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## 1940: Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures - Full Text

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*Chas. H. Thompson*  
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## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

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We have pleasure in presenting in book form the addresses delivered in the lectureship of Abilene Christian College for February, 1940. The importance of the subjects for discussion, the number of addresses and the excellent treatment by the speakers all contribute to making this book not inferior to any of the volumes that have been published in the past.

The men who delivered these lectures are well and favorably known in the brotherhood of the churches of Christ as capable leaders and careful students of the Bible. We pass this volume on to the reader with the hope and confidence that it will serve some useful purpose in the field of religious literature. Our thanks and appreciation are hereby expressed for the promptness with which the various speakers placed in our hands the manuscripts which has enabled us to have the book ready within thirty days from the time the lectures were delivered.

G. H. P. SHOWALTER.



## WHAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS

By Chas. H. Roberson

“And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary: for thou hast found grace with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob unto the ages; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:30ff).

“From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17).

“Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the good tidings of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:14f).

“And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good tidings of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23).

“But he said unto them, I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent” (Luke 4:43).

The most casual reader of the gospel records knows the large place that the kingdom has in Jesus' teaching. Immediately on entering upon his personal min-



istry, his first public utterance related to the kingdom (See Matt. 4:17). The possession of the kingdom is the subject of the first beatitude; he made its coming with ever increasing power the subject of daily prayer; he urged the seeking of the kingdom as the first and the highest duty of man (Matt. 6:33); he said that his purpose in coming to the sons of men was to preach the kingdom of God; and for the same purpose he sent forth the twelve (Luke 9:1-12). The kingdom was the message which the twelve were to carry to the uttermost parts of the earth: "And this good tidings of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony unto all the nations" (Matt. 24:14). From the first to the last the keynote of his teaching and his preaching was a revelation of the doctrine of his kingdom.

It is, therefore, a matter of vital importance to understand Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom. To misunderstand it is to misunderstand Jesus' message which results in misunderstanding his interpretation of life. The kingdom of heaven occupies such a prominent place in Jesus' teaching that it is helpful to trace its earlier meaning and usage.

### Conceptions of the Kingdom in the Old Covenant

In the twenty-third chapter of Exodus each Israelite is commanded to appear three times each year before Jehovah with gifts in his hands. This ancient law indicates that Jehovah was early regarded as Israel's divine king. In the initial vision of Isaiah,

Jehovah is so described when the prophet exclaims: "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: For mine eyes have seen the king, Jehovah of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). The same idea underlies the protest of Samuel against the appointment of Saul as king, "Ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us; when Jehovah is your king" (1 Sam. 12:12). This conception, however, did not prevent the Hebrews from paying homage to an earthly king, nor from cherishing the hope that a human Messiah would come to establish a world-wide kingdom and whose chief task would be to extend the authority and the glory of Jehovah unto the ends of the earth (See Isa. 11:1-10; 35:1-10; Micah 4:1-8; Hab. 2:14). This nationalistic conception was held by the common people in the days of their liberation from Babylonian servitude; in the days of the Maccabees; and in the days of Jesus by the Zealots, a party that sprang up in the days of Herod the Great.

Among the Pharisees, a party that dates its beginning during the days of John Hyrcanus (135-105 B. C.), were many leaders in Jesus' time who, realizing the impossibility of throwing off the yoke of Rome, believed that the kingdom of heaven would be miraculously established and based their belief and expectancy upon passages like Dan. 2:44.

A third conception of the kingdom of God is presented in the Psalms, particularly Ps. 24, 29, 47, and 95-100, in which the human king completely disappears and the reign of God is presented. Jehovah reigns over men. His rule is to be just, merciful, righteous, good, with power, and everlasting. This broad conception of the reign of God was also voiced

by the pre-exilic prophets and is by far the noblest idea of the kingdom of God to be found in the Old Covenant.

### Current Partial Views

One cannot well discuss "What the Kingdom of Heaven Is" apart from making specific inquiry concerning some partial views which obtain.

Many good men identify the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, which is its exact equivalent, with heaven, the abode of the blessed dead. Under this view, to seek the kingdom is to seek heaven, and to enter into it is to gain heaven at last. The most perfect exposition of this view occurs in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." The fallacy of this idea lies in the fact that it makes a part synonymous with the whole. It makes religion too exclusively other-worldly. It makes the kingdom something future and remotely related with the hard facts of daily living. Heaven was a great reality to Jesus, and he proposed to set in motion those principles which exemplified would make earth a colony of heaven.

A more common conception identifies the kingdom of heaven with the visible church. The church becomes an end in itself, and its own upbuilding becomes its chief concern. Such a conception of the kingdom has resulted in the sin of ecclesiasticism and the wretched strife of sectarianism. The church, like the blessed Master, is not to be ministered unto but to minister. The church is the divinely appointed means to a divinely ordained end. The function of the church is to extend and upbuild the kingdom; to



execute the will of the reigning sovereign. The kingdom relates to a purpose to be achieved; the church is the means by which that purpose is to be realized. Men get into the church by what they profess; they get into the kingdom of God only as they hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Another view identifies the kingdom of God with the invisible church, which is in effect much the same as confusing it with heaven. Such a conception has the effect of making the kingdom remote from the life that now is and not vitally concerned with its distracting problems.

The true view of the kingdom of heaven is large enough to include all that is true in each of the views named. In extent, the kingdom of heaven includes heaven and earth, and the church, visible and invisible. In content, it embraces heaven, the invisible church, and the regenerate membership of the visible church.

### Jesus' Description of the Characteristics of the Kingdom of Heaven

Is it a valid question to ask which of the conceptions in the Old Covenant did Jesus teach? Or did he reject all of them and proclaim a new interpretation of the ancient hope? There are many divergent views among scholars. Some hold that Jesus was indeed a son of his age and race and looked forward, like the majority of his people, to the establishment of a temporal kingdom, and himself enthroned as king. A larger number of modern scholars maintain that Jesus shared the current apocalyptic hope of his

day, and expected and taught his speedy second coming and the miraculous establishment of a supernatural kingdom. There are others who are convinced that he expected and labored for the establishment of a world-wide spiritual kingdom in which God alone should rule. One's faith in Jesus does not depend upon the answer to this question, however, it is a fact that the conclusion adopted will influence his conception of Jesus' character and his work. It is a question that can be answered only by a most careful study and analysis of the evidence recorded in the Bible. The right basis for answering such a difficult question is furnished by the large body of Jesus' teaching on the subject. The kingdom of heaven or its equivalent kingdom of God occurs eighty-four times in the Gospels.

There is no other subject to which Jesus devoted greater attention. By a wealth of figures and parables he illustrated the kingdom. His description is clear and in detail, and a careful study should do much to remove the confusion and misunderstanding which is current concerning it. By the parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31f; Mark 4:30ff; Luke 13:18f) Jesus taught that the growth of the kingdom is slow and natural. By the parable of the Leaven (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20f) Jesus taught the pervasive and transforming influence of the kingdom of heaven. By the parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (Mark 4:26ff) Jesus taught the silent and progressive character of the kingdom of God, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," and that it is not due to man alone in planting the seed, but to God who constantly nurtures and fosters

it, "and the seed spring up and grow, he (man) knoweth not how." Israel's history had been a preparation for it; John the Immerser announced its approach which Jesus reiterated; the work of the apostles marked its establishment in its true meaning and distinctive nature. But it is to continue to come in the world through increasing obedience of men to the will of God. Alike in extension—The Mustard Seed—and in intention—The Leaven—the kingdom of heaven is to go on developing in greater and greater power.

The crowning passage in Jesus' description of the kingdom is Luke 17:20f. The occasion of this was the oft recurring question of the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God would come. It reflects their belief that it would be something sudden, catastrophic and revolutionary, instituted by God without man's having any part in its being set up. Jesus refutes this idea in his declaration, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," that is in a form to be seen by the human eye. In its coming no one can say, "Lo, here! or There!" In the reason he gives we have the most illuminating statement found in all the gospels concerning his conception of the kingdom of God, "the kingdom of God is within you." It is unfortunate that the Greek idiom admits of two interpretations, namely, "in the midst of you" and "is within you." The former is supported by the classical Greek; the second has the support of the Greek of the Koine period. The phrase is used in the latter sense in the Old Covenant in such passages as Ps. 39:3; 103:1; 109:22; Isa. 16:11; and Dan. 10:16. This testimony is quite strong, for writers of the gos-



pel were more powerfully influenced by the Greek version of the Old Covenant than by the classical Greek usage. It appears, therefore, that "is within you" represents the thought in Jesus' mind, and if so, it is a definite rejection of the popular nationalistic conception of the kingdom of God, and at the same time makes the kingdom individual and spiritual, something within the heart of man. This interpretation accords with Jesus' teaching concerning God and man and the strong emphasis which he always placed upon that which is inner, personal and spiritual rather than upon that which is national, external and material.

Jesus met the current ideas of the kingdom, and when standing in the very shadow of the cross, he calmly and explicitly stated, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). In Luke 14 Jesus teaches that the privileges of the kingdom of God are open to all, but only those who appreciate them will enjoy them. And before Pilate his calm faith in the goodness and the justice of the Father failed him not; and he declared his absolute conviction that the reign of God in the hearts of men would surely be and that both he and his disciples would have a prominent place in it.

### The Place and Meaning of the Kingdom in Jesus' Teaching

The term "kingdom of heaven," or its exact equivalent, "kingdom of God," occurs more than eighty (80) times in the gospel records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Matthew prefers the form, "kingdom of

heaven" which he uses thirty-two times. Four times he has "kingdom of God"; Luke has it thirty-two times; Mark fourteen times; and John, two times. In later Jewish writings, heaven was constantly employed as a synonym for God, (cf. I Maccabees). There is no difference in the meaning of the two terms. The term "kingdom of God" is not taken from the eschatological vocabulary at all. This is a fact which champions of the "eschatological theories" of the gospel have lightly passed over; but it is quite significant. It is taken from the synagogue prayers of the day, and Jewish teachers explained it as meaning the rule or the sovereignty of God; where God's law is obeyed, there is the kingdom of God. Jesus himself, in making it the principal petition in his pattern prayer, subjoins a paraphrase: "Thy kingdom come," that is, "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The question, "Why does Jesus give so great prominence to the kingdom of God?" is in point. The answer may be: It was the topic uppermost in the minds of all classes with whom he came in contact. It was the watchword in the preaching of John the Immerser. It was constantly on the lips of the scribes. His disciples frequently asked concerning it. It was, therefore, to the wise teacher, that Jesus was, a natural and effective point of contact with his hearers. Its nationalistic interpretation by the Zealots was the will-o'-the-wisp luring the Jewish nation into rebellion against Rome which resulted in the downfall of the nation in 70 A. D., and any like movement either now or in the future has no promise of different results. Its apocalyptic interpretation dulled the

sense of personal responsibility, and so now the idea that the kingdom of God is wholly future may be the reason that so great laxity in morality prevails. But the use of the term in the Psalms prepared the minds of the more thoughtful student for the individual and universal interpretation that Jesus gave it.

It is most remarkable that neither John nor Jesus gave any definition of the kingdom of heaven. The wisdom of the Master is confirmed by the large number of cumbersome definitions which scholars have attempted. The dominion or rule of God is the simplest yet found. It is the reign of God in the minds and hearts and wills of men. It is the recognition by man of the sovereignty of God in every thought and act. It is man's, on his own volition, bringing his will into submission to the will of God. It is a divine gift, yet it is something to be acquired through the will and the effort of man. It is, in its origin, individual and spiritual, yet in its ultimate development is destined to transform society, for loyalty and devotion to the heavenly Father is the strongest and only universal bond that can bind men together. Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom of God contemplates a universal brotherhood in which all men are united in the common desire to do the will of God.

The idea of the divine kingdom of God as a spiritual relationship, that is, composed of those who possess certain qualities of heart and mind is clearly borne out by the passages describing participation in it. The beatitudes are the classic illustrations. "The poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3; Luke 6:20), "the pure in heart" (Matt. 5:8), and "the peacemakers" (Matt. 5:9), are the ones to whom the kingdom is promised. Distinct-



ly there is a new note in Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom of heaven. It was new cloth that could not be sewed on the old garment of Judaism; it was new wine, and must not be put in old wine-skins (Matt. 9:16f; Mark 2:21f; Luke 5:36ff).

### The Most Exalted Ideal

In the exalted conception of the pre-exilic prophets, the student finds two essential ideas concerning the kingdom of God: it is a regenerate community; in the fellowship of this community God's will is to be fulfilled. The kingdom of God implies a world-wide society, in which universal obedience to the divine law as administered by the Father's Anointed, would bring universal blessings, spiritual and temporal. The kingdom of God fully come means to them an ideal world. One infers from the Master's statement, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17), that he came to make actual the prophets' vision. The kingdom of heaven is the ideal which will be fully realized among men when the will of God is "done in earth as it is in heaven"; that is, when the laws of the king are perfectly obeyed by men. Jesus knew that his mission was primarily directed to the spiritual nature of man, yet it is true that all of God's laws are laws of the kingdom of heaven. All the laws of God, physical and mental, moral and spiritual, are laws of the kingdom and are given to minister to the blessedness of its citizens.

The kingdom of God (heaven) is as far reaching as the laws of the king, and is large enough, broad

enough, and inclusive enough to comprehend all that is true, useful and beneficent. In the kingdom of God fully come can one imagine the violation of God's laws, in any sphere of living?

"The kingdom of God fully come! Then inhumanity, injustice, unrighteousness, inordinate greed and selfishness, and all the enemies of human welfare and human happiness, spiritual, intellectual and physical, eliminated from human life! The kingdom of God fully come! Then right-doing universally prevalent among men, for 'the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17). Then love regnant in human life, perfect brotherhood realized through perfect obedience to the two great laws of the kingdom of God, perfect love to God and perfect love to man, man at peace with his God, himself and with his fellow-men, universal happiness reigning in the world!"—Guy Hoover (Indiana Pulpit).

Such an ideal is ennobling, sublime, and worthy of the best of which man is capable. The message to this assembly is that if you are to render the best service of which you are capable, you must make the ideal the Master set before men your ideal, for in it are included all true and worthy aspirations. Each life is significant only as it strives to attain to its own highest living and for the welfare of humanity. May each of us rededicate and reconsecrate his power and efficiency to the interests of the kingdom of heaven (God). This means that character shall be our chief concern; and by character is meant the character of the archetypal pattern man, the Christ of



God. The achievement of Christ-like character is the sublimest task beneath the stars.

The kingdom of God is an invisible world, not apparent to the senses, not involved in the space-time continuum, but it is very close to us. One must be careful, however, not to tie down the conception of the kingdom to a narrow ethic, or to a passive and resigned obedience. The kingdom of God is an overwhelming power transforming the lives of men. Jesus rescued the great truth so long forgot that God works in his world all the time, that his justice and his compassion overrules all things from the rise and the fall of mighty empires to the untimely death of fledgling sparrows. This invisible power, this inner history, is the kingdom of God. God is near to men, not remote from them, and is familiar with men and enters into communion with them.

The kingdom of God is the invisible world of power and glory, parallel with the visible world of space and time, and breaking in upon it and subduing it. In Jesus himself the process begins; in and through him the kingdom of God is coming to men. To accept him is to accept God; to reject him is to reject God. Jesus is the divine Son of Man who symbolizes the kingdom of God; he is here now in poverty and lowliness and humility, but he is to come again in power and glory on the clouds of heaven, that is to say, the kingdom is to come, it does not matter which you say; it comes to the same thing. Those who accept him now on the earth already belong to the kingdom; he will acknowledge them when he comes in glory. Those who are ashamed of him now will be denied then.

### Jesus, the Perfect Exemplar of Doing God's Will

The divine Son of Man, the champion of the kingdom of God; came to the earth to do a work which is hid in mystery from his followers. This work began with a battle with Satan. Satan is a name for spiritual fact, the strong, cunning, vicious opposition to all good that is in the world. Jesus never speculates whether the evil in the world is a person or a force or a tendency; he never speculates on its origin; he simply names it: SATAN. Jesus is a spiritual realist; he finds in his heart and in the world a set of forces working for good, and another working for evil; one is the kingdom of God, and the other is Satan.

The Master found Satan in his own inner life, and overcame him; he found Satan next in his opponents and denounced them; he found Satan thirdly in his own chief disciple and warned him. Peter had the idea that there was no need for Jesus to go to Jerusalem and die; Jesus taught that the narrow way must lead to the cross for each of them, and that unless each took up the cross he could not be his disciple. The way of justice and mercy and love is also the way of patience and suffering and sacrifice. Jesus went to Jerusalem to meet force with endurance and to overcome death by dying, and as he went he told them how through his death man could find the way into the kingdom of God, and how his death was to be the ransom for the sins of the world. On the cross he met the last of Satan's terrors, and overcame it; his disciples were convinced that he had vanquished not only sin, but death also, and carried the news of their meeting with him risen from the dead through-

out the whole inhabited world. Such are the things which the men who knew Jesus best reported about him.

### Contrast With Jewish Conceptions

The kingdom of God (heaven) is one of the most remarkable ideas and phrases of all time. Its use by Jesus is by far the most interesting aspect, for it is his watchword, or comprehensive term for the whole of his teaching. When Jesus began to speak of the kingdom of God, it soon became manifest that by him and his contemporaries it was used in different senses. The contrast went on increasing until there was a great gulf between him and them. The difference can be expressed no better than that he and they laid emphasis on different halves of the phrase. They stressed "the kingdom" and he "of God." They were thinking of the expulsion of the Romans, of a Jewish king and court, and of a world-wide dominion going forth from Mt. Zion; he was thinking of righteousness, holiness and peace, of doing the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. So earthly and fantastic were the expectations of the Jewish multitude that he had to escape from their hands when they tried to take him by force and make him a king. The authorities never acknowledged the pretensions of one who seemed to them a religious dreamer, and, as they clung to their own conceptions, they grew more and more bitter against one who was turning the most cherished hopes of a nation into ridicule, besides threatening to bring down on them the heavy hand of the Romans. And at last they settled the controversy between him and them by hanging him on a tree.



### Conclusion

And now do you ask what the kingdom of heaven is. It is not a separate inclosure, not a bounded kingdom, but a pervasive spirit. The kingdom of God is goodness made natural, vital, submissive and dynamic in the lives of men. In the early centuries of the Christian era, the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven" was used by teachers to designate heaven itself. The Alexandrine thinkers brought back the phrase to designate the rule of God in the conscience of men. Augustine's great work bears a title, "De Civitate Dei," which is a translation of our phrase; and to him the kingdom of God was the church, while the world outside of the church was the kingdom of Satan.

It is evident to students of the Bible that the leading phrase in the teaching of Jesus must always be the masterword of his interpretation of life. The controversy throughout the whole sweep of human thinking is an interesting one, and while this teacher has no desire to be dogmatic, he wishes to set forth certain elements of living power in the phrase, "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven," which can never pass away: (1) It expresses the social side of the Christian religion. Though religion must begin with the individual, it must aim at brotherhood, organization and expansion. (2) It expresses loyalty. The will of God must be done. The Son shows men how. Without the love of God the Father and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, no progress can be made in bringing the world to Christ. (3) It keeps constantly before men the sublime truth expressed in the pattern prayer, that the one needful thing is doing

the will of God on the earth. Herein is the true end of all authority, and behind which there is at work the power of heaven. (4) It reminds all generations of men that their true home and destiny is heaven. Often as the Master used the phrase, he did so obviously as the name for heaven; and while his aim was that the kingdom should be established on earth, he always promised to those who aid in making it a colony in this world that their efforts would be rewarded in the world to come. The constant recognition of a spiritual world and an eternal world is one of the unfailing marks of the true and the genuine follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Often did the Master promise rest, peace, and the like. Again and again, where he might be expected to employ the phrase "kingdom of God," he used life or eternal life. Such were the blessings for which he came into the world to bestow; and the most comprehensive designation for all of them is "The Kingdom of God" or "The Kingdom of Heaven."

References: Bible—American Revised Version, The Indiana Pulpit, ed. Book, The Life and Teaching of Jesus—Kent, The Meaning of the Revelation—Carrington, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

## THE EXISTENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:1-9; Text: Rev. 1:9.

By W. B. West, Jr.

### Introduction.

President Cox, Ladies and Gentlemen, Brethren and Friends: The invitation of President Cox to have part in these annual historic lectureships is appreciated very much. They have done much good for the cause of Christ. By them thousands of brethren have been brought together from various sections who received instruction, inspiration, and edification which they took back to their homes.

It is encouraging to be greeted by this large audience. For Mrs. West and me it is good to return to our alma mater and go down memory's lane to scenes and experiences with profound gratitude. From the Central church and from George Pepperdine College in Los Angeles we bring greetings.

In his great address this morning Brother Roberson told us what the kingdom of heaven is. He defined it as the reign of God or Christ in the hearts of men and women finding corporate expression in the kingdom of God or church on earth. The subject of this evening's address is "The Existence of the

Kingdom of Heaven, Past, Present, and Future." If the assignment is understood by me I am to present nineteen hundred years of church history and to speak of the future existence of the kingdom of heaven within thirty or thirty-five minutes. It is certain I cannot be as brief as the school boy who was asked by his teacher to write an essay on Benjamin Franklin who wrote: Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, moved to Philadelphia, met a woman on the street whom he later married and discovered electricity.

### I. The Past Existence of the Kingdom of Heaven

The basis for the idea of the kingdom of heaven is found as far back as the creation story in Genesis where God is the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator, Lord, King, and Ruler of all things, animate and inanimate. It is voiced in the promise of a Messiah given in Genesis 3:15 which reads: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It found expression in the calling of Abraham, in the leading of the children of Israel out of Egypt, in the formation of a theocratic kingdom at Sinai, in the toleration by God of an earthly king as a representative of him when his people asked for a king to be like the nations around them, in the prophets of the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries before Christ, in the apocryphal and apocalyptic literature between the Old and New Testaments, in the preaching of John the Bap-



tist, Jesus, the seventy, and the twelve. In Daniel 2:44 we read this promise: "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Matthew represents the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist in this manner: "And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:12). Matthew informs us that the burden of the message of Jesus was: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).

In his address this morning, Brother Roberson identified the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, and the church as meaning essentially the same. In the parts of Cæsarea Philippi Jesus predicted the establishment of his church in these words: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Jesus connected this prediction with an accompanying promise to Peter that "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" would be given to him (Matt. 16:18, 19). In the same chapter, verse 28, Jesus said: "There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." After his resurrection Jesus commanded his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. In obedience to this command they tarried. On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, in the city of Jerusalem, "they were clothed with power from on high." On this day the



apostle Peter preached the first gospel sermon in the history of the world to which about three thousand souls rendered obedience, becoming citizens of the kingdom of heaven, which was established on this day with all a kingdom implied.

After Pentecost the kingdom, or church is spoken of as being in existence. We read of the church of God in Corinth, of the church in Ephesus, Smyrna, etc. John tells us he was in the kingdom (Prov. 1). Prior to Pentecost with the prophets it was in the future and with Jesus and John the Baptist it was at hand. Thus, we can say that the kingdom of heaven or church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus.

For fourteen years, from A. D. 30-44, its center of operation on earth was Jerusalem. Thousands of men and women became subjects of it who "continued steadfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and the prayers." Its worship and work were under the supervision and guidance of the apostles, the elders of the Jerusalem church, and the seven men chosen to serve tables. A number of persecutions arose against it, the chief of which resulted in the martyrdom of Stephen which culminated in the dispersion of the Christians into the regions of Judea and Samaria where Jesus had said they should be his witnesses, together with Jerusalem and the uttermost parts of the earth. For some time messengers of the Cross spoke the word "to none save only to Jews," but shortly the picture is to change.

Antioch in Syria, from A. D. 44-68, became a center for the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom.

From this city Paul departed for each of his three missionary journeys. Professor Wm. M. Ramsay in his "Church in the Roman Empire," 147, etc. pointed out that the peculiarity of the Pauline mission was that it followed the great lines of Roman communication, and aimed at establishing itself in the large cities—the centers of civilization. The Book of Acts and the Epistles show how remarkable were the results. Churches were planted in all the great cities of Asia Minor and Macedonia. In his Annals 15:44 Tacitus testifies that in Rome by the time of Nero's persecution (64 A. D.) the Christians were a "great multitude."

For the ensuing thirty-two years, from A. D. 68-100, Ephesus was the center for the extension of the kingdom of heaven. Paul had spent more than two years there establishing a church and teaching in the school of Tyrannus, a result of which was all Asia heard the word. The Jewish War of A. D. 66-70 resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the burning of the temple. Fire and sword made the destruction so complete that Josephus says "there remained nothing to make those who came thither believe that the place had ever been inhabited" (Jewish War, VI, 2. 1.) The destruction of the whole fabric of the Mosaic theocracy caused the Græco-Roman world no longer to consider Christianity a mere sect of Judaism. John the apostle, at the beginning or during the Jewish War, left Jerusalem and went to Ephesus where his long stay was roughly interrupted by his being banished to the island of Patmos, during the reign and persecution of Domitian (A. D. 81-96). He was permitted to return to Ephe-

sus, where he died in extremely old age after 98 A. D. Concerning the territorial progress of the kingdom of heaven from 68 to 100 A. D. information is scanty. Around 80 A. D. the Roman government established Roman provinces in Upper and Lower Germany. Irenæus, one of the early fathers who died in 202 A. D., evidently referred to these provinces when he wrote of preaching the gospel among the Germans and other barbarians who "without paper and ink, have salvation written in their hearts by the Holy Spirit."

The main interest of the period is in spiritual development amid outward persecutions, apostasy, and besetting heresies. The spiritual development is well reflected in the New Testament writings of this period. The readers addressed in the Epistle of Jude were in a most threatening danger because of prevalent libertine and antinomian tendencies. Ephesus and vicinity had been a field of speculative thought even in the days of Paul. This is evidenced by Colossians, and by the warning of Paul to the Ephesian elders to whom he said: "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30). What Paul had predicted became a reality during John's residence in Ephesus. False teachers and unsound tendencies found their way to the city. In fact, they were to be found in various parts of the Mediterranean World.

In our survey of the past existence of the kingdom of heaven, we have just closed the apostolic era,



from A. D. 30 to 100. We come now to the post or sub-apostolic, from A. D. 100 to 170, so known because the leadership of the church during this era was entrusted largely to men who had enjoyed intercourse with and instruction from the apostles, among them Clement of Rome (Phil. 4:3); Barnabas, the fellow missionary of Paul; Hermas (Rom. 16:14); Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and a disciple of John; and Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, and a disciple of John. During this period special interest centers in the transition from apostolicity to catholicity, our having seen during the last part of the first century the beginnings of departure from the apostolic church. Beginning with 170 A. D. and closing with 325 A. D. we see the rise of the Catholic Church with its organized life being gradually but permanently moulded by the Roman genius for government, law and order.

Brevity of time forces us to survey the continued past history of the kingdom of heaven very briefly, remembering that all along God is reigning in the hearts of some men and women, they composing the kingdom of heaven on earth and further keeping in mind that Jesus said the gates of Hades should not prevail against the church and that where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst. With David Lipscomb, and others I believe the true church has existed through the ages. We may not be able to find it in corporate form as it exists today. But somewhere and all the time God has had faithful children. Brother Lipscomb believed that every Lord's day since the first on Pentecost there have been faithful children of God who have

taken the Lord's Supper. This opinion is shared by me.

From the proclamation by Constantine of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire in 313 A. D. to the accession of Gregory I in 590 A. D., the Catholic Church gained supremacy in the Roman world regardless of pagan reaction under Julian, but internal divisions appeared, the most notable of which call forth the Council of Nicea in 325 A. D. During the next two hundred and ten years from Gregory to Charlemagne (590-800) the outstanding features were the founding of the Catholic Church among the Germanic nations and the subjugation of many of the Christian lands of the East by Islam. Parenthetically, we may observe it was only the victories of Charles Martel and his Franks in 732 and the resistance of the Eastern Empire till 1453 that stemmed the tide of Islam conquest, and saved Europe from the danger of an exchange of the Cross for the Crescent.

The next significant event in our cursory survey of church history is the crowning of Charlemagne, the Frankish king, as Roman Emperor by the Pope, Leo III, in 800. Charlemagne conceived this Imperial power as a universal theocratic Christian monarchy. As the head of all Christendom, he claimed to direct the external government of the church itself, while he acknowledged the Pope as its spiritual head. The dominating interest of the Middle Ages is the contest for supremacy between Emperor and Pope, but undoubtedly the most significant fact was the final severance of the Holy Orthodox Church of the East from the Roman Catholic Church of the

West. Other features of church history during the Middle Ages worthy of mentioning are the rise and advance of Scholasticism, Monasticism, the Seven Crusades to recover from Mohammedans sacred spots of Bible lands, the Babylonian Exile (A. D. 1305-1377) of the Papacy, and mysticism—the stress on the inwardness of the religious life—which may be regarded as a preparation for the Reformation, two forerunners of which should be mentioned—John Wyclif (1324-1384) in England, and John Hus (1369-1415) in Bohemia.

1517 A. D. will forever remain one of the decisive dates of the history of the world. It marked the nailing of the ninety-five theses of Martin Luther to the Castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. It set in motion the world's greatest reformation movement in which Luther attempted to reform the Roman Catholic Church and to give the Bible to the masses. Almost contemporary with Luther, Ulrich Zwingli emphasized the restoration of primitive Christianity. D'Aubigne says,

Luther desired to retain in the church all that was not expressly contrary to the Scriptures, and Zwingli to abolish all that was opposed to the word of God. The Zurich reformer passed over those ages, returned to the apostolic times, and carrying out an entire transformation of the church, endeavored to restore it to its primitive condition.<sup>1</sup>

Even before Luther and Zwingli there were advocates of the restoration of primitive Christianity. John Calvin, John Wesley, the Haldanes, of Scotland, and many others led in a movement to reform the existing church and to restore primitive Christianity. But



God gave the fruition of the noble task to Alexander and Thomas Campbell, to their associates, leaders of what is known in church history as the "Restoration Movement of America."

The aim of the leaders of the Restoration movement was different from that of the leaders during the Reformation. The intention of Luther was to reform the Roman Catholic Church and to Calvin and Wesley reformation was their goal. But the aim of the Campbells and their associates was not to reform, but to restore, the New Testament Church. They sought to go back beyond John Wesley and the Methodist Church, beyond England and the Episcopal Church, beyond Geneva and the Presbyterian Church, beyond Germany and the Lutheran Church, beyond Constantinople and the Greek Church, beyond Rome and the Roman Catholic Church, until they came to Jerusalem, and there the corner stone was laid. The fact should be emphasized that Alexander Campbell did not found a church, but he found the church. The aim of his father, Thomas Campbell, of himself, and of his associates was, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent," which is another version of 1 Peter 4:11 which reads: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."

