giddy girls are a dishonor to the cause of the Master. Caps are comely and no dishonor to old sisters, but there is a fitness that we must not forget. The Apostle teaches this fitness of things in this same Corinthian letter, when he says "unto the Jews I became as a Jew." "To the weak became I as weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Read 1 Cor. 9: 19-22.

"When I was a child I thought as a child," but if we are now men and women in Christ Jesus, let us put away childish things. Let us leave these rudiments of religion and go on to perfection. Forgetting the things behind, let us press for the prize offered us by God through Christ.

Antioch, Ind.

For the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN.
Bishops or Elders.

BY M. HADY.

That the office of Bishop is an important one none will question. Look at the qualifications as enumerated by Paul. That there are good, faithful bishops, we are glad to believe; that there are unfaithful ones we are forced to admit. As a general thing the Bishop has, and should have, the confidence of the unspeaking. We know there are those in every church, who put their confidence and trust in holy things entirely too much into the care of the ministers and bishops. There

are those who depend on the minister to do their Bible reading, their praying, and, in fact, trust in him to such a degree, that it is really dangerous in the judgment of others, who think and act more for themselves. That many of us are in one or the other extreme, on this subject, is too true. Some have entirely too much and others not near enough confidence in the man placed on the walls of Zion.

The Bishop may be called the eye of the congregation. As long as the eye is in a healthy condition the body may place explicit confidence in it, for it will never lead into danger; but when it is full of guile, and the body follows, then look for "smash-ups" and "helter-skelter" work. So in our Bishops; as long as they have the glory of God in view, work for the good of all; are men of sincerity, not selfish, not unruly; in short if they are what God wants them to be, then there is not much danger that they will lead astray, and such a Bishop we all should, yes, we all will admire respect and love. There is entirely too little confidence, esteem, and love shown toward our good and faithful ministers. The apostolic informs us that the older who rules well deserves double honor.

But while there is entirely too little honor and love shown toward the good Bishop, may it not be equally true, that too much is shown towards the unfaithful one? One who "rules well," no doubt, is the one who feels the responsibility resting upon himself, the worth of souls, and an interest in the upbuilding of the beloved Zion. He will try to fill his office to the honor of God and the good of the church. He will look to the world to come for his reward. Christ is his Head and Law-giver, and to him he will look for pattern. A bishop who does not rule well will have his own vain-glory, the applause of man in view. He don't feel the worth of souls, don't care to have the borders of Zion enlarged; in fact, as the faithful one will lead off in the glorious work, so will the unfaithful one keep it from moving at all.

In apostolic times the Bishop was only a servant; but now the church belongs to the Bishop, he is the head of it; he will dictate. The unfaithful bishop can do more harm than numbers of private members can ever be able to make good.

Our duty towards the bishop as mentioned already, are, if he is faithful and rules well, to love, esteem, and honor him. We should treat him with the greatest care, and protect him from all danger; but when he shows himself unfaithful, then he does not deserve this love and honor. We may talk to him, reason with him, and if he will not take the word of God for law and advice, it will be dangerous for us to follow him.

In order to know our duty towards our bishop we should be acquainted with the New Testament, for it is a New Testament office. It is our duty, yea, thank God, our privilege to do this. God will deal with the unfaithful bishop as he will with every unfaithful Christian. We are responsible only for our own deeds, good or bad.

The Bishop may also be compared to an officer in an army; for, we are and claim to be the army of the Lord. But oh, when I think what poor soldiers we are, how little we are doing for the good cause, and how much we might do with the privilege we enjoy, how careless we act and feel when we see the enemy capture one stronghold after another; then when I think of the quarrels, the fighting, the division, the contention and strife, even among those who profess to be for Christ, I am made to say within myself, we are no army at all! When I look at the army of Satan, how they prosper, how they succeed, conquer, capture one soul after another. I am made to wonder, why all this success on their side, and the defeats on ours? Yes, I wonder! But behold how Satan and his captains drill their men, how many attractions he holds forth, how many places of inducement, how one encourages the other! Then look to ourselves. Who encourages that young sister who joined the church a year ago, or the young brother who joined and expected to find pasture to grow on to be a man in Christ? Perhaps they have christian parents. If they have they can do it; but if orphans, who then? Does the bishop, the minister, the brother or sister?

