

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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This is an excellent explanation as to why Circular Letters were popularly used in Baptist Associations.—RWC

From The Baptist History Homepage

Editor's note: David Spencer in his *The Early Baptists of Philadelphia*, says: "It was customary on the part of the Association to send back to the churches a short circular letter containing a general statement of the meeting that had been held, and urging to faithfulness to Christ, to the church, and in developing any special matter of great importance. The first of these we have given us was in 1729. . . . From this excellent epistle, the first of the kind extant in this country, has sprung the various styles of circular letters now furnished in our different Associational meetings." — *jrd (Jim Duvall)*

Note:

J. R. Graves came to California 1878/79 and circulated among several churches of the State holding Revivals and special meetings.

In his perusal of the printed material he returned to Tennessee with, this was the only charge he reported (from a 1856 Minute Book of the San Francisco Baptist Association) when he wrote Old Landmarkism: What it Is.—RWC

J. R. Graves—California Baptist Brethren

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OLD LANDMARKISM

publicly advocated the policy of *strictly and consistently carrying out in our practice those principles which all true Baptists, in all ages, have professed to believe*. Be this as it may, one thing is certainly true, no man in this century has suffered, or is now suffering, more than myself "in the house of my friends," for a rigid maintenance of them.

In 1846 pulpit affiliations, union meetings, receiving the immersions of Pedobaptists and Campbellites, and inviting Pedobaptists, as "evangelical ministers," to seats in our associations and conventions, even the Southern Baptist, had become, with but few exceptions, general throughout the South. At the North not only all these customs, but inviting Pedobaptist preachers to assist in the *ordinations*, and *installations*, and recognitions of Baptist ministers, was quite as common. I have noticed that in some of these meetings Universalist, if not Unitarian ministers affiliated, and delegates were appointed by Baptist associations to meet Pedobaptist associations and Methodist conferences. A glance at my file for 1856 notes this action by a California association:

"Delegates of fraternal courtesy were also appointed, as follows: Bro. Brierly to the Congregational Association of California; Bro. Saxton to the Methodist Conference, North; and Bro. Shuck to the Methodist Conference, South."

Baptist papers made a glowing, pleasing record of all these inconsistencies without a note of disapproval.

At this writing, January, 1880 — and I record it with profound gratitude — there is only one Baptist paper in the South, of the sixteen weeklies, that approve of alien immersion and pulpit affiliation ("The Religious Herald"), while already *two* papers in the Northern States avow and advocate Landmark principles and practice. I do not believe that there is one association *in the whole South* that would today indorse an alien immersion as scriptural or valid, and it is a rare thing to see a Pedobaptist or Campbellite in our pulpits, and they are no longer invited to seats in our associations and conventions anywhere South.

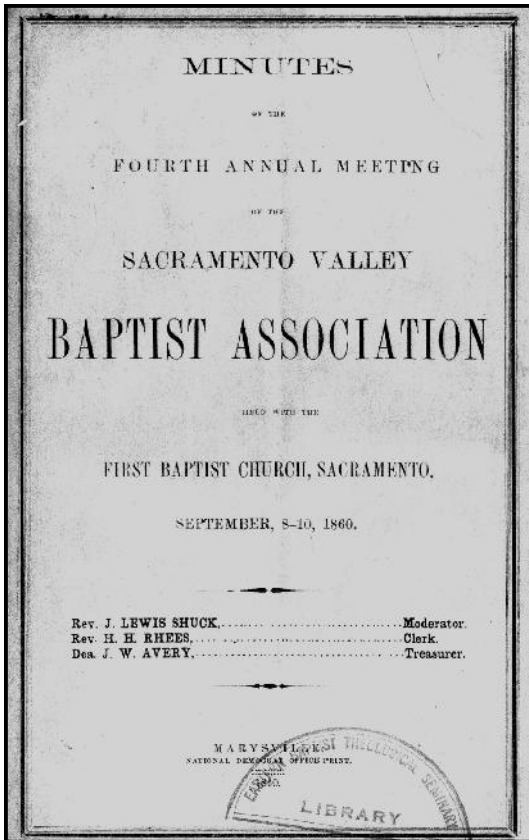
The heavy drift of sentiment throughout the whole South, and the "Great West" and Northwest, is strongly in favor of Baptist churches doing their own preaching, ordaining, baptizing, and *restricting the participation of the Supper to the members of the local church celebrating it*.

With these statements, before the reader forms an opinion, a fair and impartial consideration of these chapters is entreated.

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Sacramento Valley Baptist Association
1860—Circular Letter
Jehu Lewis Shuck



CIRCULAR LETTER.

THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS POWER.