## II. The Present Existence of the Kingdom of Heaven

Tonight the churches of Christ as a corporate expression of the kingdom of heaven on earth stand up

<sup>1</sup>J. K. Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, 401. Cited by J. W. Shepherd, *The Church, the Falling Away and the Restoration*, 123.

on this platform with the knowledge that the kingdom of heaven has been in existence for one thousand nine hundred and ten years. We know of no better way to speak of the present existence of the kingdom of heaven than by giving a cross section of what is being done by citizens of the kingdom. There are more than five thousand churches with more than five hundred thousand members. There are congregations in both the Eastern and Western hemispheres, with a large constituency in Great Britain and the largest in the United States. Churches of Christ are preaching the gospel in six non-Christian lands. Already congregations, some of them strong, have been established in these lands. Brave soldiers of the Cross are working in virgin fields in our country. Citizens of the kingdom of heaven are operating six colleges wherein young men and young women are being taught how to become citizens of the kingdom of heaven and those who are already citizens how to become better ones. Members of the church are operating six Christian homes for the homeless children where "pure and undefiled religion is practiced." Eight major religious journals are published by individual members of the churches of Christ wherein teaching is disseminated by means of the printed page. Within more recent years congregations are giving more attention to teaching the word of God. As an example, in Los Angeles, California, the Central church is leading in a cooperative effort of the churches of the city by having special training classes taught on Friday evenings by local ministers and teachers. Also, within recent years much interest has been taken in radio broadcasting. In a recent



issue of the Gospel Advocate ninety-five different radio programs were listed. Another recent feature of our work are lectureships sponsored by individual congregations, and by the majority of the colleges operated by our brethren. No church in the world is growing on a percentage basis as much as the churches of Christ.

### III. The Future Existence of the Kingdom of Heaven

Now, we come to consider the future existence of the kingdom of heaven. It is apparent to every student of current affairs that we are living in a world that is being shaken to its very foundations. These are times that try men's souls. War clouds that are hanging low over the Atlantic may at any time settle on our own beloved land. A major battle of world proportions looms on the horizon in every direction. It is a battle against ideologies—Communism, Nazism, and other isms. A new world is being born. What kind of a world it will be, God alone knows. Everyone recognizes we are living in a changing world. Such titles as "In the Shadow of Tomorrow" and "The End of an Era" indicate such a consciousness. Can and will the kingdom of heaven survive these conditions? If so, what part will it play in the world's history? As to the survival of the kingdom of heaven the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "it is a kingdom that cannot be shaken." How much it will affect the world's history will be answered by you and me. The proof that you and I are Christians may be measured best by whether we desire to go to China,

Japan, India or some part of the United States and establish the kingdom of God or to go to heaven. So the kind of existence the kingdom of heaven on earth will have in the future will be determined by how much we do God's will.

As builders of the kingdom we should be men and women of vision. It is difficult to overemphasize this. The writer of Proverbs says, "Where there is no vision the people perish" (Prov. 29:18).

In the old assembly hall at the University of Virginia there is an almost perfect copy of Raphael's picture, "The School of Athens." In the center of this picture stands the figure of Socrates; on his right, Plato; on his left, Aristotle; standing next to the great logician is the figure of a slight, delicate youth, his dreamy eyes looking into the distant future. This is Alexander the Great. On one occasion when Professor Noah K. Davis, of the University of Virginia, was interpreting this picture to a brilliant woman visitor, he said, when he came to the figure of Alexander the Great, "This certainly seems a flaw in the great artist's conception. Who would ever think of painting Alexander the Great as a dreamy youth?" She replied, "No, Mr. Davis, Raphael was right. He who would conquer a world must first dream he has conquered it." So before we can conquer the world for Christ we must first dream we have conquered it.

It was the vision of a Paul who evangelized the Mediterranean world of his day, the vision of a Luther who unchained the Bible from the pulpit and gave it to the masses, the vision of the Campbells, Stone, and their associates who called the world of their day back to the New Testament, and the vision of a David

Lipscomb, James A. Harding and others who preserved the New Testament order of worship and work at a time when the simple New Testament churches were becoming like their religious neighbors. If you and I are to build the kingdom of God on earth we need to climb the everlasting mountains of God with Abraham and see the lands God has given us for a possession, and, also, we need to lift up our eyes and look on the fields and to see that they are white already unto harvest.

For the continued and enlarged existence of the kingdom of heaven on earth, we need a vision of world-wide evangelization, beginning with our Jerusalem, the United States. This vision will need to be begotten by a passion for souls. More than nine times in the New Testament it is said of Jesus; he was "moved with compassion." Paul had a passion for the salvation of the Jews which is expressed in these words: "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved" (Rom. 10:1). It was John Knox who said: "Give me Scotland or I die." A young missionary who, due to poor health, was forced home and who wanted to return to the mission field was asked why he wished to return. The reply was, "I cannot sleep for thinking of them." Paul wrote to the Romans that the gospel had been preached to the whole creation in one generation. Cannot we do the same today? We should tremble as we think of our lack of loyalty to the world-wide commission of Jesus.

For the continued and enlarged existence of the kingdom of heaven on earth we need a vision of genuine service in caring for the needy which character-



ized the early church. In Acts 6:2 we read of "the daily ministrations" of the Jerusalem church. James defines pure and undefiled religion as visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction. A preacher was invited to the room of the wife of a pioneer preacher of the word. This widow was taken care of by the church. The Christian widow pointed to the picture of her husband on the wall. Memory was busy with the past. She doubtless heard him pleading with people to come to Christ. At the water's edge she heard them singing: "Oh, Happy Day . . ." She saw him coming home poor in purse but rich in faith. She was in the poor home doing all she could to make ends meet. Her husband dies in middle life and now the church is caring for her. In the arena of debate Roman Catholicism met a crushing blow by Alexander Campbell, but it triumphs in its hospitals and benevolent work. The world says, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day." Isaac Errett told of a funeral service he conducted where the father and mother were buried in the same grave with four small, helpless, homeless, children looking on shedding tears not fully realizing all they had lost. Some wondered what would become of the children as the cold, heartless clods were filling the grave. While the assembled neighbors stood silent as the little children looked at the mound of earth, above the sacred dust of their dearest friends on earth a Christian man walked forward and said to one of the children, "Will you go home with me and be my little boy?" Then another and another and another Christian man stepped forward making the same request until the two boys and two girls had



homes. There was not a dry eye around that grave, big men, out of the church, wept when they saw real Christianity practiced (Jas. 1:27), some of whom later obeyed the gospel.

We need a better and a better trained leadership or eldership in our congregations. To this end special classes should be taught in the churches and in schools operated by members of the church. We need better trained preachers. If a doctor spends seven years in learning how to treat our ills and to keep us well physically, how is it we are satisfied for young men with no or little training to teach men and women concerning their souls? Preachers, it seems to me, can no longer have the attitude of the preacher in Kentucky, about whom Brother Roberson used to tell us, who when he was urged to study Greek, replied, "English was good enough for Peter and Paul; it is good enough for me." In the Old Testament days there were the schools for the prophets and Jesus gave special training to the twelve. Should not the Lord's servants have thorough training for their work? To all more teaching should be done. Churches should teach the Bible every day of the week. For the extension of the kingdom of heaven all its citizens should be better taught and trained.

A spirit of genuine service will be necessary in the continued existence of the kingdom of heaven—a service of which Jesus spoke when he said, "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25). Many a missionary goes to the foreign field giving up everything except the missionary. Many a minister goes to work with a church giving up ev-

everything except the minister. Many an evangelist goes to the field giving up everything except the evangelist. Many a teacher goes to teach giving up everything except the teacher. Dr. E. Stanley Jones tells the story of Lord Shaftsbury who was one of the greatest men England ever produced. In his brilliancy he was going straight into Parliament. But one day he looked into the faces of the poor of London and the sight haunted him. One night he lay tossing on his bed trying to decide which way he should go. Would he go into Parliament or would he give himself to the poor? All night he lay there, and one by one he pulled up by the roots the darling ambitions of his heart and flung them out. In the morning he belonged to the poor. He gave his life magnanimously and unselfishly to the poor. When Shaftsbury died, all England turned out to do him honor. No king ever had such a funeral as he had. When the procession moved up the street it was lined by hundreds of thousands of people. Beside the hearse representing the vast crowd were those carrying a banner with these words, "We were hungry and you fed us." Behind them another banner, "We were in prison and you came unto us." Another group, "We were strangers and you took us in," etc. All England turned out to do honor to him who forgot himself. It is this spirit—the spirit which characterized Lord Shaftsbury that will extend the kingdom of heaven on earth until "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

On the horizon I see increasingly glorious days for the kingdom of heaven. Evidences on every hand in-

dicate that the knowledge of the Lord is covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. We are not standing gazing up into haven. We are striving to build a city of God upon earth and to do it by living and preaching the gospel and not by having speculative theories of a future reign of Christ on earth and of another way of saving men than by preaching the gospel for which there is absolutely no scriptural authority. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The last command of Jesus to his disciples was, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." So far as me and my house are concerned we shall be busy preaching the gospel until Jesus comes again. Our attitude shall be that of the judge of a New York County Court who some years ago was holding court when there was a severe storm. The sky was becoming black and everywhere complete darkness was coming when an excited man rushed into the courtroom and shouted, "The world is coming to an end. Jesus is coming." The calm judge replied: "If that be true let us light our lamps and be busy when he comes."

Some sweet day Jesus is coming again for he has so promised. No one knows the day and hour of his coming but the Father. Without doubt he is delaying his coming for the preaching and acceptance of the gospel to make more people ready for it. When he comes he will deliver the kingdom—a spiritual kingdom—over which he has been reigning since Pentecost to God the Father. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and



power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For he put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all." If we add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge self-control; and to self-control patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love, an abundant entrance will be ministered unto us into this everlasting kingdom—not a thousand-year period—but an eternal state of spiritual blessedness. In this kingdom the redeemed of the ages shall live forever.

Jesus said: "Except one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Are you here tonight outside of the kingdom of God? If so, will you respond to the invitation of the gospel while we stand and sing the song of invitation?



## THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

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By Reuel Lemmons

Of all the interests which have engaged the attention of humanity, religion has proven itself the most powerful, the most inspiring and the most lasting. Amid all the affairs of life with which men have concerned themselves, there has ever been, above all else, the persistent sense of relationship with higher power. The best product of every mind is essentially religious. In the Christian system God is recognized as the Supreme Counsellor of the soul; Jesus as the Savior and Guide; and his word as the anchor of the soul in its struggles.

In a correct understanding of religious principles, I had rather be right than be president. The environs of Christianity stretch so far beyond this present world that to be wrong would be disastrous. I have no joy in being right, just because it is right, but because the salvation of my soul depends upon my being right. If I am not right I am lost. Since the Bible is God's only revealed method of setting men right in religious matters, then to the Bible we must go for authority in discussing the subject, "The Kingdom and the Church."

God inspired some holy men of old to write this book for the human race. When the scratch of the last pen could be heard no longer and the last of the

ink had dried upon the pages, man had received his greatest legacy. Nothing has ever equaled it. Nothing ever shall. It is perfect; it is supreme. I'm glad God has given man this book—he needs something so badly by which to guide his wandering feet. History wouldn't be so beautiful if it were composed only of the lists of bloodthirsty country makers and breakers and their gory deeds, but to find it dotted here and there by accounts of godly men drawing humanity from the path of ruin is like finding a diamond on a rocky hill. With like yearning we approach it today, in an effort to settle a question which is rapidly growing in proportions—namely “Are the Kingdom of God and the Church of our Lord one, or do they differ to such an extent that they are not one?”

I am conscious of the fact that in this lecture I shall be forced to touch upon subjects covered thoroughly by men who have preceded me, and men who will follow me on this program. This I must do in order that this subject may have the resemblance of completeness within itself. I recognize that no one of these lectures can stand, independent of others, but that each is a part of an entire discussion. At those points where this subject is inter-linked with other addresses I have tried to touch lightly, leaving a complete discussion of them to others.

As a starting point in this discussion let us turn to the first chapter of the book of Revelation, reading verses 4 to 6 inclusive. “John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven spirits that are before his throne; and

from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us, to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; unto him be glory and the dominion forever and ever."

In this text, you will notice that John addresses himself to the "churches," and then, addressed to these same churches, he says, "Christ has made us to be a kingdom." Here we have the two words of our subject in the same text and referring to the same group of people. These verses within themselves should show any reasonable person that the terms "church" and "kingdom" are here used synonymously. The terms are also used thus in another place. In Matt. 16:18-19 Jesus ended his conversation with Peter thus: "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . ." Here again the two terms are used in the same breath, with the same meaning. In the midst of this passage in Revelation, which we have read, Jesus is called "a faithful witness" and "the first born from the dead." Let us keep these terms in mind, as Jesus will be the witness most frequently called upon during this lesson.

By the word "kingdom" I mean the kingdom of heaven, also called the "kingdom of God," and the "kingdom of Christ." In his comments upon the last passover, Jesus said (Luke 22:29-30) "And I appoint unto you a kingdom as my father hath appoint-



ed unto me; that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." In recording by divine inspiration the same scene, Matthew says in chapter 26:29, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Now these men were guided "into all truth" and both of them, describing the same conversation from the same set of lips. Thus Jesus himself used the terms "My kingdom" and "My Father's kingdom" interchangeably.

Mark reports that Jesus came into Galilee preaching, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). Matthew reports (Matt. 4:17) that Jesus withdrew into Galilee and "Began to preach and to say, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Thus the same lips use these three terms interchangeably.

By the church, I refer to the "heavenly Jerusalem," also called the "church of God" and the "church of the first-born." In Hebrews 12:22-23 we read, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born." Thus we see that the heavenly Jerusalem and the church of the first-born are one. Paul says in Col. 1:18 that Christ is the first-born. Hence, the heavenly Jerusalem and Christ's church are one. In Acts 20:28 the same institution is called the "church of God." "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Hence these three titles, as well as



others, all refer to the same church. Then, the kingdom and the church belong to Christ, to God, and to heaven. This in itself identifies them as one.

In discussing the church and the kingdom, I propose to discuss only the New Testament, or "last days" phase of the subject. God has always had a priesthood. That priesthood Melchizedek held for a brief space in the days in which Abraham dwelt in Canaan. That same priesthood Jesus Christ holds today according to Hebrews 6:20. Likewise God has always had a kingdom and a throne. David, in Psalm 45:6 says, "Thy throne, O Lord, is forever and ever."

God from that throne ruled over men until the days of Saul. In 1 Samuel 12:12-13 we read, "And when ye saw that Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us; when the Lord your God was your king. Now, therefore, behold the king which ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired. Behold, the Lord has set a king over you."

David sat upon that same throne, and after him Solomon. And after Solomon sat a long line of kings of the tribe of Judah. Finally, because of the wickedness of Coniah, God had the prophet Jeremiah pronounce the curse recorded in Jer. 22:30. Thus saith the Lord, "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." So God took away the throne which he had given to Israel in the days of Samuel and Saul. He solemnly promised that none of the descendants of Coniah should ever sit on that throne in Judah, yet Matthew lists Jesus as a descen-

dant of Coniah. This one statement forever brands the theory of the personal return and reign of Christ over the earth from Jerusalem in Judah for a thousand years as purely the fictitious product of speculative minds.

In due time, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea—born to be king—to sit upon the throne of David, but not born to sit upon a literal throne in the city of Jerusalem in Judah. That throne had been removed from the earth since the days of Coniah and God had promised that none should ever sit on it in Judah either now or after the resurrection.

I have presented these things to show that in some sense of the term, God has always had a church and always had a kingdom, and that the two have always held the identical spot in God's plan. However in this lecture we are concerned with that kingdom and that church as they were given to Jesus Christ upon his ascension to the right hand of God.

Jesus did not receive his kingdom until after his death. Even as Joseph of Arimathea sought permission to bury the body, he "looked for the kingdom . . ." (Mark 15:42). In the first chapter of Acts, as the disciples stood with the risen Christ on a little hill outside Jerusalem, and asked, "Lord, doth thou now at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus had not yet received the kingdom. It had not yet been restored. While these disciples watched, in the next instant after this very question, Jesus was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight. While their human and finite vision had to end with the underneath side of a cloud, the eye of the prophet Daniel pierced the mists and saw "one like unto

the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given unto him dominion, and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).

The apostle Paul does not leave us in doubt as to when Jesus received his church, or became head of it. Hear him: “. . . the working of the strength of his might which he (God) wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:19-23).

Herein is conclusive evidence that Jesus Christ received the kingdom and the church at the same time—namely when he ascended to the right hand of God, and was clothed and crowned with power. Thus, Jesus became head of the church and king of the kingdom at the same instant and by the same process. They must be one.

We can approach one step nearer to an infallible conclusion by finding that the kingdom and the church entered their New Testament phase at the same place, in the same instant and by the same process, and were composed of the same subjects. Jesus told his hearers, in Mark 9:1: “There are some



here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, until they see the kingdom come with power." The kingdom was to come with power during their lifetime. In Acts 1:8 Jesus told them, "ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you . . . ." So then they were to receive the power when the Spirit came; but the kingdom was to come when the power came. Again in Acts 2:4 we read, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." It is the day of Pentecost. The Spirit comes. The power was to come with it. The kingdom was to come with the power. Therefore the kingdom came on Pentecost. Jesus went away to receive it at the hands of the Father. He did receive it, and the day of Pentecost was infalible proof.

On the other hand, I find that Jesus promised Peter that he would build his church (Matt. 16:18). That church being based upon a (new) testament, it could not have been built before his death, for the writer of Hebrews 9:16f says, "For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it, for a testament is of force after that men are dead, for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth." Again, the church could not have belonged to Jesus for Paul said that he purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28). It was not his until it was purchased by him, and he purchased the church with his blood. The last verse of Acts 2 refers to the Lord adding to the church, which was then in existence. In it were apostles, prophets, teachers, etc. which Paul says in 1 Cor. 12:28, were set in the church. One has only to read the second



chapter of Acts to see the "setting in" of these men. Thus the church and the kingdom were set in operation under Jesus the Christ at the same place, in the same instant, and by the same process, and was composed of the same subjects. They must be one.

Thus far we have shown that the kingdom and the church are in actual existence now; that Christ is the head of both of them; that he received the positions at the same instant, by the same process, and that the kingdom and the church began simultaneously, at the same spot, and by the same process.

Soon after the creation, God decreed that every thing should produce after its own kind. That law, all the realm of nature respects. That same law is true with respect to the production of the kingdom. Jesus said in Luke 8:10-11, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they might not see and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God." The seed produces the kingdom. One produced by the seed would be a citizen of the kingdom.

Yet Peter says (1 Pet. 1:23), "Ye are begotten again not of corruptible seed but by incorruptible, through the word of God. . ." If the seed of the kingdom produces the kingdom, then those to whom Peter wrote were all a part of the kingdom. Yet he refers to them as the "elect," "obedient children," "spiritual house," "holy priesthood," "a people called out of darkness into light," "brethren," and other titles, all of which are used elsewhere in God's word as descriptive of the church.

The seed does not produce two different plants.

No grain of wheat planted leaves the sower in doubt as to whether there will spring forth a stalk of wheat or of corn. It would be unreasonable to suppose that the seed of the kingdom, when sown, might produce the kingdom, or on the other hand it might produce something entirely different—the church. The seed of the kingdom is the only thing under heaven that can be sown and the church produced. If the church is produced then the seed of the church was sown, according to God's law in Genesis. If the church is produced by the seed, and the kingdom is produced by the same seed, then the two products of that seed are not two but one.

Every element necessary to produce the kingdom is present with us today. We have the seed of the kingdom, which Jesus said, in Luke 8, "is the heart of man." We have the field, which Jesus, in Matt. 13:38, identified as the world. So we have the field, the soil in the field, and the seed. Now when the seed was sown, results were produced. Jesus said in Luke 8:15 that some "brought forth fruit with patience." So then the seed, or word of God is planted in the soil, or heart of man, in the field, this present world, and the result is a citizen of the kingdom.

Likewise the identical elements make the existence of the church in the world possible. Paul, in writing to "the church of God which is at Corinth," said, "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain" (1 Cor. 15:1). Here we have the essential elements. The field, or world; the

soil or heart; the seed, or gospel; a combination of which Paul says produced the "church of God which is at Cornith." The same elements are necessary for the existence of the kingdom and the church, and by the identical process they both are expanded. They are not two but one.

Paul sowed the seed of the kingdom and produced the churches in Asia. In writing to the church at Colossæ, Paul spoke of the Father "who hath delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:17), which kingdom we found in the beginning to be the kingdom of God and of heaven. So, then, all the Colossian churches were also in the kingdom. Again the writer of Hebrews says that all of them had come unto "the church of the first born," yet in Heb. 12:28, he tells them that they have received a kingdom that cannot be moved. So then, all who were in the church to whom the book of Hebrews was addressed were also recipients of the kingdom. In Rev. 1, John, addressing himself to "the seven churches that are in Asia," said in verse 9, "I, John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus . . ." So all who were in the seven churches in Asia were to a man in the kingdom also.

To be in the kingdom is to be in the church, and to be in the church is to be in the kingdom. Show me any man in the New Testament age, and prove to me that he was in the kingdom, and I will prove by the same process that he was in the church. Show me one man in the New Testament church, and prove him to be a member thereof, and I will by the



same process show that he is a citizen of the kingdom.

Why they even went by the same names. In 1 Cor. 15:1 Paul spoke of those who were with him in the church as "brethren." John, in Rev. 1:9, speaks of those who were in the kingdom with him as "brethren." Paul calls those at Colossæ who were in the kingdom "saints," and uses the very same term to identify those who were in the "church of God which is at Corinth." These titles and others do not describe two different sets of people. They refer to one people. That people comprises the church. That same people comprises the kingdom.

It may also be noticed that the same method of entrance places one in the kingdom and in the church. In John 3:3-5 Jesus told Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." So, one enters the kingdom by way of the new birth. Yet Peter, in 1 Pet. 1:23, says that those whom he calls "spiritual house" in 2:5 had been born again. Now the writer of Hebrews speaks of the "spiritual house" as the church in Heb. 3:6. So then, all who were in the church were there by virtue of having been born into it. Yet Jesus explains that one gets into the kingdom by being born again. So then, the same birth places one in the kingdom and in the church. One could not then be born into the kingdom and not



be born into the church. Thus it is impossible for one to get into one without getting into the other. So then, they must be one institution and not two.

Paul further wrote to those Colossians who had been "translated into the kingdom," that they had "put off the old man with his deeds, and had put on the new man. . ." (Col. 3:9-10). The same writer, writing to the church at Ephesus in chapter 4, verses 22-24, says to those who were in the church, ". . . Ye put away . . . the old man . . . and put on the new man." So then one does exactly the same thing when he enters the kingdom that he does when he enters the church.

Furthermore, every single attribute of character required of one who is a citizen of the kingdom is required of the member of the church with the identical degree of quality. Every duty demanded of one in the kingdom is also demanded of one in the church. Whatever the prophets, or the writers in the New Testament, said concerning the character of Jesus could just as easily have been spoken concerning the character of either the man in the kingdom or the man in the church.

A good example of this reasoning is found in Matt. 25. Jesus there, under the figure of a kingdom shows the good and the bad of all the earth drawn before him in judgment. Beginning with verse 34 we have, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink . . ." Then he enumerates the things they had done, by virtue of

which they were receiving their reward. Yet each of those things was a work expressly commanded of the church by the apostles. Thus these people received a reward in the kingdom for doing what was commanded of the church. Jesus further makes this contention clear by referring to those people as "these my brethren." The term brethren is used extensively to designate the relationship of those in the church. In this instance, Jesus evidently did not make a distinction between the church and the kingdom. If he did not, what right have we to make such a distinction?

Christ's method of ruling his kingdom and his church is one method. He reigns over the kingdom by or through his truth. He governs the church by the same truth. James wrote to those who were "heirs of the kingdom" that they were "brought forth by the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18). And again, Peter, writing to the church said "wherefore seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth . . ." So Jesus uses the same truth in exactly the same way to govern both the kingdom and the church. They must be the same institution.

Undoubtedly worship is carried on in both the kingdom and the church. Yet there is only one acceptable brand of worship. Jesus says in John 4:23, "The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Those in the kingdom and those in the church then must worship in the same spirit and according to the same truth. If there was the slightest difference between them, this could not be true. Every true

worshipper is both in the kingdom and in the church for the two are one.

Considering for a moment the structure of each, we find that also to be identical. These five things are necessary for the existence of a kingdom: (1) a king, (2) a kingdom, (3) subjects, (4) law, (5) authority. Those five things are present. Christ is that king (1 Tim. 6:15). He has a kingdom now (Col. 1:13). He has subjects in that kingdom now (Rev. 1:9). We are under a royal law (Jas. 2:8). The Son of man has dominion over that kingdom which was given him (Dan. 7:14).

Likewise for the existence of a church five things are necessary: (1) a head, (2) a body, (3) members of that body, (4) a law, (5) authority. These five things are present. Christ is head of the church (Eph. 1:22). The church is the body (Eph. 1:23). We are members of the body (1 Cor. 12:27). We are under the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). Christ has authority to execute his law in the church (John 5:27). So then, both church and kingdom are structurally one. Jesus, in Matt. 28:18, proclaimed that all authority in heaven and earth were given unto him. Yet James speaks of his law as singular. So then, both the church and the kingdom are subject to the same law.

Furthermore, within the kingdom, Jesus promised his apostles that they should "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). These apostles were to rule with him in his kingdom. Yet these apostles were given the very same position in the church, when he commissioned them to "go



make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. . . ." (Matt. 28:19-20).

So we find that the church and the kingdom are one from the dawn of prophesy until the end of eternity. The speech of the prophets had tickled the ears of the human race for generations, and turned anxious eyes toward some future day, which according to Jehovah God should be designated as the "last days." Isaiah said, in Isa. 2:2-3, "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways and we shall walk his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Isaiah here says that the "Lord's house" or "Zion" shall be established in the last days. In Heb. 12:22, we find that we have come unto that house and to that Zion, which the writer says is the "church of the first born." So then, the church in prophecy was to be established in the last days.

Joel likewise prophesied concerning the happenings of the last days. Peter informs us on Pentecost that Joel's prophecy is here fulfilled. Yet we have shown earlier in this lecture that there can be no doubt but that the kingdom had its beginning in that moment that Peter said Joel had prophesied of. Thus we find



that the kingdom was also to be a product of the last days.

That both the church and the kingdom was to fill the same territory is clearly demonstrated. In the dream of the King of Babylon, a stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, fell down and smote the image upon its feet and "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Daniel says that this stone was the kingdom (Dan. 2:44). Thus the kingdom was to spread into all the earth.

Jesus, in Matt. 13, shows the growth of the kingdom to be like that of a mustard seed, which, being the smallest of grains, became the largest of trees. He also used the parable of the leaven to demonstrate the expansion of the kingdom. Now let us trace briefly the expansion of the church. From the smallest of beginnings on the day of Pentecost, it spread from Jerusalem into Judea, Samaria, and then into the continents of the earth and the islands of the sea. From East to West and from pole to pole the gospel is carried. The seed is sown. Whenever and wherever one becomes obedient to it that one becomes a Christian or a member of the Lord's church. Thus it can be easily seen that the expansion of the boundaries of the church so as to include all peoples, nations, races, and tongues, in all ages of the last days fulfills perfectly every prophecy dealing with the expansion of the kingdom.

Daniel spoke concerning the endurance of the kingdom that it "shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to another people . . . and it shall stand forever." Jesus, in a parallel prophecy, record-

ed in Matt. 16:18, says of the church, "on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." If Jesus here spoke the truth, then the church is everlasting also. It follows that if the church and the kingdom are two distinct institutions, each of which is eternal in duration, then there must be two heavens to contain them, or else a partition put up to divide them. Since all our information concerning the glory world mentions only one innumerable host over there where God and angels dwell, we must conclude that there will be no distinction there between those who were in the church and those who were in the kingdom. If there is no distinction there, there is no distinction here.

We have the promise of Paul that Jesus will reign over his kingdom until the last enemy is put under his feet, and the last enemy to be put under his feet is death (1 Cor. 15:25f). In 1 Thess. 4:16-18 we are informed that death will be destroyed by the resurrection, for the dead shall arise and the living be changed. At that time, according to verse 24, Jesus will deliver up the kingdom to the Father.

Now on the other hand I find that Christ is to be head over the church until he comes for that church. Paul wrote to the "church of the Thessalonians" (1 Thess. 1:1) telling them that, "we . . . shall be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). Then I find further that "Christ hath reconciled you through the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unreprouable before him" (Col. 1:22). Now we see that Christ is to present the church, just as he presents the kingdom, at the same time, to the

Father. He doesn't perform a double duty in this respect.

In any action there is a purpose. Every intelligent deed of ours has some definite purpose behind it. It would be unreasonable to think that God had no purpose back of what he did. In all God's creation it is easy to see that he had the welfare of his creature, man, in mind. When man sinned, God's purpose for his eternal happiness was thwarted. Immediately God set about to effect man's return that the eternal abode of the soul should not be left uninhabited. God so announced his intentions to Eve, promising that her seed should bruise the serpent's head.

That eternal purpose God kept hidden from the world until the days of Jesus. Paul says, in Eph. 3:5, that that mystery is "now made known to his apostles and prophets by the Spirit." He further says in verse 10 that the manifold wisdom of God is made known by the church. Thus we find that the church was God's instrument through which to attain his eternal purpose. But on the other hand, Jesus has promised to "gather out of the kingdom those that offend, and they shall be burned" (Matt. 13:41). Therefore the kingdom is also God's instrument through which to attain his eternal purpose.

Now it is unreasonable to believe that God has two methods in operation at the same time through which to attain his purpose. God does not deal that way. Their objects on earth are the same. There is no logical reason for a difference in the two. They accomplish exactly the same purpose. Since these things are true, the church and the kingdom must be the same institution.



These conclusions within themselves would refute any possible acceptance of the theory that the church is simply the "vestibule" of the kingdom; or of the theory that the kingdom does not now exist, but will begin when the church ends. I can see no reason for such an idea outside the fact that in order to court the speculative fancies of materialistic religionists concerning the literal existence of a literal thousand literal years of a literal reign of Jesus on a literal throne in the literal city of Jerusalem, such a distinction must be made. If the arguments presented herein do prove the church and kingdom to be one and the same, then there is no possibility for the existence of such a future kingdom. If, on the other hand, they are wholly false, then there might possibly be some way of getting an earthly reign of a thousand years, if such an idea were acceptable to God, and if there were any conceivable reason for it.

Rightly, Jesus referred to the church or kingdom as a pearl of great price. In it is exemplified and commanded all the pure and good and holy. It is set against all evil and all sin. The progress of the race is but living testimony to its power and greatness. Prophets, priests, kings and singers have extolled its glory, growth, and praise. Every reference in prophecy to Jesus the Christ found its greatness in the fact that he established the kingdom or church. All that God now does for man is done through it, and all that man hopes to attain in eternity is brought within his grasp by it. In it is symbolized the joy and purity of immortal glory. When shadows fade, clouds



all pass, and trials cease, then shall the pearl of great price shine forth in regal splendor and glory. It is worth a man's forsaking all that he might possess it.

Of all the creations of God, the kingdom or church is the most beautiful. Though God made the lily, its garments are not so fair as the robes of the redeemed. The solidity of a granite peak, towering like a sentinel above surrounding hills cannot be compared to the immobility of that kingdom that time cannot affect and that man cannot destroy. Even the ending of time cannot sweep it away.

And God's glorious people—the "ekklesia" of every nation and every age! Spirit filled! Garments washed white in the blood of the Lamb! An invincible host! Redeemed! Purchased! Forgiven! Sons! Heirs! Partakers of light! Saints! Angels! A heavenly building, and a holy priesthood. What an honor and privilege to share with saints and martyrs the distinction of being a part of God's glorious kingdom! Indeed it is a foretaste of heaven itself!

