

Landmark Baptist Historian

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"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."
Deuteronomy 32: 7

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-Report to the American Baptist Home Mission Society-

*(From Rev. O.C. Wheeler,
San Francisco, California, June 1, 1849)*

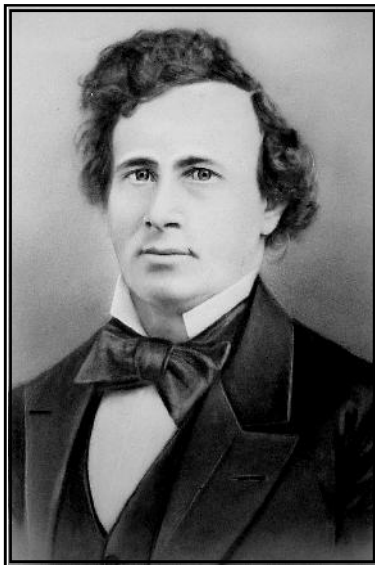
On entering my field, I found but one public room in the town, and that was occupied three times on the Sabbath. Building materials and labor bore such a price as to preclude the possibility of erecting a building of any sort, and even a tent of sufficient dimensions to accommodate a hundred people would have cost at least \$250; hence, I was obliged to wait till a Christian brother's house could be put in a condition to occupy for the purpose of public worship. This required more time than we anticipated. You have but little idea how slow men work when they are paid sixteen dollars a day. It was fitted up at length, and we now occupy it to the best advantage we can, for public worship and a Sabbath school which we have just commenced, but we need one, already, for more commodious.

The accommodation I now enjoy for my family, would [sic.] command a rent of \$250 per month, though very small when compared with such as can be procured in New York for \$40 per month. They are provided by a good brother residing in the place.

It is impossible for me to describe, or you to conceive of, the state of society here. An intense excitement constantly pervades the community, growing out of the abundance of gold around us, and tending to hurry them onward in almost every pursuit of life, too frequently, without proper reference to the moral character of their acts. The success of some men in getting rich is astonishing. I could name a dozen within my limited acquaintance who, within a year, have risen from actual penury to the possession of \$50,000. But thousands of others, especially at the mines, are suffering very much. This state of things affects the religious interests of the place very unfavorably; and yet there is a peculiar sort of interest in religion very prevalent. All seem glad to have ministers here, and all speak encouragingly of establishing churches. When things get better arranged among us, I think large congregations will be collected.

Although I am called upon, almost daily to visit the rising towns in the territory, I can scarcely leave this place at all; the continual arrivals and frequent cases of sickness and death demand my constant attendance and unremitting toil.

The vice and immorality which reign around me, - far surpassing anything I ever saw before - would, but for Divine assistance, make my whole head sick and my whole heart faint; but with that assistance, graciously vouchsafed, it is otherwise. The half-exhausted energies remaining to me belong to God. To him they are consecrated, and for him they must be spent. "The destruction that wasteth at noon" - the miseries of the wicked in our streets, - present so much of a view of coming wrath, that all my powers are demanded in efforts to save men - pulling them out of the fire. Do ask our Christian friends to remember us in their prayers.



Osgood Church Wheeler
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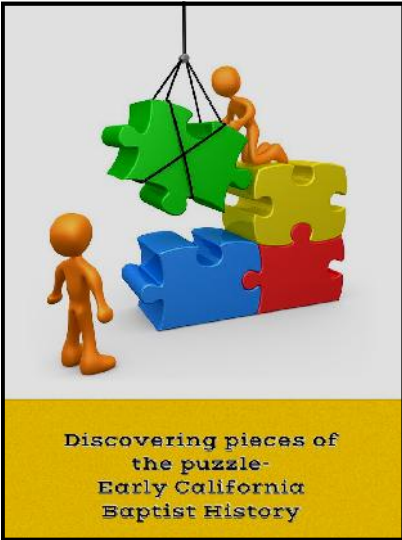
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Faith Landmark MBC

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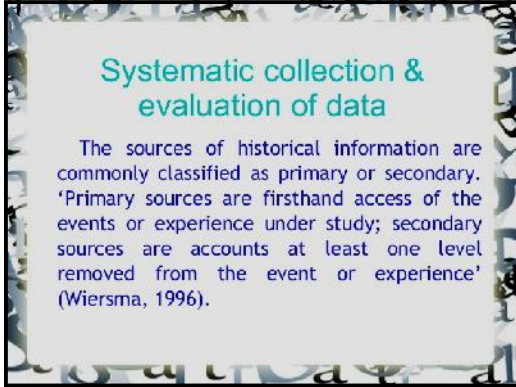
Landmark Baptist Church
609 Figueroa Street
Folsom, CA 95630