Our bishops could do much to help the young along, not with the iron rod but with kind words. Many a good and warm-hearted Christian has been driven away by the cold treatment received from the minister. Will our elders learn to feel the responsibility? Will they lead off in piety, holiness? Will they encourage the poor, down-trodden ones to take courage on a rugged journey? Will they encourage Bible class, prayer-meetings, and members to erect the family altar? Will they make efforts, with all their power, to enlarge the borders of Zion, to convert the world? In short, will they use their office and influence for good? If they will, it is our duty to give them double honor. The office is a holy one, and we would like to see the men filling this office to be holy men. And if by their works, they prove themselves leaders in the good cause, it shall be our delight to honor them, and to follow, but only as they follow Christ.

We shall pray for the time to come when all our officers shall feel more willing to be such not only in name; but as God wants them to be.

Meyersdale, Pa.

Mr. Moody's last advice to his New Haven audience was: "Be honest pay your debts, keep your temper and avoid strong drink."

THE PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN.

The Progressive Christian.

A Religious Weekly.

H. R. HOLSINGER & J. W. BEER,
Editors and Business Managers.

BERLIN, PA., FEB. 28, 1879.

BRETHREN'S PROGRESSIVE PUBLISHING CO.

The subscription of the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN is \$1.00 a year, in advance.
New subscriptions may commence at any time during the year, but we cannot agree to furnish back numbers.
The PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN will be sent only till the term of subscription expires, unless otherwise ordered.
Payment, when sent by mail, should be made in Money Orders, Drafts or Registered Letters. Money orders shall be made payable to BRETHREN'S P. P. Co., at Meyersdale Pa.
All letters and communications to be addressed to
Brethren's P. P. Co.,
BERLIN, Somerset Co., PA.

THE POINT OF DIFFERENCE.

In the *Brethren at Work* of the 27th ult., under the caption, "A Dangerous Course," appears a lengthy article from the pen of our esteemed brother R. H. Miller, which we think deserves more than a passing notice. We observe first, that it receives the unqualified endorsement of the editors of that paper, who say, in allusion to it, "It is timely and to the point. He shows the matter up in its true light." In our examination of said article, therefore, we shall regard it not only as the position of Brother Miller, but, equally, as the position of the *Brethren at Work*. We will quote freely from said article, and wherein we agree we will say so without circumlocution; and wherein we differ, we will also say it like brethren should. The first extract we make reads thus:

"If one of the papers misrepresents another in its objects and purposes, there will soon unpleasant feeling arise. To avoid this, the true position and purpose of each paper should be accepted in its own avowed object as given by itself."

To this we give our hearty endorsement, only adding that every paper should make a clear statement of its position and principles, so that all who subscribe for it may know what to expect; and having assumed a position it should be true to that platform. It is useless to have a platform, unless we stand on it; and not only useless, it is not quite honorable. In speaking of the character of the paper he says:

"With the *Brethren at Work* I did have something to do, and believe I wrote something once, setting forth the course I thought should be taken in the paper. The said editorial (referring to an editorial in the *Deacon* and copied by the *Vindicator*) comes in conflict with that, therefore, I speak again, that all may see the true position taken in our paper."

We pause to call attention to two facts: (1.) Bro. Miller had "something to do" in forming the character and in "setting forth the course" of the *Brethren at Work*; and (2.) he calls it "our paper." All this seems to say that he has a farther interest in and connection with that paper than merely as a special contributor, as he is represented in it. It is reported, also, that Bro. Miller set forth publicly that he owns a half interest in said paper. We mention these things to give him an opportunity to set himself right before the brotherhood in relation to this matter. If he has no financial interest as a partner, in it, he will correct the erroneous report; and if he has, it would be right that he should appear as one of the proprietors and editors.