DEAR BRETHREN—

That was no unmeaning or insignificant curiosity which prompted the treacherous wife of Samson to exclaim, imploringly, "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth." Failing and baffled in all her previous attempts to control the giant strength of the strong man she saw that her only hope of success was in discovering the sources of his mysterious power. Her reasoning and her philosophy were right, although vile and dishonorable her motives. Wiser, far, are the children of this world often found, than the children of light. Mighty, indeed, in the wisdom of appliances, and in the elements of power, is the glorious gospel which we possess, but too often, alas! we either overlook or mistake the grand sources of its successful achievements. Sometimes, indeed, in the glowing exercise of prayer and faith, we feel the secret, silent impress of our religion, and realize freshened convictions of the power of its certain advancement; but, like Samson, sacrificing the wonders of his strength to his love of woman—our yieldings to the love of the world, chill our warmest religious impulses, smother our convictions, weaken our faith, and we find ourselves bound hand and foot to the pillars of expediency by the withes and cords of worldly wisdom and human policy. Nor is it enough to know clearly wherein our strength lies, but it is of the last importance that we make the right application of these elements, when we once ascertain what they truly are. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Literary power finds its successful elements in assiduous application, cultivated intellect and a refined taste. Scientific power marshals her effective elements of thorough research, careful analysis and accurate details. Mechanical power is constantly developing her wonderful results, because her elements are a knowledge of forces, adjustment of parts, and the absence of attrition. The elements of philosophical power are found in a truthful basis, consistent argument and skillful arrangement. If all these comprehensive powers have moving causes and controlling principles prompting to wise action and guiding to successful issues, surely our Religion, more momentously important than all else on earth beside, possesses elements for its own effective dissemination and for its own largest successes. By Religious Elements, I have reference to those means, appli-



Jehu Lewis Shuck Born in Alexandria, Virginia, September 4, 1812, the second son of Frederick Shuck and Elizabeth (Bogan) Shuck. Both of his parents were born in Alexandria. Reverend Lewis Shuck attended the John Spotts School at Lewisburg, Virginia (now West Virginia). Later he studied at the Virginia Baptist Seminary. He received the honorary degree of A.M. from Richmond College in 1851.

In his youth he was present at a missionary meeting at which contributions were solicited. He had no money to give, but he put a card in the collection plate. On that card was written one word: "Myself." In 1835 while a student at the Virginia Baptist Seminary, Mr. Shuck

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Courtesy FBC—Sacramento

Circular Letter

The Elements of Religious Power—Shuck

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ances and instrumentalities, which, by securing the Divine blessing are rendered effectual in the successful prosecution of the cause of the Lord Jesus. But what are the Elements of Religious Power? I will mention some of them. There are

1. GENUINE CONVERSION.
2. CHURCH ORGANIZATION.
3. CONSISTENT CHARACTER OF CHURCH MEMBERS.
4. CHURCH DISCIPLINE.
5. AN EVANGELICAL LITERATURE.
6. A SPIRITUAL MINISTRY.

To these important topics, I can of course only give a brief discussion. I regret, indeed, that time will not allow me to go fully into them all.

1. GENUINE CONVERSION. That fundamental feature which causes Christianity to rise up in palpable and marked contrast to every other religion of the world, is that it is pre-eminently a religion of the heart. Man's head is generally right—his convictions mainly true, and his honest opinions on the whole fairly correct. The great difficulty which him is that his heart is wrong. His fallen nature, his fearful depravity, his sinful bent are all proven and illustrated by his practical transgressions. Unless this is personally and individually known and felt there will be no true repentance, and where there is no true repentance there will be no true faith, where there is no true faith there will be no genuine conversion. This genuine conversion—being born again—becoming a new creature—born from above, is the work of the Holy Spirit, following true repentance and preceding baptism. A mistake here will be fatal to the whole Christian life, and fatal, too, to the eternal interests of the soul. Let the present fourteen thousand irreligious backsliders, who, once Baptists in other lands, have come to this fabled region of gold, leaving their religion behind them, bear swift and terrible testimony to the large *unconverted* element which even Baptist churches, by unguarded slackness may gather into their folds. And what a mighty element of Religious Power, under God, would not these fourteen thousand be to our struggling, yet rising Zion in California, had they all been subjects of genuine conversion by the Holy Ghost before their baptism. Inspired with the zeal and principle of true Christian Baptists, they would have been, when reaching this far off land, like Abraham, the father of the faithful, when he left his Chaldean home, who, wherever he wandered, set up an altar for the Lord God. My brethren, let us guard this point with a care and with an anxiety commensurate with the responsibility which the solemnity and the importance of the subject involves. I speak advisedly. Pain and sorrow have pressed my heart, when in my recent travels I have prosed the track of declaimers (not Baptists, I rejoice to say) who are not only ridiculing the grand evangelical doctrine of conversion, but are boldly and sacrilegiously immersing unconverted men and women in the name of the Lord. Let our tongues, my brethren, cleave to the roofs of our mouths, and let our right hands forget their cunning, rather than pronounce the sacred baptismal formula over any single human being who does not first give us evidence of genuine conversion.

2. CHURCH ORGANIZATION. Persons genuinely converted and then buried with Christ in baptism, on a public profession of their faith, are the only proper material for a regular Church organization. And Church organizations composed of such converted and baptized believers are in accordance with our ssgended Lord's own appointment, and designed by him as monuments of the mercy and goodness of God, and for perpetual wit-