Robert W. Cullifer, Editor
Lbfolson@aol.com
916.718-9770

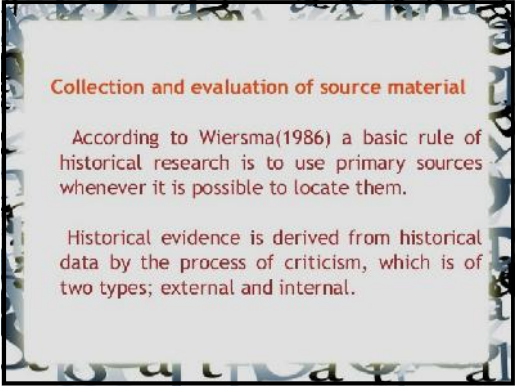


Baptist Historical Research

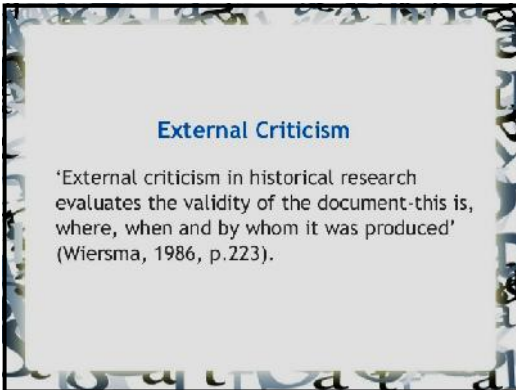
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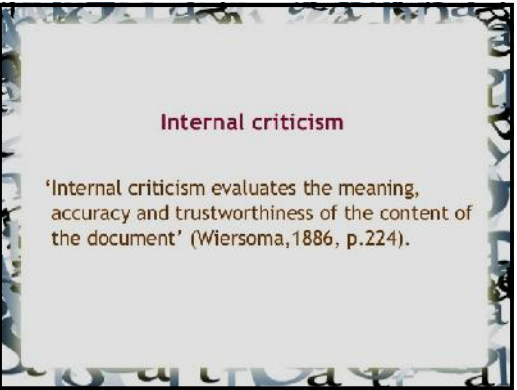
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Source:-

<http://www.slideshare.net/MadamJahan/historical-research-17259546>

By Jahan Ara Shams



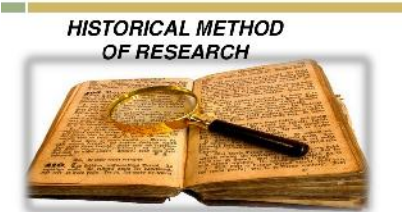
Steps in Historical Research

Historical research involves the following steps:

1. Identify an idea, topic or research question
2. Conduct a background literature review
3. Refine the research idea and questions
4. Determine that historical methods will be the method used
5. Identify and locate primary and secondary data sources
6. Evaluate the authenticity and accuracy of source materials
7. Analyze the date and develop a narrative exposition of the findings.

(Berg & Lune, 2012, p.311)

Source:-
Edith Cowan University—Australia
<http://ecu.au.libguides.com/>



1872 Circular Letter Sacramento River Baptist Association—E. Waller

1872 Sacramento River Baptist Association CIRCULAR LETTER.

Dear Brethren of the Sacramento River Association:

Grace be unto you, and peace from God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for his goodness to us through the past year, more especially for the tokens of his favor and grace which have added to our number many precious souls for whom Christ died.

But, brethren, as our numbers increase, so does our responsibility, so should our influence. The Lord has blessed us in enabling us to keep our Missionary in the field, his work has been a good work, but while he has labored faithfully, he has done so under great disadvantage from the fact that as Baptists we have not (when separated from any visible organization) prepared the ground for the reception of the Gospel. The question in need of answering is how can we now best aid him in his work, so as to insure success.

First - By sowing broadcast our religious literature. This any lover of truth can do. Advocates of error and superstition realize the power of the press, and you may find their obnoxious documents thrust in your face even in the House of God. They know that people will read the printed page, when they will not listen to the living voice. In the cars, on the public highways, you will find tracts advocating the doctrines of a Joe Smith or a Miles Grant. By these means they gain converts to their heresies, while seldom can you find a tract pointing to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.

Then again, we need our religious literature to keep before the people our views of Christian doctrine and practice. People should know what we have to say for ourselves as well as what others say of us. You can find (in so-called religious papers) practice and doctrines imputed to Baptists which they repudiate, and truths to which they do hold perverted and misrepresented to favor sectarian purposes. For this reason you find intelligent persons who cannot tell the difference between a Baptist and other sects who practice immersion. Now if we were more active to keep our literature "before the people", our Ministers would find it a great deal easier to preach, and receive a heartier welcome.

Second - By our liberality - not to our Missionary only, but to any God appointed - means to help along the evangelization of the world. True, we must not neglect him, for his time is not his own to employ in worldly pursuits. He is dependent upon us, but our liberality must not stop here - our help is needed to supply the printed page, to supplement the preached word. You know it takes money to keep the press running, and the brain and arm that works the press strong; for this reason we should patronize our printing office and publication house. If we fail in doing so, we need not cry out: - Poor paper! Poor paper! Anything will be poor that is half starved. Such a cry is a witness against ourselves. If we would prosper as a denomination, we must patronize our own establishments, buy our books there in preference to any other house, put ourselves out of the way a little sometimes to forward the work of Christ, and PAY CASH. You know when the Angel appeared to Cornelius, he says: "Thy prayers and thy alms are come up for a memorial before God." There is that which withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Third - By active personal effort. Many of our brethren travel a great distance in the course of the year upon personal business - what a glorious opportunity to work for Jesus! But to do this we must carry our religion with us; we must not be ashamed to own ourselves Christians and Baptists at that; always be earnest, honest, outspoken, ease-denying *Christian gentlemen*, who feel that we are bought with a price - therefore, would glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are His. Speak a word for Jesus, sow beside all waters, take out our tracts and Evangelists to supplement our words, and God will give the increase.