After a quotation from the *Vindicator* in regard to the non-committal character of the *Brethren at Work* and *Primitive Christian*, he says:

"We presume the right of our brethren to differ with us should be granted freely, and that, too, without any hard feeling, but we want the brother to see the precise point about which we differ."

Upon this we agree. We know of only one way to prevent brethren from differing with us, and that is by agreeing with them. But as long as they do not agree with each other, we cannot agree with all, and hence we conclude that the better plan is for each to be true to his own convictions, and to exercise mutual charity and forbearance. But we ought to be candid and honest in our views, and in their statement, so that we may "see the precise point about which we differ." After some explanations regarding the different views and courses of our publishers, he says:

"There are three positions that may be taken by the papers published in our brotherhood. First, a paper may take one side of all vital issues and publish nothing but that side; rejecting all that may be said on the other side. Second, a paper may discuss both sides and open its columns to all that may be said on either side; each of these can have continual discussion, but on very different principles. The third is our position, that these discussions be confined to Annual Meeting and not continued or permitted in our papers."

In regard to the first of these positions we remark that it is susceptible of farther distinction: First, a paper might defend and advocate the decisions of the Annual Meeting, and reject everything that is not in harmony with those decisions. Here is room for another paper in the brotherhood as we have none that assumes this ground. Second, a paper might fling out the

banner of reformation and oppose the decisions of the Annual Meeting on certain vital issues, and admit nothing into its columns that advocates those decisions. Here is room for another paper, if any brother is ambitious to become an editor and publisher of such a sheet. Third, a paper might map out its landmarks, whether old or new, agreeing with some of the decisions of our Annual Meeting and opposing others; and then it might admit only what is in harmony with its own platform, or within its landmarks, and reject everything that does not jingle with the editor's notions or opinions. Here there is no room, as this is precisely the position of the *Vindicator* and *Deacon*, if we understand the matter; and more, some of the other papers sometimes act on that principle, as we can show.

The second position stated by Brother Miller is ours; that is we open our columns to both sides of any religious or moral question, and invite a free, friendly and brotherly interchange of thought, to promote growth in grace and in a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. This, we believe, is the only successful way of bringing about that unity that should characterize the brotherhood. Brother Miller expresses our views exactly when he says:

"We believe when these vital issues are discussed, it should be a free discussion for both sides. A discussion of one side only, in any case, will be more likely to produce prejudice and hard feeling, than it will of wisdom and knowledge."

We shake hands on this subject. Whenever there is a discussion of a question, whether in Annual Meeting, or any other meeting, or in a paper, it should be free and equitable; and the object should always be to elicit truth and not merely to gain a victory.

But now we come to the Point of Difference with Brother Miller and with the *Brethren at Work*. He says:

"A continual discussion of both sides may be a source of knowledge, but it would produce division in some of its forms." * * * "The third is our position, that these discussions be confined to Annual Meeting, and not continued or permitted in our papers."

Do our readers now see the point? We do not differ in relation to the propriety or necessity of discussing important questions, but in relation to the time and place. They assume that at the Annual Meeting is the time and place; and we assume that we should not be fastened in such stocks in the inner prison, if we may use the comparison. We hold that we may discuss these important questions in our private houses, along the way, in our workshops, *via voce*, by private correspondence, and in our periodicals. We hold that it is as right for brethren to discuss important questions upon which they differ, as it is to discuss such questions with other persons, whether in public or private. If the one is right, the other cannot be wrong.

But why allow a discussion of important questions at our Annual meetings? Is it not to gain knowledge—a knowledge of the truth? Certainly. Well, will the knowledge thus gained produce division, or will it bring us together into a unity of the faith? Most certainly we seek knowledge to bring us together and not to divide us. This being admitted—and there is no room for difference on this point—we would like to be told how knowledge, or, which is the same, truth, gained by a discussion in our papers, would produce division in any of its forms. If it does, God will bless the side of truth. Better have division if the truth demands it, if knowledge requires it, than in blindness and ignorance to be wedded to error. "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." It is only another form of the Papal error that the Bible should not be read by the common people. Among the Papists it is desirable, on the part of the Pope, bishops and priests, to keep the great body in superstitious ignorance, and hence it is consistent to oppose the reading of the Scriptures and free discussion; but we want no such popish net thrown over us or over our people. We want more light, more knowledge, more truth, and we want to get it whenever, wherever, and however we can. "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." It must be threshed; the grain must be separated from the chaff. "Doth God care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written; that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope."