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nesses against the guilt and wickedness of men. The members are to be lively stones; the light of the world and the salt of the earth; and a church thus constituted, be it large or small, will be a standing testimony to the work of redemption, and an element of effective instrumentality in the edification of saints, in instructing the young, in warning and winning those who are without, and in spreading the knowledge of salvation in regions beyond. God never designed his people to live scattered and alone, outside of the spiritual hives of a church organization. Much every way, in California, have we, as a denomination, suffered for want of regular church organizations, and we have suffered too in some few instances, because of organizations irregularly effected, yet calling themselves Baptist churches. They have, however, generally, soon fallen to pieces, from the weight of their own bad material and irregularities. What we require at this very time, in many important localities in this land, is the organization of more Churches—regular old fashioned Baptist Churches, firmly maintaining the unfinching principles of our faith and practice, untempted by all blandishing offers of Union, influenced by all proposals of compromise. Other than these, better have no church organizations at all. But a mighty element of Religious Power have regular Baptist Churches been for now nearly three hundred years. "We acknowledge," says the elder Beecher, "that the fire of evangelical truth was kept burning in Baptist Churches while on the altars of our Congregationalist bodies throughout New England, it had well nigh been extinguished by the rapid advancement of Unitarian error." Every Church, therefore, organized upon regular Baptist principles and polity will, with the Lord's benediction, prove an effective Element of Religious Power.

3. CONSISTENT CHARACTER OF CHURCH MEMBERS. This is a delicate, but most important point. In the effective working of the element of church organization, the whole body, says the Apostle, must be fitly framed together. The spiritual edifice put together in all fitness and due proportion, the effective symmetry of the whole can only be preserved by the consistent walk and conversation of the individual members. And what more robs religion of its power, saps the energy of the ministry, ties the hands of the pastor, and dims the light of a church than the inconsistency and sin of church members? Falling in, sometime ago, in my travels, with a minister of another denomination, and in reply to my inquiries touching the state of religion in his region, he stated that it was not only low, but remarked that the character of most of his own people was such as to deprive the pulpit of its usual power and efficiency. He stated further, that he knew not one male member of his church but what the community could bring some charge of inconsistency against, and consequently he lacked the influence of that moral power arising from high-toned Christian character, which he had a right to expect from church members. Often, indeed, it happens that the most faithful efforts of the ministry are rendered ineffective by the inconsistent lives of the avowed followers of Christ. I must omit specifications. But while such things exist, all hopes to secure this element of religious power from the character of Church members, are trampled in the dust. On the other hand, who can estimate the outgoing influence of careful piety, eschewing conformity to the world, its maxims and its allurements, co-operation with the ministry, punctual attendance on divine services, a faithful discharge of duty within the church and out in the world, with daily offerings at the family altar. Such influence would illustrate this element of power to which I refer, in all its beauty and certain effectiveness.

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was accepted by the Baptist Triennial Convention as a missionary to China, being the first American Baptist missionary to that country. He did Foreign Mission work in China from 1836 to 1853. For ten years he worked in Macao and Hong Kong under the Boston Board of the Baptist Triennial Convention. He organized at Hong Kong on May 5, 1842, the Queen's Road Baptist Church with five members. This was the first Protestant Church in China. During the rest of his service in China he worked in Canton and Shanghai under the auspices of the Southern Baptist Convention. In Shanghai he built a chapel and organized a Baptist church. While at Shanghai he translated ten tracts into the Chinese language. From 1854 to 1861 Mr. Shuck was engaged in Domestic Mission work in California, being the first missionary appointed to the Chinese in that State. During this term of service with the Chinese Mission in California, he built a chapel in Sacramento, organized the first Chinese church on the American Continent, and edited a Baptist newspaper. His first convert in California was Wong Min, who became a successful native preacher in Canton, China. In 1861 Mr. Shuck gave up missionary work and moved to South Carolina, where he was pastor, until his death, of Steel Creek and Blackville Churches in that State. Married September 8, 1835, Henrietta Hall, the oldest daughter of Reverend Addison Hall of Kilmarnock, Lancaster County, Virginia. They were married by the Reverend Henry Keeling. Two days after their wedding these two young people were solemnly appointed for their work in China at a service held in the First Baptist Church of Richmond. Mrs. Henrietta (Hall) Shuck, who was the first American woman missionary to China, died in Hong Kong on November 27, 1844,

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Circular Letter

The Elements of Religious Power—Shuck

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4. CHURCH DISCIPLINE. This is not only an important and potent element of religious power, but a divinely appointed guardian angel over the very purity of the churches of the Lord Jesus. The voice of the great Head of the Church comes in unmistakable tones of authoritative command, saying to the organized churches, "Put away from among you that wicked person." And how perfect is his law laid down in Matthew 18, on this subject. The genius of man could never devise or frame a law so thoroughly and entirely adapted to keep the church pure by preventing heart burnings and dissensions, and by securing general harmony and individual justice. No church should dare to entertain a single case of discipline until the first steps in this divine law of the church be previously complied with. But verily have our churches been remiss in dangerously delaying to deal with delinquent members. The first steps, if promptly taken, might save disgraces to the church and ruin to the wayward. But a positive duty omitted, we find person's names on our church books of whose lives, and others whose doctrines it would be a shame to speak. The divine command is not to keep company with such, no, not even to eat with them. And whatever may be the other elements of power a church may possess, where these unrepentant evils continue to exist, she wears a stain on her brow, loses the respect of the world, is shorn of her strength, and must inevitably decline and fall under the hidings of the Lord's countenance.