Fourth - By earnest prayer. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." But remember, our prayers never ascend any higher than our affections. Are those affections set upon earth? our prayers cannot ascend to the Mercy Seat. Does desire fly upward? If we earnestly seek God's glory in the salvation of souls, we will not only be diligent in business, but fervent in spirit. If we feel our own helplessness without Divine aid, we shall "look unto the hills from whence cometh our help." We MUST pray. We cannot help but PRAY if our souls are burdened under the sense of our responsibility, and God has promised to answer prayer - the prayer of faith; and we must pray for a blessing upon the labor of others as well as our own; for our Missionary when absent as when present. We always need each other's sympathy and co-operation. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Brethren, I commend you to God, and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Respectively submitted,

E. Waller

1872 Circular Letter—Pacific Baptist Association C. L. Fisher

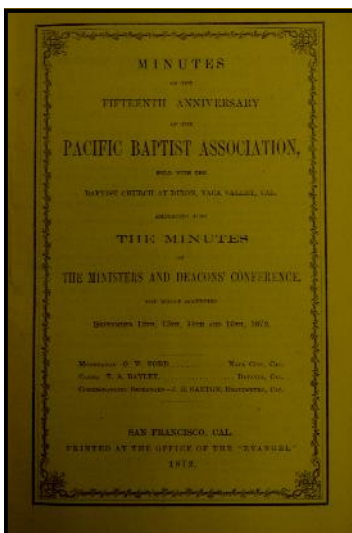
CIRCULAR LETTER.

SUBJECT ASSIGNED: THE HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS.

Dear brethren, have Baptists a history? From the time Christ was on earth down to the present there has not been a period in which they have not existed and suffered persecution. From the age of John the Baptist to the massacre in Jamaica, bigoted religionists and governments have not ceased first to slaughter and then to slander them. Can such a people have a history? The materials of it, through the papal night, must be drawn from the writings of their enemies. Dr. Buckland says: "We claim not only a place in history, but a history. A history of the Church of God. Holding to the faith once delivered to the saints, to the word of God and the law of Christ as our sheet anchor, we claim that when the history of the Church shall be written in the light of God's word, it will be in the noblest and truest sense our history. If a people holding from age to age these fundamental doctrines, that the Bible is the supreme law of Christians, that personal faith in Christ gives salvation, that immersion in water is the baptismal covenant of a believer with his Saviour, while infant baptism and all other traditions of men are not binding upon Christ's followers—if such a people are Baptists, then Baptists have a history." Stanley says: "If the people of Vincinius—quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus—are correct, and that doctrine has been held always, everywhere, and by all is vindicated as truth in history, then are the principles of Baptists the great principles of history. For all acknowledge that this maxim is not to be taken of the whole body of belief, but of that which is fundamental, not of the prevalent, but of the underlying, the unchanging and unchangeable. And a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ gives salvation. The baptism of a believer in water is obedience to Christ's law, the gathering of baptized believers together in church relations, to be ruled by the word of God, and to maintain Christ's ordinances are New Testament requirements. Bible history establishes the fact that Christ organized his Church in the upper room in Jerusalem with the eleven apostles, and sent them forth to teach the great gospel plan of salvation, baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. During the year A. D. 63 in the Apostle Paul's day many were converted and organized into churches by him. History informs us that a Welsh lady named Claudia, and others, were converted under Paul's ministry at Rome and were baptized by him and carried the precious seed with them and scattered them on the hills and valleys of Wales. The converts organized themselves into churches and observed the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as established by the Master. For nearly two centuries no other churches were known except these formed after the pattern of those established by Christ and the Apostles; all these churches were of one faith and practice,