Brother Miller admits that the Annual Meeting is not infallible, and that some of its decisions might be changed; "but there is a right way—a legal way to bring all of them up again and discuss them at Annual Meeting, and have them changed." So we say too. But he adds: "To grant the right of every brother to oppose every decision of the church and Annual Meeting would be virtually destroying Annual Meeting itself, and setting up not only congregationalism, but individualism, and destroy all the union and oneness of the church." Who ever asked or dreamed of such a right? This is a

begging of the question, an evading of the point at issue. Brother Miller knows that there is a wide difference between opposing a decision and maintaining the incorrectness of a decision. No one asks for privilege to mutiny.

Next he compares our church polity to the judiciary of our country. Be it so. But where is the law, and where the decision of the Supreme Court, or any other court, that says the citizens of the United States may not freely discuss, either *via voce* or in the press, the correctness or legality of the decisions of the Courts? There may be no rebellion—no mutiny, but there may be the most free and extensive discussion. So, with us, the church, and District Meetings, and Annual Meetings decide, and we are not going to rebel or oppose; but we do claim the inalienable right, under the gospel law of liberty, to sift to the very bottom, at any time and in any way, the correctness or incorrectness, the righteousness or unrighteousness, of the decisions of our Annual Meeting. We are fallible, too, and Brother Miller, or any other brother, has free access to our columns, to discuss this question, or any other proper question, and to lead us in the way of truth.

Now, to conclude, we call special attention to the Point of Difference between the other papers in the brotherhood and the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN. Some of them assume a position, and then allow a one-sided discussion, admitting only what is in harmony with their favorite hobbies, whether they maintain or oppose the decisions of our A. M. Others profess to discard entirely the discussion in their columns of questions on which the Annual Meeting has given a decision; saying, substantially, that we have no right, outside of our conferences, to discuss these questions, thus practically excluding nine-tenths of the brotherhood from having any right or part in this matter. Then the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN stands alone, yet not alone, and assumes that the humblest, and poorest, and most ignorant member has a right that should be respected to express an opinion or advance an argument, or propound a question, on any side of any subject. We hold that you have the same right to advance your views that any editor or special contributor has. We hold that in our papers, where we can discuss questions calmly and thoroughly, is the better place to determine the claims to truth of any proposition. We hold that the broadest liberty in the search for truth is most consistent with and productive of the strongest fraternal affection and Christian union. And now we ask our readers to examine this matter well, and then decide on your paper, not by its size, or cost, or type, but on its principle. If you think we need a free rostrum, give us your influence and patronage; for you must not mistake, our paper is the only paper in the brotherhood that flings this banner to the breeze. If we are mistaken, we are honestly in the dark, and we are willing to let the enlightened judgment and conscientious conduct of our brethren and sisters say whether or not the brotherhood needs the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN. "Having thus chosen our course, without guile and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear and with manly hearts." "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right let us strive onto finish the work we are in."

DON'T, BRETHREN, DON'T.

We do not like to see brethren sparing at each other through the press or pulpit, like worldlings in debate. Especially does it excite our nervous temperament when we see a great fat preacher pounce down upon a little, lean deacon in the manner in which the *Brethren at Work* does with the *Deacon*, in the last issue of the former. We are aware that the *Brethren at Work* may refer us also to the eleventh commandment ("mind your own business.") Still our sympathies will not allow us to be altogether silent. In fact we could not fully discharge our duty to our brethren if we did not step between them as peacemakers.