5. AN EVANGELICAL LITERATURE. The power of the press who can estimate? And the element of religious power emanating from the wide dissemination of an evangelical literature can hardly be overrated. But I cannot now discuss this very important position. Our people are evidently a reading people, but I do not believe that as a general thing, they are readers of large sized volumes. Large volumes, indeed have their places, but I give it as an expression of deliberate conviction that the great literary object to which Baptist churches should at present bend their special attention, as far as the press is concerned, is to the circulation of small books and newspapers containing the clearest and most evangelical exhibitions of the work of redemption and embodying the fullest and most uncompromising views of scriptural faith and practice, as held by our denomination. The Baptist element in literature completes its evangelical character, and without this Baptist feature all evangelical literature will be positively defective as an element of permanent religious power. Time would fail me to speak of our crying need of a College, Female Seminary of a high grade, and of a Theological school suited to our present wants. I leave this large and inviting theme almost untouched and proceed to my last point.

6. A SPIRITUAL MINISTRY. I, of course do not under estimate any kind of ministerial learning, for it has been to me matter of standing mortification that some of our good and excellent brethren who preach, seem determined not to advance even so far as to use their own language with common correctness and in a common sense manner. But what we want above everything else in our churches and in our ministry is the inner soul life of the gospel. Wealth, mere human influence and physical facilities have in almost every age since the foundation of Christianity, been relied upon by even the best followers of Christ for success. "Have any of the Rulers believed on Him?" was a significant inquiry which has found its illustration in every century of the Christian era. But all history proclaims that often where these elements and resources could be commanded at will, our cause has failed; and on the other hand the most signal triumphs of Christianity on record, have been secured in the total absence of them all. Even

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order, erudition, brilliant talents and indisputable truth itself will not meet the case. As some writer has said, order in Christianity may be compared to the bones, ligaments and skin of the human body, talents and learning to the brain, and truth to the blood. Now all these important elements may exist, and you may still have a paralytic, yea, a dead carcass, a breathless corpse. Yea, something more, indeed, we want—a higher element we demand, that carries with it an unmistakable power, and that element is life, spiritual life—the latent throbbing pulsations of a living being. And while I do not deny the usefulness of human appliances, and the important significance of outward frame-work in the completion of the religious structure, yet all these lie in the trembling chains of paralysis or the chilling repulsiveness of silence and death, without the warmer impulses of the inner life, the outbreathings of that living spirit within, which has everywhere and at all times gone forth as an element of indomitable power and of triumphant success. How was it with the early heralds of salvation, stripped as they were of all earthly substance and worldly influence? Read and see. They tarried at Jerusalem to be endued with power from on high. Oh! my brethren, what was the element of that power for which these very first ministers of our ascended Lord waited through the awful silence of those mysterious ten days? You shall hear. They were all, we are told, in the beautiful spirit of harmony, with one accord in one place, and the stillness of that fearful silence being broken by the shakings of a rushing, mighty wind, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost! Here was the first development of an element of spiritual and resistless power—the first puttings on of the whole armor of God. A whole world of hostile hosts were to be subdued—the great battlefield was here, in prospect marked out—the few and feeble soldiers of the new faith were to be equipped for the trying conflict. Mighty indeed were the opposing forces, and to every human appearance, overwhelming the odds against them. But they continued in prayer and supplication, and so marvel that dismay sat not upon one apostolic countenance—no fear quaked in the hearts of those bold men from lake of Gennesaret. They stood upon the sublime threshold of prophetic fulfillments and realized the words of the vision, "Not by the world's might, nor by human power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." They had heard a voice which others had not heard; they had seen a band which others had not seen, and had felt the elements of a hidden power which others had not felt. Boldly, then, in the face of opposition and mockery, they commenced the application of this new element, and as Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, stood up and preached Christ and Him crucified, triumph crowned the divine experiment, and in a single day, three thousand were pricked to the heart, converted, baptized and added to the Lord. Thus, give us ministers of pliant, praying, earnest hearts, good men, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and our cause is safe, our tents are enlarged, our stakes are strengthened—for, having a spiritual ministry we possess the scriptural and undoubted Element of Religious Power, which, defying every antagonism, whether among men or devils, will ensure the triumphant advancement of the glorious Church of the living God, as she marches forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.

Grace, Mercy and Peace,

J. IRVING SHUCK.

SACRAMENTO, September 8, 1846.

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aged twenty-seven years. In October, 1846, Mr. Shuck married Miss Eliza G. Sexton, a teacher in the Judson Female Institute at Marion, Alabama. This wife died five years later in China. In June, 1854, he married his third wife, Miss Annie Trotti, of Charleston, South Carolina, who survived him. By his first marriage Mr. Shuck had five children, including an infant who did not live. One of four survivors was Reverend Lewis Hall Shuck, a Baptist minister and educator. He was born in Singapore while his parents were on their way to China and was educated at Wake Forest College and the University of Virginia. He was for a while President of the Albemarle Female Institute, Charlottesville, Virginia. Held pastorates in Virginia and South Carolina; succeeded his father as pastor of Steel Creek and Blackville Churches. Buried beside his father. Other survivors were Ryland Keeling Shuck, Oscar Devan Shuck and Miss Henrietta Layton Shuck (Miss Nettie), a schoolteacher. There was at least one more child by the last marriage, Carrie Trotti Shuck, who died in childhood. Her death is said to have hastened the death of her father. Mr. Shuck died August 20, 1863, at his home near Barnwell Court House, South Carolina. Buried at Barnwell Court House."