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holding Christ as their head and leader. At the beginning of the third century, Victor, Pastor of Rome, excluded the Eastern Church for refusing to keep the Paschal feast, afterwards called Easter. It was then that the ordinances began to be corrupted. Baptismal waters were blessed, oblations performed for the dead, and monastic life comes into fashion. In 1534 the Episcopal Church of England comes out of the Catholic Church under King Henry VIII. of England. In 1540 the Lutheran Church came out of the Catholic Church under Luther. In 1541 the Presbyterian Church seceded from the Catholic Church under Calvin at Geneva. In 1602 the Congregational Church originated from the English Episcopal Church under John Robinson in the north of England. In 1729 the Methodist Episcopal Church came out from the Episcopal Church under John Wesley. The members of Baptist churches through these ages were a persecuted people." Professor Henry says: "Who would pass in silence and bury in oblivion that which was the smooth career of the Romish Church; but the statement of false opinions should contribute to perpetuate them, have quietly ignored them; and as Charles V. buried Baptists alive in the Netherlands, so have these Pedo Baptist churches tried to bury Baptist history alive; but it rises again and confronts them at history's judgment seat, the bar of impartial posterity. What are the outlines of Baptist Church history? The New Testament gives the constitution of the Church complete, and its prophecies gives us the outline of its entire career. Adopting God's word as our law, we have the Baptist Church and its history. Adopting the authority of human tradition, we have the Church of Rome and its history. The Christian faith had been widely spread, churches of believers gathered together in the chief cities of the Roman Empire before the imperial power was turned against the rising superstition." Says Professor Gildas: "As early as A. D. 45 or 50 there is good proof that Christianity reached the shores of Britain." There it flourished longer in purity than elsewhere. Each church was an independent organization, its authority lay not in the pastor or bishops, but in the body. A holy membership was sought; no trace of infant baptism can be found; but England's streams were consecrated by the burial in them of believers in the Saviour's death. Those characteristics of the Baptists were not wholly lost until they were driven into the western mountains by the Saxons. Thus they have met death with inconceivable courage and joy. When they might have escaped by silence they avowed their principles; and when their numbers would have overawed their persecutors, they refused to resist by force, but died like Christ praying for their enemies. Mosheim, page 27-46 tells us: "That during these dark times Baptists met in retired places at midnight or before break of day to worship and baptize. They were charged with the fanatical delusion of thinking to form a church free from sin, because they received none but believers. While Luther had hanging over his head the brief of Pope Adrian demanding his death, the Anabaptists asked for liberty to worship God, and notwithstanding their slaughter by thousands they held fast to the authority of the word of God alone to rule the soul. This was the birth period of bitter agony in the awakening of God's Church to come up out of the wilderness. In it we see a Baptist Biblical faith struggling for ut-



Charles L. Fisher
Cullifer Photo Files

BRO. FROST'S BIBLE READING.

Rev. A. J. Frost, of San Jose, then deeply interested and impressed the audience with a Bible reading on the "Eight Togethers with Christ:" "Crucified with Christ."—Gal. iii : 20. "Quickened Together."—Col. ii : 13. "Raised together."—Eph. ii : 6. "Seated together."—Eph. ii : 6. "Sufferers together."—Rom. viii : 17. "Heirs together."—Rom. viii : 17. "Glorified together."—Rom. viii : 17. "Living together."—1 Thess. v : 10. All of

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which is true of him that believeth. Bro. Frost's time was extended ten minutes by vote of the Convention.

1872 Circular Letter—Pacific Baptist Assoc.—Continued
1874 Circular Letter—Sacramento River Baptist Assoc.

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terance and life. It was said in that day that whenever the Reformers would find arguments to conquer Rome, they used those of the Anabaptists. The spiritual power of the Reformation lay wholly in those scriptural principles which are held in common with us. In one word, the long struggle of God's Church against the dominion of the Papacy has been up to the present day a struggle between the New Testament Baptist principles and the traditions of men. This source of life and power made the Reformation and will complete it. The people who held this faith once delivered to the saints have multiplied, have shown it to be of God, have exemplified its excellencies in promoting human welfare and civil liberty, elevating the race and advancing the cause of Christ." All evangelical Christians are coming up to the standard of a Baptist faith with a rapidity never before known. Errors against which our fathers contended are passing away, and God's true witnesses are arising to assume the dominion of human faith which God has decreed to them. And now, dear brethren, be steadfast to the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, as Paul tells us, "there is one body and one spirit even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. "One Lord, one faith and one baptism."

C. L. FISHER.

1874 Sacramento River
Baptist Association

Circular Letter—

Dear Brethren of the Sacramento River Baptist Association:

At our last meeting you kindly invited me to write the circular letter for this meeting, which I now submit.

Dear Brethren, another year has rolled around, and with it we have seen many changes. The Lord has been merciful to us, and blessed us abundantly in all things. Some who met with us last year have been called away to the better land to enjoy the presence of the Lord, while we are left to labor in the world's harvest.

Dear Brethren, we are taught that there is a distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil. For we are taught that "whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother, for this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; for in this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren; for he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death."

Here, brethren, is a contrast drawn between God's children and their opposers. God's children may do wrong; but if they do, we are told "That every son the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and there is a rod for the back of the transgressor; therefore, let us keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life." We are told again, that "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue in my love." Brethren, this love had its origin in a Divine fountain in Heaven's bliss, and by this love and fellowship that we have one for another, teaches the world that we are Christ's disciples, and if we want to evangelize the world, we must entertain a deep sympathetic fountain of love, that will be continually welling up in a living fountain unto eternal life. We must also be changed from the love of sin to a love of holiness, in both heart, and life-practice; for the Apostle says, "If a man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Brethren, let me remind you that the field is large, and waiting for ministers spotless in life and practice, who will rise in the strength of the Lord, to disseminate the blessed Gospel of Christ. And let us in all our deliberations endeavor to spread the glorious truths of the Gospel to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth; and let there be a long tidal wave of holiness sweeping over the mountains and valleys of the Pacific slope; so that souls may be brought to a knowledge of the truth, as it [is] in Christ Jesus. Oh! How sweet it is for the brethren to work together in unity of spirit.

WILLIAM THOMPSON

1874 Minutes—Pages 15 & 16

SACRAMENTO RIVER
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

SATURDAY, September 26, 1874.

The Ministers' and Deacons' meeting resumed business with prayer by Elder A. G. Doom, at 9 o'clock A. M.