Today we stand in God's "holy place" offering up our daily sacrifices, awaiting with anticipation the time when life's whippoorwills shall call and not in vain—the time when the Great Reaper—no longer grim—shall fold each child of God into his earthen trundle-bed; and each shall sleep in peace, awaiting the day when the unequivocal finger of God rubs out the hills and vales of time, and the righteous dead, like a million daisies, spring from bursting tombs to join the heaven bound host. There in the solemnity of that divine tribunal to have the nail

pierced hands of our crucified King, press down the crown that fadeth not away upon our immortalized brow, and then with saints of earth through centuries past gather of one accord in one place, in sweet communion while ages roll in an undivided assembly that shall never be dismissed.

## THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

By John H. Banister

President Cox, Brethren and Friends:

I deeply appreciate the kind invitation of Brother Cox to appear on this lectureship and the honor of speaking to this splendid audience tonight on the subject, "The Keys of the Kingdom." I particularly like the general theme of the lectureship, "The Kingdom of God," since we are intensely interested in the kingdom; are members of it; and are interested in the growth and influence of it in the world. Too, since there has been so much misunderstanding of the kingdom; so many errors and harmful theories taught relative to it. I believe a thorough study of this all-important subject is timely at the present and Brother Cox is to be commended for his wise selection of this subject.

Since my subject tonight is "The Keys of the Kingdom," everyone knows there is one outstanding text for this theme, (Matt. 16:13-19) and to the reading of this Scripture I now invite your careful attention:

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some,



Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said unto him, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This is a very familiar text which has been used on hundreds of occasions by every gospel preacher. In fact, my subject is an old, familiar one, yet like all other Bible subjects, it is ever new and pulsating with life divine. When Jesus told Peter he would give to him the keys of the kingdom, he spoke, in that connection, about building his church, so we would naturally expect the keys of the kingdom to have some sort of relationship to the church of Jesus Christ. There are two definite ideas presented in this subject: Namely, (1) The kingdom, and (2) The keys. We shall study the kingdom first.

## I. The Kingdom

Since the keys given to Peter were "the keys of the kingdom" it is very important to know all we can about the-kingdom as that will help us in ascertaining more about the keys.

## 1. What Is the Kingdom?

There has been much controversy in the religious world on this subject. Some teach that the kingdom is a sort of ideal that pertains to the inner man and has no definite connection with the outer man. Others teach that it is to be an earthly affair, making a distinction between the church and kingdom. They teach that the church is in existence now but the kingdom is not, and will not be until the second coming when Jesus will inaugurate an earthly, millennial reign. Jesus taught in John 18:36 that his kingdom was not of this world. Those who hold to the pre-millennial theory of the kingdom teach that it is of the world (earthly in nature), and that is the difference between the two. The theory that Christ's kingdom is nothing more than a future earthly millennial affair, is to my way of thinking, repulsive to the spiritual mind and contrary to reason and Scripture. Jesus was crucified because he would not establish an earthly kingdom and that shows conclusively that he did not then plan to build an earthly kingdom or that he plans one in the future. If the kingdom is earthly, and yet in the future, then we will have the anomaly of Christ being converted to the Jews and not the Jews being converted to Christ. The Jews would not accept the kind of kingdom he offered them; so Jesus reverses himself and accepts the kind of kingdom the Jews demanded.

In 1 Cor. 15:23-25, Paul teaches conclusively that Christ is reigning as king now (therefore, the kingdom must be in existence now) and at his second

coming he will cease his reign and deliver up the kingdom to the father. That will be "the end," not the beginning, of the kingdom so far as its being on earth is concerned. Since the kingdom cannot be earthly in nature, but spiritual, it must have some connection with the church. In our text Jesus uses the terms "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably, proving that they are one and the same thing. "I will build my church . . . and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom." In Luke 22:29-30, Jesus places the Lord's supper in the kingdom and we later find it in the church (1 Cor. 11:23-28) so it is obvious they are the same. Also, in Hebrews 12:23-28, Paul speaks of the "church of the firstborn" and in the same context he calls it the "kingdom which cannot be moved." Too, the church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18); and we are "baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). Also Jesus tells us that we enter the kingdom by being born "of water and the Spirit." Since "born of water" means baptism, then the same baptism that puts us into the kingdom puts us in the "one body" (the church) else we are forced to say there are two baptisms in contradiction of Eph. 4:5 which says there is one. To conclude, then, that the kingdom and the church are one is correct and in harmony with every idea presented in the New Testament of the kingdom. In the New Testament, the church is described by many appropriate figures. When we speak of the church as a kingdom, we think of its governing feature; as a body, we think of its fellowship feature; as a temple, we think of its worshipping feature; as a house, we think of its family feature; as a vineyard, we think of its working fea-



ture; as an army, we think of its fighting feature; as a bride, we think of its purity and holiness; and as a flock, we think of its protection for the sheep. So it certainly is in harmony with the Scripture to speak of the church as the kingdom.

## 2. When Was the Kingdom Established?

This is an old theme that has been thrashed out in many debates with representatives of the various denominations. Different theories are held by them on the subject, some hold the kingdom started with Abraham; others, that it began with John the Baptist; others, that it began with the selection of the twelve apostles.

In fact, most denominational churches hold that the kingdom began somewhere during the personal ministry of Christ. The pre-millennialists, as everyone knows, hold that the kingdom has not yet been established and will not be until the second coming of Christ. If the kingdom is not in existence now, Paul was wrong for he taught in Col. 1:13, that we are translated into it; and in Hebrews 12:28, that we have received a kingdom; and in 1 Thess. 2:12, that we have been called into it. Also, John said he was in the kingdom (Rev. 1:9), which could not have been if the kingdom was yet in the future.

That the kingdom was not established during the personal ministry (although it was in a state of preparation); that it is not a future affair; but that it was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ is a truth, I think, that can be substantiated. The Old Testament prophets confirm

this. In Isa. 2:2-4, we have a distinct prophecy of the kingdom. He presents three ideas: (1) The kingdom would be established in "the last days." Peter in Acts 2:17, shows that the last days began on Pentecost. Paul in Hebrews 1:2, teaches that the Christian dispensation was "the last days" so it must have been set up when the "last days (dispensation)" began.

(2) "All nations" would flow into it, showing that it was for all. This proves that it could not have been set up during the personal ministry because the preaching of the kingdom then was to the Jews alone (Matt. 10:5-7). It also disproves the pre-millennial idea for the kingdom is for "all nations" and the so-called future kingdom is primarily for the Jews.

(3) The law of this kingdom would go forth from Jerusalem. This is in exact harmony with the words of the great commission in Luke 24:46-47, that the preaching of the universal gospel would begin in Jerusalem. This was fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2) for that was the beginning of the "last days"; the beginning of a universal kingdom, or church; and that was when the law of the Lord first went forth.

In Daniel 2:44, we have another distinct prophecy of the time of the kingdom's establishment. After interpreting the king's dream by showing that the various parts of the image referred to earthly kingdoms, Daniel said, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Since the kingdom was to be established while one

of those kingdoms was in existence, it follows that it has already been set up for each of those kingdoms has already passed away. As everyone knows, the church of Jesus Christ had its origin during the reign of the Roman Empire which was one of the kingdoms pictured in this image. Daniel's prophecy proves then that the kingdom has already been established. Too, he says "it shall never be destroyed" and "it shall stand forever." This must be the same kingdom of Hebrews 12:28, "which cannot be moved," and we have already shown that this kingdom is the "church of the firstborn." Daniel says the kingdom shall never be destroyed and Paul says it cannot be moved so these two are the same, or we have two universal, indestructible kingdoms. During the personal ministry of Jesus the kingdom was preached as being "at hand" (approaching; soon to come, etc.). In Matt. 3:2, John the Baptist preached that. In Matt. 4:17, Jesus preached it. When he sent out the twelve, he told them to preach the "kingdom is at hand" (Matt. 10:7). The seventy were told to preach, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9). Jesus said some of them would be living when the kingdom would be established (Matt. 16:28). He taught his disciples to pray that the kingdom might come (Matt. 6:10). When on the cross, one of the thieves requested, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42). This shows it was not set up before the cross. After the death of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, who buried Jesus, was waiting for the kingdom (Mark 15:43). Just prior to his ascension the apostles asked him if he would then restore the kingdom (Acts 1:6). Though this shows



their misconception of the kingdom, yet it proves conclusively the kingdom was not set up at the time of his ascension. So we are safe in saying the kingdom had no formal existence up to Pentecost. On Pentecost, the gospel, in its fullness, was first preached and people were added to the church (kingdom) (Acts 2:47). This is the first time we read of anyone being added to the Lord's church. Before Pentecost, the kingdom is always spoken of as future; and after Pentecost it is always spoken of as being in existence, so it must have had its beginning there. In Acts 11:15, Peter declares that was "the beginning." Philip preached the kingdom (Acts 8:12). Paul declares that some had been translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13); and John affirmed he was in it (Rev. 1:9).

If the kingdom is yet future, as pre-millennialists affirm, the Old Testament prophets were wrong; the Scriptures cited above are wrong; Paul was wrong; John was wrong; and we have no king now (1 Tim. 6:15) unless, like Judge Rutherford, one holds that Jesus was crowned king but had no kingdom. Too, the new birth is not in effect if the kingdom is not now in existence and we cannot be "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:4). And, to reach the height of absurdity, if the kingdom is not now in existence, Peter has never used the "keys of the kingdom" and that shows that Peter, not Christ, will play the leading role at the second coming when the kingdom (according to some) will be established. Since we have now found out what the kingdom is and when it was established, it is in order to study the subject of:

## II. The Keys

### 1. What Are the Keys?

As all will acknowledge, "keys" are here used figuratively and not literally. "Keys" are "a symbol of authority"; "power"; "the authority to lay down rules"; "to grant admission" etc. Let us notice some places where the word occurs in the Bible. In Isa. 22:22, Isaiah says, "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open." This prophecy finds its fulfillment in Rev. 3:7 when it is applied to Jesus, "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." It is evident from the above that "key" refers to power, authority, etc. In Luke 11:52, Jesus says, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Taking away the key of knowledge was their way of restraining others from learning. In Rev. 1:18 Jesus says he has "the keys of death and of hades" meaning he has the power to unlock the graves and bring forth the dead. In Rev. 9:1-2 we see a star falling into the earth "and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit . . ." In Rev. 20:1, John "saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit . . ." Obviously "key" is used figuratively. One would need a fertile imagination indeed to think they are to be taken literally.

Thus it is apparent, I believe, that Peter was to receive authority to open the door of the kingdom to the world.

That Peter, and none other, did open the door of the kingdom to the world is presumptive proof of the above meaning of "Keys."

## 2. To Whom Were the Keys Given?

The keys were given to Peter and to none other. Christ selected him from among the twelve for this responsibility. Why Peter was selected we know not, unless it was his peculiar fitness for this task, which Jesus recognized in him. The fact that Peter was chosen for this work would seem to indicate that he was more capable than the others. Since the "keys" committed to him meant the opening of the door of the kingdom (or church) to the entire world, it is no accident, therefore, that the first sermon, under the great commission, to either Jew or Gentile was preached by Peter. In Acts 2:14 we find that "Peter lifted up his voice and said unto them . . . ." While the other apostles were present, yet it was Peter who took the lead and did the preaching on this occasion. In Acts 10 when the door of the kingdom (salvation) was to be opened to the Gentiles for the first time, the angel of the Lord directed Cornelius to "send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter . . . . he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Lest Cornelius might call the wrong Simon (which was a common name then) he gave his surname in order that Peter, and, none other, might be brought. Later, in the council at Jerusalem, Peter



says, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe" (Acts 15:7). Peter was given the authority to do the first preaching under the gospel law and he did it. The keys being committed to Peter bring two important thoughts up for consideration at this time:

**A. The Preeminence of Peter.** Was Peter elevated in rank above the other apostles? Did he have more authority than the others? Was he the first Pope? Did he alone have power to bind and loose? Our friends of the Catholic Church believe in the primacy of Peter, and their entire system is built around that idea. If we can show that Peter was not above the other apostles, then we have demolished the foundation of Catholicism. The power to bind and loose, though spoken to Peter in Matt. 18:19, was given to all the apostles. In Matthew 18:18 and in John 20:22-23, we find that Jesus "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Thus we see all the apostles had this power vested in them by virtue of their inspiration. The only way in which Peter was different from the apostles was in the matters of the keys and, having used the keys once and for all, he had no more authority than any of the other apostles. Peter was not the first Pope for the Bible says nothing about the church having such. "The Rock" in Matt. 16:18, refers, not to Peter, but to the Messiahship of Jesus in Matt. 16:16. At a later time Paul rebuked Peter to the face, and

publicly, which he would not have done had Peter been preeminent (Gal. 2:11-14). In the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:13, 19) James presided, which he would not have done had Peter been above him in apostolic rank. There is nothing whatever in the New Testament to show the preeminence of Peter. On the contrary, the evidence shows that the apostles were on an equal footing and had equal authority. "Peter was given duty, not power; responsibility, not privilege."

**B. The Authority of the Apostles.** That the apostles had authority is admitted by all. It was delegated to them by Christ through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Do we have successors to the apostles in the church today as the Mormons claim? Are the apostles still in the church now? Are they exercising authority now? If so, how? That we do not have successors to the apostles is evident by the absence of the miraculous powers vested in the original ones. That the Popes of Rome are not the successors of the apostle Peter, has been proven by history and Scripture. That the apostles are in the church now is admitted by all, I think. How are they in the church? Not in the flesh as we are. How are they exercising authority in the church today? Through their teaching influence. Paul expresses it in 1 Cor. 11:23, when he says, "For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you . . ." In Acts 2:42, we find that the early Christians continued in "the apostles' doctrine." We are to continue in the apostles' doctrine today and that is done by doing as the apostles have taught us in the New Testament. Paul says in Gal. 1:8-9, "But though we, or an angel from heaven,

preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed . . . . If any man preach any gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." That gospel referred to was that which was not preached "after man," but which had been received by revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12). Therefore, the apostles have the same authority today they had while on earth.

To reject their teachings, as given in the New Testament, in favor of the decrees of Popes, human creeds, councils, etc., is to reject the authority of the apostles. Since the apostles had the power of binding and loosing, then whatever they bound on us we must observe; whatever they did not bind on us, we must not observe. If men seek to bind on us those things the apostles did not bind we may be assured that they are not the successors or representatives of the apostles and are not recognizing the authority given to the twelve.

### 3. How and When Were the Keys Used?

Since the keys gave Peter the authority to open the door of salvation to the world, then the keys were used when that door was opened to the world. He used the keys to open the door to the Jews on Pentecost and to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. He exercised the authority of the keys by preaching the gospel. In Acts 2, we find Peter declaring the gospel to the Jews for the first time. In his sermon (Acts 2:22-36) he declared facts the world had never heard or known before, namely the death, burial,



resurrection, and exaltation of Christ. Upon these facts Christianity rests and they are the essence of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4). After preaching in such a forceful way, and proving that Jesus was the Christ, he told those convicted hearers what they could do to be saved and thus opened the door of the kingdom to them. He pointed the way into the kingdom by pointing them to the way of salvation. After they had asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" he told them to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." That was the door of salvation then and it is the door of salvation now. Those who would enter the kingdom now must do as they did. They "gladly received his word and were baptized" (Acts 2:41) and the Lord added them to the church (Acts 2:47) or kingdom. When sent to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10) to open the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles, we find Peter preaching the same gospel and telling the people to do, substantially, the same thing. Peter preached Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36); his life and works (Acts 10:37-39); his death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 10:39-41); the great commission (thus laying down the terms of pardon) (Acts 10:42); he commanded them to believe (Acts 10:43); they repented (Acts 11:18); and were commanded to be baptized (Acts 10:47-48). Thus the Gentiles had to believe and obey the same gospel as did the Jews.

#### 4. Are the Keys Still In Use?

The keys are not in use today. Peter, having opened the door to both Jew and Gentile, by showing

them the plan of salvation, needed the keys no longer. The door once opened can never be shut (Rev. 3:7) and hence, the keys are no longer needed. We need not expect the keys to be used again. What we need to do is to teach the same plan of salvation which Peter taught and thus show sinners the opened door of salvation. We sometimes hear a preacher announce, "I am going to open the doors of the church tonight." This is not language of Scripture and you never hear gospel preachers using it. It is wrong for two reasons:

(1) The New Testament church does not have a plurality of doors. That would imply a number of different ways to get into it.

(2) No preacher can open the door of the church because that power was given to Peter and he alone exercised it. When you hear the above expression you may safely conclude that the preacher is not a true gospel preacher and that the church he represents is not the New Testament church. When Peter used the keys he forever opened the door into the church of Jesus Christ. By that act he opened the door of Love, Compassion, Grace, Mercy, Blood, Redemption, Forgiveness, Atonement and one can enter this door any time he is willing to believe and obey the glorious gospel of Christ. One, thank God, does not have to wait for mortal man to open unto him the door into eternal life. That has already been done. Man need not wait for the door to be opened but to enter the opened door without delay.

Although the door of mercy is forever open, our hearts are often closed to him. We do not need to persuade God to open that door unto us, we need to

open the door of our hearts unto him. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). My sinner friend, is your heart still closed unto him? He has opened the way unto you. How many times he has knocked at your heart! How much he loves you! How anxious is he to come in! Will you hear his tearful pleading and open the door of your heart and let him come in? He will forgive you, bless you, sustain you, comfort you, be with you through all the changing scenes of life, and, after awhile, he will stand by your side in death and go through the dark valley with you, and as you near the "happy golden shore" the opened gates of that heavenly city will burst in splendor upon your enraptured vision and you will be permitted to enter in there to remain forever with God, Christ, the angels, the redeemed of all ages and be reunited with your precious loved ones that are not dead, but just gone on before.

. Will you come while we stand and sing?



## CHRISTIAN UNITY

By John Straiton

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord, so spake Moses in his farewell address to the assembled hosts of Israel. Just as there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, so there is only one body, the church of the living God. In this body Christian unity exists, and through this body this unity is manifested not only to the world but to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places.

Christian unity is a unity of Christians. The word Christian is used in two senses. In the strict New Testament meaning a Christian is one who has believed on the Lord, has repented and been baptized. Loosely and popularly it is applied to any one who professes Christianity in any of the many forms in which it is presented by the many varied religious bodies who accept the Bible in some sense as their guide. Amongst these there is a growing sentiment for Christian union. By this is meant the coalescence of two or more denominations into one. A recent example is the union of the three large Methodist denominations into one organization. This is not what we mean by Christian unity. There is a great difference between union and unity. An example that

will show this distinction is found in the account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream recorded in the second chapter of Daniel. The lower part of the great image, which the king saw was composed "part of potter's clay and part of iron." There was a union of the two but no unity. A oneness in nature is essential to unity. The human body is a good example of unity. Though there are many members of the body, diverse one from another, yet the body is a unit. In the New Testament the body is used as a symbol of the church. Every member of the church is born from above—is born of God—and therefore is a partaker of the divine nature. This oneness of life gives to the church an essential divine unity, which may be marred and disfigured but which can never be entirely lost. It is of that unity we speak. Unity can be consummated only by acceptance of the absolute authority of the Scriptures and a complete willingness to obey them. More than a hundred years ago Barton Stone stated, "Men have devised many plans to unite Christians—all are vain. There is but one effectual plan, which is that all be united with Christ and walk with him."

Some Christians make more rapid growth in knowledge than do others. This difference in attainment tends somewhat to division. One man has faith to eat all things: the other who is not so well informed eateth only herbs. Must they divide over this question? The strong man is not to set at nought the weak: while the weak man is not to condemn the strong. Why? Because God hath received him. This is the basis of unity. If God has received a man I

have no right to reject him. If God has not received him I have no right to accept him. In the days of Jesus one of his disciples wanted to draw a line where the Lord had not drawn one. John said, "Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him." Why, John, why did you forbid him? "Because he followeth not with us." John wanted to make a division where the Lord had not made one. What did Jesus say? "Forbid him not; for he that is not against you is for you." It is clear then that the basis of Christian unity is acceptance with God.

The Lord had one physical body, and he now has one spiritual body, the church. The Roman soldier, who with a spear pierced the body of Jesus was guilty of a great sin. The men today who rend the spiritual body of the Christ are guilty of a greater sin. The poor ignorant soldier knew not what he did. Any one today with the Bible in his hand who will be a party to dividing the body of Christ is a greater sinner than the Roman soldier.

Let us endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Gospel banner lift on high,  
 With steady hand and strong;  
 As heralds of a brighter day,  
 That may not tarry long  
 When strife of warring sects shall cease.  
 The one great contest be  
 That acts of mercy may increase.  
 And Christ exalted be.



The Gospel banner lift on high.  
We'll plead with one accord,  
For union on this truth alone  
That "Jesus is the Lord";  
Then by our swift obedience prove  
His power to save and bless  
That men may be constrained to love  
The Lord our righteousness.

THE SAVIOUR'S PRAYER FOR UNITY  
OR  
PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS A BASIS OF  
CHRISTIAN UNITY

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By Trine Starnes

Talking about unity in the field of religious thought today may appear to some to be much like talking about peace in a war-torn world: men crying, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). On every hand we hear men crying, "Unity, unity," when there is no unity.

But within the church of Christ things ought not so to be, for Jesus taught that Christians are more than others, and that they should do more than others. They should not only talk about unity more than others, but do more about it than others, for they have the only key to its attainment.

As brethren in Christ we continually make the plea for unity among the religions of the world. We plead for denominationalism to be dissolved, and for all to unite in "one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God." And certainly there can be no greater plea, unless it is the plea of this prayer of our Saviour, and that is for the church itself to be united.

In the Savior's prayer John seventeen there were two major objectives: an immediate and an ulti-

mate objective. The immediate objective was: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one" (vs. 20, 21). The ultimate objective was: "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (v. 21).

That earnest prayer was answered. In Acts 4:32 we read, "And the multitudes of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." The result of such unity was that great multitudes believed and turned to the Lord. Both objectives were realized in the Jerusalem church. Had that unity continued, no doubt the world would have long since been converted to Christ. But the evangelization and conversion of the world are contingent upon the unity for which Jesus prayed. Something happened in the early church! Something intervened to frustrate that unity!

The woeful influence that caused that primitive unity to collapse was personal unrighteousness. All strife and discord grow out of personal unrighteousness. Cain killed his brother because of a personal jealousy and envy, which within itself was sinful. The strife which arose between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and those of Lot was because of a personal selfishness and covetousness on the part of Lot. That personal covetousness was sinful within itself.

The division in the church at Corinth was the fruit of a personal carnality and childishness that had crept into the ranks of a once united brotherhood. Some were walking as babes; they were fleshly. The



division was the fruit of that personal unrighteousness.

In view of these self-evident truths, my plea is that personal righteousness is the only basis of unity within the body of Christ. I want it to go down, deep into every heart, that I believe with all of my heart, that Jesus not only prayed that his disciples be one, but that he solved the problem of their oneness and unity by locating the fountain from which it flows; that fountain is personal righteousness. Can it be possible that bitter waters could flow from such a sweet fountain?

Thomas Carlyle once said, "If you want a reform to go around the world, put it on two feet." That is to say, make it a personal matter. When Luther was ready to reform the great ecclesiastical machine of Rome, he did not call a convention; he said, "The world is my parish." That thought took itself on two feet and the world today is enjoying the fruit of that individual contribution. Jesus is the author of this principle, for he entrusted the gospel into the care of a very few men, and he had time to converse with the woman at the well.

The industrial idea of our times is "mass production," "specialized workmanship." One man does nothing but attach front fenders, another puts on wheels. The result is more cars, but individuality and personality are destroyed. This narrows the horizon of the individual; this deadly monotony suffocates the individual character and initiative.

We are prone to allow this trend of things to infringe upon our personal element in the religion of Christ. One brother wanted Jesus to see about di-

viding the inheritance. Peter wanted to know what the Lord was going to do about John's living until he returned. One mother wanted to know if one of her sons could sit on the right hand and the other upon his left. All the apostles could be great, but which one would be the greatest was the bone of contention. If this spirit which appeared intermittently had been countenanced or approved by the Savior, division would have been inevitable.

But to the contrary, when the disciples were scattered abroad, "They went everywhere preaching the word." They were all doing the same thing; one was not tightening bolts, and another putting on wheels. One was not concerned about another's being greater or more prominent than he, or worshipping in a larger congregation. While they were scattered geographically, they were united spiritually; though separated in body, they were one in heart. They were personally and individually righteous.

As a concrete suggestion as to personal righteousness as a basis of Christian unity, I want to link the prayer of our Master with one of the pure and ever-flowing springs which he located as a source for this great fountain of personal righteousness. In Matthew 5:47 he said, "And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans the same?"

This, like all other expressions of Jesus, has deep and far-reaching meanings beyond any casual notice. The very meaning of this passage rises to all the heights of Christian excellencies, and crowns the dome with all for which our Savior prayed in John seventeen.

The first principle word is "Salute." Some of us have not yet learned how to salute our own brethren in the sense of this passage, much less the "others" implied by the adverb "only." The word "salute" in this verse means more than a mere recognition that we have "met a man," and recognized him as we passed by. This word carries with it the pledge of affection.

There are various salutations. There is a salutation of subjection and obedience; that is the greeting of a subject to his Lord and Master, and we owe that to Christ, for he is our king. There is a salutation of wantonness and temptation; that is the harlot's salutation, and Christians are forbidden that. There is a salutation of dissimulation; that is the traitor's greeting, such as Judas used, and we are forbidden that. "Let love be without dissimulation" (Rom. 12:9). Then there is the salutation of tenderness and affection, the salutation of "Brotherly love," and it must be the one enjoined in this passage. We are herein commanded to salute not only our friends, but our enemies as well. But if we have not yet learned the affectionate salutation for our brethren, how then can we pass on to others, that which we do not possess for ourselves? "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others," Brethren, party esteem is nothing more than "withered fruit," and it falls from the trees of Sodom, rather than from the trees of Zion.

"If ye love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same?" Shall publicans be as godly as the Lord's disciples? Shall the sons of men be equal to the sons of God? Shall



the law of nature swell the bosoms of men to as high a tide as the law of grace and love?

Barabbas means "earth-born," born of an earthly father only. A Christian is one who is born from above, born of a heavenly father. Do we extend a salutation which justifies the Savior's approbation and approval in the light of this text? If so, we will do more than others, who are not thus born from above. We do not have the peace for which our Redeemer prayed, because we are not personally righteous enough to have unity which brings peace. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Say what we please, read all the papers we choose, discuss all the ways and means we desire, call all the meetings we will. we shall have to examine ourselves as to how we live and act, as well as to examine ourselves and "so let us eat."

Our part in the prayer of Jesus is to grow into and then "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Brethren, we can never do this by inventing, permitting and provoking jealousies and enmities which snuff out the spirit of Christ. We can never, never do this by arraying one brother against another. Neither can we do this by carrying hearts full of hatred, malice, and slander.

Personal righteousness is the solution to our unity problems. It is the fountain-head. it is the source of unity.

We cannot create unity by generating factions, we cannot make unity by digging gulfs and trenches to separate chief friends and brethren. We cannot do our individual part in fulfilling that for which Jesus prayed, by harboring sinful sentiments, holding per-

sonal animosities, and giving vent to unforgiving sentiments.

Not only the prayer of Jesus, but consistency itself demands our unity. In refuting the claims of psuedo-scientists and sketpics we say, "Scientists themselves are not agreed on this speculation." We array one scientist against another, and declare that science is a divided house. When we are confronted by the erroneous claims of a denomination, we do not fail to point out the number of separate branches in that denomination, we assert in vigorous terms, "You are divided among yourselves." We oppose union meetings, and one ground of opposition is, there is no real unity there. But, brethren, can we finish the chapter? Can we say, "We are united"?

In our present lesson the soul-justifying Savior is condemning the self-justifying Scribes and Pharisees. Never did men make more boast in and of the law than did they, but seldom have men had less cause for doing so. They knew but little as to the letter of the law, and less as to its spirit. They were better acquainted with the customs and traditions of nature than they were with the canons of Scripture. Jesus showed them that the righteous laws of God cannot connive at the unrighteous lives of men; that God's laws not only require truth and righteous lives without, but also within. Therefore, he taught that he that looketh on and lusteth after, and he that liveth with a woman unlawfully, are both adulterers. The rays of this bright sun shine on the secret chambers of the heart. Jesus taught that he is a murderer whose heart holds hatred, though his hands may be free from violence. "Whoso hateth his brother is a

murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). Thus the lusts of men may be predominant, when their lives are not inordinate; and their hands are free from crime; just as guests may be in the house, though they do not look out through the windows.

Cicero complained of Homer, "That he taught the gods to live like men." My friends, Jesus teaches men to live like God. The disciple of Christ is more than others, so Christ asks him to do more than others. A priest may walk by one side, and a Levite on the other; but the Good Samaritan represents Christ's conception of what the ideal man should be. Therefore, he did more than others. What do we more than others? Personal righteousness is the fountain from which all peace and unity must flow.

It is lamentable that we should live so long in the world, and do so little for Christ; or that we should live so short a time in the world and do so much for Satan. Personal righteousness is the remedy for all our ills. Those who collect pearls from this shore will leave as many behind as they carry away with them, and those who cast their bread upon these waters shall gather in abundance after many days.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psa. 133:1). There are some things that are neither good nor pleasant; for example, envy and detraction. The mind of Christ excludes both of these. Personal righteousness forbids envy and detraction. To envy a brother by trying to put out the light of his sun, cannot make thine own shine with brighter luster. Would a man be rational who envied an ox of the pasture which only



fits it for the slaughter? Would it be rational to envy a malefactor of the carriage which conveys him to his execution? We do not have less because others have more; neither do they have much because we have little. Another brother's place, station or rank in life is no more the cause of our want, than Leah's fruitfulness was the cause of Rachel's barrenness. Personal righteousness will put away envy; and when envy is dethroned, peace and unity will once again prevail in the body of Christ. "What do we more than others?"

Brethren, is it a vision or a dream to see the church for which our Savior bled, reposing serenely in the "unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace"? Is it a vision or a dream to say that the time will come when brethren will settle their differences face to face, or in the presence of godly mediators, rather than clashing words and slander, either through pen, press or pulpit? Is it a vision or a dream to behold the brotherhood of Christ welded together in the "bond of perfectness," rather than isolated and severed by the frigid lusts of hatred, animosity and malice?

Some years ago on the rugged hillside of a small cemetery was a lonely mound in which rested the body of a little girl. A husband and wife, who had long been separated, met at the grave as father and mother. Their separation had been bitter, and that which was once true love had become hate. On opposite sides of the cold grave they both stood motionless. Presently, their tear-dimmed eyes fell upon the little mound which held the broken link with which God had so graciously joined their hearts.

As they knelt down and bowed their faces upon the cold ground covering the grave, they stretched forth their hands, each to the other, and in the midst of flooding tears that love which had once united them in the sacred ties of marriage was renewed. The bitterness of the years was washed away in their flowing tears of sorrow; and hand in hand they marched away, beginning life's struggle anew as in their former years, when love was master of their lives and the departed babe was fondled in her mother's arm.

Can we not, brethren, when separated by misunderstandings or sentiment, meet by faith beside the grave of Jesus, and there together pray, forgive and forget? Can we not, for the sake of unity, for the sake of this prayer of Jesus, for the sake of the body of Christ, there kneel in the solemn presence of God, then march away from that communion arm in arm and heart in heart, thus drawn together by that object of mutual affection, our Savior, who not only died to save us, but prayed that we might be one?