The difficulty between the two papers arose from the *Deacon* telling the B. A. W. its faults in very plain words, something in the style in which brother Shively talks in this issue about paid ministers. That is, the *Deacon* thinks the B. A. W. is governed by a policy, looking more to making money than to the promulgation of truth. And in this opinion the little *Deacon* is not alone. The non-committal policy of the B. A. W. is a matter of frequent remark, and it is believed by many to be adhered to for the sole purpose of making money and gaining popularity. But, then, that is all right in the estimation of the B. A. W. That is its policy and the people are sustaining it upon that platform. There is room for one or two such "milk and water" papers among us. We do not wish to occupy the field and the *Deacon* could not, so why would the latter look with envy upon the rich pasturefield of the former. It reminds us of the story of

the dog in the manger. He could not eat the hay and he would not allow the ox to eat it.

But then the *Brethren at Work* commits a most egregious error in its retort to the *Deacon*. It says, "It is self-evident that we know more about the business and condition of this office than anybody else, and therefore what we say ought to be regarded as correct beyond doubt. Regarding our circulation it is likely that the *Brethren at Work* has as large a subscription list as any paper in the brotherhood, but it is not ten thousand though we hope it soon will be. The assertion about our net profits, being yearly full four thousand dollars is false from beginning to end. Our income is not half that amount."

We agree with them that they know more about the condition of their office than any one else, and what they say ought to be regarded as correct, but among such apparent contradictions, it is hard to believe their story. First they admit that their circulation is about as large as that of any other paper in the brotherhood, and that they hope it will soon be ten thousand. It is known that the *Primitive Christian* has had about eight thousand circulation. It is known, too, that the B. A. W. has had that number. Fixing it at this number, and we believe this to be closely approximating the correct figures, it would give an income of \$12,000 a year. But even taking it at half that number, viz. four thousand subscribers, it would make an income of \$6,000 a year, while they say their income is not half of four thousand dollars, Brethren, this will never do. You must come nearer the truth.

Then we don't like so much evasion. Why could not their mailing clerk have certified that the highest number of copies of the regular issue, sent out at any time was:—and give the actual figures, instead of saying it had not been ten thousand. It may be 9984, even 416 quires, for all the clerk has said. Why should they hesitate to give their actual circulation? The *Christian Cynosure*, of Chicago, gives its circulation every week.

But how quickly and how valiantly the *Brethren at Work* stands up for its defense when it is insinuated that it is making money. This itself is an evidence that the charge is true. If it were not true, they would have said: "Our brother is mistaken." "It is false from beginning to end," is an exclamation indicative of being pinched somewhere.

PRODIGALITY.

The most common prodigality is a waste of time; and it is not only the most common, but the most ruinous. At what age this wasteful expenditure begins is difficult to tell, but it ends with the close of life, except in its consequences. There are so many ways of wasting time that we may not attempt to enumerate them; and often he who is the most busy and penurious is the greatest prodigal as respects time. A man's entire life may be devoted to some useful employment, in the pursuit of which he may rapidly multiply his acres and fill his coffers with gold, and yet, in the end, when it is too late for reformation, it may be found that his whole life was wasted—thrown away. This lavish wastefulness consists in a misuse of a portion of time and a wrong application of the good gifts of God and the fruits of toil.

God who gives us all our time demands that a portion of it be devoted to his service and to the praise of his goodness and glory. He who fails to use a portion of his time in the exercises of religion, not only wastes time but wastes what does not properly belong to him. A man must find time to pray, to visit the sick, to attend religious services, to observe the ordinances of God's appointment, and to attend to duties of love and mercy. Whoever does not use a proper portion of time in this way, is guilty of both prodigality and embezzlement; for such an one uses God's time for his own gratification, and, after all it is wasted.

When the labor of life is rewarded in prosperity, we must give according as the Lord has prospered us for the promotion and advancement of his cause. He who calls houses and lands, flocks and herds, fruits and money his own—who has abundance and to spare—and yet gives nothing for religious and charitable uses, is a prodigal. He may be a respectable citizen or even a professor of religion, but his religious profession will not save him. There are frequent opportunities for doing good by a judicious application of some of his means; but if he, through covetousness, clings to his self, he will find, at last, that it was an offering of lavish wastefulness upon the altar dedicated to self. Gaining the world and losing the soul is fearful prodigality. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." He will hold you to account for the use or abuse you make of his gifts.