The Committee on Essays and Essayists reported as follows:

Your Committee, appointed to suggest the names of essayists and subjects for essays, for the next meeting of this body, respectfully propose the following:

- Elder A. J. Cummings, "The Study of the Scriptures."
- Elder J. M. Johnston, "Should Baptist Churches Receive Alien Immersion?"
- Elder William E. Read, "Private Devotion."
- Elder S. T. Davis, "Education."
- Deacon C. B. Hull, "Sabbath Schools."
- Elder J. Brooks, "What does it take to constitute a Christian?"

Respectfully submitted,

J. H. DURHAM,
D. J. LAKE,
RICHARD BAYNE. } Committee.

On motion, the report was adopted.

A. G. DOOM, Moderator.

WILLIAM E. READ, Clerk.

1877 Circular Letter—Pacific Baptist Assoc. Bros. Bateman, Saxton, and A. Hitchcock

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constituting the Association, from which the following statistical table is compiled.

The attention of the Association was called to the suggestions made in the letter from the Santa Rosa Church, when upon motion the same was referred to a committee, consisting of brethren M. Dozier, S. A. Taft, J. C. Baker.

Hopewell and Napa City Churches, coming under rule 16, were stricken from the minutes.

Visiting brethren invited to seats: Revs. J. C. Baker, U. Gregory, O. C. Wheeler, and Deacon Reymerson took seats with us.

The following Committees were announced: On Circular Letter—Bros. Bateman, Saxton, A. Hitchcock; Digest of Letters—Elder E. B. Hatch, to assist Clerk; On Preacher of Annual Sermon, next place of meeting., Writer of Circular Letter—Brethren E. B. Hatch, A. Hitchcock, H. Parks; Committee on Resolutions—O. C. Wheeler, E. B. Hatch, J. B. Saxton.

Moved and carried that when we adjourn it be to half-past one p. m.

11 A. M.—Sermon preached by Rev. T. A. Gill, Chaplain at Mare Island. Text—Luke i; 2. Adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

1:30 P. M.—Association called to order by the Moderator.

Prayer by Rev. U. Gregory.

Report of Committee on Circular Letter. Report adopted. Circular Letter read, adopted and ordered printed with minutes, as follows:

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To the Churches comprising the Pacific Baptist Association:

DEAR BRETHREN—It is a custom generally observed in Baptist Associations to address to the Churches a "Circular Letter" upon some topic of spiritual and denominational interest. In this we desire to call your attention to the importance of observing and sustaining the Covenant Meeting of the Church.

In the days of our fathers this meeting was highly prized and observed with great regularity. The time for its observance was carefully borne in mind, and if at all consistent the meeting was faithfully attended by all or nearly all of the members.

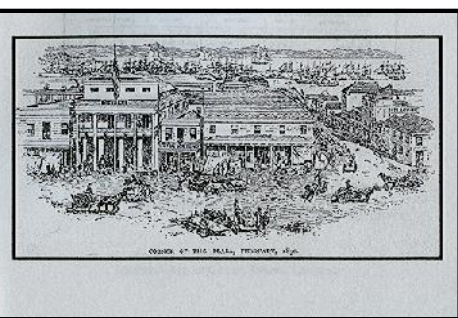
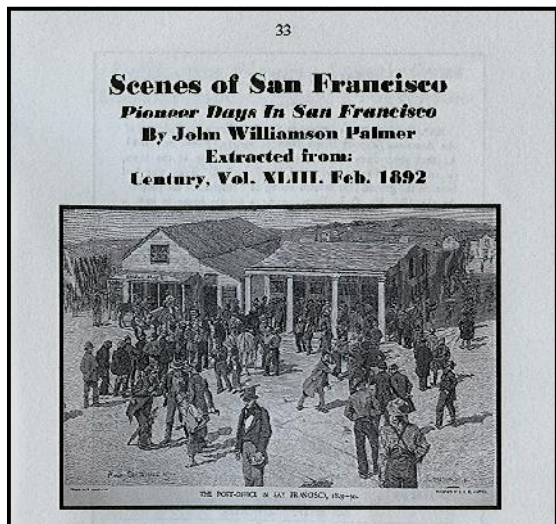
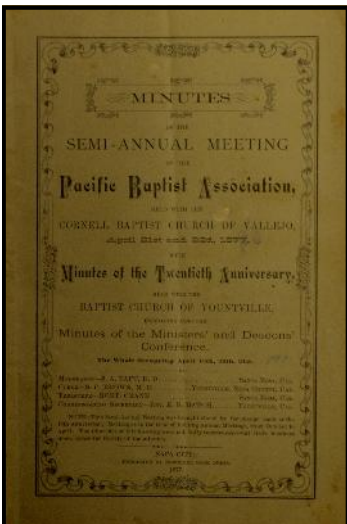
In many Churches this meeting does not fill so prominent a place as in former times. It has been to some extent depreciated. Not that it is entirely neglected, but it is more thinly attended, and regarded with less interest than in the days of our fathers. It is not unfrequently made to take the place of the regular weekly prayer meeting, and differs but little from it in character and form. Now, we urge that every Baptist Church carefully maintain a COVENANT MEETING. It is to some extent a necessity. Certainly no Church can be efficient, successful and prosperous while this meeting is allowed to suffer and languish. It fills a place and meets a necessity that no other meeting does. The prayer meeting is of a general public character, as much so as the public service of the Sanctuary on the Sabbath. The business meeting, whether special or stated, is for the transaction of business, and not for mutual conference and devotional exercises. The nature of the Covenant Meeting is indicated by its name. It is to promote spirituality and true Church life by formally and heartily renewing the covenant into which we enter with one another and with our Lord and Saviour when we become members of the visible Church.