May we always, through our own discipline of personal righteousness, make our individual contribution to fulfilling the inspiring prayer of John seventeen. Let us read afresh and anew the beatitudes of Matthew five, then commit to memory the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and forget about how we may have unity, but just enjoy it for awhile.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15).

## CHRISTIAN UNITY

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By R. D. Smith

Ephesians 4:1-3.

Christian unity is a state of oneness, harmony or agreement among Christians. It is the absence of division and strife; and the thing for which Jesus so earnestly prayed; and which Paul besought the Corinthians to observe.

Let us eliminate whatever is not relevant to the phase of this question I have chosen to discuss; and proceed to the real issue, that we may not waste time. There is not a question as to the importance of Christian unity. We are perfectly agreed that the word of God should be the basis or standard of faith and practice in order to unity. But so far we have failed to attain this greatly desired and much talked of state or condition.

It must be clear to all thinking brethren that in spite of the aforementioned points of agreement, we can never have perfect unity without uniform interpretation of the rule of faith and practice. It is said that the Civil War was fought on account of the principle here involved. North and South had agreed to the union and had accepted the Constitution as the basis; but failing to interpret uniformly, brought on that bloody war. In like manner, failing to inter-



pret the rule of faith and practice uniformly, we have had division and strife among us for the whole duration of our existence, since the beginning of the restoration movement; and it continues unabated. But you will no doubt say to me, If we would speak only where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent, all division would immediately cease and unity prevail. There is no doubt of it; but we have not yet been able to agree as to what the Bible speaks and where it is silent, in so many instances. Should you ask for examples, you are referred to our religious papers and to the many and constant controversies raging in these, revealing in some instances as many as three or four positions held by brethren on a single Scriptural question. Is this unity? We need not try to deceive ourselves and fool others; for we simply do not have it.

Ours is a golden motto. Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent, is a perfect formula; and would mean immediate and perfect unity. But who is doing it? If we speak different doctrines, somebody is wrong. Who speaks where the Bible speaks? Which of the differing brethren? It therefore becomes a question as to how to carry out our motto and apply our formula. If we all could recognize a supreme council or tribunal to which we might refer all matters for adjudication, letting this tribunal decide for us what we should believe, preach and practice; and abide this decision, we would all speak the same things. But a casual observation of such a system, once adopted, convinces one of its absolute failure, much less its unscripturalness. We repeat to you this story in the fewest possible words.

After the death of the apostles, the church found herself troubled on account of the teaching of conflicting doctrines. We are told that the controversy waxed hot, like unto ours in these days; but for a time they seemed to find no solution. But as time went on there was evolved a system that worked perfectly and enabled them to stop the heretics and end their false teachings. The historians tell us that in order to put down heresy, punish heretics and to preserve the unity and purity of the church, the presbyters or bishops adopted the doctrine of apostolic succession. They meant by apostolic succession, and so taught, that God sent Christ with all power to act for him; that Christ sent the apostles or bishops appointing them as their successors, with all power to act for them; that these presbyters or bishops transmitted this power to other presbyters or bishops before their death and thus it was that bishops or presbyters became the direct successors of the apostles, which made them the successors to Christ and God. Thus presbyters or bishops, claimed divine right to rule the church; and to expel false teachers without let or hindrance; and that they alone might exercise this power. The historian calls this step, the Ascendency of the Presbyters or Bishops; and designates it as their first departure from apostolic simplicity. The first and colossal error, i. e. according presbyters or bishops apostolic succession, with apostolic powers and prerogatives, with the right to be and act as the very vicars of God and Christ, infallible and irreprehensible, leaves the church helpless and prostrate, with these men to lead them like sheep to the slaughter, which they did not hesitate to do swiftly and surely.

They were now Romeward bound never to stop till they reached the City of The Seven Hills.

Thus with this first error established they move with steady progress from one step to another ever tending to that certain tragic end, the complete apostasy of the church. With all authority in the hands of the presbyters, elders, or bishops of the local church, soon one of their number is presiding elder and soon the presiding elder or bishop. Behold, says the historian, The Monarchal Bishop, over the local congregation. With all authority in his hands the local bishop joins other like bishops of local churches in a certain territory at the synod, where one of their number presides and soon becomes the presiding elder or bishop of that district; and we have the parochial system. The synod grows in popularity and quickly extends its bounds taking in a larger territory. The bishop of the metropolis presides being made bishop of the realm. See the Metropolitan System! Continuing to enlarge the unit of government and to reduce the number of rulers, we have the Archbishop with his Archbishopric. But the struggle for power is not ended. The unit of government is again enlarged by slicing the world into five grand divisions; and enthroning a religious ruler over each with absolute authority over his realm. He was styled The Patriarch and his domain The Patriarchate. The system, The Patriarchate. Yet the rulers are not satisfied with the size of their domains and at once begin a death struggle for more power. After a bitter contest the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria fell out of the fight, leaving Rome and Constantinople to fight it out. It was war to the knife and



knife to the hilt; but when the smoke of battle cleared away, the Patriarch of Constantinople was hors de combat and the Patriarch of Rome was crowned king of the spiritual world, elevated to a throne under the imposing title, Universal Patriarch, papa or pope, in the year A. D. 606. He did not only claim authority to rule the universal church; but that all temporal rulers were to subject themselves to his authority with all of their subjects. Once a plain humble presbyter or elder, he has grown to these enormous proportions. All of this under the claim of apostolic succession; and the plea of preserving the Unity and the purity of the church. Apostolic succession, the worst of heresies; the motive for its adoption, the colossal subterfuge. Thus an example of man's rulership over the church.

Let me say here that I have every respect for the splendid men who have striven to fit themselves by experience and study and discipline, as per Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, for the work of overseeing. But as for those who delegate to themselves the prerogative of rulership over their brethren, their claims are hereby challenged. Brethren, I have come to tell you the truth, if I never speak again. There is not the least warrant in the Scriptures for the rulership of elders, or of any other persons, over the church of God, beyond the power and influence of teaching the word of God, exhorting and persuading and the example of a holy life.

I am prepared to affirm that the church is to be ruled or governed by the word of God, through the influence of teaching, exhorting, persuading and the example of right living. I will deny that this is ex-

clusively the work of elders in any sense. I will deny that the vessel bearing the word constitutes the binding power of the word. I will affirm that the word of God must rule; and that unity, to be Christian unity, must be based on this.

Since Christianity is a system of faith it is obvious that no sort of compulsion, beyond that of conviction, is permissible in this province. Unity is agreement, concord, harmony; and in the very nature of things can never be a matter of command. It is to be brought about through the intelligence, by a logical course of procedure. That is by mutual study and investigation; and, to be successful, must be as per Paul's admonition to the Ephesians; i. e. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The manner and spirit of our discussions has greatly hindered our efforts at unity. Let us heed Paul's admonition for there is no excuse for the bitterness that attends our investigations.

After forty years of preaching I do not recall that there has ever been a proper discussion of this vital question. True there has been much said on related phases of it; but I think that never once have we started at the right place and proceeded orderly to find the answer to the question: How Is the Church To Be Ruled or Governed? I am anxious to hear such discussion that I may be sure of the truth; and I suggest that some of you able brethren engage in a public oral discussion, in a brotherly spirit, that the matter may be clarified.

## STRIFE IN THE CHURCH

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By Wm. S. Willis

### Introduction

Brethren and Friends: May I express my appreciation for this honored privilege of being on this program with such a fine group of splendid speakers. And here in this great College of the Bible and Christian education.

When Brother Straiton asked me to be on this program, and assigned to me the subject of "Strife in the Church" my first thought was to present the subject in a general way. But after a more serious consideration, I shall speak particularly concerning strife in the early church.

### I. Strife in the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-7)

Soon after the church was established on the day of Pentecost, we find strife had entered, and over material things being brought into the church. If we are to understand this condition we must look into the cause and effect of this strife.

Immediately following Pentecost, and because of the miracles, wonders and signs performed by the apostles, great fear came upon the whole church. The



disciples believed that the Lord was coming soon to receive them up into glory. For the heavenly messengers had told them at the ascension that they would see him coming back to the earth, in the same manner they had seen him taken up from the earth. And if this be true, they would have no need for their houses, lands and goods, therefore, they sold them and brought the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

Barnabas sold his land and brought the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles. There were two other members who owned property and sold it. These members were not as unselfish as was Barnabas and the other members. They brought only a part of the money and laid it at Peter's feet. Ananias and his wife pretended that they had brought all the money. This act of selfishness cost them their lives and caused great fear in the hearts of all the members.

This socialistic plan of financing the church, did not last very long. It placed too great a responsibility upon the apostles. Its requirements were too drastic upon the members. And the human elements were too strong, and murmuring soon arose over how the money was being distributed.

At the beginning of this common fund plan, everything was lovely. The disciples were all of one heart, and one soul, and had all things in common, and every man was given as he had need, and no man lacked in anything. But selfishness soon entered the hearts of the members, and murmuring began. And strife was greatly hindering the prayers of the apostles, and the preaching of the word of God. Something had to be done.

“And in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom you may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude” (Acts 6:1-7).

May we pause here to note how this matter was handled and settled. When the apostles saw there was strife in the church, and that it was hindering the progress of the work, they did not mention the trouble or strife but approached the matter from the expediency of prayer and of the word of God. And may we note also that these men were to be appointed by the church and not by the apostles (or preachers). The apostles called the whole church together and laid before them a plan of procedure; laying down the qualifications upon which these men were to be appointed, but left the responsibility upon the church. And after these men had been sought out “Whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them” (Acts 6:1-7).

These men were to be responsible for the financial affairs of the church and to be teachers and evangelists in preaching the word. Two of them became very prominent in the early church: Stephen and Philip. These men must be led by the Spirit without the written word. Therefore it was necessary

that the apostles lay their hands on them imparting unto them the power to perform miracles in the presence of an unbelieving world. This gift of manifested powers departed with the death of the last apostle. It had fulfilled its mission in guiding those who gave to the world the written word of the gospel. The laying on of hands is not necessary today as we are led by the spirit through the written word.

Because of murmuring and strife the church had ceased to grow. Most of the apostle's time was being given to this strife, and they had no time for prayer and for the ministry of the word of God. Brethren, how true this is today. There are many fine gospel ministers who are kept so busy with strife in the church, they have no time left for the ministry of the word, and no spirit for prayer. This should not be.

When strife is removed from the church, it will begin to grow and prosper as did the church at Jerusalem after strife was settled. "And the word of God increased: and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

Friends, I have dealt at length with strife in the church at Jerusalem because material things had been brought into the church. Today, much strife in the church is caused by material things being brought into its program and worship. Brethren, these things should not be.

## II. Strife in the Church at Antioch (Acts 15:1-31)

About thirteen years following "strife in the



church" at Jerusalem we see it again. This time in the church at Antioch. Here it was caused by false teaching in the church. And the question was circumcision.

Before we enter upon this discussion, it may be well to look at the background of the church at Antioch. Following the death of Stephen a great persecution arose against the church and the disciples were driven out of Jerusalem. "They went everywhere preaching the word." Some went as far as Antioch and set the church in order among the Gentiles. Report of this church reached the apostles at Jerusalem and Barnabas was sent down to take charge. When he arrived he found a work much too great for him to handle alone. And he went to Tarsus, and brought Saul (Paul) to Antioch where they remained with the church "a whole year" preaching the gospel and many were obedient to the word. In the meantime Peter came down to look this work over. When he arrived he found such a wonderful fellowship he entered and sat at the table with the Gentiles.

There were others who came down from Jerusalem professing to have authority, and demanded that all Gentile converts must be circumcised before they could receive fellowship or even be saved. This caused a great strife between the Gentiles and Jews in the church. The Jews withdrew from the Gentiles. Peter withdrew also, taking Barnabas with him.

This was a serious matter. It had shaken the very foundation of the church. It was threatening to overthrow all for which Christ had suffered and died. Peter was afraid of controversy with the Jews. Not so with Paul. He entered into this fight with all his

strength, soul and spirit. He "stood Peter to the face before them all." He tells us about this fight in his letter to the church in Galatia (2nd chapter). Paul was too much for these false teachers. The matter was carried to Jerusalem, to the church and before the elders and apostles.

We see Paul and Barnabas in Jerusalem confronted with the most serious question in all their experience with the church. If they should lose their case, Judaism would supplant Christianity; Satan would triumph over Christ, and hell would prevail against the church.

This matter was handled wisely and prayerfully. All evidence and testimony was produced. Arguments were made by all concerned. A decision was reached, and a verdict was rendered. Peter vindicated himself by defending the gospel against false teaching, and Christianity against Judaism. Circumcision in the church was condemned by the elders and apostles. The false teachers were reprimanded. Paul and Barnabas were given the right hand of fellowship in their great work with the Gentiles. Brethren were sent down to testify to the settlement of this trouble in the church, with letters from the elders assuring them that circumcision would not again be taught or brought into the church, and condemning the false teachers as impostors, not having authority from the church. "Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:24). And there was great rejoicing in all the church.

Brethren, false doctrines and teachings have caused much "Strife in the church." And not only false doctrines, but sometimes we have made non-essential things the test of fellowship which has led to strife, contention and division among the brethren. All truth must be taught. But we should give much thought and prayer to such things that might cause "strife in the church" among the brethren who may not understand as we do. Therefore we should "study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

### III. Strife in the Church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:1-16)

Some years following "strife in the church" at Antioch, we see it raising its evil head again. This time in the church at Corinth, and over the question of human names.

In the former cases we have studied, we find these matters were settled in the church, by the elders and apostles. But here we see Paul trying to settle this grievous question by writing a letter to those strife-torn and divided brethren. Here strife had carried its evil intent to a division among the members of the church. Paul in his letter tells us that those brethren were actually divided over human names. Some wanted to be known as Paulites; some as Apollosites; some as Cephasites; and some were still wearing the name of Christ.

Paul tried to settle this condition by rebuking and reproving those brethren for their divisions, and by



exhorting them not to wear human names. We do not know the results of Paul's effort with the church at Corinth. But we do know that human names have come down through all the ages even unto this present day.

My friends, "Strife in the church" is the greatest hindrance to the growth and progress of the kingdom of God. It is the greatest stumbling-block to the preaching of the gospel. It has caused more sorrow than all other sins of the world. And human names is the blackest sin of all Christendom.

We may ask any ten people we meet if they are Christians, and probably, seven will be wearing human names, and will deny the names recognized in the New Testament for the church of Christ.

My Christian friends, we need to re-study the cause of "strife in the church" and when we have learned the cause, we should be as determined to stamp it out as were the elders, apostles and Paul in the early church.

Every sermon preached, every lesson taught, should impress upon those who hear, the importance of wearing the name given at Antioch, and to recognize the names given in the New Testament that the church must wear. And that "neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

We must teach that this name is "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name, not only in this world, but in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21).

When all honest, sincere seekers and believers of

the truth are willing to do what Paul did, we can remove all strife from the church, and Christ will be given the "preeminence in all things unto the church" (Col. 1:18). For Paul said, "for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all the family in heaven and in earth is named" (Eph. 3:14-15). The time allotted for this address will not permit further discussion. Therefore, I shall close with the words of the beloved apostle Paul, which is the only cure for "Strife in the church." "Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but, that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

## WHAT PAUL DID FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

By Wesley Mickey

In discussing "What Paul Did for the Unity of the Church," I shall call special attention to what he did to unite the Jewish and Gentile Christians. The differences between the Jews and Gentiles of Paul's day seemed to be among the chief causes of strife and division, so Paul, born a Jew but called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, felt it his duty to do all he could to overcome these differences. He realized that he was "debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise" (Rom. 1:14). Thus Paul became a martyr to the cause of Christian unity.

### Exhortations to Unity in Paul's Epistles

In Paul's letters we find many exhortations to unity and quite often we find these exhortations dealing directly with this question of division between Jew and Gentile. To the church at Ephesus he wrote, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,



and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:11-18). After Paul had shown clearly that Christ had "broken down the middle wall of partition," he pleads for them to endeavor to maintain that unity in love; "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

He taught the Christians at Colosse that when a man becomes a new creature he is "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11). And to the Galatian Christians he wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for all are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). It seems that Paul's primary purpose

in writing Galatians was to present a contrast between the law and the gospel so the Jews might understand that they were on an equal plane with the Gentiles. The superiority of the gospel over the law is also clearly set forth in the Roman letter and Paul there discusses the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles. In writing about the condemnation of sinners he said, "What then? Are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles)? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (Rom. 3:9). They were both in need of the gospel of Christ and only that could bring them together.

### Paul Preached Christ

The greatest thing that Paul ever did to help people overcome their differences and be united was the same thing that will accomplish the most good in bringing about unity today. Paul preached Christ. He said to the church at Corinth which was torn by strife, "I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). By exalting the Savior to his proper place, Paul hoped to be able to settle all strife. He kept so busy telling lost souls of Christ who died for their salvation that he could not afford to become a part of their sinful divisions. He believed in putting the most important things first in his own life and tried to influence others to do the same. He knew that if he could lead people to love the same Saviour and to serve him obediently he could bring them into Christian fellowship. Even so, the best way to overcome

strife and division in the church today is to "preach Jesus" and strive to get all disciples actively engaged in the same noble work.

### The Council At Jerusalem

After Paul's first missionary journey, there were certain prejudiced Jews in Antioch who demanded that the Gentiles be circumcised as a part of their Christian duty. It was Paul who, along with Barnabas, was sent up to Jerusalem to present this question to the apostles and elders. At that meeting Paul and Barnabas were called upon to relate "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (Acts 15:12). These same men, along with messengers from the Jerusalem church, returned to Antioch with the answer that was calculated to quiet the men who were causing strife and to bring the Jews and Gentiles into closer harmony as Christians.

### Paul Rebukes Peter

Upon one occasion, Paul felt that it was necessary to oppose Peter and "withstood him to the face" (Gal. 2:2), because he refused to eat with the Gentiles when Jews were present. Paul realized that this action on the part of Peter would widen the breach between the two nationalities and he was unwilling for such conduct to go on unrebuked. If the unity of the church is to be maintained today, there must be no distinctions made between nationalities and there must be no binding of traditions upon Christians.



### The Collection for the Poor Saints at Jerusalem

One of the kindest and most tactful moves ever made by Paul to unite Jews and Gentiles was his collection among the Gentiles of Europe and Asia for the poor Jewish saints at Jerusalem. That collection not only served to teach the Christian's responsibility toward the poor but did much to break down the Jewish prejudice against the Gentiles and to prompt great generosity on the part of the Gentiles in response to a feeling of brotherly kindness. Paul reminded the Christians of Corinth that they should make their contribution "as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness" (2 Cor. 9:5).

When we Christians of this generation are led to cheerfully contribute in some way to the needs of other people, such as those in Africa, Australia, etc., we naturally have a keener interest in them and feel closer to them than we otherwise would. Thus, we are not only made to realize the need of Christian fellowship but we are led to enjoy the blessedness of it.

Paul knew that it was "more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), and he saw in the poverty of Jerusalem an opportunity to make the Jews feel obligated to the Gentiles and to make the Gentiles know the joy of being liberal.

"Let party names no more  
The Christian world o'erspread;  
Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,  
Are one in Christ, their head.

“Among the saints on earth  
Let mutual love be found;  
Heirs of the same inheritance,  
With mutual blessings crowned.

“Thus will the church below  
Resemble that above,  
Where streams of pleasure ever flow,  
And every heart is love.”

—M. C. Kurfees

## HOW TO BECOME A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

By Forrest R. Waldrop

Ours is the great privilege of citizenship in the two greatest governments known to man: the Government of the United States of America, which is the greatest carnal government, and the kingdom of heaven, which far surpasses any physical government. Truly did Isaiah say: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9). One needs only to think upon the temporal, fleeting benefits and privileges of physical life, as contrasted with the everlasting, enduring benefits of spiritual life, to see the superiority of God's kingdom over the kingdoms of men. Physical things endure only until death, but the spiritual shall take on greater reality, and greater benefits after death.

That we may be subjects of both governments, and enjoy the privileges provided in them, cannot be questioned when we hear Jesus say, as recorded in, Matt. 22:21, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Or to hear Paul say in Rom. 13:1, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is



no power but of God: and the powers that be are ordained of God."

### 1. "Marks and Scars" of Citizenship

There are certain unmistakable "marks and scars" present with every individual on earth. When we hear the description given relative to the marks of identification, the finger prints, and the marks and scars, we are made to realize their importance, and how impossible it is to escape them. And, there are certain identifying marks borne by every true child of God, from which ye cannot depart, and remain acceptable unto God. These were apparent in Peter and John when they stood before the council of the Jews as recorded in Acts 4:13: "Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Their being unlearned and ignorant men did not label them as disciples of the Christ, but the works which they did, and the words which they spoke did definitely cause the Jews to recognize this fact.

Jesus spoke of the same point in this way, Matt. 7:16: "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" As children of God, we should see to it that we manifest the "marks and scars" of the kingdom of heaven.

### 2. The Desirability of Citizenship .

The desire for citizenship in the United States, is evidently greater today than it has ever been. This

is caused by the disturbing conditions of the world in general, together with the added advantages insured by the Constitution, and the protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which may be enjoyed in this country. And, there must be the desire of these things before citizenship can be acquired. Aliens do not become citizens by accident.

Neither do individuals enter into the kingdom of Christ by accident. There must be the desiring before the acquiring! But, citizenship in the kingdom of heaven should be far more desirable than in any other government. It offers benefits here and now in the lives of men and women, and in the world to come, eternal life. Where is the government of men which offers benefits to man beyond the grave? Some governments today even confiscate the property of the citizens.

### 3. Who May Become Citizens?

The citizenship of our country is made up by those who are born and reach the age of majority, and by those who have left their former country and have obtained citizenship in our country. A great many more people enter this country through birth than through any other avenue. A child enters the world through no fault or merit of its own, and may grow to manhood little realizing the advantages offered and the principles prevailing in the country of its birth. But not so with the church of the Lord. He who enters the church or kingdom does so with an understanding of its teachings and principles. In fact, no individual can become a Christian who lacks the

ability to understand, believe and obey the gospel. For we read, Heb. 11:6: "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him."

#### 4. The New Birth

Jesus chose a well understood principle when he taught that one enters into the church through the new birth. He taught Nicodemus at this point when he said, John 3:3-5: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This statement is the equivalent to the great commission as stated in Mark 16:15, 16.

In every birth, there is the agency of two parents. There is the begetting and the bringing forth. In the spiritual birth the begetting is accomplished when the word of God enters the heart and begets faith. The apostle Peter said, 1 Pet. 1:23: "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth." Herein is the Spirit's part in the new birth, for the Holy Spirit was sent into the world to guide men into all truth (John 16:13), and when faith is thus produced, the begetting has been accomplished by the Spirit through the word of God.



It was for this purpose that the gospel was written (John 20:30, 31).

Faith is acquired through the hearing of the word of God, Rom. 10:17: "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Therefore, a man has a part in his own spiritual birth, for he possesses the ability to believe or disbelieve the word, and to accept or reject it. Herein lies a difference between the spiritual birth, and the natural birth, for the child has no choice relative to its birth.

Do you ask: How were people born of the Spirit in the days of the apostles? Let us examine the first instance of it in the New Testament and see how it was accomplished. On the first Pentecost after the death of Christ, the word of God was placed in the hearts of the multitude by the preaching of the apostle Peter, as he declared unto them the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In this manner they were begotten by the Spirit, and faith was produced in their hearts. If anyone was ever born of the Spirit, surely these were, for the Holy Spirit had just been given unto the apostle and he was completely guided by him, so that it was not Peter speaking, but the Spirit speaking through him. Notice the results of believing the preaching of the word of God, Acts 2:37, 38: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Upon these instructions three thousand people were baptized in the name of Christ.

They were born again, born of water and the Spirit. And, the same procedure which thus made them citizens of the kingdom of God, saved them from their past sins. Furthermore, everyone who has entered into the family of God, since that day, has entered in identically the same manner.

Those who contend that the Spirit operates directly upon the heart of man, overlook the facts of the gospel. For in every conversion the word of God was preached by men. The case of the eunuch of Acts 8 is a good example. The Spirit directed Philip to the man, but Philip did the preaching and the eunuch could not tell that the Spirit was hovering over the scene. Yet he was begotten by the Spirit through the word spoken by Philip the preacher.

When Peter began preaching to the house of Cornelius the Holy Spirit came upon them in baptismal measure, yet this was not done to save them, for they were to hear words whereby they would be saved (Acts 11:14). Peter commanded them to be baptized in water (Acts 10:47, 48) and thus they were born of water and the Spirit, Mark 16:15, 16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." In this same manner the Corinthians were begotten and born again. Whatever followed the begetting was the new birth (See 1 Cor. 4:15; Acts 18:8).

### 5. A Record of Births

When a child is born into the world, the attending doctor is required to fill out a Birth Certificate, and

deliver it to a Justice of the Peace, who in turn files it with the Bureau of Vital Statistics, a department of the government whose purpose it is to look after such records. It is becoming more important year after year that we have certificates of the births of our children, and of ourselves. It is exceedingly difficult to obtain a passport, or to travel in other countries, without such a record. Our schools are becoming stricter in requiring the presentation of these papers at the time a child enters into the institution.

It is possible that an individual may have complied with all requirements of the government relative to natural birth, and his name not be enrolled in the Book of Life of the United States. For, at times, doctors have failed to properly execute the papers at the time of birth. This necessitates the filling out of certain papers to establish the fact of birth, and to secure a certificate of the same. Such a mistake is never made concerning the New Birth. The great Recorder of the Lamb's Book of Life never fails to enter those names which should be on its pages. Hence, we need not doubt that our names were recorded there, if we were born again as taught in God's Word. Heavenly recorders make no mistakes. This fact is noticeable in Acts 2:47, ". . . And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved." This is equal to saying that the Lord added day by day those who were born into the family of God. None were added who were not saved, and none were added who were not born again. These expressions are synonymous. But, imagine the folly of a doctor trying to record the birth certificate of a child be-



fore it is born, and you will have the very predicament that men are in who teach salvation before and apart from baptism. God does not record the names of his children before they are born into his family! Hence, names are not entered in the Book of Life before baptism, for baptism is the act of bringing forth in the spiritual birth.

Thus, we note that when the word of God produces faith in the heart of man, the Spirit has begotten him again. But faith must grow and produce repentance, or the reformation of life, it must be a confessing faith, and it must culminate in baptism or the bringing forth unto spiritual life. This is the meaning of being born of water and the Spirit.

Although the Lord never fails to enter the names which should appear in the Book of Life, it is altogether possible that our names may be blotted out of that Book.

Rev. 3:4, 5: "But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Notice please, that this is conditioned upon the fact that he overcomes, that he is worthy, and that he does not defile his garments of righteousness. It is necessary that he overcome if his name is to remain on the Lamb's Book of Life.

The great thought that should search every heart is:

## IS MY NAME WRITTEN THERE?

Within the holy Book of Life, I know  
 The angels write with care,  
 The names of those who triumph here below,  
 Is my name written there?

Is my name written in the Book of Life,  
 Where shining pens record,  
 Is mine with those who conquer in the strife,  
 And win the great reward?

## 6. Come Out From Among Them

There is one great fact which is not set forth by the figure of birth, relative to entering the Kingdom of God. For the one who enters God's kingdom comes out of the devil's kingdom. He must renounce sin and all its practices. Read with me, Col. 1:12, 13: "Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." Hence, there is a coming out of sin, as further attested by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:17, 18: "Wherefore, Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you, And will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Notice also that God's receiving us is conditioned upon the fact that we "come out from among them," and "touch no unclean thing."

This is similar, in a way, to the **Process of Naturalization** in the United States. When an alien desires to become a citizen of this government, there are certain rigid requirements with which he must comply. This, of course, differs with different persons, for some remain in the country longer than others before applying for citizenship. Hence, I shall set forth the most general procedure, for there are some sixteen different conditions which arise relative to different aliens.

1. In cases where there is no record of admission into this country, it is necessary to establish a **Record of Arrival**, or of legal admission for the purpose of permanent residence. In such case, if the alien has resided here continuously since June 29, 1906, he may establish this fact by affidavits from two citizens who have personally known the applicant. This fact may also be established by documentary evidence, such as: old papers, deeds to property, receipts and records of this type which show residence during that time.

2. Both the witnesses and applicant must be of good moral character, and this is determined by questioning and investigation by the Immigration Service.

3. Those who entered this country prior to July 1, 1924, must fill out an **Application for Registry of an Alien** (Form No. 659), giving detailed information relative to himself, and his entrance into this country, even to the extent of giving the date of arrival, the port at which he arrived, and the ship or conveyance on which he arrived, and much other infor-



mation, together with two plain photographs of himself, properly signed by him.

4. Having thus established his record of admission, he is in a position to proceed further. His next step is to apply for a **Declaration of Intention** of becoming a citizen of the United States (Form No. A-2213). This petitioner must be at least eighteen years of age. Here again he must submit two photographs of himself and give information relative to himself, his former country, and the time and place of his arrival, and declare his intention to become a citizen of this country.

Just here we find a striking similarity with the teachings of God's word. The apostle Peter wrote, 2 Pet. 3:15: "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear." Therefore, it is required that a Christian be able to establish a reason for his hope. And, what a contrast this is with those who claim salvation in a way that is "better felt than told."

Having made the above declaration of intention, the petitioner must wait at least two years before taking further action. And, during this period of time the petitioner must acquaint himself with the constitution of the United States, and the principles of government, as well as to learn to speak the English language. As an aid in acquainting him with our government, he is furnished a "Manual for Citizenship," published by the Daughters of the American Revolution. In this manual is printed the constitution with all its articles and amendments, a history

of the government, and it sets forth what is expected and required of citizens. This work has been published in seventeen languages other than English.

After two years from the time of making the above declaration, and upon reaching the age of twenty-one years, the petitioner is permitted to take further action in securing citizenship. In most cases, it is required that he be a resident of this country for five consecutive years, and in the county and district for six months. This varies with different conditions.

5. **The Petition for Naturalization** (Form No. A-2214) is made at this time, and it is literally an asking of the court to confer citizenship upon him. In a preliminary hearing, held ninety days before the final court hearing, the petitioner is required to affirm that:

“(7) I am not a disbeliever in or opposed to organized government or a member of or affiliated with any organization or body of persons teaching disbelief in or opposed to organized government. I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy. I am attached to the principles of the constitution of the United States and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States. It is my intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce absolutely and forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom (which) at this time I am a subject (or citizen), and it is my intention to reside permanently in the United States.” “(8) I am able to speak the English language.” (Form No. 2204-LA). There must appear with the petitioner, two

reliable citizens who have known him personally, who must testify by affidavit to the five years of continuous residence in this country. In this affidavit the witnesses must attest: "That this petitioner is, (and during all such periods has been) a person of good moral character, attached to the principles of the constitution of the United States, well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States, and in my opinion the petitioner is in every way qualified to be admitted a citizen of the United States." (Form No. 2204-LA). Absence from this country for a period of six months or more in the country of his former allegiance may break the continuity of residence, and generally makes it difficult for him to obtain citizenship. This condition differs according to the circumstances. At this time he must be able to speak the English language and sign the petition in his own handwriting.