Then there is idle prodigality. Time is wasted in doing nothing, or worse than nothing. The talent that God has given to be used is hidden. The idler may lay nothing into his neighbor's way; but he is useless because he

is inactive. He might do a little good, at least, but he thinks it unnecessary for him to do anything, and he don't. He is an unprofitable member of the human family, throwing away his own interests and manhood.

The tattler or busybody wastes his time in destroying the peace of communities and the reputation of persons who are better than himself. There is no end to his inquisitiveness, and suspicions, and doubts and fears. He wastes his powers and capacities for usefulness, and wastes much that belongs to others. There is a wonderful amount of time spent in idle, useless, silly, ridiculous, obscene and vulgar conversation. Friends or neighbors meet, and talk for hours, and when they part, none is either wiser or better. This is a very common species of prodigality.

Time is spent in drinking, in games of amusement, in actual gambling, in dancing and carousing, and in ways too numerous to mention. But, perhaps, in our age and country more precious time is wasted in the reading of trashy, immoral, fictitious literature, than in any other way. Many, especially among the young, waste their spare moments in daytime, and their evenings, even to late hours, in reading such miserable stuff that it can only tend to deaden their moral sensibilities, weaken their mental faculties, and unfit them for an appreciation or reception of what is true and excellent. Well did God through the Revelator class the lover of fiction and the maker of lies with the defiled and the defilers of mankind. Here Satan weaves his net of mystic enchantment in which he gathers and drags to ruin many blood-bought souls. This is the most alarming and destructive prodigality of the age. In this hot-bed of immorality are bred and nourished all species of crime. It generates deception, trickery, fraud, profanity, licentiousness, infidelity, rapine and murder. The love of novelty is touched by the magic charm of fiction, and a deceptive film is spread over the moral vision, so that truth loses its beauty and its power to interest. Herein lies the strength of this alarming prodigality. The mind and heart are so captivated that reasoning is vain, as truth is not appreciated. We have but little hope of persuading and converting confirmed fiction readers, but we may protect those who are not yet under its stupefying spell. As abstinence is the only safeguard against drunkenness, so it is against this prodigality. Improve your moments; hearken to the voice of duty, and all will be well.

HOW IS IT?

The White Oak church, Highland Co., Ohio, is without a minister and has but one deacon. At Hollowtown, the brethren have a house where there is meeting twice a month, supplied by adjoining congregations, and where, also, they have a Sunday School which does not stop in cold weather. This we regard as affording better evidence of spiritual life and vitality than can be found in some churches with several ministers. Right here we will say,—what we have long felt but never said in print,—that regular preaching, as we mostly have it, is not necessary for the success of the cause. The church may increase in numbers and in holiness without it. It would be ten-fold better to have regular and frequent social meetings, where all our members can work, than to be continually preaching to them and packing them with a knowledge of duties which they do not perform. Preach the gospel to sinners; organize churches, and let members edify one another, working together with their deacons and elders; have Bible classes and Sabbath schools; and, we suggest, it would be much better to have member meetings for the purpose of instructing, encouraging, and admonishing one another in place of so many council meetings to chastise, reprove and expel. Where a church is diligent in the use of these means of grace, there is certain to be a good in-gathering when the evangelist comes to hold a protracted meeting. This would be advancing the everlasting and immutable gospel, with ancient zeal, under modern advantages. How is it?

We know of places—large churches—where, as a rule, but few attend the council meetings. They are tired of trouble and unpleasant business, and stay at home. This is wrong; but we are confident that if the members were invited quarterly or even monthly to meet for instruction and encouragement,—drill to fight the enemy,—they would all be there, if possible. Such meetings they would not want to miss. Then there would be less call for these unpleasant and forced chastisement meetings. How is it? Who will try it?