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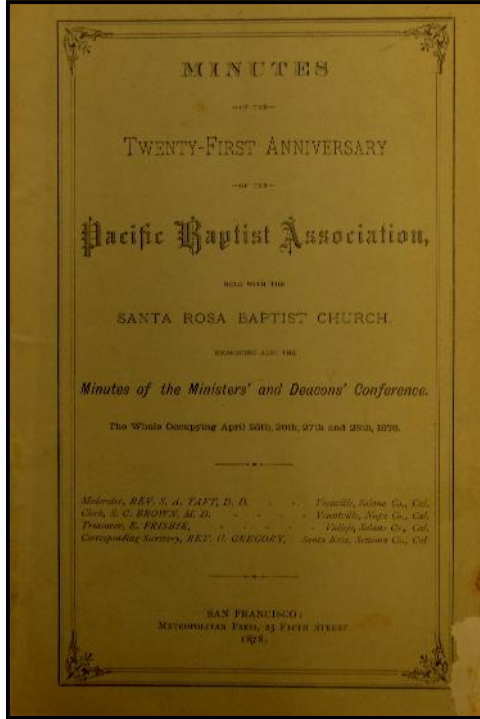
Church relationship is not only spiritual and organic, but of the most vital nature. It is compared by Paul to the relation existing between the different members of the human body. The Covenant Meeting is specially designed to cement and intensify this union. We therefore call particular attention to the importance of this monthly family gathering. Do not neglect it. Cherish it. Sustain it. Make it a source of strength, spirituality and joy. Do not combine it with the prayer meeting. In some instances the Covenant Meeting is appointed on the same evening of the prayer meeting because of a feeling that one meeting for social worship during the week is sufficient. The latter meeting is for the public—a coming together for public worship. The Covenant Meeting is for the Church, and designed to promote Church life. Let it therefore be invested with such an interest that the members of the Church will feel it a pleasure to hold it separately and at another time from the prayer meeting. If necessary, make a special effort to induce all, or as many as can consistently, to attend the meeting. It is often the case that only a mere fraction of the Church is to be found in attendance upon this appointment. Some in every Church you will always find present, others are present occasionally—when it is convenient—, while a third class are rarely, if ever, present. As a general thing the occasional, as well as the non-attendant, can be present with as much regularity and promptness as those who so rarely fail. Let it be a general family gathering, at which all, both old and young, are expected to be present. It is, of course, the province of each Church with its pastor to determine what the exercises and general character of the meeting shall be. Our Churches are not characterized by uniformity in this particular. With some the time is principally occupied with brief remarks by the members concerning their interest and faith in the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With others the principal feature of the meeting is an address by the pastor upon some topic of practical or doctrinal interest to the Church. With some the Covenant is read only occasionally, and with others not at all. We hope, however, in a majority of instances that it is read steadily. Without assuming any authority in the matter or spirit of dictation, we will venture to suggest a compromise, namely: Let the pastor open the meeting with remarks, more or less extended, upon some appropriate theme bearing upon the interest and welfare of the Church. Let this be followed by brief remarks from the members, relating particularly to their personal interest and experience in things of Christ. Let all, old and young, male and female, be encouraged to take part in this exercise. By so doing the weak become strong, the timid courageous, and all are made more active in Christian life. It is to be regretted that so many in our Churches wish to excuse themselves from this exercise. Many female members try to excuse themselves on the ground that it is not proper for a woman to speak in Church. Others offer the excuse that they have no talent. Both excuses are utterly worthless. If all would cultivate the habit of speaking in these meetings their own personal Christian character would be more fully developed, and the meeting itself would be invested with far more interest. After such an exercise, fully shared in by all, we are made acquainted with each other's conflicts and triumphs, and are better prepared to carry out the apostolic injunction to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Such an exercise as we here urge is calculated to awaken the latent energies of the Church, bring out its talent, strengthen the bonds of Christian love and affection, and stimulate faith and good works. At each meeting let the Covenant be carefully read, each member taking it upon himself anew. This exercise gives to the occasion its appropriate name—THE COVENANT MEETING. May God make it a blessing and joy to all our Churches.

2 P. M.—Rev. J. C. Baker, Agent Am. Bap. Pub. Society, addressed the Association in the interest of the Society and the Sabbath School work, at



1877 Circular Letter—Pacific Baptist Assoc. Written by Deacon M. Dozier



In addition to this, much of the financial embarrassment of churches is due to the lack of system in obtaining and disbursing the contributions of members. No good reason can be given why the same strict and uniform regulations that govern other societies in this respect should not be practiced by churches in their temporal capacity. It is true that the contributions are voluntary, and, from the nature of the case, will probably ever continue so; but these contributions should be subscribed at the beginning of the year to the full amount of all computed expenditures, and when subscribed, should be collected and disbursed according to fixed rules. But why should the contributing members of a church seldom comprise one-third of the entire membership?