When the applicant presents himself for citizenship, in addition to being questioned concerning his past life, a record is made of his marks of identification, such as: his age, height, and weight, the color of his hair and eyes, his complexion, build, and scars and marks which he bears, together with the complete finger prints of both hands. Also, he is thoroughly questioned concerning the constitution and the form of our government, in order to determine his knowledge of the country, and his sincerity in seeking citizenship. This requirement presents the greatest stumbling block for most petitioners.

As citizens in the kingdom of heaven, we are not required to speak English, or any other established language of men, to the exclusion of others, but God



does definitely demand that we speak a pure speech, and that we speak as the "oracles of God." Hear Paul just here, Col. 4:6: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one." Then notice the declaration of the apostle Peter in 1 Pet. 4:11: "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were the oracles of God, . . ." or as translated in the King James Version: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; . . ."

6. At the final hearing, held in open court ninety days after the preliminary hearing, information relative to the petitioner's knowledge of the government and the principles of our country is closely examined, to determine his knowledge of the same, and if he passes the examination, he is questioned concerning his willingness to take the oath of allegiance as follows: "I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all fidelity to the country of my former allegiance; that I will support and defend the constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. So help me God." (Form No. A-2214). Later he is required to take this oath in open court, and after taking this oath of allegiance, he is admitted by court, a citizen of the United States of America, and given a certificate of citizenship.

At this point, may I acknowledge the great help given my by the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the United States, and to Mr. R. F. Abbott,

Mr. V. J. Bintliff, and Mr. W. J. Mangum, all of whom are members of the local office in Corpus Christi, Texas. And, if there should be any of you seeking further information than is given in this lecture, you may get in touch with the nearest Immigration Office, or Clerk of District Court or Federal Court, and the desired information will be gladly given you. As citizens of this country we owe it to ourselves to be as well acquainted with our government as possible.

### 7. A Process of Spiritualization

I am not here advocating that Christianity is a process of naturalization, but I do sincerely believe that Christianity is a process of "spiritualization" wherein one gives up the works of the flesh and does the works of the Spirit, Gal. 5:19-24: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruits of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus, have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof."

Yes, friends, there is definitely a giving up of sinfulness in obeying the gospel of Christ. And, just as our nation demands the breaking of allegiance to

one's former country, and swearing allegiance to this country, so also God demands that we break off our allegiance to the devil and his kingdom. Hear James, at this point, James 4:4: "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." And read with me, 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Hence, allegiance to the world must be broken off, or as Moses said, Ex. 10:26: ". . . there shall not a hoof be left behind. . ."

### 8. The Benefits and Privileges of Citizenship

One needs only to meditate upon the benefits and privileges secured to him by the constitution, to have aroused in his soul a greater love for the land of the free and the home of the brave. Listen to the reading of the first article added to the original constitution:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."



Where can you find a carnal government which secures more than this to its citizens? Thus, the constitution grants to us the following rights:

1. The protection of life and property, at home and abroad, assuring us that property cannot legally be seized without court order. The constitution protects all alike. It safeguards the working man who is striving for an existence, as well as the man high on the ladder of success.

2. The right to trial by (an unbiased) jury, and freedom from excessive bail.

3. The freedom of speech and the freedom of the press, to say and write what we choose, so long as we do not interfere with the rights and blessings of others.

4. The right of people to peaceably assemble, and

5. The right of religious freedom, to worship God according to the dictates of our consciences according to the word of God.

And, how thankful we ought to be that we live in a land of liberty, where we may pursue the course of life without the fear of being molested.

## 9. Spiritual Benefits

The spiritual benefits to be had in Christ, far surpass the physical benefits of life. The one is eternal, while the other is only temporal. While we enjoy the physical protection through our government, we enjoy spiritual protection through Christ. You may read the beatitudes of Christ in his Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-12) and you will be impressed with the blessings which Christ promises to those who

live in harmony with his teachings. The comfort and satisfaction which comes from a Christian life is not equalled by anything in life. Furthermore, the Lord has promised certain protection and help which cannot be received from any other source.

1 Cor. 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that he may be able to endure it."

Again,—

Phil. 4:6,7: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

Herein may be found the greatest satisfaction to the soul of man!

Christianity is the greatest civilizing influence in the world. It has lifted men and nations from the level of servitude and ignorance. Even the skeptics and atheists drink of the blessings of Christianity while they fight against them. Why do they not go to some God-forsaken country where God is unknown, or has been outlawed? No, they would not live there, nor bring their children up there, yet they fight against the source of the greatest blessings of life.

## 10. Loyalty and Patriotism

Were you not deeply impressed with the demands of loyalty, as set forth in the requirements for citi-

zenship in the United States? Whether we realize it or not, the government expects the same degree of loyalty from natural born citizens that it does from naturalized citizens. And, why should we not respect the flag which is the symbol of our country? It is waving over and protecting 118,000,000 people. It has waved triumphantly in eight wars, seven foreign and one civil. Where is the man whose soul is not thrilled by the waving of "Old Glory"?

Just imagine the thrill that came to the United States citizen who had been before a firing squad in a foreign land, when just in the nick of time, an American legate or consul rushed forward with the flag and draped it around his body, and said: "Now fire." Not a shot was fired. Foreigners respect the flag. Do we?

When you hear the National Anthem, does it not set your soul to vibrating? A few years ago a football game was in progress, when for some cause or other, there resulted a free-for-all fight. But the band leader thought quickly and directed the band in playing the National Anthem. What happened? When those beautiful tones floated through the air to the ears of the angry mob, those well grounded in loyalty and patriotism ceased fighting and stood at attention. Others rushed upon them knocking them down. But they stood again and again. They were loyal!

Shall we allow ourselves to be more loyal to the United States than we are to the God of heaven? To be sure, we must be loyal to both. Loyalty demands that we respect all three divisions of government, the legislative, the executive, and the judicial, both



on earth and in heaven. And how glad we should be that our government does not seek to interfere with God's law, such as was the case when the apostles were taken before the Jewish council. They were commanded not to speak any more in the name of Jesus, Acts 5:29: "But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men." All three divisions of divine government are bound up in Christ, for he is Lawgiver, King and Judge. He is our perfect King. Even Pontius Pilate said of him, John 19:4: ". . . Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him." Brethren, we must be faithful and loyal unto the Christ and his kingdom. Remember the wonderful words of Jesus, Matt. 16:18: "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Paul said at this point, 1 Cor. 4:2: "Here moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Disloyalty is a crime subject to punishment in every government on earth. **How can we expect to be disloyal to God, and escape punishment at his hand?**

A good moral character is very necessary to one seeking citizenship in this country, in fact, it is considered one of the greatest requirements. But, the kingdom of heaven makes greater moral demands than does our government. The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day evidently possessed some good moral characteristics. Yet Jesus had this to say to his disciples concerning them, Matt. 5:20: "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall

exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." This is not confined to the deeds of life alone. It goes deeper, into the very soul of man, to the very thoughts of his mind, for Jesus said, Matt. 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." A Christian must strive to keep his mind pure. This is one of the requirements for those seeking to enter into that heavenly home. Paul was a strong advocate of good moral character. Hear his words, 1 Cor. 6:8-10: "Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

### 11. What of the Future?

What does the future hold for you? Do you find the genuine joy in Christian service which should characterize every child of God? The answer depends upon the kind of life you live, and that which you seek most in life. If you seek self-gratification you have your reward. But if you seek righteousness and the kingdom of heaven your reward shall be great in heaven. Remember that Jesus said, Matt. 6:33: "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; And all these things shall be added unto you." Why can't we find genuine satisfaction and delight in doing the

will of God? It brings the greatest satisfaction in life. It makes life worth more here, and has great promises for the future. Hear the psalmist declare the joy of doing God's will, Psa. 84:9, 10: "Behold, O God our shield, And look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." What is your vision of life? Are you living an indolent empty life with little hope of the future? Or, do you possess a strong faith which cannot be shaken, and a hope as an anchor to your soul, yea, a living faith in joyful service to Christ?

It was just that which spurred Paul on to greater heights in Christian service. It was that which caused him to suffer joyously and to look upon life as follows, 2 Cor. 4:17-5:1: "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." Again he said, Rom. 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." And again,—as he quotes from the words of Isaiah (64:4; 65:17), 1 Cor. 2:9: "But as it is written, things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the



heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him." This was responsible for Paul's being such a lively Christian. Paul could not sit idly by and be at ease when the souls of men were lost, without hope and without God in the world. He labored, he toiled, he strove, and he wept. No wonder that he could look from his prison cell with bright hopes and say, 2 Tim. 4:6-8: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." Is this what the future holds for you? Remember, Prov. 29:18: "Where there is no vision the people perish."

## 12. Lives of Ease

The sufferings of Christians today are not worthy to be compared with the sufferings of Christians in New Testament times. Visualize the apostle John in exile on the Isle of Patmos, receiving the great vision of future life through the spirit of God, and observe the encouragement which he wrote to his fellow sufferers, Rev. 1:4-6: "John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven spirits that are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings

of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." I say, brethren, these are some of the benefits of the kingdom of God. Herein lies the strength of Christianity, for when we are weak, we may become strong through faith in Christ. Hereby you may come to possess a hope which will stabilize your soul and cause you to look for a city whose builder and maker is God.

Purer in Heart, O God

Purer in heart, O God,  
 Help me to be;  
 May I devote my life  
 Wholly to thee.  
 Watch Thou my wayward feet,  
 Guide me with counsel sweet;  
 Purer in heart  
 Help me to be.

Purer in heart, O God,  
 Help me to be;  
 Teach me to do Thy will  
 Most lovingly.  
 Be Thou my friend and guide,  
 Let me with Thee abide;  
 Purer in heart  
 Help me to be.

Purer in heart, O God,  
Help me to be;  
That I Thy holy face  
One day may see.  
Keep me from secret sin.  
Reign Thou my soul within;  
Purer in heart,  
Help me to be.

—Mrs. A. L. Davidson.



## THE PRIVILEGES OF CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM

By Thomas D. Rose

The theme assigned by Brother James F. Cox for our study this evening is, "The Privileges of Citizens of the Kingdom." To induce aliens to become citizens and to encourage citizens to live an abundant life a more comprehensive and significant subject could hardly be framed. Therefore it is worthy of the most profound and favorable consideration possible on the part of every soul whom God holds accountable. Let us note carefully the substantives used in this statement. The word "privilege" is from a compound Latin term, the component parts of which mean private and law. Hence, a law that is for or against an individual or individuals composing a group. Webster defines the word as "a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage or favor; special enjoyment of a good, or exemption from an evil or burden; a prerogative; a peculiar or personal right, or advantage, especially when enjoyed in derogation of common right." In verbal form, it means to accord some particular right to or exemption from. Such rights, advantages or privileges are not to be treated as matters of indifference. With every special favor there is a corresponding obligation.

The next word to consider is citizen. It is a transla-

tion of a word, the root meaning of which is the same as the word translated city. Thayer gives the following definition: "The inhabitant of any city or country; the associate of another in citizenship, that is, a fellow-citizen, fellow-countryman." Webster describes a citizen as: "An inhabitant of a city or town who enjoys its freedom and privileges as freeman; a member of a state; a person, native or naturalized, of either sex who owes allegiance to a government, and is entitled to reciprocal protection from it, opposed to alien." Citizen is a New Testament word. Paul said, "I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city."

Kingdom is suggestive of a king, territory, citizen, rule, and law. The Lord's people in their relation to divine government are called a kingdom. With regard to the birth and reign of the Messiah, Isaiah said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever." In the realization of the above prophecy, John said, "And he made us to be a kingdom, priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." "I, John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus." The kingdom of our subject is "the kingdom of heaven." With reference to the same thought,

kindred phrases are employed: kingdom of God, his kingdom, kingdom of the Son of his love, my kingdom and thy kingdom. This language emphasizes the divine nature of the kingdom. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from hence." The kingdom of heaven is divine in its origin. Daniel, the statesman prophet, foretold its beginning and its superhuman power. In his night visions, he saw one like unto a Son of man who came to the Ancient of days, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The kingdom is divine, not only in its origin, but is likewise heavenly and spiritual in its king, its laws, its mission, the character and destiny of its subjects and their privileges.

The king and kingdom of prophecy are early and easily identified in the New Testament. John and Jesus preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Jesus taught his disciples to pray for it to come. Before his death Jesus said that some present would not taste of death till they saw the kingdom of God come with power. After Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, Peter declared, in the city of Jerusalem, "That God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." From the second chapter of Acts through the book of Revelation, the kingdom of heaven is affirmed to be a living reality and Christ as a ruling and reigning King



of kings and Lord of lords. The citizens of the kingdom of heaven are all who by the power of the gospel have been delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love; all who have been born of water and the Spirit, and are seeing, enjoying the reign of the Prince of Peace in their hearts and lives. All who constitute the kingdom and are loyal citizens are the legal and favored heirs of all the special advantages, benefits and rights in connection with the reign of the second David who would occupy the throne when the fallen tabernacle of the first David was reconstructed. Every providential blessing and personal privilege that we are now enjoying by virtue of our citizenship in the kingdom of Christ is in fulfillment of those glowing prophecies so bright, radiant and hopeful given by men borne along by inspiration. These will continue to be our rich and glorious inheritance until Christ delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and an abundant entrance is given into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The entrance into the eternal kingdom with all that it means is but the consummation of our present privileges as faithful and obedient citizens.

That there are manifold duties, grave, exacting and inflexible, bound upon every Christian by him who has all authority in heaven and on earth no one will deny. Truly, the gospel of Christ is a law of life, for it binds obligations, it prescribes a rule of daily conduct, it richly rewards the obedient and punishes the transgressor. But to regard this citizenship strictly in terms of cold, drastic and severe obliga-

tion; to obey the laws of the king at the lash of the whip; to respect and respond in the spirit of a dumb driven ox, or even as a bond-servant, is to literally deprive oneself of the divine happiness that is vouchsafed to those called into the sacred service of the Lord. The highest, holiest and most satisfactory service to all concerned is that rendered in sincere appreciation for all the favors and privileges of the king of glory. Much lifeless, listless and spiritless service will be eliminated, and in its stead will be that service which satisfies the seeking heart of God and the earnest longing of one's own soul when citizens are actuated by a deep and abiding consciousness of the king's love, mercy and goodness.

To our subject Paul has made a very distinct contribution in the latter part of the third chapter of Philippians. Nominal Christians, mere professors and false teachers had arisen. Both Paul and Peter said that such hindrances and stumblingblocks would be the sad experience of the kingdom of heaven. In verses 17-19 the apostle warns against them and describes them in no uncertain terms. "They are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." They were earthly, sensual and self-indulgent and had wholly forgotten that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking." In bold contrast with such conventional and worldly citizens, Paul next presents the celestial citizenship. "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Perhaps the meaning of heavenly citizenship reaches its height in this passage. In

Jerusalem a mob sought to kill Paul. Lysias, the chief captain, rescued him with soldiers and centurians. In making his defense the wise and courageous apostle declared his Roman citizenship. The chief captain said to him, "Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am Roman born." Citizenship of Rome, acquired by birth or with a great price, was regarded a very high distinction. More than once it saved Paul from ignominy. If citizenship in a kingdom of this world was then, and is now, of such tremendous value, how much more incalculable is the worth of citizenship in the kingdom of heaven before whose onward and triumphant march the iron kingdom was to be broken in pieces and consumed.

The phraseology of our subject indicates that heaven's kingdom has a plurality of citizens, and that each citizen is the possessor of a plurality of privileges. "Our citizenship is in heaven," said Paul. The word "our" is emphatic. We are fellow-citizens; "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Fellow-citizens who actually have and enjoy fellowship with God, with Christ and with one another. The Greek word, which occurs no where else in the New Testament, does not mean speech, not conversation as we commonly use the term. It conveys the idea of citizenship or commonwealth. This citizenship is a privilege from God. The word "is" is also emphatic, signifying present existence. If we are Christians in the sense of inspired language our citizenship is not projected into the future, but is now. A recognition of this principle is primary and abso-



lutely fundamental in the entire life of a servant of the Lord. We do not have to wait until after death to begin the enjoyment of "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Christianity is pre-eminently a present day matter. "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Every one who forsakes all for the kingdom of heaven shall receive now in this time a hundredfold of certain blessings and privileges of the Father's provision. Many would gladly and gratefully accept citizenship in the kingdom of Christ if they could see that it pays rich dividends to serve Jesus now. In preaching the gospel and teaching the word of God much stress should be placed on this point.

The passage says, "Our citizenship is in heaven," not on this earth. Heaven is the glorious center of Christ's spiritual empire. The Christian lives in two realms at the same time. Locally, he is a citizen of this world, and as such must render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; spiritually, he is a citizen of heaven and must render to the King of kings the things that are his. Christ lived in the world and paid his tax as other men, but he was not of the world. Christian citizens are to be Christly now. Every soul is to be in subjection to the higher powers but is to give first consideration under all circumstances to the kingdom of heaven. Christians are pilgrims in and strangers to this world. As citizens of a foreign country do not feel at home, so heavenly citizens are not at home in this world. "They desire a better country, that is, a heavenly." Like Abraham of old, they constantly and eagerly look "for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and mak-

er is God." From the seat of our commonwealth we wait for a Saviour in blessed anticipation that our corruptible bodies may be fashioned anew and conformed to the body of his glory. No wonder then, that Paul admonished the Colossians to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is." In worldly matters men will fight for their rights, but as Christians many live complacently, far beneath their heavenly rights and privileges.

The freedom that any country guarantees to its citizens is of vital and first importance. One of the definite and special rights with which a Christian citizen is invested is liberty in Christ. Paul raised the question: "What advantage then hath the Jew?" "Much every way" was the reply. The Jews enjoyed many superior privileges, especially during the golden age of the Jewish monarchy, in the administrations of David and Solomon. The law of that kingdom at its best was a yoke of bondage. It was largely external and was a system of types and representations of which the gospel, the law of liberty, is the sum and substance. The apostle further speaks of "our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus." The liberty of which he here speaks is a divine right of every citizen of Christ's reign. The law for the regulation of all Christians is the law of liberty. "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." These Scriptures and others of like import have been terribly abused. Liberty in Christ does not mean license to do as one pleases. This liberty is thoroughly circumscribed by the law

of the king. It is perfect not only in contrast with the law of Moses, but is entirely perfect in furnishing every citizen unto every good work and for the accomplishment of all of God's purposes and plans in his people. It is perfect and perfecting in its very nature. It gives complete freedom from all the burdens and weaknesses of the old law. It does that which the law through the weakness of the flesh could not do. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The gospel of freedom provides liberation from the outward and ritualistic services of the law of Sinai; it altogether exempts a citizen of the Lord's kingdom from all the doctrines and dogmas of men, from all the institutions and ecclesiasticisms of Catholicism and Protestantism; it also gives full freedom from the influence, guilt, power and penalty of sin. It even goes beyond this. It offers sanctification and entire preservation for spirit, soul and body at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The law of liberty frees one from all the past, it supports him in the present and adequately provides for the future. Conscious and appreciative of this personal favor in the kingdom of heaven, citizens are to speak and do "as men who are to be judged by a law of liberty."

Privileges of inestimable worth to every soul under the government of the Prince of Peace are suggested in Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Things purely outward and of an indifferent nature were disturbing and hindering to the peace and progress of the kingdom. In every age there has been a large class



of professors who have been extremely punctilious regarding eating, drinking, mint, anise and cummin, but cared nothing for the weightier matters, righteousness, peace and joy. The kingdom of Christ is to help men in things material, but it was not established for that purpose. It rises far above and beyond that. It deals primarily with things inward and spiritual. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." It extends to Christians, that which the world and the kingdoms of men cannot give, righteousness, peace and joy.

Self-righteousness is human and destructive. God's righteousness is a special and personally beneficial right to every citizen. "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth." This righteousness must be sought and appropriated. Christianity consists of much more than morality. Righteousness is based upon the word of God and proceeds therefrom. It is right doing, right living according to the divine standard of life and service. It comprehends justice, truth and purity. Righteousness of Christians must exceed that of all others.

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus." This peace of mind, heart and soul is a living and supporting experience of all who trust and obey, but is not fully understood by any. "Being therefore justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The kingdom of heaven passes through many struggles, trials and tribulations. Storms arise and tempests rage. With much consolation to the disciples Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not

as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful." The peace of God enables the true citizen to be tranquil and unruffled when discord develops and dangers threaten. To have this peace one must follow after things that make for peace and promote concord in the kingdom of heaven.

Suffering and sorrowful humanity sighs for happiness which can be had. "I bring you good tidings of great joy" is an angelic announcement. Joy unspeakable and full of glory is God's favor to those in his kingdom. From entrance into covenant relationship with Christ this is true. After being taught and baptized, the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. The jailor at Philippi rejoiced greatly with all his house having believed in God. The key word of Paul to the Philippians was joy. From the first, that great gospel joy flooded their hearts and was to continue regardless of circumstances. "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice" was the final admonition to them.

A loyal citizen feels keenly his personal responsibility to his government; and too, he has his reciprocal rights from the government that he supports. One of these is protection. Recognizing the possibility of imposition and injustice he should consistently uphold the power that guarantees to him safety and security. To live temporarily in a foreign country and under another flag helps one to appreciate the protecting power of the country of which he is an inhabitant. To be assured of the presence, power and protection of a mighty government affords much satisfaction and courage. If this is true in political

and temporal kingdoms, how much more so in the kingdom with infinite resources and that shall stand for ever.

God commanded Moses to lead the Israelites through the dreary wilderness and into the promised land. This meek man knew something of the fearful responsibility of the task and the dreadful difficulties that he would encounter. To the Lord, he said, "Thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me." "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" was Jehovah's reply. Moses felt his own insufficiency and utter helplessness, to such extent that he cried out, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." He knew before starting that without divine aid the journey would be a miserable failure.

As God promised to be with Moses, so has the Christian's King promised to be with him. To the disconsolate disciples Jesus said, "I will not leave you desolate" or orphans. In the most stupendous work ever undertaken by men, he promised, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This promise of his presence carries with it all the power and co-operation of the God-head bodily; it extends his comfort and protection to all who maintain their spiritual integrity and allegiance to him as prophet, priest and king. In the execution of the commission, Peter enjoined believers to repent and be baptized unto the remission of sins, with the inseparable and sustaining promise: "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Christians are a habitation of God in the Spirit. After many years of actual experience with Christ, Paul exclaimed, "I



can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." As a citizen and subject, he firmly believed what his Master had said, "Apart from me ye can do nothing." He was certain that in Christ every thing expected by a sympathetic Saviour could be done. To him, the word impossible was not the language of a redeemed soul. He did not attribute the strength to do God's will to his own ability. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." For Christian success he relied implicitly on his Lord's declaration, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." Daniel's deliverance is an example of God's sufficiency. The humblest Christian has access to omnipotence so long as Jehovah is his trust. When his soul shall make her boast in Jehovah, he is protected by the divine armour and is girded by divine strength. With the strength of heaven as one's personal right, he cannot plead his weakness for stumbling. He must stand unmovably like a rock and put forth active power like a spiritual Samson. By waiting faithfully on the Lord, his strength will be renewed and made equal to every demand. The citizen who lives on the life-giving word is equipped for every duty, trial and temptation. An application of Paul's injunction, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" will enable him to say, "Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Greatness has been the aspiration of men and the goal of human endeavor in all generations. Men have

sought and suffered to occupy positions of honor and power in the world. Greatness in the truest sense known to man is the special birthright of every citizen in the kingdom of heaven. As to the worthiness of efforts to become great, all depends on the conception of what constitutes greatness. God's thought of greatness is as much higher than man's, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Near the close of the Jewish economy one of the greatest men from the days of Adam appeared in the hill country of Judæa. His greatness was not an accident; it was the result of righteous and blameless parents, communion with God and strict discipline in his life. His greatness consisted of the unusual service that he rendered to the Lord and sinful humanity. As a man, his vigorous constitution, his natural gifts, his knowledge of nature and men and his maturity of power and spiritual growth made him head and shoulders above his fellows. As a preacher, he was in a class to himself. His work was not in the centers of population but in the sparsely settled wilderness. Men of every rank and throughout Palestine came to hear him. His oddity of dress and food was not the attraction; but his message of sublime faith and holy living preached in the spirit and power of Elijah created a sensation and moved men. He was as bold as a lion and had the courage to rebuke Antipas as Nathan did David. As a prophet he saw what the sects of his day never saw. He saw face to face that which Abraham and others saw from afar. He was the last of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New. As a man, preacher or prophet who was the peer of John the Baptist? The one

for whom he came to prepare the way said that John was much more than a prophet. Yet, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath none arisen greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." By virtue of the station enjoyed, the relation to Christ, the privileges granted, the blessings to be had and the work to be done, even the least in Christ's kingdom is greater than John. This should challenge the best in every citizen of the kingdom. The prophets pointed out the coming Christ; John pointed him out as the Lamb of God among them; those in the kingdom can preach and teach that Christ has suffered and entered into glory, and that he reigns today and intercedes as high priest through whom his people have access to God's grace and mercy. They can lead men to believe on the Christ who was dead but lives for ever more; they can persuade the lost through obedience to the gospel to become the recipients of all the merits of the atoning death. The humble servant of all is declared to be the greatest of all. To spend and be spent in building up the kingdom among all the nations and perpetuating it throughout all generations is the climax of all service. It is the work by which God is glorified in the kingdom of heaven. Everyone whose citizenship is in heaven has the superlative prerogative of exalting Christ as King by doing a work that will endure for time and eternity.

Man is the image and glory of God. He is inherently religious. No period of degeneration, nor depth of degradation has ever erased from his heart the conception of a Supreme Being. In sin he has lost



sight of many of his original rights, but has never forgotten nor forsaken his primitive privilege to worship. He will, yes, he must have a god to which he pays veneration and from which he expects blessings. His God may be his Creator, or it may be the creation of his own hands. The right to worship is universal and eternal. Everything from God Almighty to the lowest of beasts, even the reptile, has been and continues to be worshipped by beings made in the image of their Maker. Worshipers partake of the nature of the object which they adore or idolize. This accounts for the highest possible plane of civilization on which the worshippers of the only true and living God have ever lived; it likewise gives the ground for the plane of debasement on which millions continue to merely eke out an existence. For the transformation of lives and for the restoration and maintaining of God's image, there is nothing more potent than the privilege of divine worship. Men ascend or descend according to their worship. The status of any people is largely determined by their religious devotions.

God has always wanted a people like himself. To the end of making and keeping men godly he has in each dispensation provided a system of worship that was suitable for that particular age. The patriarchs built their altars and gathered their families for worship. The Jewish religion was national and therefore centralized. During those eras much of their service consisted of animal offerings and material oblations; hence it was formal and heartless. Their approach to God was ceremonial and at a distance. But since the time that the heavenly host sang,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased”; since the shepherds left the Bethlehem manger “glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen”; and since the wise men who represented literature and learning saw the young child and fell down and worshipped him, men have worshipped with a new significance. That God might seem less historical and more fully revealed to man, and that man might know him more intimately and draw more closely in his worship, God came down in the flesh, in the person of his Son. Jesus said, “If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also” and “He that hath seen me hath seen my Father.” Citizens of the kingdom of heaven have advantages and privileges in their worship never before experienced. They do not have to go to Mt. Gerizim with the Samaritans, nor to Jerusalem with the Jews. They do not have to make a long pilgrimage to Mecca, nor find some holy shrine at which to pray. The worship of Christians is not localized. Jesus said to the woman at the well, “The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father; the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth.” Wherever and whenever as many as two or three gather and do as worship that which the New Testament authorizes, and do so in genuine sincerity, with reverence and awe, there God places his name and his blessings. God is Spirit, and all who worship him, must worship in spirit and truth. No picture has ever filled and thrilled the hearts of Christians with greater joy, nor given more inspiration, than

the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation. God is upon his throne, and the Lamb is standing at his right hand holding a book. In the spirit and posture of true worship, the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, a host of angels and every created thing give power, riches, wisdom, might, honor and blessing. Heavenly citizenship, liberty in Christ, Christ's presence, righteousness, joy and peace, true greatness and true worship are some of the privileges of citizens of the kingdom of heaven.



## THE AMBASSADORS OF THE KINGDOM

By T. B. Thompson

Brethren and Sisters, in the Lord, and Friends:

I am happy to appear on this program at the invitation of Brother Jas. F. Cox, and I am conscious of the obligation the occasion imposes on me.

In preparing this speech I had two things in mind principally: (a) A speech that would be passable before this audience of a thousand people, and (b) furthermore, such treatment of my subject as would make instructive teaching for the thousands in future years that will read the published lectures.

My subject—"The Ambassadors of the Kingdom"—demands first a definition of the word "Ambassador." Webster: "A minister of the highest rank sent to a foreign court to represent his sovereign."

Encyclopedia Britannica: "Ambassador—The word denotes a public minister of the highest rank sent by one sovereign to another, with power to represent his sovereign."

Twentieth Century Encyclopedia: "A refusal to receive an ambassador properly accredited, if made without sufficient cause, is considered a gross insult to the power he represents."

An ambassador represents a higher rank than that of an envoy, since the latter is not the representa-

tive of his sovereign, but simply a diplomatic agent of the government.

A very simple meaning of "apostle" is "one sent." Since the apostles of our Lord were sent by him in person, it is most interesting to note the extent to which the description of the office and work of the apostles of the Lord coincide with the definition of an "ambassador" as suggested above. Indeed, Paul speaks of the apostles as ambassadors: In Eph. 6:20 he speaks of himself as "an ambassador in chains." Also (2 Cor. 5:20), speaking for all the apostles Paul declares, "We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating you by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." No other save the apostles themselves could or can fulfil the requirements of this passage.

So far as the office of the apostles of the Lord is concerned, it would seem that it had a two-fold significance: As to aliens, they were "ambassadors," while, to citizens, they were supreme judges (Matt. 19:28).

I. First, let us note the importance of the apostolic office.

1. The apostles were the representatives of Christ, being represented in 2 Cor. 5:20 as standing "in the stead of Christ" as though God were "entreating by us," that aliens be reconciled to God. In Luke 10:16 and also in John 13:20 Jesus stresses the importance of the work of his ambassadors by showing that those who hear the apostles, hear him, and to hear Christ is to hear God; also to reject the apostles is to reject Christ and God. As also to receive

those sent by the Lord is equal to receiving Christ himself.

2. Their importance is again shown in that the apostles speak the very words of their sovereign. Jesus tells them that when they are delivered up before magistrates that they are to take no thought what they shall say, for it would be given them in that hour what they shall speak; assuring them that it would not be themselves speaking, but God speaking in them (Matt. 10:19, 20). In explanation of this very thing Paul (1 Cor. 2:13) declares that they spoke not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but words which the Holy Spirit teacheth, combining spiritual words and spiritual things.

3. Therefore, the message of the apostles was the message of Christ, and was ratified in heaven. Did not Jesus promise to give the apostles the "keys of the kingdom"—the authority to name the conditions of entrance into the kingdom—with the assurance that whatever they "bound" and "loosed" on earth would be ratified in heaven (Matt. 16:19)? My conception of the office of the ambassador easily permits of that construction, which I sincerely believe is confirmed by the Scriptures.