*Faces on the Wall by Woodford B. Hackley
Published by the Virginia Baptist Historical Society - 1955*

*The History of Landmark Baptists of California Volume 1 - The Nineteenth Century - Where We Came From Pages 77 & 78
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BAPTISTS IN SESSION AT SANTA CLARA
THE ALTA CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO—WEDNESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 12, 1864.

BAPTISTS IN SESSION AT SANTA CLARA

[From an Occasional Correspondent of the Alta California]

SANTA CLARA, October 11, 1864.

Third Day.

EDITORS ALTA: Immediately upon the opening of business, the remainder of letters were read, and the following list of delegates declared entitled to seats:

First Church, San Francisco- Rev. D. B. Cheney, D.D.; B. S. McLafferty; G. P. Ludlow, Geo. E. Davis and A. R. Medbury, Licentiate Deacons: J. S. Geddes, D. N. Breed, Isaac Lankershim, and Messrs. S. Carey, George W. Dam, B. H. Dwyer, S. H. Conant, John E. Hall, Geo. L. Plympton, J. B. Montrose.

Second Church, San Francisco- Rev. H. A. Sawtelle, J. A. Wirtle, Licentiate Dea.; S. A. Bemis, Messrs. Peter Craig, J. C. Spencer, Wm. Neil, J. M. Olmsted, Charles Kate, S. Benson, R. Hamilton.

San Jose- Rev. J. Henry Giles, Licentiate, D. E. Gish, Deas., T. Hamilton, and Messrs. E. T. Barber, Thos. Way, H. Van Meter, Isaac Phillips, Eli Furman.

Santa Clara- Rev. A. Jones, Messrs. J. Allen, A. Madan, S. G. Antes, D. C. Abbott, G. Robinson, J. Monholland.

Sacramento- Revs. F. Charlton, O. C. Wheeler and O. W. Briggs; Deacons W. R. Strong, C. B. Cooley, and Messrs. R. Woods and Wm. R. Gallup.

Stockton- Rev. C. R. Hendrickson, D.D.; Deacons B.W. Owens and E. R. Stockwell; Messrs. D. K. Woodbridge, T. Barnes, H. Gamble, C.F. Spenser, P. Ward.

Calaveras- Rev. J. S. Buckner, R.C. Smith, C. Cobb, R. Riggs, R. S. Thompson, A. V. Baker, J. Kearing.

Bethel- Revs. H.M. Henderson and O. Crittenden; Messrs. H. W. Dixon and W. N. Bub.

Brooklyn- Revs. J. Francis and J.B. Saxton

Nevada- J.R. Rummery and Thomas Casey.

Oakland- A. L. Baker (Licentiate), J. Francis.

Alamo- Rev. W. Isaac; Deacons J. P. Chrisman, A.W. Wall and R. P. White.

San Juan- Rev. W. Isaac and Messrs. G.F. Pennebecker and John Rupe.

Lincoln- M. A. Lee, A.M. Jones.

Ebenezer- Rev. J.G. Heuff [J.T. Huff], Deacon J. Kennedy, Messrs. Joseph Kennedy, Jasper Bell, John Butterfield, Jas. Suman, and H. J. Jackson.

Sonora- J.W. Purdy, (Licentiate) Deacon Edward Loomis, Messrs. Rufus Keeler, B. A. Smith, O.S. True.

Mount Olivet- Rev. T.E. Randolph and Deacons Dangerfield and Carter.

French Camp- E.B. Taft (Licentiate) J. Morrison.

Santa Cruz - J. A. White (Licentiate).

Third Church, San Francisco- J.M. Flowers.

The Committee on Circular Letter reported, recommending that the letter be read by the author, which was done and the letter read, adopted, and ordered printed.

Rev. A. Jones stated the outline of a plan for a Ministers' Institute; whereupon the subject was made the special order at the close of the regular business.

The Standing Committee on Sabbath Schools made their report, which was adopted.

A Committee on Resolutions was appointed, consisting of the Committee on the State of the Country and Mesrs. O. C. Wheeler and A. L. Baker.

At 11 o'clock A.M., Rev. Dr. Hendrickson preached the annual Educational Sermon; after which the Association took a recess till 21/2 o'clock.

BAPTISTS IN SESSION AT SANTA CLARA – Continued on page 6

BAPTISTS IN SESSION AT SANTA CLARA THE ALTA CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO—

BAPTISTS IN SESSION AT SANTA CLARA – Continued from page 5

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Prayer by Rev. Mr. Taft.

The Standing Committee on Education made its report, which was adopted.

The Committee on Order of Business made a further report as follows:

This afternoon to be devoted to reports of Committees and general business; the evening to addresses by O.C. Wheeler, Secretary of the Sanitary Commission, and Rev. O.W. Briggs, Secretary of the Freedmen's Association. That the sessions of to-morrow be devoted to the transaction of general business. Adopted.

The Board of Trustees of the "Evangel" reported, and the report was adopted. In accordance with the report the following were elected a Board of Trustees for the "Evangel" for the ensuing year. D.B. Cheney, F. Charlton, J. Lankershim, S. Benson, G.W. Dam.

The Committee on Missions reported in part, upon which it was resolved that there be \$300 appropriated to Rev. Hiram Hamilton, of Idaho.