For two reasons: First—because many are not really regenerated, and are hence unwilling to make any sacrifice for Christ's sake. Secondly—because so little attention is paid, either in the pulpit or at home, to the development of the faculty of benevolence.

While much begging and scolding is done when money is imperatively demanded, next to nothing is attempted in the direction of inculcating a habit of Christian benevolence.

All virtues flourish best and show brightest when put into early practice; and none more so than that in question. (For further views of the Association on this important subject, the reader is referred to the report of the committee on Church Support embodied in the printed Minutes.)

Another evil that attaches to our practice, is in our method of receiving members. It is the means of admitting into the church many persons of whom the members know little or nothing, either as regards their past history or their present mode of life. To say that the reception of new members always takes place in open meeting, and that all should satisfy themselves of the fitness of the applicant, is simply to say that we should do what we very well know we will not do. There are several reasons why this will never be done, and among them we may mention that the majority of candidates for church membership are young persons, to whom public examination is very embarrassing; and not only will their answers to questions be prompted more by excitement than by reason, but they will in nearly every case be pronounced in terms inadvisable to all except those in the immediate vicinity.

Furthermore, should an individual be capable of seeking church membership for an improper purpose, he would unquestionably be capable, also, of deceiving the church on the occasion of his formal examination, when searching inquiries, if not absolutely, are virtually impracticable. We do not hesitate to affirm that this mock examination, for it is entitled to no other designation, has been the means of bringing the church of the living God into contempt of wicked men. As a remedy, this evil, partial at least in its efficacy, we would suggest the reference of all cases of application for membership to a standing committee, consisting of the Pastor and Deacons, whose duty it shall be personally to satisfy themselves of the fitness or unfitness of the applicant, and to report the result of their investigation to the church at some appointed time—the church then to use its own judgment in acting upon the report.

Another sore evil with which the churches have to contend with, is one which unfortunately, is almost, if not quite, ineradicable. We refer to the discrepancy in the teaching of our different ministers. Few cases, probably, have operated so powerfully in the production of discontent, uncertainty and discord in churches as the pulling down and uprooting process which so frequently marks the first few months' work of a pastor in a new field of labor. It is true that if what has been planted is bad seed, it should be uprooted and replaced by good seed; but in the field we find so many unskilled laborers that the wheat is made to suffer almost as the tares. As great an evil as this is, and as much to be desired as its correction,

the remedy rests only with those who are productive of the mischief. And these, as a rule, are unfortunately oblivious to the necessity of any remedy just in proportion to their capacity to cause the evil. Although enlightenment of the mind and heart in the truth of God, secured by the aid of the Spirit and coupled with much individual and independent investigation, is the only remedy for this evil with which we are acquainted, but would suggest that much confusion of ideas and confounding of doctrines would be avoided if a more accurate discrimination were made between the teachings of Paradise Lost and the teachings of God's word. Substituting for the teachings of God the doctrines of men is an evil against which the Apostle found it necessary to warn the churches in their day.

The danger is no less in our day, nor the necessity for its careful avoidance less imperative.

Be studious and thoughtful, brethren, and be vigilant. See to it that no man robs your truths of the Gospel, upon which you base your hopes of immortality.

Rev. S. A. Taft, D. D., President of California College, being called, occupied the attention of the Association (Dea. Wm. Farmer in the chair) with remarks pertaining to the College, and was followed by Rev. O. C. Wheeler as to the same.

Upon motion the Circular letter was adopted, and a discussion followed, participated in by Revs. J. Roberts, T. W. Spanswick, J. E. Barnes, E. B. Hatch, O. C. Wheeler, and Deacons Hollman and Frisbie.

Upon motion, it was ordered that it should be printed in the minutes, and that a copy be furnished the *Evangel* for publication.

Adjourned to 7:30.



Jim & I enjoying a morning brew before going to the GTU

After a season spent in devotional exercises, the following Circular Letter was read by its writer, Deacon M. Dozier:

Circular Letter of the Pacific Baptist Association.

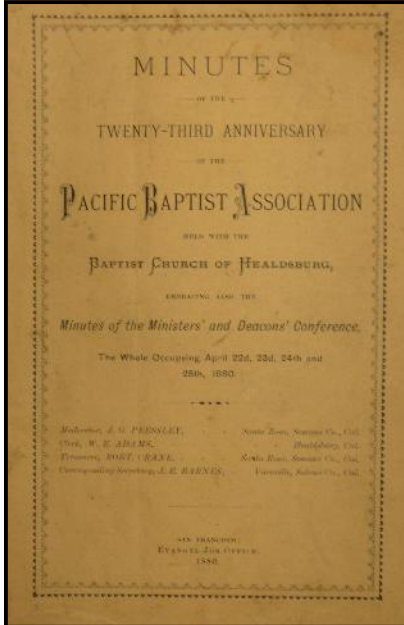
To the several Churches of the Association:

DEAR BRETHREN—We desire to address you on some of the evils that afflict the churches, and their remedies.