4. The importance of their office is seen in the fact that they are in the very foundation of the church. Read Eph. 2:19, 20 and note that Paul so declares. They are not only in the foundation of the church militant, but their names are to be inscribed on the twelve foundations of the church triumphant: "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve



apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14). This may help us in understanding the language of the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 3:10: "According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I have laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon." The word for "masterbuilder" is architecton, from which comes our word "architect." As ambassadors, standing in the very stead or room of Christ, the apostles were in the foundation, and were architects as no others could be. May it be here suggested that since these apostles are still in the foundation, and the foundation of God standeth sure (2 Tim. 2:19), there is no need for a succession of apostles to fill any need in this respect—nor any other.

II. Let us note in the second place the qualifications of an apostle.

1. First an apostle, just as any ambassador, must be chosen by the right person. Jesus speaks in John 6:70 of choosing "the twelve." The Lord further states (John 15:16) that the apostles did not choose him, but he chose them, and sent them out. Referring to Christ's choosing Saul, Ananias, in Acts 22:14, 15 says: "And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." When Paul stood before Agrippa he quoted the following language from Christ: "I have appeared unto thee to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16). The

appearance was not primarily to make him a Christian, but to qualify him to be an ambassador.

2. A second qualification of an apostle is that he must have seen Christ.

Paul defends his apostleship by reference to the fact that he had seen Christ (1 Cor. 9:1). It may be remembered that Peter set forth two conditions in Acts 1:21, 22: (a) First one must have been with Christ from the baptism of John to the ascension, and (b) must have been a witness of his resurrection. Paul did not accompany Christ during his personal ministry, but did see him; and could, of course, bear witness to his being alive at the right hand of God, implying certainly his resurrection. Later reference will be made to this.

3. Since some good brethren have doubted that Matthias was ever recognized as an apostle by the Lord, it seems in place here to present some Scriptures and suggestions along that line. In the first place it seems to me unthinkable that Peter, unaided, could have so accurately applied the prophecies in Ps. 69:25 and 109:8, which had no direct reference to Judas, but applied to him only as they applied to men of such character. Then, Luke specifically says that Matthias was numbered with the eleven (Acts 1:26), making of course "the twelve"; just as when it is said that Peter stood up with the eleven (Acts 2:14) it constituted "the twelve." You will also recall that in Acts 6:2 it is said "the twelve" called the multitude together. Reference was made by Peter to the fact that Judas was not only numbered with them, but also received "his portion" in the ministry (apostolic ministry with its prerogatives—Matt.

10:1). Is it possible since the apostles knew the powers and prerogatives of an apostle they would not have questioned the reality of Matthias' apostleship had he not have had "his portion" with them? Matthias becomes, therefore, the only Scriptural example of apostolic succession, and that was to fill the place of one who lost his office, not by death, but by departing from the prescribed qualifications of an apostle. It is worthy of note that even though there was a general meeting of the apostles in Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15, that no motion was made to fill the place of James whose death is recorded in Acts 12—No, James did not lose his place in the foundation of the church, nor his place on the supreme bench by reason of death, and so needed no successor. Christ's earthly work is done, just as the apostles' earthly work is done; no need for successors to either.

III. Paul's apostolate a special one to the Gentiles.

1. Jesus told Ananias in Acts 9:15 that Saul was a chosen vessel to bear "my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel." Also note that in Gal. 2:7-9 Paul distinguishes between his mission to the uncircumcision and Peter's to the circumcision. It is worthy of note that in 1 Cor. 15:5, 8 Paul distinguishes between himself and "the twelve," which seemed to be a title that applied only to the original twelve, as confirmed by our Lord in John 6:70. There were not actually twelve apostles at the time to which Paul refers in 1 Cor. 15:5, since that was between the death of Judas and the appointment of Matthias, further confirming "the twelve" as a title applying to the original appointments. Did



Paul lack one of the requisites to being numbered with the original twelve?—not having journeyed with Christ throughout his personal ministry! Do the words of Jesus in John 15:27, “because ye have been with me,” in reference to his chosen witnesses, have any particular meaning in this connection? What did Paul mean by his being “the child untimely born” (1 Cor. 15:8)? At first glance it would seem that he refers to the fact that he was not born into the apostleship at the same time the others were. The original, however, seems to bear the idea of an abortive birth—born before development, or, in advance of full development. The original twelve came into their apostolic office in fact after three and one-half years of schooling under the tutelage of the Saviour. Paul entered into his apostolic office before and without that previous preparation; born before being developed through training; thus abortively born. Hence not of the original twelve, but abortively born for a particular and special mission. Do all these things have any connection with the fact that Paul, of all the apostles, must be continually defending his apostleship before the church?

I would conclude, therefore, that the reasons for denying Matthias' apostleship and attempting to place Paul among the original twelve, and thus on one of the twelve thrones, is lacking greatly in Scripture confirmation. I am perfectly willing to leave it with the Lord to find Paul a seat and a throne.

IV. Now let us consider the authority of the apostles.

1. When Jesus gave the great commission, as recorded in John 20:21, he declared that as the Father

had sent him, even so he had sent the apostles. He authorized them to forgive and retain sins, which, as reported by Matt. 16:19 would be ratified in heaven. They were to lay down the conditions of salvation from sin; also, to give instructions for the settlement of troubles among the brethren (Matt. 18). In each instance they were assured that their legislation would receive confirmation in heaven. In all this is demonstrated their ambassadorial authority. Jesus had plainly declared that to receive or reject an apostle was to receive or reject him and his Father. Christ did not underestimate the authority of these apostles, but said whosoever receives my ambassadors receives me, and whosoever rejects my ambassadors rejects me. In this connection it is important to notice the statement in John 14:12: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do: because I go to my Father." Men may underestimate the work of the Lord's ambassadors, but the Lord did not.

V. We come now to the miraculous powers of the apostles.

1. In healing all manner of sickness. When Jesus chose the twelve as reported in Matt. 10 he gave them power over unclean spirits and to heal all manner of sickness. So we see Peter (Acts 5:15) healing great multitudes who were vexed with unclean spirits. Special miracles were said to be wrought by Paul when aprons and handkerchiefs were carried from his body to the sick and they were healed. In this connection consider the meaning of the words of the Lord in Matt. 7:22, 23 where Jesus says that many shall appear at the throne of Judgment insisting that they

have cast out demons (modern religious healers), to whom Jesus will reply, "I never knew you." There is a vast difference between the instantaneous and unmistakable healings of the apostles and the modern miraculous (?) healings of our day.

2. Another clear demonstration of miraculous power is seen in the ability of the apostles to speak in tongues. Acts 2:4 shows the apostles talking in languages which they had never learned. This was not unintelligible jargon, as characterizes the modern religious fanatics, but recognized dialects. Verse 11 says the Jews from widely separated parts of the country, with their different languages, heard in their "own tongues" the marvelous works of God. Paul tells us that tongues are a sign to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22). That, of course, was true of all miracles, even miracles of a benevolent nature—they were as Paul says in Heb. 2:3, 4 to confirm the message, not primarily to benefit the individual.

3. Again, the powers of apostles were manifest in their handling of deadly serpents and drinking deadly poison. Jesus had made the promise in Mark 16:18 that neither the bite of serpents nor the drinking of poison would in any wise hurt them. Paul demonstrates this on the Island of Miletus when bitten by a deadly viper, and when he neither swelled nor suffered any pain, the natives thought him a god. Modern religious cranks sometimes allow themselves to be bitten by snakes, and after swelling almost to the bursting point, and rolling in pain for days, they finally recover and go back to their ignorant followers to be proclaimed poison proof. The case lacks much being made out. Jesus said there would be no



hurt where his power protects, and Paul's experience shows such to be true; so, modern healings, or being bitten of snakes, do not measure up to the Bible standard. Few, if any, instances are on record where these poor misguided religious cults have drunk deadly poison; so long as they make the claim, I think they should be tested.

4. Finally, the powers of apostles, are manifest in their raising the dead. Jesus promised in Matt. 10:8 that they should raise the dead. In Acts 9 and 20 respectively we find Peter and Paul raising the dead; being done without days of delay and begging God to intervene. Occasionally we hear of some religious cult attempting to raise the dead, and have been known to keep the dead unburied until the authorities had to intervene and force them to bury the body. Why cannot these deluded souls see that nothing they do fulfills the conditions and requirements set forth in the Bible? I have actually known some of my own brethren to get all excited over the claims and exhibitions of modern healers. Brethren, better try all such claimants, by the Great Commission. Remember Paul says in Gal. 1:8 that if any man preaches any other gospel than that which he preached, let him be accursed; even though he be an angel from heaven. That is good enough for us all.

VI. We are now prepared to take a look at the signs of an apostle.

1. In 2 Cor. 12:12 Paul declares he had worked among the Corinthians "the signs of an apostle." Miracles were "signs" (evidences) of one's claim to be an apostle. If they were wrought by an apostle in person, or, if by one on whom apostles had laid

hands. All the gifts of the Spirit as mentioned in 1 Cor. 12 were conferred by laying on of apostles' hands. Simon saw (Acts 8) that through laying on of apostles' hands the power to work miracles was given. In 1 Tim. 4:14 Paul admonishes Timothy to neglect not the gift in him which was given him through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Later on (2 Tim. 1:6) Paul says that Timothy's gift was bestowed by the laying on of his hands.

2. With reference to miracles, may we suggest that if just anybody then, or now, could have worked miracles they would not have been "signs of an apostle." If there were a barber "pole" in front of every business house in your city, it would no longer be the "sign" of a barber shop.

3. Try it out on this rule: Christ had the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). The apostles received the baptismal measure, and while they could not bestow that same measure, they could by laying on their hands bestow a "spiritual gift." Those who received spiritual gifts could work miracles, but could not bestow such power upon others. Now, figure it out. Bestowing gifts by laying on of hands ended with the death of the last apostle, and working miracles ended with the death of the last living man upon whom the apostles laid hands; if not, why not? Brethren, do not the same "signs" follow now (John 20:30), and for the same reason?

VII. Finally, we notice the message of the apostles.

1. Their message was an inspired message, as stated in 2 Tim. 3:16, in which Paul declares "every

Scripture inspired of God is profitable." There is one other place where the word inspiration is used—Job 32:8. The word means, "God-breathed" or "breath of God." Two statements from Paul will serve to fully explain the matter. Turn to 1 Thess. 2:13 and note how Paul draws a distinction between man's word and God's word; declaring emphatically that their message was the latter. Then in 1 Cor. 2:13 the matter is settled for all time to come, when Paul affirms that the message that God gave to the apostles was not given to the world in "words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words." Try out every theory of inspiration, and then resort to this as the truth.

2. The apostles' message was, therefore, the message of God. It came from God to Christ (John 12:49); from Christ to the apostles (2 Cor. 13:3); and, from the apostles to us. That this message is dependable may be judged from the following facts: Jesus assured the apostles that when the Spirit should come it would bring to their remembrance (John 14:26) what he had taught them; would testify of Christ (John 15:26); show them things to come (John 16:13); and guide them into all truth (John 16:13). That guarantees to us the uncorruptness of the message.

3. We are warned to accept their divinely inspired decisions, and to regard the finality of their word. Paul says we should hold the traditions of apostles given us by them (2 Thess. 2:15), because their



teaching and practice are divinely inspired and ratified by the head of the greatest government in all the universe (pardon comparison).

Finally, brethren, the message of the ambassadors of the kingdom is our message. The faithful proclamation and living of that message is the world's only hope.

## “CHRISTIAN UNITY”

### Divisions Among Those Who Believe, or Claim To Believe Christ Divine

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By H. L. Reynolds

(A) How these divisions have come about; that is, how these various separate sectarian bodies have come to be.

I want to say, right in the beginning of this discourse, that the cause of and blame for any and all divisions among those who claim to be followers of Christ, from the establishment of the church until now, lies at the door of man! The blame is not on the Christ,—on any ambiguity of his statements, or doubleness of his purpose—but on man. In fact, the Saviour of mankind prayed that his followers be one.

In John 17:20-21 we find our Lord praying this prayer—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Yet, I have heard sectarian preachers thanking God for the different denominations, so that each man can join the church of his choice. Further, I

have heard them say, "I don't believe God intended us all to see alike."

I have heard them quote John 15:15 in support of their theory that God intended that there should be different denominations. Let us look at this passage for a moment: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." At first glance it becomes evident that the Lord here was talking to his disciples, and not to several different denominations—in fact no such thing was in existence at that time.

Those of us who lament the fact that infidelity is scattered abroad throughout our land know that the greatest contributing factor to this evil is the divided condition of those who claim to follow Christ. Brethren, it is the duty of every Christian to make every effort in his power toward unity, without, of course, sacrificing any principle of the doctrine of Christ. The observer who notes the divided state of so-called Christendom, cannot but ask the question—"How have all these separate sectarian bodies come to be?" The answer to this question can be summed up in a few words. In every case, it was either (1) A desire for prominence by their founders, or a misguided zeal for God—i. e.; (2) A zeal of God, not according to knowledge. The establishment of any denomination can be traced to one of these two causes.

Let us look at the church during the days of the apostles. Acts 2:46 reads thusly: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Ac-

cord means harmony or agreement, hence they continued daily with agreement or harmony. Acts 2:42 reads: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer." These two passages teach us that in the beginning, there was unity among the followers of Christ. However, this condition of harmony and agreement did not continue for long, for we hear the apostle Paul saying to the Corinthian brethren: 1 Cor. 1:11: "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions, among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

The brethren at Corinth were divided; over what were they divided? Were they divided over the divinity of Christ? No! Were they divided over the mode of baptism? No! Well, what were they divided over? They were divided over their ideal of a preacher. Some thought Paul the greater, so they said we're of Paul; others thought Apollos was the better, so they said we're of Apollos; others said Peter baptized me, so we're of Cephas; still others said we are of Christ. Sad to say this condition exists in some congregations today. Here is an example: A certain congregation is considering employing a preacher to conduct the annual summer meeting; Brother A suggests Brother Jones as the logical man, and offers twenty-five dollars toward his support if he is employed; but, says he, "if you don't hire him



I won't give a dime." This, of course, is an extreme example, but it has been known to happen. Division is sinful, and therefore should be avoided.

From the church at Corinth, we go to the church at Galatia, where we find false teachers trying to bind on Christians the commands of the law. But we hear Paul saying to them in Gal. 1:6-7: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Looking down through the centuries, Paul saw the plight of the Christian world of today, and in Acts 20:29 he gave a word of warning that must be heeded. Paul said: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things (perverting the gospel) to draw away disciples after them." This foreboding came to pass very shortly, and by the time the third century rolled around there was very little New Testament Christianity to be found.

In the beginning, the oversight of the church was placed in the hands of elders, or bishops. Each local congregation had its elders. Pretty soon some of these elders began to long for more power, and began to cast about for ways and means to bring their desires for power to realization. It came to pass after awhile that districts were created, and a bishop was placed over each district with the title of "Archbishop"—a

term foreign to the Bible. From thence it was only a step to "Lord God the Pope." Such were, and are titles given to the Pope, supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church, who claims power to forgive sins on earth.

How any people who claimed to be followers of the Christ could so far apostatize from his teachings seems incredible to us, and yet it is true and the thing that brought it about was a departure from the simple New Testament teaching, and a desire on the part of the leadership for more and more and still more power. Time will not permit me to go into a detailed description of the iniquities of the Roman Catholic Church. Suffice it to say that as time went on she grew bolder in her flagrant disregard of God's word. However, it might be pointed out that one of the most corrupt practices of this corrupt church was the sale of indulgences. This brain child of Satan was hatched in the fertile mind of Pope Leo X early in the sixteenth century and had for its purpose the raising of money for the church.

I quote from "History of Christianity" by Abbot, p. 420.

A regular tariff of prices was fixed for the pardon of all crimes, from murder downward. If a man wished to commit any outrage or to indulge in any forbidden wickedness, he could do so at a stipulated price and receive—from the Pope—a full pardon. These permits, or indulgences as they were called, were peddled all over Europe and an immense revenue was gathered from them. There was one man, John Tetzal by name, a brazen miscreant, who made himself very notorious as a peddler of these indulgences. In a cart gor-

geously embellished, and accompanied by a musical band, he would approach some populous town, and tarry in the suburbs until his emissaries had entered the place and informed the inhabitants of the signal honor which awaited them with the advent of a nuncio from the Pope, with pardons for sins at his disposal. Tetzl carried in the capacious box of his peddler's cart, the parchment certificate of pardons for every imaginary sin: Murder, adultery, theft, sacrilege, blasphemy—every crime had its specified price.

Following is a quotation of one of these certificates of pardon:

"I, by the authority of Jesus Christ, his blessed Apostles Peter and Paul and the most holy pope, absolve thee from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous so ever they may be. I remit to thee all punishment which thou dost deserve in purgatory on their account, and restore thee to the innocence and purity thou didst possess at baptism; so that, when thou diest, the gates of punishment shall be shut against thee, and the gates of paradise shall be thrown wide open."

It was the sale of these indulgences that caused Martin Luther to break with Rome; not the only cause of course, but it was in effect, "the straw that broke the camel's back." So, in 1530 Luther met with several of his followers in Wittenburg, Germany, to map out a plan of action against Papal Rome. At this meeting the Augsburg confession of faith was drafted and adopted. This was the beginning of the Lutheran Church, and came into being as a result of the labors of Martin Luther in trying to reform the Roman Catholic Church. He started out to reform the



Catholic Church, and ended by founding another denomination.

In 1539 Henry the VIII of England fell in love with Anne Boleyn. The king was a married man, but that didn't keep him from planning a marriage with Anne. So he applied to the Pope of Rome for a divorce from Catherine of Aragon whom he had married twenty years before. This the Pope refused. So the king had himself divorced from her without the Pope's consent. "This brought about an open rupture between the Pope and King Henry. Henry's real purpose was a national Roman Catholic Church with himself as head, but this proved an impossibility. He saw there could not be two independent Catholicisms, one on the Tiber and the other on the Thames. He found himself compelled to ostensibly link himself with the new protestantism, and yet, in reality deeply in sympathy with the old Romanism. Henry the VIII was a Roman Catholic in all but name and endorsement of the papacy" (Short History of the Christian Church by Hurst). Thus was born the Episcopal Church, an offshoot of the Catholic Church, and the direct result of an illicit love affair between King Henry the VIII, of England, and Anne Boleyn.

Next, we come to consider the origin of the Baptist Church. This church had its beginning in Amsterdam, Holland, by the efforts of one John Smyth in 1607 A. D. In his volume "English Baptist Reformation," p. 29, Dr. Geo. A. Lofton, well known Baptist historian, gives an account of the origin of the first Baptist Church in English history. Organized in 1609 A. D. it originated with John Smyth and his followers at Amsterdam, Holland, whither they fled



in 1606 from persecution. They were a body of English separatists gathered by Smyth who left the English church in 1602 on account of their inclination to puritanism and his opposition to the corruptness of the English court." This, of course, is nearly sixteen hundred years too late to be the church we read about in the New Testament. No doubt John Smyth was zealous, but his zeal was not according to knowledge. Instead of starting a new order, he should have advocated a return to New Testament Christianity.

We now come to consider briefly the founding of the Methodist Church. This denomination had its beginning at Oxford, England, in 1729 A. D. when four young Oxford students led by John Wesley met to organize a society to inject a little more spirituality into the Episcopal Church. They were all members of the Episcopal Church, and had no idea of starting a new denomination. John Wesley himself said, quote, "On Monday, May the first, our little society began in London; but it may be observed that the first rise of Methodism, so called, was in Nov. 1729 when four of us met together at Oxford. The second rise of Methodism was at Savannah, Georgia, in 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house. The third rise of Methodism was at London, May the first 1737 when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every evening in order to free conversation, which began and ended with singing and prayer."

Continuing Wesley declares, "I am under God, the father of the whole family."

So we see this denomination had its beginning as a society in the Episcopal Church, with really no

thought by its founder of its ever becoming a separate and distinct body.

The reformers in the sixteenth century—Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Wycliff, Zwingli, etc. were trying to reform the Roman Catholic Church.

The Episcopal Church was the result of King Henry's desire for a more prominent part in church affairs, as well as his desire for a new wife.

The Methodist Church is the result of a society within the Episcopal Church, that finally grew bigger than the church itself. It is a notable fact that the religious world is not divided over what the Bible teaches, but what it does not teach. There is a basis upon which all religious people can be united today. Accept the Bible and the Bible alone as our rule of faith and practice, speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where the Bible is silent.

Think on these things.

## THE KINGDOM, ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER KINGDOMS

By F. B. Shepherd

My responsibility to this Lecture Week is to discuss in the light of, and by the help of, the word of God the question of the "Relation of the Kingdom of Heaven to the Other Kingdoms." Actually, I think it would not be out of order to say the other "kingdom" since there are really but two powers in the world, e. g. the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan. I am not going to affirm anything but what has been affirmed in the speeches that have preceded mine during this Lecture Week. I am not going to affirm one thing but what the children of God have believed and taught these past 1900 years. The inevitable conclusions I shall draw you may not be willing to accept. Our preaching has been Scriptural, but our practice many times has not measured up to that preaching.

"Relationship" means kinship or association. It may involve cooperation and partnership in a common cause; utter separation, independence, and indifference, or antagonism and warfare. Relationship means, where these have contact. The way one travels, the things one does, with respect to the other.

The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of Christ, the church of the living God. This kingdom is an

absolute monarchy. Jesus Christ the absolute, undisputed, God anointed Sovereign. God has from the very beginning had a government of his own upon earth. His will has been exercised by his chosen servants. He has ever had a complete, perfect, set of laws to govern his creation. His first form of government was the Family-Patriarchal-form. His second the National-Children of Israel. His third and final, the kingdom of heaven, in which there can be neither Jew nor Greek, no male and female, no barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman, for they are all one man in Christ Jesus. The history and success of each of these systems is easily traced in the Bible. As far back as inspired history takes us there has been but two classes of people as far as God has been concerned. Those who recognized and acknowledged the sovereignty of Jehovah. Those who refuse to recognize and acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Hence they recognized and acknowledged the dominion of the devil (Rom. 6:16). The other kingdoms are the various civil powers now existing in diverse forms throughout the world. These may be Republican, Monarchical, Totalitarian, or what have you, according as the different nations and tribes of the world determine to have, or accept more or less willingly, a form of human government. My obligation in this discourse is not to discuss the relative excellence of the various other kingdoms, nor even the necessity of their existence. I merely acknowledge their existence, their actuality, and discuss their relationship to, or with, the kingdom of heaven. Since the origin, constitution, and purpose of the kingdom of heaven has been exclusively set forth in preceding



speeches of this Lecture Week; in my estimation the most logical course for me to pursue is to first examine into the origin, purpose, and constitution of these other kingdoms, and from a comparison of them with the kingdom of heaven draw my conclusions. The Bible and profane history are our sources of information. The Bible information antedates that of profane history. The first human kingdom was that of Babylon, characterized by God as Babel. This kingdom was founded by Nimrod, a grandson of Ham, and a mighty hunter before the Lord (Gen. 10:10). Nimrod was its first sovereign, and Nineveh apparently its first capitol city (Gen. 10:10; 11:2, 9). This first of the other kingdoms undoubtedly originated in, or was born in, rebellion and disobedience to the absolute sovereignty and law of Jehovah (Gen. 11:1-9) since God's original form of governmental institution was that of the family. Be it recognized and acknowledged that to God and to God alone belongs the right and prerogative to govern in every realm of the created universe. All authority is inherent and primary with God. God alone is the rightful law-maker of the universe by virtue of his acts in creation. Although Romans 13:1 says the "Powers that be" are "Ordained" of God it does not necessarily mean God's approval, or that God originally intended them to exist (1 Sam. 8:9-21). In God originated, and by him was founded his own absolute authority. He merely permits that of another. Throughout the ages, in his infinite wisdom, patience, longsuffering, grace, and sometimes anger: God permitted men to become their own rulers, but merely because these men refused to acknowledge the authority of God (Rom. 1:21,

28). Actually man has no authority inherent nor delegated to make laws for his own government. Nor does he possess the wisdom and knowledge to govern himself properly (Jer. 10:23). The laws of these other kingdoms and constitutions are the expressions of human ideas, the sum of human wisdom, and the aggregation of human strength. The various rulers are human beings. From this original kingdom of Babylon there grew multitudes of other kingdoms, either independent of, or successors to, this original. Hence history teems with stories concerning the rise and fall of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, as world powers, together with accounts of smaller and less significant nations and kingdoms which were either independent or dependent according as the fortunes of constant war determined. And, let me insist in passing: every war in history from Nimrod to this good day, is the result of human government.

Britian, France, the United States, Germany, Italy, Japan, China, Russia, etc., today are but offsprings of these first kingdoms in a political way as are the hundreds of religious communions in a religious way offsprings of the great apostacy from the kingdom of heaven—the Catholic Church. History repeats itself. The first unit of God's government was the individual family, self-directing under the revealed will of God (Heb. 1:1; 11:4). Ambitious Nimrod combined families under himself and thus established a human monarchy, thereby rejecting the government of God. The unit in government and direction of the kingdom of heaven originally was the family—the local congregation. Ambitious men combined these

original independent and interdependent units under one head and humanly devise laws into an ecclesiastical hierarchy until they gave us the Roman and Greek Catholic Churches. Out of this original apostasy, perversion and rejection of divine authority there has grown the hundreds of equally rebellious Protestant denominations.

The supreme monarch and lord of these other kingdoms is Satan, the prince of this world under whose dominion these powers have arisen, and under whom they have placed themselves (Luke 4:6; 1 Cor. 15:24-28). These other kingdoms are antagonistic to the kingdom of Christ. All authority hath been given unto him in heaven and on earth. Therefore all failure or refusal to recognize and acknowledge the absolute sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ is rebellion against him. These other kingdoms undoubtedly do not acknowledge his absolute sovereignty on earth. Therefore they are still only permitted to exist by Jehovah and continue only that they might be used of him for the punishment of evil doers and each other's destruction (Rom. 13:3, 4). They are doomed to complete destruction eventually in God's own appointed time (Rev. 11:15) at the hands of the sovereign Lord of the universe, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Daniel declares the King of kings, the Ruler of the kingdom of heaven shall consume them (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45). While upon earth Christ acknowledged these other kingdoms were of the world and had been planted by, belonged to, Satan, the devil (Luke 4:6). He predicted they would eventually be rooted up (Matt. 15:13). Christ is ultimately to deliver up the kingdom of heaven to



the Father, "when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power." These other kingdoms are to become the kingdom of the Lord and his Christ. The Holy Spirit is on record that the time of this rooting would be in connection with the second advent of the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Cor. 15:28).

A comparison of the origin, nature, purpose of existence, function, and constitution, of these other kingdoms with that of the origin, nature, purpose of existence, function, and constitution, of the kingdom of heaven should furnish an answer to our question of the relationship between them. The kingdom of heaven is the consummation of divine wisdom and in it dwells the power of God. The kingdom of heaven is an absolute monarchy. It is separate, original, distinct, independent, from all other kingdoms. It is absolutely complete and perfect in its nature, constitution, laws, government, and function. Its laws provide an absolutely perfect system for the adjustment of every question, the settlement of every dispute, the handling of every problem of discipline within its ranks (Matt. 5:23; 18:15-18). Yea, within the world. The child of God is positively forbidden to avail himself of the civil powers to gain even justice at the hands of his fellow citizen of the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:1-10). "These are of no account in the church," says the Holy Spirit. I believe Jehovah is infinite in knowledge, in wisdom, and in power; in mercy, in love, and in grace. I believe Jehovah is immutable, changeless, and unchangeable. I believe, therefore, that God's way in everything is the only right way. It is the way that cannot but be. I believe,



therefore, that every provision made by Jehovah for the performance of any work, or the attainment of any end sought by him, has ever been an absolutely perfect provision needing no improvement upon, or revision of, in order that it might perfectly produce the results for which he designed it originally (Isa. 55:8). I believe that to attempt any change in, revision of, or substitution for any institution or method of God is presumptuous. It discounts the provision made by Jehovah and reflects upon divine wisdom. I believe Jehovah makes no experiments, he cannot err, but ever has been, now is, and forever will be, the only infallible source and standard of right and righteousness. I believe all his laws are the very mirror of his changeless attributes. All his statutes and institutions are inherently, immutably and infinitely, reflections of his immaculate nature, character, and person. The material universe upon the one hand, and the normal physical human body on the other are perfect illustrations of these fundamental principles of truth. I believe the kingdom of heaven is a God originated, God ordained, and God established institution through which God's children can, and should, work unto the moral and spiritual uplift, and eternal salvation of the world of men. I believe she is in her constitution, laws, and provisions, all-sufficient unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). I believe there is not one thing that is good, that is of God, that cannot be done exclusively and perfectly as a child of God and a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Thus have my brethren preached and contended lo these many years. To doubt or deny such conclusions is to challenge the infinity of

the wisdom of God, to discount the completeness and perfection of his plan, and to reflect upon the immutability of his nature. By virtue of his appointment by the declaration of Almighty God, Christ alone has the sovereignty, the right, the prerogative to make laws for the government of this universe (Matt. 17:5). All authority vests in him according to his own affirmation (Matt. 28:18). All authority is his according to the authoritative declaration of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 17:5; 1 Cor. 15:25). He also pledged his apostles that through that same Holy Spirit he would deliver unto them all truth (John 16:13). Since he must keep his word to be deity there can be nothing essential to man's life and conduct, direction and government, not included in the all truth delivered to the apostles, revealed to the first churches, and preserved upon the pages of the New Testament. The headquarters, abode of the King, capitol city, of this kingdom of heaven, is heaven (Phil. 3:20). Citizens thereof are but strangers and sojourners here enjoying the privileges of pilgrims in a foreign land. We have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come (Heb. 13:14). This absolute monarchy contains all God's children; all of God's children are in it. Every one is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Every citizen of the kingdom of heaven is in it. The other kingdoms yet exist as the kingdom of Satan in rebellion to the law of Christ. Permitted by God in his infinite grace and long-suffering, to function in dishonor until such time as already set within his own authority they are destroyed. They are utterly unlike in their component parts. The absolute separateness and independence of the kingdom

of heaven from all other kingdoms is not merely conspicuous, it is preeminent. The fundamental principles upon which the other kingdoms are founded, governed, and maintained, are incompatible with, and in conflict with, those upon which the kingdom of heaven is established and continued. In one the origin is found in God, and good. In the others the beginning was in rebellion to God, and greed (Gen. 11:1-9; 1 Sam. 8:9). One, then, is temporal, temporary, changeable, and changing. The other, spiritual, eternal, unchangeable, and unchanging. In their very natures the two kingdoms are as different and antipodal as the natures of their respective sovereigns—Christ and Satan—who are irreconcilable enemies, opposites, incompatible, and antagonistic. One is founded upon grace and suasion perfected by love. The other founded upon force, violence, physical power, maintained by the sword. The citizens of one fight for it physically. Leave it to God, is the commandment to the citizens of the other (John 18:33; Rom. 12:19). The triumph of the one is the defeat of the other. In function these do not have one thing in common. In purpose the ends sought by each are opposites. They operate in entirely distinct and different spheres; each regarded by God a separate, distinct, and independent organization, for a different purpose. The one ordained for the lawless and disobedient children of Satan, the dishonorable minister of God, an avenger of wrath to him that doeth evil (Rom. 13:4). The other established as the pillar and ground of the truth, the instrument through which the Lord of the universe shall evangelize the world with the gospel unto the salvation of souls.