The Committee on Correspondence reported recommending that delegates be appointed, and a fraternal letter sent to the Pacific Association. Adopted.

The Chairman announced the following Standing Committees:

Education- A. Jones, F. Charlton, B. S. McLafferty, G.W. Dam, E. T. Barber.

Sabbath Schools- A.S. Baker, J. Francis, J.T. Huff, A. Madan, J. Rummery.

Religious Publications- J.H. Giles, A. B. Clark, E.B. Taft, W. Isaac, J. Lankershim.

Sabbath Observance- J. P. Ludlow, S. Hilton, B.W. Owens, W.R. Strong, S.A. Bemis.

Adjourned to seven P.M.

In the evening, O.C. Wheeler, Secretary of the Sanitary Commission, addressed the audience on behalf of the interests of the Commission.

*As Published in THE ALTA CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO
WEDNESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 12, 1864.*



Henry A Sawtelle, Moderator
Of the 864 Session of the
San Francisco Baptist Association



1864—MINISTERS IN THE ASSOCIATION.

A. L. BAKER.....	Oakland.	ADDISON JONES.....	Santa Clara.
CHARLES W. BRADBURY.....	Virginia.	<i>Rufus Keeler</i>	Lexington.
OBEL W. BRIGGS.....	Sacramento.	WILLIAM S. KIDDER.....	French Gulch.
<i>Joshua Brooks</i>	Nicolaus.	JEROME B. KNIGHT.....	Idaho, I. T.
J. S. BUCKNER.....	Woodbridge.	JAMES PETER LUDLOW.....	San Francisco.
FREDERIC CHARLTON.....	Sacramento.	<i>Benjamin T. Martin</i>	San Francisco.
ALBION B. CLARK.....	Columbia.	B. S. McLAFFERTY.....	Virginia, Nev.
DAVID B. CHENEY.....	San Francisco.	<i>Arnold R. Medbury</i>	Santa Clara.
ORRIN CRITTENDEN.....	Mountain View.	A. W. PECK.....	Vallejo.
GEORGE E. DAVIS.....	San Francisco.	<i>James W. Purdy</i>	Sonora.
NATHANIEL EATON.....	San Juan.	THOMAS E. RANDOLPH.....	Marysville.
JOHN FRANCIS.....	Brooklyn.	HORACE RICHARDSON.....	San Francisco.
J. HENRY GILES.....	San José.	HENRY A. SAWTELLE.....	San Francisco.
<i>D. E. Gish</i>	San José.	J. B. SAXTON.....	Aurora, Nev.
A. A. GUERNSEY.....	Stockton.	CYRUS W. REES.....	Loyalton.
HIRAM HAMILTON.....	Idaho, I. T.	ELI REES.....	San José.
D. C. HACKLEY.....	Horsetown.	F. SPENCER.....	Horsetown.
H. M. HENDERSON.....	Mountain View.	<i>Eleazer B. Taft</i>	Stockton.
C. R. HENDRICKSON.....	Stockton.	<i>O. S. True</i>	Columbia.
STEPHEN HILTON.....	San Francisco.	C. N. WEST.....	Santa Cruz.
THOMAS HOWELL.....	San Francisco.	OSGOOD C. WHEELER.....	San Francisco.
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WILLIAM ISAAC.....	San José.	JAMES A. WIRTH.....	Santa Cruz.

1864 San Francisco Baptist Association Circular Letter—By Frederick Charlton

This is the Circular Letter referred to in the Article "Baptists In Session At Santa Clara"
In *The Alta California, San Francisco*—October 12, 1864.



To the Ministers of the Churches of the San Francisco Baptist Association:

DEAR BRETHREN--In fulfilling the duty of my appointment to write "The Circular Letter," I name as my subject, THE NEGLECTED TRUTH.

All Christian truth in a world of sin is neglected--thoroughly neglected by the wicked, and too lightly esteemed by the good. But one truth, more than all others, seems entitled to this appellation, *neglected*; for none is so reviled, excluded, ignored. That truth is, *Future Retribution, or the Final Punishment of the Wicked.*

1st. *The Forms of this Neglect.*-- That the wicked neglect it, is as certain as they deny it, or carelessly risk its doom. But I am to dwell upon the neglect of this truth in the circle of professed friends of Christ. It is *personally* neglected, occupying too small a place in the believers meditation, shedding light as it does, on the evil of sin and the riches of pardon, and rendering serious and watchful the Christian life. Parents to seldom bring it upon the minds of their children, and thus impress this important truth at life's most favorable period, when the traces of all truth are made lasting. The Sabbath school teacher to the scholar; friend to friend in social life, neglect it. And O that I could say, the minister of the gospel never neglects it, but I cannot. The closet, the home, and the wayside, the school and the pulpit, together witness a neglect *in the due use of the truth of Future Retribution.*

It is not charged that the hopefully good *deny it, seriously doubt it,* or fail in *some* good measure to feel it's important; but that it has not its *place* in the attention of professors of religion that it has in *the Bible*; and that this neglect is not slight--this crowding out of this truth not unimportant--but radical, alarming, ruinous. The character of many modern conversions illustrate this neglect, showing as they do that the law has not done its work, as a schoolmaster, in bringing them to Christ.