ONLY TEN CENTS.

We will send the PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN for introduction, to each of ten persons for five weeks for one dollar. By this offer our friends will be able to obtain a number of addresses, as it will be only ten cents each.

The balance of the year from receipt

of order for only seventy-five cents. One year for one dollar. Subscriptions may begin at time of receipt of order, and will be received for any length of time under ten years.

Will not each one of our present subscribers exert himself and herself to get us one more subscriber at some one of our offers? Please help us to introduce the paper. We are aware that it is not so easily done as it will be at the close of the year, yet much may be done by a little extra effort.

EXPLANATION.

Some of our agents do not understand our instructions for sending money, hence we explain. If you send money by registered letter or draft, send it to Brethren's P. P. Co., Berlin Pa.; and if you send by post-office money order have the order made payable to Brethren's P. P. Co., at Meyersdale, Pa., (as that is our nearest money order office,) but send the order and all letters and communications to Brethren's P. P. Co., Berlin, Pa.

NOTES OF PROGRESS.

We have to-day opened a special department in our paper for recording the "Progress of the Cause," to which we invite especial attention and contributions from all parts of the brotherhood. Not lengthy, but brief and pithy. Take Bro. Bosserman's item in this department, this week, for example. All that we desire may be written on a postal card, ordinarily. If the writer prefer he may give data only and we will write it up to suit ourselves. In thus recording the work of the Lord we but follow the example of the Apostles of Christ. Let the good news be heralded throughout the land, of sinners saved, and sons and daughters born to God.

Our Copy Book.

"Overmeasured," C. H. Balsbaugh; "To Howard Miller," Eli Slifer; "Suggestions to Progressionists," John R. Denlinger; "From Meyersdale congregation," by a member; "Truth," Julia A. Wood.

GLEANINGS.

ELDER R. H. Miller, who has been in ill health, is slowly improving.

BROTHER D. B. Gibson has changed his address from Perrin, Mo., to Norborne, Carroll Co., same State.

WHEN brethren send us marriage notices to be published in the PROGRESSIVE, we would be pleased to have them send us the post-office address of the parties.

BROTHER D. N. Workman has been holding meetings in the Loudonville church, Ohio. Up to the 22nd ultimo there were thirty-six conversions, and the work of the Lord was still progressing.

BROTHER E. L. Yoder labored in the Mahoning congregation, Ohio, from the 13th to the 20th of February. There was one addition, and he was obliged to leave, too soon, to meet other engagements.

BROTHER Stein made a visit to Mt. Morris, Ill., but has returned again to his home at Newtonia, Mo. His discussion with the editor of the *Battle Flag*—that Ray of light-mindedness—is progressing slowly. We wish him much patience, believing that he possesses all other necessary qualifications for such a contest.

WHILE the Ashland College building is under construction, Brother Sharp is improving his time in preaching the gospel and working for the school. He also purposes to publish a children's paper, of which we cannot farther speak until we see it.

SOME of our papers state that "Bro. J. P. Hetric has resigned his charge of the church at Philadelphia, Pa." We correct the statement by saying that he tendered a resignation of said charge, but, by last accounts, it was not yet accepted.

The Nettle Creek church, Ind., has over four hundred members, including eight ministers. Commencing Dec. 27th, 1878, they had a series of meetings at Locust Grove, conducted by brother W. R. Deeter, at which there were three added.

If you are a faithful brother, and would like to purchase an excellent farm, very cheap, and near a meeting-house, address brother Hiram Musselman, Scalp Level, Cambria Co., Pa. The farm was bought and held for you, but you must not wait too long.

COMMENCING on the 25th of January last, brethren Solomon and William Buckalew, of W. Va., held a series of meetings in the Fairview meeting-house, Fayette county, this State, at which there were five accessions. Bro. J. I. Cover is the elder in this congregation.

THE District Meeting of Northern Kansas and Southern Nebraska, will be held, April 7th, at Burr Oak, Jewell Co., Kansas. Red Cloud is the station on the B. & M. R. R. Those go-