Citizenship in one based upon fleshly birth and the accidents of parentage and place of nativity, changed by personal choice and determination in naturalization. Citizenship in the other obtained regardless of parentage or place of nativity, but determined by birth of water and the Spirit resulting in adoption at God's hands into his family. Logically and scripturally then, when men accept the gospel they become citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Naturalized out of the other kingdom, the kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of heaven (Phil. 3:20; Matt. 20:25; Mark 12:14; Luke 20:20; Eph. 5:11). Elected and ordained unto an entirely different work in the world. No man can serve two masters. No man can be a full fledged citizen of two governments at the same time. He can live obediently under one and enjoy the privileges of it while still a citizen of another. But to be a component part of two, and active in both, is as impossible as it is illegal. No provision is made in the New Testament for the function of the other kingdoms in the things of the kingdom of heaven. These other kingdoms do not recognize nor acknowledge the absolute sovereignty of Christ. They do not seek his absolute authority and will in heaven and on earth. Neither does the New Testament provide, either in precept or approved apostolic example or precedent, for the function of the kingdom of heaven in matters of statesmanship or civil government. Christianity is the seed of that which grows right and righteousness, not a system of judicial authority (1 Cor. 5:12, 13). Christ never proposed to formulate civil laws nor to enforce secular justice by physical power (Luke 12:14). His work from within, out.



Not from outside, in. It is highly significant that neither Christ, nor any apostle, or inspired teacher ever made a direct onslaught upon one of the established popular evils or practices of society of their day. No inspired teacher ever addressed or harangued a group of citizens of the other kingdoms upon a political or purely moral issue. No inspired teacher, no group of inspired preachers, or Holy Spirit directed church, ever attempted to exercise one particle of control or authority directly over the "powers that be" politically, by physical force or ballot. All utterances against immoral conduct were aimed directly and exclusively against the children of God. The theme and burden of apostolic teaching and preaching to those not citizens of the kingdom of heaven was ever the sonship and sovereignty of Christ, and his scheme for the redemption of their souls. Originally citizens of the kingdom of heaven stood aloof from the state and refused to have anything to do therewith except to pay taxes and render obedience thereto. The commonwealth of Israel, in its original simplicity, is yet a living monument to the relationship God expects his people to sustain to other kingdoms. Every act of affiliation, partnership, friendship, or treaty, with a foreign nation was regarded by God as an act of treason against his sovereignty. Their punishment and final destruction was a direct result of their indulgence in these forbidden fellowships (Ex. 23:32, 33; Judges 2:12). Affiliation of the kingdom of heaven with other kingdoms today in a similar manner cannot but result in the curtailing of the influence of the kingdom of heaven and thus slow up or

arrest completely the progress of its appointed work in its God ordained sphere of activity.

To sum up, then, the relationship of the kingdom of heaven, its citizens, to the other kingdoms can be nothing more than that of humble, unreserved, submission to all laws of these powers so long as those laws do not involve the citizen of the kingdom of heaven in any violation of the command of God. He must pay taxes as they are levied upon him (Rom. 13:6, 7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). He may avail himself of all privileges of freedom from oppression, or common justice, and the protection of certain rights granted by these powers. The apostle Paul did (Acts 16:36-38; 22:25-29; 25:10-12). Since the citizen of the kingdom of heaven is positively forbidden to take vengeance upon his enemies or the enemies of God, but to give place to the wrath and vengeance of God he cannot consistently, or legally, have part in any active or positive way as an agent of that which God characterizes his "sword" (Rom. 13:4). This undoubtedly enjoins the citizen of the kingdom of heaven against the bearing of arms in carnal warfare at home or abroad, offensively or defensively, against a fleshly foe. The function of the other kingdom is that they shall bear the sword of God unto the punishment of evil doers (Rom. 13:3). They are God's avengers for wrath to him that doeth evil (Rom. 13:4). Individually and nationally. In the long ago God punished wicked nations by sending them against each other (Psa. 60:8; 108:9; Isa. 10:5-13; 44:28; 45:1-6; Jer. 25:8-14). Undoubtedly he carries out such work today through these other kingdoms. Prayers of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven on behalf of the

“powers that be” are enjoined, but only that these powers may rule according to the will of God unto permission of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven to live quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness (1 Tim. 2:1-7).

The citizen of the kingdom of heaven must preach the gospel regardless of conflict or consequence (Peter and John, Acts 4:8-20; 32; 5:28, 29, 41, 42). The citizens of the kingdom of heaven must worship God and him alone according to his requirements and in his appointed way in spite of time, condition, place, or command of other kingdoms (Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Dan. 3:8-23; Daniel, Dan. 6:7-10; Acts 4:23-31; Heb. 10:24; Acts 12:5, 12). God’s requirements of his child is ever that his body, soul, and spirit shall be devoted unreservedly to the service of Jehovah (Rom. 12:1). Since he is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven his body is and ever shall remain a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). Whether alive or dead he is exclusively the Lord’s possession (Rom. 14:7, 8). He is no part of the kingdom of Satan (Rom. 6:17, 18; Col. 3:1-4). The citizens of the kingdom of heaven must ever seek to maintain separateness from the Babylon of other kingdoms that they be not overtaken in their final destruction (2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4, 21-24).

Perhaps the scope of this discussion logically demands I consider the objection that Cornelius was a soldier and the New Testament nowhere says he ceased his connection with the Roman army when he became a Christian. The burden of proof rests upon him who affirms Cornelius continued his former connections and duties. In the light of Rom. 12:19, Cornelius

could not have remained a faithful child of God and held his office. In its very nature it was contrary to, and incompatible with, the very letter and spirit of Christianity. It could very easily have compelled Cornelius to have imprisoned and put to death his own brethren in the Lord. Examining the case of the jailor, similar conditions would pertain. As a Roman jailor he would perhaps be required to scourge and imprison other Christians just as he formerly incarcerated Paul and Silas in the inner prison after whipping them. Could this man have remained a jailor and a faithful Christian? The duties and responsibilities of their respective offices were incompatible with the letter and spirit of Christianity to such a degree they would be compelled to resign or desert regardless of the consequences.



## THE BIBLE A FEASIBLE BASIS FOR UNITY

By G. H. P. Showalter

To attain to the unity required of our Lord there must be one divine standard, one creed, the law of Christ, accepted and obeyed—one faith and a oneness of practice and conduct.

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity”—Psa. 133:1.

The churches of Christ today have precious privileges and opportunities which, if improved, give promise of a future richly gracious for the kingdom of our Lord.

Old denominational bonds and ties are weakening. Many are stretched and strained beyond repair—some are broken. Some are shattered as a potsherd is broken on the rock—they can never be mended. New alignments are being made in religious fields. Old prejudices are giving way and there is increasing evidence of the dawn of a better day. Already the eastern heavens are tinted with an approaching glory that may mean the dissipation of much of the darkness of religious superstition and of creedal sectarianism that promotes division and prevents union. A book of discipline or confession of faith governing a religious party, bars from that communion all Christians who cannot conscientiously subscribe to its terms and demands. But no Christian can pos-

sibly believe all the manifold creeds written out by men and now in force in the varied groups, called churches. This is clear to anyone who will give the subject a moments thought, for any one creed contradicts all the others—they all inculcate different doctrines and impose different laws. Otherwise the Methodists could and would accept “the confession” of the Presbyterians, or the Presbyterians would accept the “Augsburg Confession” of the Lutherans, and both of these good people could consistently receive into their fellowship the whole Methodist church. It takes the different creeds to make possible the various churches. And as long as there are different churches there can be no union. One church has one fundamental law and another church has another fundamental law. One of them has one constitution and the other has another constitution. One believes one thing—the other believes another thing. No, their faith is not the same; if it were they would adopt the same creed. One believes one creed—the other another creed—hence they do not have a “common faith”—they are hopelessly divided—they cannot be united—not, and at the same time maintain their denominational identity. One really has one faith while the other has another faith. Human churches are in rebellion against God, for the reason that they do not speak the same thing—one says one thing and another contradicts it.

Christ founded one church and gave it one creed or law. He founded only one church, and he gave it only one law—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. We can all be one when we all enter that church and abide in it—accepting its one law, the New Testa-

ment. The Methodist Church is one because its members accept the Methodist "Discipline." Similarly the church of Christ can be one when its members accept the creed the Savior gave—the New Testament. The church of Christ can never be one on any other terms or conditions. They can never be one when and if its members begin to accept various and different creeds. The Methodist Church could not be one when and if its members begin to accept any and/or, all the creeds of the other churches. They would immediately become divided.

The question comes, "Can all professed Christians accept the Bible?" Yes, they can do this. They cannot all accept the terms of human creeds—but they can all accept the Bible as their guide—the New Testament as their rule of faith and practice. Then, on this they can be united, and this, being true this basis of union should be urged with all possible earnestness. Why not? If it is the only acknowledged basis on which all can unite—and it is agreed that union is so desirable—then consistency and reason would unite in demanding this stand for the Bible, and on the Bible alone. And this does not mean one denomination going to another—or one church uniting with another. It means that all may go to the Bible. The Bible is yours as much as mine and mine as much as yours. It is for all. None are barred from it. Human creeds do this, but the Bible does not. The members of one creed-bound church will not fellowship the members of another creed-bound church; but the members of a Bible-bound church of Christ will fellowship all other Bible-bound churches of Christ and this, of necessity, will result in unity. And Christ prayed for this. The



apostles urged it. And we can realize it—if we will.

It is easy to illustrate. America—the United States—is one government because it has one constitutional law. The constitution of the federal government corresponds to the New Testament of the church of the Lord Jesus. But the constitution embodies the fundamental law of the land and is the basis for the oneness of the government. If the constitution of some other country should be adopted by some of our citizens, and that of still another country by others of our citizens, and some were to cling to the constitution of our land, then there would be division, strife, treason, rebellion, war and every evil work. But that is exactly what has been done in the church. Many have set aside the divine constitution which all agree is safe and sufficient, to adopt in its stead some human constitutions and laws—hence division, strifes, wars and fightings, factions, heresies, (sects) and every evil work. If our country is to be and remain one, and indivisible it must be sustained and protected by one common constitution or law and if the church is to be and remain united it must have one common faith—one and only one law—the Bible.

#### A Feasible Basis for the Union of all Christians

“If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself”—John 7:17.

The oneness of all Christians is not only desirable but practical and possible. In unity lies strength, and in strength is the hope of the conquest of truth over error, and the salvation of the lost. In the Godhead there is the consummation and perfection of celestial



harmony. In simplicity, and sublime beauty and grandeur the Savior's declaration has passed along down through the centuries and will stand till time shall close: "I and my Father are one"—"I am in the Father and the Father in me." The divine Father's power was exercised in all the wondrous works and words of Jesus. So should Christ be in us who profess to know him and love him and to represent him to the world. "Apart from me ye can do nothing." "Abide in me and I in you." So spake the Savior to his disciples. How strange that people fail to grasp the simple and easy meaning of the Master! He wants his people united and proposes as a basis—that only basis that is tangible, reasonable and divine—that all of his children abide in him—that is, as much as to say, under his authority—controlled by his law. In this way only can they be of one mind and one heart—one accord, impelled by one purpose, directed by one Spirit. The Savior does not want his followers united with anything that is not of divine authority. To try to organize, and theorize, and unionize, by bringing together under one head the discordant religious institutions of human origin, is utterly foreign to the Savior's plea and prayer for unity. When people speak according to the Scriptures they are united. When some speak thus and others do not they are divided. What is the remedy? Men's idea is to form a union of these incompatibilities—agree to disagree—stifle conscience—tolerate what they do not believe to be the truth—allow that men may believe anything, everything, or nothing, and do as they please, and still be in full fellowship, and go to heaven. It is a shame that great men will so reason—rather that they would

so act without reason, common sense or Scripture in the prosecution of a purpose to unite the people of God.

But what is God's remedy for division? It is that those who speak according to the Scriptures, continue to do so—that they remain where they are, steadfast, immovable—and that those who speak not according to God's word—who have turned from the holy commandment (law) of God—forsake their own works and ways and come back to the Lord—abide in him, speak according to the Scriptures, obey what he commands and do as he requires. They will all then be a united and happy people. In this way, also, the name of Christ will be magnified, and his divine law—the new covenant—exalted.

The Bible—just that and nothing more—appears not to be pretentious enough, great enough, with many of the religious grandees in spiritual places. But what else is needed? What is necessary that it does not command, or edifying that it does not require? His divine power according to the apostle Peter has given unto us all things that even pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue. What more do we need as a law of life? What more can we do in the realm of right conduct?

But people are not satisfied with the church as founded and furnished by our Lord. They add embellishments. They supply new laws, create new offices and elect officers unheard of in the New Testament to fill them. They even build other churches besides the one Christ built and expect our Lord to

accept and approve them. And these become an obstacle in the way of the unity for which Christ prayed.

There are several theories among professed Christians as to the basis of union. One group holds to the theory of making the terms liberal enough and the platform broad enough to accommodate itself to all shades and varieties of faith and to all types of religious philosophy. Others are so circumscribed in the realm of spiritual vision that they find themselves utterly intolerant of all believers who cannot with good conscience subscribe to some humanly arranged articles of faith and terms of discipline, under which they themselves have found solace for their own weary souls. Those who cannot accept said creed—receive it, uphold it and be governed by it—will just have to take another route from grace to glory. They insist that all others do as they do, or there is no peace, whereas they ought to urge that all men do as God requires in order to please God. Their ground is too narrow for all to stand on it.

“The Church and the Churches,” by Karl Barth, is a book of recent publication and contains much of interest along the line of a return to the Bible as the only practical basis of union among professed followers of Christ. Quoting from *The Watchman*, “Karl Barth has been preaching a liberal theology which he only half believed. His liberal theology left him completely stranded. In his plight he turned to the Bible and in this Book he discovered a new world. Barth is Christ’s ambassador boldly declaring to a faithless, carnal church and to a haughty, self-confident unbelieving world a clear, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”



Barth soberly and unceasingly declares these truths: That God is God, and not the lengthened shadow of man, or a mere impersonal power. \* \* \* \* That the Bible is God's word and a witness to the redemption of man by Jesus Christ alone, that the church really stands in the world with one book, the Bible, and has essentially but one function and task, and that is to be a witness to the truth of the world."

The author of the book says: "Those who are baptized into 'the church of the living God' find their faith seriously impugned by the co-existence of a number of faiths.

"The multiplicity of churches has been one of the strongest factors in that great process, so clearly discernible in the last two centuries, whereby so many members have found themselves alienated from the church.

"The church of Jesus Christ is one, invisible in respect of the grace of the word of God and of the Holy Spirit, visible in its congregations, \* \* \* \* and its ministry of the word."

Whatever else may be said of Karl Barth, his book as condensed and published in the "Religious Digest" contains many statements that would suggest a desire on his part for a return to the Bible as the sole basis of unity among God's people. Mr. Barth points out that the pagan nations are bewildered on account of the number of churches in Christendom and that it is just as true in home lands where political theories and social alignments are determined on account of religious affiliations.

Loyal Christians should urge as never before the Bible as the only divine basis or ground for the one-



ness of the disciples of the Lord Jesus. Whatever is more is unnecessary, and anything less is not enough.

Let us look into the matter further. Some who are righteously concerned and anxious about the union of all Christians have failed signally in the accomplishment of such union for other reasons than the foregoing.

1. Seeing the divided state of Christendom in the early part of the nineteenth century some prominent men of piety and of good intentions proposed the Bible as a practical basis for the union of all Christians. They urged this plan as workable, and with much success. Thousands rallied to the support of such a plea and the creeds of human origin, disciplines, and confessions of faith lost heavily, almost irreparably. But many proponents of the Bible as a basis for union began to weaken. They were not entirely satisfied with victories won, and successes already attained. It was a sad day for a worthy cause when they began to lose confidence in their plea and to modify its terms.

2. Leaders began an ignominious retreat with a new slogan: "We cannot unite on the Bible; we must unite on Christ." An effort was made to exalt the Christ, but to give greater liberty as to whether people respected the teaching of the Bible. This became a matter of indifference. In fact the plain teaching of the Bible was disregarded in much that enters into the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps a greater mistake was never made. Christ can never be honored and exalted apart from his word. When the apostles preached Christ unto the people, they simply preached the gospel of Christ with its facts to

be believed, its commands to be obeyed and its promises to be enjoyed. When Philip "went down to the city of Samaria he proclaimed unto them the Christ," and the people obeyed. And in the case of the eunuch Philip began at the same Scripture and "preached unto him Jesus." That is he preached unto him the gospel of Christ. This, all the apostles did, in the execution of the great commission. They preached to the people the gospel of Christ, and men and women heard, believed, and obeyed their Lord. The apostles never undertook to exalt the Christ aside from the promulgation and exaltation of his law. Christ is exalted today only when his law is magnified in the life of those who are exercised thereby. All will be united when all take the Bible as their sole guide in religious faith and practice.

3. It has been urged and particularly, in recent times, that the essential thing is the living—that is, a reproduction of the life of Christ—by those who are his professed followers, that "doctrine" amounts to little or nothing; that the living of the life of Christ is everything and that people should not argue and neither should they worry in regard to whether they can agree as to the teaching of Christ, just so they are imitating the life of Christ. But it remains after all that the teaching of Christ—the terms, conditions, and requirements of the new covenant—must be at the foundation of all life, and all living, and all character and practice, and experience that is acceptable in the sight of God. This view of the matter tends to reverse the natural and divine order. It is not first a life then the doctrine, but it is first the doctrine and then the life, or rather the doctrine, or

teaching of Christ, produces the life and supports the character. Our Savior said to his disciples, "If ye continue in my word, then shall ye be my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The freedom from sin comes as a result of the knowledge of the truth. People to be united to Christ and in Christ must be first of all united on his teaching, accepting with one voice the terms and requirements of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

#### Union—Desirable and Undesirable

That union gives strength is a proposition generally accepted and one which argues strongly in favor of union. An aggregation of capital gives a stronger financial basis, and in a similar way a combination of smaller forces in any line of moral, political or religious endeavor. "United we stand, divided we fall" has been quoted to encourage unity in political, religious and material affairs. It has its meaning and application.

The Savior prayed for the unity of his followers. Paul deplored the divisions that separated a people of the Lord when they should have been united. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" said the Psalmist. It is manifest, however, that people must be in the Lord in order to be united in the Lord. They must be followers of Christ before they can be united as followers of Christ. And herein comes a lesson.

The three great divisions of Methodists were in Kansas City for some weeks, about one year ago, working up the details of the consolidation of these Metho-



dist bodies. A united Methodism ought to make a stronger Methodism, and the probability is that no sacrifice, whatever, is being made, morally, or conscientiously in order to bring about this union. They all believe in pedo-baptism; they all accept sprinkling, pouring or immersion so far as the action of baptism is concerned. And in the other fundamentals of Methodism they can agree and unite without sacrifice of scruples.

However, who would think that the members of the churches of Christ could conscientiously unite with the Methodists? Their faith and practice differ too widely. The only way for them to unite would be to ignore their differences.

There was a union meeting in Indianapolis, last summer. Some two or three similar meetings have been held. It was a meeting of a few of the "leaders among the churches of Christ," and of the "Christian Churches" with a view to union. Now it is very clear that there is no possible basis for union among these two distinctive people until the obstacles that impel to the separation are removed. What about the organ, the orchestras, the man-made instruments, of music in the worship? What about missionary and other benevolent societies unknown to the New Testament church? What about the principle involved in these matters? What about the attitude that the Bible is not our supreme authority, and that we are under no obligation to be governed by it? Are the churches of Christ ready to ignore these fundamental matters?

What was the cause of the separation of the churches of Christ and the Christian Church? Are these



causes the same today? Are the loyal churches any more ready to use things unauthorized in the work and worship of the church today than we were fifty years ago? Do the "progressive" brethren love the organ less than they did fifty years ago? Do they love it as much? Do they love it more? Are they willing to give up the instruments of music and all other things unauthorized in order for peace, unity and harmony? They were not fifty years ago, they have not been during the years since, and I opine that they are unwilling to do so today. Do these "leading brethren" among the churches of Christ, who are talking of "union," have convictions as in the past? Do they mean they are willing to worship with the use of instruments of music? Do they mean that they are willing to fellowship others in such departures from the New Testament order of things? If so, it would be easy to unite with the "progressive brethren." If not, the two bodies of people are just as far apart as ever.

Unauthorized practices among the "progressive Christian Church" constitute the obstacles that separated a happy and powerful people a half century ago. These things constitute the wedge that split the log. Until the wedge is removed, and its advocates cease driving the wedge, the cleavage will continue.

Are we to suppose that these good brethren in Indianapolis last summer talked about these things? Did they undertake to remove them? Did they suppose or propose that there could be union without removing them? In short, have we any convictions or conscience in the matter? One good brother who at-

tended the meeting wrote to me deplorably of the meeting: "Some understood the unity meeting was to be noncontroversial, but some of the folks forced it in that direction and the organ brethren responded in some measure . . ." What is the meaning of this? Do these brethren expect the churches of Christ to be blindfolded, stifle their conscience, and enter into something which they do not believe, and which they cannot possibly conscientiously endorse? If such is not the significance of such meetings, what on earth do they mean?

"Understood that the unity meeting" was to be "non-controversial." What does this mean? We could unite with the Methodists in that way. Just take the things upon which we are agreed, say nothing about the things that separate us, "agree to disagree," and "unite." It would be just as easy to unite with the "Baptists" as with the "Christian Church." It could be done just as conscientiously. It could be done just as Scripturally. To me, such procedure is surprising. It is amazing! It is alarming! Most any bodies of people can "unite" if they agree not to touch on differences, make their "meetings non-controversial," and sacrifice whatever conviction they have. If the "progressive Christian Churches" are proceeding Scripturally, then they are already united with all people who love and fear the Lord. If they are proceeding unscripturally, an amalgamation of them with the churches of Christ can only be brought about by an inexcusable and unpardonable sacrifice of conviction and of that faith once for all delivered to the saints.

1. Since the unity of the churches of Christ and the unity of the individuals that go to make up the

membership of these congregations, depends on their common acceptance and adoption of the teaching of Christ and of his holy apostles and inspired prophets, he is best promoting unity among us, as the professed people of God today, who is most diligently engaged in teaching what is revealed in the New Testament.

2. Since the acceptance and defense of any false doctrine, untaught in the New Testament, will necessarily result in strife, schism, discord, and division, he is best promoting the unity for which our Savior prayed who fearlessly opposes with tongue or pen, and in life and practice, such false doctrines and false philosophy.

3. Men today who are resisting the encroachment of speculative teaching of certain leaders among us are doing a great work for the oneness of the people of God in the faith of the gospel, and it is a most cruel and ungodly thing to charge them with being dividers of churches. On the contrary they are offering a most valuable and needed service to prevent division by keeping out of the churches of Christ teaching that is contrary to the sound doctrine of our Lord and of his inspired apostles. Unity such as Christ approves means the acceptance by all, of all that he has taught, and the vigorous rejection of and opposition to all that he has not taught.

#### Union—Desirable and Undesirable—No. 2

Things taught and practiced contrary to the teaching of Christ, cause division and prevent unity and should therefore be opposed.

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of

our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you"—Paul, 2 Thess. 3:6, 7.

"Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions among you and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, . . . and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent."—Paul, Rom. 16:17, 18.

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather even reprove them."—Paul, Eph. 5:11.

"For what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness"—2 Cor. 6:14.

When it comes to the matter of "union," it is of first importance to consider the ground or basis upon which the desired union is to be consummated. The New Testament is loud in its call for the oneness of the people of God. For this the Savior in love and earnestness prayed, and for this his holy apostles pleaded with members of the body of Christ. There were thousands of religious people about them, in error, and, with them, neither our Lord, nor any inspired man ever commanded, asked, urged, or required his people to unite. They never prayed that they might have fellowship with them, or be united with them. They never asked, or urged, that the disciples of the Lord cooperate with those in religious error,



and never required that they hold "union meetings" with them. Peace is sweet, and harmony is delightful, but neither is acceptable to God if obtained at the sacrifice of the unerring and faultless counsels of divine law.

The denominational world about us presents a spectacle that illustrates, most forcefully the weakness and foolishness of men, and the strength, power and wisdom of God. They bite and devour one another; they do not fellowship one another; a member of one denomination is not even acceptable as a member of another denomination. They have and hold to doctrines that contradict each other. Yet they come together, hold a "union meeting," suppress all mention of their differences, "convert a lot of people," then let them "join the church of their choice." But when they have taken their choice of the churches, and lined up with the church of said "choice," they at once become "taboo to all the other churches"—the ones not of "their choice." Now all these churches claim to believe the Bible. They could unite on this. And why not? They cannot all unite on their doctrines, creeds and confessions of faith—they can all unite on the Bible, if they would. Then, clearly, they are unwilling to accept the only known way to union. And it means little to them that this only way open to union is God's way. For the Bible is the only revelation of the will of God to man. Of course, they tell us these others are on the way to heaven—they are going a different route but will all reach the same place. They can have no fraternal intercourse with them here, no fellowship of the Spirit, no kindly affection.

They cannot unite with them here, but plan to do so when they get to heaven!

If the platform is made long enough, and wide enough, and broad enough, of course all could take a stand upon it—it matters little about their faith and practice. I talked to a lady who urged that the teaching of my brethren and the position of the churches of Christ is narrow. She thought all the denominations are just groups of Christians and that we ought to be broadminded, and so regard them. Further conversation disclosed that she based her conclusion on their supposed sincerity. She thought that what they believed and taught mattered little, so they were sincere, and thought they were right. She thought it made little difference whether they believed and taught the sound doctrine of Christ or the “doctrines” and commandments of men. Sincerity was the big thing—the one thing needed. I do not know how she knew that all are sincere, that all are even conscientious—she did not tell me. That is a measure of knowledge, to which I humbly confess I have not yet attained. I asked her if the Jews are sincere, and if she claimed they are going to heaven in unbelief. They are charitable? Yes. And sincere? Yes. They often excel others in philanthropies and in benevolences. Well, she thought they were all right, too, that a reward awaited them on the other side, because they are kind, good, merciful, compassionate and charitable. I reminded her that the Jews are infidels—they reject the Lord of Glory, the Redeemer of Men—to reject Christ is to reject God (John 12:44-50). Not to receive Christ, is not to receive God; to reject God is to be without hope. The good woman

was like thousands of others. She did not realize that there is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death. She has not learned that though sincerity is important, it is not everything, and that the way of the Lord—not our own—must be followed and his law obeyed if we would receive the promises. But she had a broad platform—one big platform—to include most everybody. But, though popular, and like the broad way that leads to destruction, many go in, on, and stand upon it, there is not in it the basis for the unity of the people of God as set forth in the New Testament.

### Union—Desirable and Undesirable—No. 3

“Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?”  
—Amos 3:3.

The idea, in religious life, of union first, and agreement later, is wholly of men. The idea of agreement first and then union is of God. To express it in other words, perfect agreement results in oneness. To be united we must be agreed. People can never be united in the moral, intellectual, or spiritual realm so long as they are in a state of disagreement. Two business men united in purpose, aim and plan, and in the methods to be employed in the administration of their business, may make a success of the enterprise because there is general agreement. But if in these fundamentals there is disagreement they would better separate, seek other associates, lay out other plans, and proceed along other lines where they may have the security and protection which the safeguards of harmony assure. The mandates of the Prince of Peace



can never be acceptably performed till his people are united, and the world will not be turned from infidelity through the pernicious and destructive influence of strife, discord and confusion. I allow no man to desire more earnestly than myself the oneness of the people of God, nor to strive more devoutly to realize the accomplishment of such oneness. But I question most seriously the methods now conceived and employed by some to bring about what is called the "union of God's people." As long as there is division, people are not alike. They must become alike if they would be united. As long as there is division, people disagree. They must be in agreement before they can be united. And how can they walk together except they be agreed?

The Bible simply does not require the impossible, unreasonable, unholy and senseless thing of walking together, or of being united, while in a state of disagreement. If we are really concerned about unity, and have the least measure of respect for God's word, then we are deeply and primarily concerned about the existence of differences and the removal of them. The things that bring about separation, that occasion division and strife—these must be considered, and settled, and eliminated. This is the question of first importance. This is the problem that must be solved. And any one is making a miserable farce of the claim to a possession of the spirit of Christ, and the peace of the gospel, who cannot, in a calm state of mind, and in a sane manner, as becomes the professed follower of the Master, speak plainly, kindly and in love to anyone regarding any religious differences and disagreements that impel them to religious separation,

division and strife. The Bible way to bring about unity is clear as the sun in his meridian brightness. It is neglect, or oversight, to say the least of it, on the part of Christians, that they do not apply the plan God has revealed to bring about the desired oneness. Let us here note a few of these in due and proper order.

1. The unity God's word requires, as set forth above, is to come into a state of agreement. To ignore this is worse than folly. It is to act in defiance of the word of God.

2. The unity contemplated in the New Testament is a oneness of thought, purpose, belief and practice. He who disregards this sets at naught the plain, unequivocal demands and requirements of God, and of our Savior Jesus Christ. He who undertakes to obscure, conceal, cover up, hide or avoid the mention of things that bring about division—things of disagreement—is, either knowingly or ignorantly, operating against the realization of the very things God desires and that God requires. These are the obstacles that should be approached, attacked and overcome. These are the problems that must be solved. In the work of unifying the people of God, he requires of us nothing less and nothing else. To say, or by our conduct imply, that we should "agree to disagree" and give no attention to the things on account of which disagreement brings division and strife, is nothing short of rebellion against God and a departure from him.

3. The Savior tells exactly the sort of unity God expects of us. Let us note it carefully: "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . . that they may be one, even as we are one . . . that they may

be perfected into one" (John 17:20-23). Here the Savior gives the description of the unity he desires among believers—one as he and his Father were and are one. Did he and the divine Father work together? Were they "agreed"? Could they work together and not be "agreed"? The "union meeting" folks would have us so believe, apparently. But the Bible says not. If people are united, then, as God requires, they must first be agreed. Otherwise they are not one as God and Christ are one, and this is the only oneness Christ has prayed for.

4. Paul gives instructions that cannot be misunderstood—instructions that define that unity alone is acceptable to God: "That ye all speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1:10). To disregard this is no part of the unity required by Paul. He who undertakes to urge men to "speak the same things"—the things of the Lord Jesus—the word of God—is a proponent of peace, and a messenger of peace and of the unity of the New Testament. Think about some advocating the musical instruments in the worship, the societies and other innovations and the rest severely opposed to them! Some speaking one thing, and some another—not speaking the same thing! And then—of all things,—not even seeking to uncover the disagreements so that all might see them, eliminate them and be united and walk together.

5. "That ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). They are not of the same mind; they are not of the same judgment; they are not of the same faith; they do not speak the same thing; they are not agreed. Yet they want to go out and walk together in "union meetings"



and elsewhere! And they want the elders, the preachers, and the churches to accept this new doctrine that two can walk together when not agreed!

### The Only Workable Basis

1. All true, faithful, conscientious Christian people earnestly desire the unity of all of God's people. Many are praying to this end.

2. There must be a basis for union upon which all can conscientiously stand. No terms or requirements must obtain that will be a bar to effective union. Nothing must be required that cannot be conscientiously entered into by all parties who desire to be united.