The first evil that we shall mention dates to the manner in which the financial interests of a church are managed. Impecuniosity is the bane of ninety-nine hundredths of the churches of the land, even when composed of members in good circumstances. A partial cause of this church poverty, is a very prevalent idea that churches require but little money; that being a sort of spiritual institution, they need no means of temporal support. But a very much more prolific cause is found in an utter lack of a proper appreciation of the great good to be accomplished by the free use of money in church work. Our church members are, as a rule, very much too contracted in their ideas of the proper sphere of church work, not only believing it to be limited to the immediate vicinity and necessities of the church itself, but even within these limits, regarding the demand for money as far less than in reality it is. Coupled with this is a hereditary tendency to pay to the church only that which we can with perfect convenience spare from other purposes, and too frequently to pay this little grudgingly. This disposition is evidently founded on our failure rightly to appreciate the magnitude of our church privileges; for what a man values, that will he willingly pay for.

1880 Circular Letter—Pacific Baptist Assoc. Uriah Gregory

Pages 9—11



After the reading of the letters the following Committees were appointed:

On hearing of Circular Letter, Revs. S. A. Taft, J. E. Barnes and J. T. Prior.

On Devotional Exercises, Rev. W. E. Adams, Dea. I. C. Laymance, Bros. O. C. Phillips, H. C. Ottmer, John H. Fay, Henry Bledsoe.

On Preparing Abstract of Letters, Revs. E. H. Gray, W. E. Adams, J. E. Barnes.

On Preaching Annual Sermon, Rev. J. E. Barnes, G. H. Lillard, E. H. Gray, D. D., Dea. Crane.

On writing of Circular Letter, Revs. J. Francis, S. A. Taft, Bro. Jos. Roberts.

A few paragraphs were cut, not pertaining to the Circular Letter

2:30 P. M. Called to order.
Report of Committee on Circular Letter, from U. Gregory, read. Ordered printed in Minutes and in the *Evangelist*.
Dea. Warner gave notice that at the next Association a motion would be made to change the time of the meeting of the Annual Session.



Cullifer Photo Files—

CIRCULAR LETTER.

Vacaville, April 20th, 1880.

To the Churches comprising the Pacific Baptist Association:

DEAR BRETHREN—In accordance with the time-honored custom of addressing to the Churches a circular letter upon some topic of spiritual and denominational interest, we desire to call your attention to more consecrated work in our Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes.

I. Our Sunday Schools should be a means of grace to all interested and associated in the work, as pupil or teacher.

To this end a full attendance must be secured both of the Church and the children; parents should not say go, but come—and then lead the entire household to the Sunday School.

After the child can understand and converse, the first four years of his life may be made to do more for it, in the matter of morals, than the four years of a College curriculum. The Sunday School should, and may be made the grandest of all schools.

II. Bring all the children into the church school, as it may prove a means of salvation to them.

This may be done, by making the school so attractive and instructive in its public exercises as to secure the attention of old and young. First, by giving each one something to do, in canvassing for new scholars; reading, reciting or declaiming; and second, by rewarding the diligent workers.

The Superintendent should make it his especial business to see that all are interested; he can do so in manifold ways; sometimes by a look, a smile, a kind word, or by some generous act of simple christian courtesy; in some way to give assurance of love or esteem for the members of the School; and especially of due respect and attention to visitors and strangers.

He, as well as every teacher, should recognise their pupils on the street, on week-days as on Sundays, ever manifesting to the class that they are helpers to all who seek the face and favor of the Saviour.

III. God's word is the grand spiritual agency to accomplish the soul's highest good.

Men love the Gospel for its pure precepts, and its grand and glorious doctrines; the children, because they are so simple and yet so divine. Lesson papers have their place, but the Bible should not be excluded from the School; it is the Law of the Lord.

IV. Cultivate a spirit of benevolence in children, for they will soon occupy the places of their parents. The weakness of our Evangelical Churches demands that in the next generation the cause of Christ should have consecrated men and women for the Master.

Teachers, set your class an example. Do you give each Sabbath as the "Lord hath prospered you," and they will give as directed. Each teacher has a great responsibility, and should manifest it for the general interest of the school.

V. Bring the children to Christ. How many conversions in your school during the past year? Our Sunday Schools have proved the grand agency for leading thousands to a knowledge of saving truth. As a social element of the Church it may be made an influential agency to build and maintain the Church of Christ. We do not undervalue external and intellectual embellishments, or the polish of polite literature; they are both ornamental and useful, but these alone cannot qualify the youth of our land for the full measure of usefulness and happiness of which they are capable, nor will they lead them to that high spiritual life which leads to holiness and heaven.

The restless energy of the young demands activity, and the Sunday School affords employment for all. Every one should have some part in the work of saving the perishing. Brethren, may we not teach all young christians to become spiritual helpers to those who are seeking the Saviour, then they will be co-workers together with him in the grand work of evangelizing the world. The poetess most beautifully expressed it in the following lines:

"Every day and every week,
Something higher would I seek;
Something nobler to be done,
Something better to be won,
This my motto ever:
Something higher, nobler, better,
Higher than the level plain,
Nobler than the petty strife
Which degrades this earthly life,
From my soul cast every fetter,
For the higher, nobler, better."

Fraternally,
U. GREGORY.