Fidelity to this doctrine, requires high moral courage; but alas! the friends of the Savior have it in too low a degree. The quarrel of the world with Christianity is, at this point, against this doctrine of Future Retribution. To fly in the face of these prejudices, and to be faithful in the presentation of this subject, ever so unwelcome, is a most difficult and neglected duty. Men love happiness, and listen with patients and pleasure to discourse on mercy and heaven. Such discourse is easy; but no task is so hard, in consequence of the sinners hostility, as fitly to warn him and reprove his sin.

The phases of church life illustrate this neglect. Crowds visit the Sanctuary as they do the theater--not to light a dark mind, heal corrupt heart, and find a precious Savior--but for observation, amusement, and recreation; alas, they are too seldom disappointed! They live and die, and hear no alarm in their pathway to hell, until they wake up from the dream of life to the Judgment of Almighty God! Where shall we hear the most interesting sermon, is the question. But *interesting* does not necessarily include, *faithful or serving.* The interest of the sermon consists in the ingenuity of its structure, the variety of its learning, the measure of its talent, the grade of its fancy, and in that it be unique, perspicuous, brief; while in the light of true gospel preaching it may be a mockery and a sin; and you turn from the sanctuary to exclaim; "Surely, the FEAR of the God is not in this place!"

Christianity has many incidental aims, besides its grand object of saving men from sin and woe. By it, knowledge is to be promoted, oppression removed, and pride and superstition dethroned. By it, domestic life is to be strengthened and purified, the afflicted comforted, and good-will to all men promoted. By it, good laws are to be made and strengthened, integrity is to be given to trade, and honesty to policy. By it, Art is to be made chaste, Science modest, and Literature moral. By it, is to be procured human freedom, national patriotism, and universal philanthropy. But these blessings are only incidental, yet we idolize them. They constitute the great and all-absorbing objects of Christian life. The Sunday school, the church, the social circle, are all made aim at the attainment of these, and thus become grand schools of experts and professors; not hospitals, as they should be, where the Great Physician probes the sore of sin, and pours in the balm of life.

Christian seem all-unmindful of the peril of sinners as expressed in the experience of Cecil, who said, "Hell is before me, and thousands of souls shut up in everlasting burnings, I asked no other motive."

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So far as this is the neglect of the pulpit, it is not confined to its charlatans and fops, to sensualists and worldlings, like the clerical Yorick, who could write Tristram Shandy, or Sterne, who spent a ministry of twenty years in painting, fiddling, and hunting; but laborious and sincere ambassadors of Christ, are prone to descend from the high and arduous place where they are set to be a savior of life unto life or death unto death, to become the mere ministers of public recreation.

Again, there is a species of substitution practiced on the New Testament revelation of wrath, which is a ruinous neglect of the sinners danger and doom. For the terrible terms of the New Testament that flash, and blaze, and appall, they substitute their own tame, diluted talk about "a guilty conscience." For the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness, they substitute as punishment "sin's natural consequences." For the fearful expulsion and curse, the companionship of devils in hell forever, that fell from the lips of Jesus himself, they substitute the "twinge of conscience and self reproach." The Bible is not definite in its reference to the particulars of future woe, and perilous indeed is that definite substitution which strips off as extravagant the appalling imagery of revelation. So powerful have these mental usages, habits of thought and forms of expression become, that almost any departure from the truth may take place and produce no alarm. The dissent in the error is so gradual, that the lowest depths are reached before the victims know whether they are tending. The mind has left the hemisphere of light, and is to truth and reason lost. They become lax and enfeebled in spirit, destitute of fervor and energy, and live in the church, sinister, heartless, frivolous. These minds have become released from the grasp of sin and ruin, and consequently from any power to appreciate the Divine mercy. Thus released, they become first presumptuous, then imbecile, and finally expire in the lap of formalism and sensuality. Thus bereft of the toughness and fiber, the grasp, the W

warm blood, and thick sinews of a noble faith in man's misery, giving turpitude to sin and value to salvation, they live by tens of thousands only to swell the numbers and extend the front of visibility are visible Christianity.

2nd. Learning now the Forms of this Neglect, *look at its Consequences*. This neglect of the sinners peril hinders a becoming seriousness on the part of professors, and promotes a lax, careless, and pleasure-loving life. It palsies the moral power of the church upon the world. The contagion of this latent infidelity in the church deepens the natural stupor of the wicked and leaves the ungodly at rest in the lap of sin. It depreciates the salvation of the gospel. It places its weathering hand upon the whole circle of its essential truths to shrink and drag them down. Man is stripped of his importance by the practical denial of his peril and sin of its turpitude, when viewed apart from its appalling ruin. Gethsemane and Calvary even lose their lustre in the denial or doubt of that eternal doom from which they are set as the ransom. Even their gold becomes dim in their fine gold changed. Subjectively the Christian religion is all contained in three truths; *Sin, Ruin, Ransom*. Indeed the first, the first two, sin and ruin, merge together, and sustain the relation of cause-and-effect. To work in the mind of the sinner a sense of sin and ruin first, making ransom desirable, is the order of the gospel. To rouse the soul to its sin and misery, is the first half of the gospel mission. To display its pardon and peace, the other; and this order may not be reversed. Heaven with its entrancing glory can only woo and win those whom hell has roused to a sense of its unutterable horror. When we see the sword of justice warning in all its terror, and the revelation of wrath displayed before us, do we not turn, if ever, to Christ for pardon and rest? Nothing moves men to seek eternal life until they are afraid of perishing. First the avenger of blood, then the cities of refuge. First Sodom, then Zoar. First Law, then Gospel. First Sinai, then Calvary. First, "I perish with hunger," then "a fathers house." First, the cry, "A sinner," then "God be merciful." Look into the messages of the prophets, and you find the threatenings. The prophets of the new dispensation lived to warn men to flee from the wrath to come, and to introduce one who should not only garner the wheat, but also burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Paul's mission was one of warning; "I ceased not to warn men night and day with tears." Jesus, the incarnation of love and pity, kept in his word and spirit before men the peril of the sinner and the dreadful misery of hell. "What," saith said he, "shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Hear him set forth his judgment; "they that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Look at his parables, whole groups of them devoted to warning, as lost sheep, lost pieces of money, a lost son. Lost worldlings are called from barns filled with plenty--called to exchange their purple and fine linen for the winding sheet of death, and their glittering mansions for the dark abode of hell. Who but Jesus disclosed the work of the angel reapers, and declared that the wicked should be cast into a furnace of fire, "where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

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There has been much fine writing on the power of the love of God, and it is all true. Aye, more' no human mind has genius enough--no heart holy sympathy enough--to fully set forth the love of God. But it is useless to offer mercy, unmingled with warning, to sinners presenting a front of resolute and determined impenitence. This is offering a feast to a man already surfeited; or, a lifeboat to a persons all unconscious of peril. All such are to be treated in the common character of evildoers, to whom the gospel is a revelation of wrath, "for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

3rd. *How shall this Neglect of the subject of Retribution be removed?*--How shall it be restored to its true place and importance among the means of man's salvation? Not by direct effort to stimulate the terrors of the wicked; not by bold and heated denunciations of sin, not in giving the disclosures of the sinners ruin in point of time and proportion their place' nor yet by labored arguments to convince the understanding. Denunciation, argument, eloquence, and frequency of appeal alone, are impotent. It has been well said, "While the walls are wringing with the sounds of alarm, the covetous man is mentally counting his gold, the eye of the vain and prurient is darting from object to object of illicit attraction, the envious and malign are brooding new calumnies to be propagated at the church door, the ambitious is plotting the destruction of his rival, and the fraudulent and rapacious are in cogitation, stretching the net for the feet of the unwary."

He who would remedy this evil must possess moral qualities of the rarest sort. He must have unblemished faith in God's revelation of wrath--no doubt must cloud the purity of his faith--no lurking skepticism be tenanted in him. To this undoubting faith, must be added a loyal submission to the government of God that includes in it justice and punishment--a loyalty that made Abraham exclaim: "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" "I know," said another, "O Lord, that all thy judgments are right; and Paul: "Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar." This loyalty is a conviction that the equity and holiness of God are untarnished alike when wrath walks through the bottomless pit, and when love walks through the mansions of glory.

In the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, when they sunk as lead in the mighty waters, Moses and Miriam sang: "Who is a God like unto thee, *glorious* in holiness? It was when the Lord said: "My determination is to assemble the kingdoms and gather the nations, that I may pour out my indignation, even all my fierce anger upon Jerusalem? that Zephaniah said: "The just Lord is in the midst thereof; He will do no iniquity." It was while the vials of wrath were pouring out, that all who stood upon the sea of glass having the harps of God, sung: "Just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints; thou only art holy." We need not only this faith and this submission, but also the riches and benevolence and compassion to the sinner. Such was the compassion and pity of Paul, as he warned sinners of their danger. He who had shaken is chains in the face of kings, displayed this benevolence and tenderness as, with trembling hand and tearful eye, he wrote the doom of the wicked: "I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction." "I have continual heaviness and sorrow of heart; I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsman according to the flesh." "For the space of three years I ceased not to warn men day and night with tears. Jesus, our great Teacher, as he pronounced the woe of Jerusalem, displayed this spirit. He beheld the city and wept over it. That woe was bathed in tears and borne on the bosom of a pitying lamentation.

May God enable us thus to rescue from neglect this solemn truth of his word.

Sacramento, October 5, 1864

F. C.

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"**Charlton, Rev. Frederick**, was born in Connecticut in 1822; converted at the age of sixteen, and baptized at eighteen; he consecrated himself to the ministry; graduated at Madison University; was pastor three years at Webster, Mass., five years at Wilmington, Del., and then entered the service of the American Baptist Publication Society, in which he continued two years. In 1860 he removed to Sacramento, Cal., and was pastor of the church in that city until the time of his death, Aug. 19, 1871. He was a man of stern principle, courteous, generous, scholarly, and eloquent. His sermons were always thoroughly studied, and delivered without notes. His pastorates were all blessed with large revivals; and in his pastoral work he reaped the fruit by educating the converts to active church work. The church at Sacramento was one of the largest and most influential in California."

*Centennial History First Baptist Church—
Sacramento, CA 1850-1950*

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Jim and I have come a long way in our research methodology over the past 26 years of working together. We now arrive on location with camera, laptop, flat top scanner and start working.

David J. Stiver—Special Collections Librarian (our GTU contact person) has even set us up in a special meeting room.—RWC