3. The opinions of men cannot possibly be a feasible and acceptable basis of union. This, for the simple reason that these opinions are not, never have been, and never can be common to all people. One man's opinion in regard to any fact or proposition or statement of history often differs widely from others, and other's opinions differ from his. If you would ask why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, there would be several different opinions. One man might say because he wanted to escape the crowd; another to avoid publicity among the chief priests and elders; another in order that he might have a quiet time in which to have his conference with the Savior. Some, or all, of these might be wrong. One might be right, and all the others wrong. It would be impossible to know which is correct and it would be impossible for people to be united on any one of them. So it is with all matters of the opinions of men in religious mat-

ters. They can never be made a practical or effective basis of union.

4. Men's feelings in religion can never be made an acceptable, feasible and practical basis of union. One man feels satisfied with his condition; while his brother believes and practices differently in religious matters and feels dissatisfied with the brother's condition, but perfectly satisfied with his own. One views a course of faith and religious activity with approval and satisfaction and feels perfectly satisfied with it, while another is wholly dissatisfied with such a course. Men's feelings differ widely and can never be made an acceptable basis for the union of all Christians.

5. No humanly devised creed can possibly be made a general, acceptable or practical basis for the union of all Christians. Methodists accept their "Discipline"; the Presbyterians "The Confession"; the Lutherans the "Augsburg Confession"; the Church of England their "Thirty-Nine Articles." But the Methodists do not accept the creed of the high Church of England; the Lutherans would not accept the Methodist creed; the Presbyterians would accept none of the others. Plain New Testament Christians could accept none. Thus we have no basis among all the creeds of the denominational churches for union. It is impossible for all professed Christians to unite on any human creed proposed by any uninspired man or set of men. This all can plainly see. Human creeds cause division and prevent unity.

6. A basis of union that pleases the Lord must be divine. And the Savior prayed that his disciples be united. The church in Jerusalem established by the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, in the first century,

were united. They had one heart, and one soul, and were of one accord. Union must always be of this type. It is a "unity"—something more than "union." To bring this about, they must all accept the same creed, the same teaching, the same law, the same covenant, the same articles of discipline. The Jerusalem church did this very thing. They had one Christ, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one church, one law—the law of Christ.

7. From the foregoing we arrive at the one and only possible, practical, feasible, basis for the union of all God's people that is acceptable to God. All of us can accept the one Christ, the one church and the one law of God, the New Testament, the new covenant. We cannot go to others and unite with them on what we cannot conscientiously accept or believe. All can accept the Bible as their guide, the New Testament as their rule of faith and practice. We plead then, with our friends, that all may come to the Bible alone, accept it, believe it, stand upon it, and be united. Whatsoever is not found therein or cannot be proven thereby, should not be made binding upon the consciences of men. Any human creed that contains less than the Bible does not contain enough; a human creed that contains more than the Bible contains too much; and if it contain nothing more nor less than the Bible it would be the Bible. No one should be expected to, or required to, believe less than, or more than, the Bible. Then let us all accept the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as the only foundation and basis for the unity of God's people. On this impregnable rock, we can stand united and happy, and thus fulfill the Savior's



prayer that we be one. And with faith, life and conduct well pleasing to God, press grandly and gloriously forward conquering and to conquer, from conquest to conquest, from earth to heaven, from grace to glory, to an ultimate and eternal rest in the upper world through the all-prevailing name of Christ Jesus our Lord.

## UNITY OF DOCTRINE

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By Edgar Furr

1. Christian unity must have a doctrinal basis.
2. The seven fundamental unities (Eph. 4:4-6).

The portion of the panel discussion which has been assigned to me is "Unity of Doctrine." The first suggested point is that Christian unity must have a doctrinal basis. The word "basis" means foundation or ground-work. It would certainly be a foolish act to try to erect a building and begin by putting on the roof. We must begin with the groundwork by laying a foundation. Paul says, "for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). The doctrine of Christ is the only doctrine upon which we can unite and be of the same mind and of the same judgment. It is the only authentic religious doctrine that we have in the world. When Jesus had completed his sermon on the mount the multitudes said "He spake as one having authority and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:29). The authenticity of his teaching goes without question, the things which he has to say we can accept without question. There has never been division among God's people until there has been a departure from his doctrine. Among such a group of Bible students I hardly

think it expedient to refer to the numerous passages that teach and command unity among us, however I think it well that we call attention to Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 1:10, "Now I beseech you brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." It would be impossible for us to be of the same mind and judgment if we have been taught conflicting doctrines. The unity of spirit and action are the things which must be built upon this foundation of unity of doctrine. There is always the trying hour and if the foundation will not stand the test the entire structure will fall.

Why have there been brethren and even congregations that have been lost to us in times past? If the uncompromising straight-forward preaching had been maintained instead of tolerating the forcing of opinions and foolish notions upon congregations there would have been no split in congregations and no departures from the faith. It is a sad condition when elders of the church are forced to ask the preacher to preach in such a way that the people can understand our position upon the word of God. Brethren, in the serious task of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and in these perilous days of error there is no occasion for this soft-pedaled, sweet-spirited, love making to denominationalism and tolerance of error, when Paul has laid down such charge as "mark them that are causing division and occasion of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned and turn away from them" (Rom. 16:17). There is no need of making apology from turning away from certain



brethren who have caused division among us, and caused entire congregations to become lost to the simple doctrine of Christ. I think Rutherford is making a fair success in spreading the old Russellistic doctrine without the aid of any of our preacher brethren. Adam Clarke may have been a great man as well as many other commentators, but we need less sermons giving the opinion of others and more sermons that give the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; and when such is the case the church will be indoctrinated until the foundation will be secure for the construction of other parts. We must not allow the foundation of our unity to become weakened by innovations and false doctrines.

In keeping with the following discussions and leading up to the same it has been outlined to me to say a few words in regard to Eph. 4:4-6, which gives the seven fundamental units—these we shall consider in their respective order. First, One Body: I hardly think it necessary to say much relative to the one body as each Bible student knows this refers to the one church as is taught in many other passages of the Bible (Eph. 1:22-23; Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Col. 1:13-14). To teach the contrary is only a compromise with error. If we are too weak-kneed and yellow-livered to tell those in denominational institutions they are lost and there is only one divine institution, namely, the church of Christ, I fear for us in the day of judgment.

One Spirit: God gave us the Spirit of truth (John 16:13) and not the spirit of error (1 John 4:6) the law of the Spirit is the law which the Spirit gives and Paul says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in

Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

One Hope: Hope consists of desire and expectation, we desire a reward for our service rendered here upon the earth and all who live godly in Christ Jesus expect it because he has promised it to the same.

One Lord: If you place two cups of water in the same container with all barriers removed you cannot keep them from becoming one. You cannot keep two individuals from becoming one in Christ when all barriers are removed. Christ came and broke down the middle wall of partition that we may be one in him and him Lord of all. Christ is our Lord and law-giver, therefore we do not need anyone to lord it over us or any congregation.

One Faith: In Acts 6:7: "A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith"—I like to think of the one faith as one system of doctrine, the faith for which Jude told us to "so earnestly contend for." In these days of many systems of teaching many of our brethren have become tolerant because they feel that many are honest and sincere in their religion, thus they complain about plain, straight-forward preaching. I have made careful observation of these complainers and have found that those who object to positive, distinctive preaching are either ignorant of the Bible, love the world or are in sympathy with digression; therefore I disregard the complaints of the complainers.

Sixth, One Baptism: If there had been three or more it would have taken no more space or energy for Paul to have said so. We have all attended funerals and we know what a burial is and we all know

what water is, therefore we know what constitutes the one baptism (Rom. 6:1-6). When sufficient amount of truth has been taught there will not only be a conversion to the one baptism but the same individuals will know the difference between the one body and sectarian institutions, therefore there is no occasion for people to feel they are scripturally baptized and later learn they are in the wrong institution.

Seventh, One God: The Creator of heaven and earth, John says—"all that keep his commandments abide in him and he in him" (1 John 3:22-24). Unity among the children of God is secured and maintained by all maintaining unity with God. It requires no negotiations or arrangements among men to unite them as one in Christ. I pray that we may all strive to keep the unity and the bonds of peace by all faithfully proclaiming the simple gospel of Jesus Christ.



## UNITY OF SPIRIT

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By T. B. Thompson

Brethren and Sisters in the Lord, and Friends:

I am happy to appear on this program at the invitation of Brother G. H. P. Showalter to discuss one phase of the general theme, "Unity Among Ourselves." The particular phase which I am to discuss being, "Unity of Spirit."

Brother Showalter has arranged this afternoon's discussion in very logical form: First Brother Edgar Furr presents "Unity of Doctrine," which is of first or primary significance; then I am presenting "Unity of Spirit," to be followed by Brother John Straiton on "Unity of Action." If we have unity of doctrine, given proper spiritual character by unity of Spirit, then, we will have both a Scriptural basis and spiritual urge for concerted action.

If I properly conceive of my duty at this time, I am to deal with those inward graces which give spiritual reality to our outward manifestations, as well as furnishing the urge to a more perfect unity. My presentation has something to do with the "good and pleasant" (Ps. 133:1) and "one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32) ideas. It presents those inner conditions described as "the same mind and judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10), and the "mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5). It warns against feelings of bitter faction and jealousy while

exhibiting outward unity (Jas 3:14). It also admonishes those who would promote unity to be not unmindful of that love which "is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:14).

I am definitely assigned verses 3 and 4 of Eph. 4, containing five words—lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance and diligence—the meaning of which we will attempt to determine.

I here present the learned Dr. James McKnight on Eph. 4:3. First, his translation of the passage: "Carefully endeavor to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the bond of peace." Second, his commentary: "Carefully endeavor to preserve the unity which should subsist among persons animated by the same Spirit; and do this by the bond of a peaceable disposition." Finally, his footnote on the words "Unity of Spirit." "This is not so much an unity of sentiment as of affection. For it appears from verse 4 that this unity is founded on the relation which subsists among persons who are members of one body, church, or society, of which Christ is the head; who worship one and the same God by the same religious rites; who enjoy the gifts and assistances of one and the same Spirit of God; and who have all an equal right to the same spiritual privileges. These, as well as all their common wants, ought to endear Christians to one another, and beget in them the same temper of virtue. In this sense, they who are joined to the Lord by faith, are said to be one Spirit with him (1 Cor. 6:17)."

Since I am to discuss those inward graces which give character to our unity, I shall speak of each of these words as Character Ingredients.

I. Our first character ingredient is "lowliness."

1. Thayer: "Having an humble opinion of one's self; a deep sense of one's littleness."

2. Biblical teachings: In Phil. 2:3 Paul insists that nothing should be done through faction or vain glory, but in lowliness each should esteem others better than himself. In Phil. 2:6, 7, Paul holds up the Christ as an example of lowliness, showing that instead of our Lord's having made his exalted position an opportunity for self-agrandizement, he made it an opportunity for self-abasement. The great Gentile apostle (Acts 20:19) speaks of serving God with all lowliness of mind, coupled with tears and trials. In Phil. 3:4 he insists that if any man had the right to boast he could surpass them all, yet, he is satisfied to become the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things (1 Cor. 4:13). The reason for this self-abasement was that, like his Lord, Paul had "emptied himself" (Phil. 2:7), and being "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), he was not living his own life, but the life of Christ by faith. Christ's world invitation (Matt. 11:28-30) is to come to one who is "meek and lowly in heart" in order that we may find rest to our souls.

II. Our second character ingredient is "meekness."

1. Thayer: "Gentleness, mildness." Another commentator says, "Manifested largely in the way we accept opposition or injuries." In this connection we remember that Solomon says, in Prov. 15:1, that a soft answer turneth away wrath, while grievous words stir up anger; that has something to do with the manifestations of meekness.

2. Biblical teachings: We present three Scriptures which contrast our word or its cognates with



other words, thus bringing out its meaning: Paul (Tit. 3:2) says we should not be contentious, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men. In 1 Cor. 4:21 the apostle writes to the sinning Corinthians and asks if he must come to them with a rod, or in the spirit of love and gentleness. The rod must sometimes be resorted to, but Paul had rather come in the spirit of gentleness. Again (2 Tim. 2:24), Paul insists that the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves. Hear the apostle as he says (1 Thess. 2:7) to the Thessalonians that he was as gentle toward them as a nurse in cherishing her own children. In Gal. 6:1 Paul insists that those who are spiritual must deal meekly with those who are overtaken in faults; as also in 2 Tim. 2:25 where he says that we must in meekness instruct those who oppose themselves. The individual in error is not our enemy, but his own, and should be approached on that basis. Our Lord said (Matt. 5:8) that the meek should inherit the earth.

III. Our third character ingredient is "longsuffering."

1. Thayer: "Patience, forbearance; slowness in avenging wrongs."

2. Biblical teachings: Peter (2 Pet. 3:9) says the Lord is longsuffering toward us, not willing that we perish; and in verse 15 he says God's longsuffering is our salvation, without which we could not be saved. Paul shows that those filled with the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) will bear its fruits, one of which is "longsuffering." The apostle says in 1 Cor. 13:4 that "Love suffereth long and is kind." Then in 1 Cor. 12:26

Paul speaks of mutual suffering—suffering together; all suffering with a member in any distress. Paul in 1 Tim. 1:16 states that through him Jesus Christ shows “forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life.” Just to the extent we are longsuffering for Christ and the gospel’s sake, is Christ showing through us “his longsuffering.”

IV. Our fourth character ingredient is “forbearance.”

1. Thayer: “To sustain, to bear, to bear with, to endure”; adding a comment, “with evenness of mind; composure; calmness; serenity.”

2. Biblical teachings: In 2 Cor. 11:1 the writer expresses the wish that the Corinthians might bear with him as they were willing to bear with those false teachers who would despoil them; that is, that they should hear him just as patiently as they were willing to listen to others. Paul gives two good reasons for our forbearance: Under persecutions he says, he endures for Christ’s sake (1 Cor. 4:10-12); and in 1 Cor. 9:12 Paul declares, “we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.” We should keep definitely in mind the reasons for the practice of forbearing; not for personal or selfish reasons, but for Christ and the gospel’s sake. The great Gentile apostle gives us instructions concerning the practice of this principle in relation to the weak and erring ones: In Rom. 15:1 Paul declares that the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak (having reference undoubtedly to those mentioned back in chapter 14:1); insisting that those whose faith is yet weak should be received, not to

"doubtful disputations," or, a "decision of scruples," but, even though he has no settled faith on eating meats or observing days, he is to be borne with by the strong; he is to be sustained until his faith can become stronger. In Romans 14:15 the apostle insists that we may even destroy a soul for whom Christ died, by our failure to help bear his weaknesses. We might keep in mind that Christ's forbearance is demonstrated by his bearing our iniquities (Isa. 53:11). Now, we are admonished to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

3. This does not mean that there is to be any tolerance toward, or compromise with, false teaching. Paul says in 2 Tim. 2:25, 26 that we should in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, that God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, that they may be recovered out of the snare of the devil. This was applied to some who taught error on the resurrection, of whom Paul says, "their word will eat as doth a gangrene" (v. 17). That would not indicate the slightest tolerance with their false teaching. Turn to Rev. 2:2-4 and find there a church which could not "bear evil men." Thayer suggests that the language indicates 'only the sense of refusing to receive or condone their doctrine; not primarily a personal attitude. It might be well to note here that this exceptionally strong doctrinal church had left its first love; what constitutes leaving our "first love" while strong doctrinally?

4. Our Lord hated sin but loved the sinner. His attitude toward the adulterous woman in John 8 is touchingly significant. God's longsuffering and forbearance toward us is divine evidence of our Lord's



unwillingness that any should suffer, but that all come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

V. Our fifth character ingredient is "diligence."

1. Thayer: "To exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence." A further application of the word is shown in 2 Tim. 4:9, where Paul tells Timothy to give diligence to come "shortly"—to hasten to him. In the words of an Old Testament character, "The king's business requireth haste."

2. Other Biblical teaching: In 2 Tim. 2:15 Paul admonishes that we give diligence to present ourselves approved of God, rightly dividing the word of truth. We insist in diligence in this important matter. Then, in 2 Pet. 1:10 we insist that all should give diligence to make their calling and election sure; to exert themselves to that end; to make a consistent effort or endeavor to bring about the certainty of their eternal election. We insist to the impossibility of apostasy advocates that the matter was not eternally and finally settled at the time of their acceptance of their Lord, but that all should continue to give diligence to this end. Now, brethren, let us apply diligence to "Unity Among Ourselves," in "giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" as stated in Eph. 4:3.

These, brethren, are the inward graces or elements, or characteristics which Paul declares are necessary to "Unity Among Ourselves." If these are preceded by "Unity of Doctrine" as presented by Brother Furr, they will give substance and reality to all our religious activities, and make possible "Unity of Action" about which Brother Straiton will now tell us.



## UNITY IN ACTION

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By John Straiton

Unity in action is the ultimate end and design of all that has been said in the four panel discussions of yesterday and today. Without a common objective much of our labor would be lost. What confusion arises when there is no common purpose in view! "Divide and conquer" has long been a principle in carnal warfare. When the enemy of all mankind was successful in dividing the followers of the Christ into sects and parties he delivered a fatal blow to the triumph of the gospel. This defeat will continue until unity is restored. When all who love the Lord are united in ideal and in action the great purpose of God in sending Christ into the world will begin to be accomplished.

Unity in action may be considered under three heads: first, a common objective; second, a common plan; and last, co-operation.

First then, what is the common objective towards which all Christians should work? We are not left to formulate a purpose for ourselves or to guess at that of the Lord's. It is plainly and definitely stated by the Captain of our salvation. In that great intercessory prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, Jesus said that it was not for the apostles only that he prayed "but for them also that be-

lieve on me through their word; that they may all be one: even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me." Our common objective then is to so present the claims of Jesus to the men and women of the world that they will believe that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Unity is essential to this. Belief in Jesus as the Christ has a further end in view. Speaking of his gospel narrative, John said: "Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." Life to a sin-cursed and dying world—life in Christ—is the common objective towards which all Christians must strive.

After his triumphant resurrection from the dead and on the eve of his return to the eternal glories, Jesus gave to his apostles, chosen and trained by him for that purpose, a statement of the great objective to which they were to direct their labors. As more accurately translated in the American Standard Version, it reads: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." His life-work on earth was ended; the purpose for which he had come to this world was accomplished; it remained for his followers to complete the work which he had begun, the great work of making disciples of all nations. He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. This gift he gave to the apostles on the first Pentecost after his ascension. They, being filled with the

Spirit, began to accomplish the great objective which had been entrusted to them. Three thousand were convinced that the Jesus whom they had crucified was indeed the Christ, the Son of God. They became disciples. A disciple is one who receives the teaching of another; a scholar, a student, a learner. The word does not indicate any degree in attainment or any certain standard in knowledge. Discipleship is a condition of heart and mind. As soon as a person accepts another as his guide and teacher he becomes a disciple of that one and as a faithful disciple he practices what he is taught. Our common objective is to make of all the nations disciples of the Lord Jesus, that they may have eternal life.

For the success of a common objective a common plan is required. Just as the Bible gives the objective, it also gives the plan for its attainment. The method of making disciples is given in the commission as recorded by Mark: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." Two things are commanded: one is, preach. Common usage has accustomed us to the habit of using the word "preach" to cover every kind of religious public speaking: to exhort, to teach, to sermonize. It is not so used in the New Testament where it has a more limited and definite meaning. Six Greek words are sometimes translated "preach." To only two of these is it necessary to give attention now. The word used by Mark is "keerusso." The root meaning of this word is: to herald, to publish, to proclaim. The leper healed by Jesus went out and began to publish it much (Mark 1:45). Of the gospel, Jesus said that it "must first be published among all nations" (Mark 13:10). And



in Luke 12:3, "That which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house tops." Publish and proclaim represent the word usually translated "preach." The other word is familiar to us because it has been translated into English as "evangelize." Its exact meaning is to tell as good news. Gabriel said to Zacharias, "I was sent . . . to bring thee these good tidings" (Luke 1:19). And in Acts 13:32, "We bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers." "Bring good tidings" is to preach the gospel. In the New Testament the word preach is never applied to an address given to a group of Christians gathered for worship. Before you think you have found an exception to this statement consult the American Revised Version.

The divine plan for the accomplishment of our objective is to evangelize—to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation through faith in the Son of God. Many things in this life are interesting, useful, and important. Some of these are social reform, abolition of war, intellectual culture by the study of literature and art, a better economic system, and many other things. But none of them is God's plan for the end he has in view; the salvation of man from the power of sin and Satan. The gospel, and the gospel only, is God's power unto salvation. Therefore, preach the gospel.

The Lord's plan begins with a very definite command, "Go." The Christian religion is an aggressive one. Go and compel them to come in. When we lose that aggressive spirit we lose that which is essential to success. In the World War of 1914-1918 the Germans swept like a flood across Belgium and part of



France. By-and-by they were stopped and began to dig themselves into trenches—the famed Hindenburg line. At that moment their defeat began. It was only a question of time till they were completely routed. When Christians dig themselves into their church buildings and are content to hold their own, they are defeated. It is only a question of time till they, too, shall be routed. Nothing could stop the early Christians: neither perils of water nor perils of robbers, neither perils by the Jews nor perils by the heathen, neither perils in the city, nor perils in the wilderness, neither perils in the sea nor perils among false brethren. On they went, everywhere preaching the word. Stoned, apparently to death, Paul rose to his feet, dusted his garments and proceeded next day to another city to preach the same gospel. Paul and the others went; we stay. It is well known that our Sunday evening meetings are attended by less than half of those who attend the morning services. At least this is true in most places. Of the number that do attend few, very few, are non-members. I wonder if the time has not come when we should close our church house doors on Sunday night and go out into the highways and hedges, the street corners, and public parks, where people are in the habit of resorting. The apostles went to the temple where the Jews were accustomed to gather; Paul went to the public market and talked to the folks whom he found there. Preaching the gospel—making disciples—is compared to fishing. When Jesus called Peter and Andrew, he said to them: “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” The first rule in fishing is that the fisher must go where the fish are. No one ever

caught a fish in a tubful of rainwater. I am afraid that some of us on Sunday night go fishing in a tubful of rainwater.

Unity in plan means obedience to these two commands: "Go" and "Preach."

The third and last point in this address is co-operation. This may be of two kinds: the co-operation of individuals and the co-operation of groups of individuals called churches.

Co-operation began in the Garden of Eden and has continued throughout all time down to the present moment. When the Lord God made man he saw that it was not good that man should be alone; and so he made a helpmeet for him. These two co-operated together in all the work God had committed to their care. No one liveth to himself. Each is dependent upon the other. Not only would civilization cease, but the world itself would come to an end if men did not co-operate. What is true in secular and material things is equally true in religious and spiritual. Passing by the many fine examples of co-operation which are given in the Old Testament, we come to the New. When Jesus sent out the twelve and the seventy, he sent them out two by two before his face. Why two by two? Clearly for the help and encouragement which they would be able to give each other. In worship, as in work, there must be co-operation. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," said Jesus, "there am I in the midst of them." When, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church at Antioch began a great missionary enterprise two men were selected and sent out. Time would fail to cite the many instances in the New Testament

where two or more individuals co-operated in the Lord's work. There is no reason why two or more brethren may not follow that example now and join together to do any Scriptural work.

In the congregation co-operation is essential to growth and well-being. The church is compared to the human body in which every member and organ co-operates for a common end. "All the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16). What Paul so well states is confirmed by our own observation and knowledge. Where is the congregation that has grown, that has proclaimed the gospel to the unsaved, that has ministered to the poor and distressed, that has sent once and again to the help of the missionary who has gone to the distant places of the earth, which is not a co-operating church, one member with the other.

But what of co-operation in those undertakings of greater size than a single congregation usually is able to care for? The religious bodies around us have found it necessary to create Presbyters, Synods, General Assemblies, Conferences, Conventions, and Boards of all kinds to care for these things. Are these necessary, or has the New Testament given us a plan whereby congregations can co-operate, or are we left to our own judgment to do what seems right in our own eyes?

In the apostolic age each congregation or church (the words are synonyms) was complete in itself. There was no superior organization greater than the



congregation. In Christ, "each several building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also (the church at Ephesus) are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:21, 22). The supremacy of the church is seen in the law given in Matthew 18:15-18. The sinning and wayward brother who will not hear the church is to be treated as an heathen man and a publican. There is no appeal from the congregations to any higher court such as the religious denominations have. It is too clear to need any elaboration that in the New Testament each congregation was complete in itself. There existed no organization made up of two or more churches which was above the individual congregation. How then did the congregations co-operate? Or did they do anything that today would be called co-operative work?

There is in the New Testament one example which may give us some light and guidance in this matter. The church in Jerusalem was in need of help. A famine left the brethren in a condition where they were unable to care for their own needy. Then the disciples at Antioch, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. This case of co-operation is one church giving and another receiving, with no machinery except the two messengers who carried the money from one city to the other. I judge that there was no other way of transferring money at that time. Some years later Paul organized a contribution on a much larger and wider scale. Many churches were included in it. Amongst others, the



various congregations in the province of Galatia were contributors. With them were associated the churches in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. Without attempting to list these churches it is evident that there were quite a number of them co-operating in this work. The raising of this fund covered a period of over a year, perhaps about two years. Several brethren were engaged in this work to remind the churches of their promises, to stir up an interest in the work, and to help collect the money. Paul exhorted Titus that as he had made a beginning so he would also complete in the Corinthians the taking up of this contribution. With Titus, Paul sent a brother of excellent reputation, but whose name has not been given to us. Of him Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "And we have sent together with him (that is, Titus) the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches; and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace." From this we learn that the churches appointed one to be associated with Paul in raising the money to take to Jerusalem. Not only these two, but a third brother was used in this good work. Of the third one Paul writes: "We have sent with them our brother, whom we have many times proved earnest in many things." I wonder what these things were? This group of three was sent by Paul to Corinth to assist in the collection for the poor at Jerusalem. A committee is a group of persons appointed to take action upon some matter. Would it be wrong to call this group a committee?

As Paul went from place to place gathering this money, each church was asked to appoint some mes-

sengers to take the money to Jerusalem in company with the apostle himself. To the Corinthians he wrote: "Whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty to Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me." As we follow him on his way to that city there are quite a number of brethren with him, no doubt on the same mission as the ones from Corinth, that is, to carry the bounty of the churches to Jerusalem. His was a difficult task, and he felt the responsibility. He asked the Roman brethren that they would strive together with him in their prayers to God that his ministrations which he had for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints.

In view of this example of effective congregational co-operation is it not reasonable to assume that congregations of today may well use similar co-operation to the advancement of the kingdom of God? The Scriptures teach and furnish examples of co-operation. Why not practice it now in a Scriptural way?

These things are certain. God has made it clear that the objective of Christian unity is to make disciples of all nations and that we are to do so by the preaching of the gospel. Let us then go forward in co-operation with faith in God and confidence in our plea for right is right and in the end will win.

## THE KING AND HIS THRONE

By Athens Clay Pullias

(Director of Bible, David Lipscomb College, and  
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The central message of the Bible is the salvation of man. In this drama of human redemption the personality of Jesus the Christ, "the King of kings and Lord of lords," adorns the center of the stage. He is called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6), "The Rose of Sharon," "the bright and morning Star." The Old Testament Scriptures point forward to him in hope. In the New Testament he is revealed in kingly glory. Our purpose is to trace that series of divinely directed events by which Jesus obtained the throne of his father David.

### The Meaning of Throne

Literally the word throne means "the seat on which a king sits on ceremonial occasions." Solomon had the most magnificent throne in this sense that the world has ever seen. It was made of solid ivory and overlaid with pure gold. More often, the word throne is the symbol of sovereign power and regal dignity.

For example, this is what Pharaoh meant when he said to Joseph: "Only in the throne will I be greater than thou."

### Facts Concerning the Kingdom

God definitely predicted the establishment of the kingdom over which Jesus now rules. Through Daniel he said: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). Referring beyond question to this prophecy Jesus said: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). On another occasion Jesus asserted that the kingdom would come during the lifetime of those who heard him: "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). The kingdom came with power on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of our Lord. Thereafter the kingdom is spoken of as an accomplished fact. For example, Paul, writing to the Colossians, expressed gratitude to God "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). In Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."

To deny that the kingdom now exists is to deny the word of God.



### Facts Concerning the Messiah

God told Abraham: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Paul explains clearly the meaning of this promise: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). Speaking of this very point Jesus said: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and saw it and was glad." (John 8:56). Through the magic eye of faith Abraham caught a glimpse of "the Light of the World." Throughout the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah are to be found. In fact, the Old Testament ends on that very note: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:1).

### Facts Concerning the King and His Throne

The spiritual realities of the New Testament often have a type in the Old Testament in the form of some physical reality. This is true with reference to the throne which Christ now occupies. When rebellious Saul was found unworthy to continue on the throne of Israel God promised that throne to David: ". . . the Lord hath sworn to David . . . to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba" (2 Sam. 3:9-10). Later Jehovah, speak-

ing to David, added: "And thy house and thy kingdom shall be stedfast for ever before thee, thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. 7:16). David prayed to Jehovah in the same connection: "O, Lord Jehovah, thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come—Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord Jehovah, hast spoken it; and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever" (2 Sam. 7:19, 29). David remembered God's word when he was about to pass the throne to Solomon: "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; —That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel" (1 Kings 2:2, 4).

In the Psalms there is an even more pointed reading: "I have sworn a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn to David my servant. Thy seed will I establish for ever and build up thy throne to all generations" (Ps. 89:3-4). "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me" (Ps. 89:34-36). "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne" (Ps. 132:11). The prophet Isaiah adds further evidence: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon

his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6-7). "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1). These passages establish several basic truths:

(1) That God promised David that his (David's) throne would continue.

(2) That it was to continue in some one great king and not in a series of earthly monarchs.

In the New Testament an angel from God in speaking to Mary reaffirms the covenant with David and designates Jesus as the one to sit on David's throne according to God's promise: "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:30-33).

The crucifixion ended the earthly career of our Lord. Forty days after the resurrection he ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9). Ten days later the Holy Spirit descended, the kingdom was established and Jesus the Christ began to reign on David's throne. The apostle Peter took great care to explain this very



fact in the first sermon ever preached under the Christian dispensation. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:29-33). The conclusions are unmistakable.

1. God promised David that he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne (David's throne).

2. God has done what he promised to do—he has raised up Christ and placed him on David's throne.—"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses."

3. Jesus did receive the throne; "therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit"—God through the Holy Spirit promised David that Christ would receive his (David's) throne—now, says Peter, he has received that throne according to that promise. In verse 36 Peter, using the fact that Christ was at that moment on David's throne, concludes his thought in these eloquent words: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath



made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Jesus of Nazareth at the very moment in which Peter spoke was both "Lord"—king, supreme governor and "Christ"—the anointed, the Savior. Paul writing to Timothy said: "I charge thee in the sight of God—and before Christ Jesus—That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus, Christ,—who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lord" (1 Tim. 6:13-15).

### Christ Has Never Sat and Will Never Sit On An Earthly Temporal Throne

The Jews were given to literal interpretations. This caused them to often misunderstand the lessons of Jesus. For example, Nicodemus could only think of a physical birth when the Master said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The woman at the well in Samaria could think of no water except ordinary drinking water, (John 4:15). Any number of similar cases could be mentioned.

The Jews made the same mistake in connection with the Messiah and his kingdom. Being intensely nationalistic the Hebrews, long had dreamed of a powerful Jewish state that would dominate the world. Yet if they had understood the Old Testament prophecies they would have known better than to expect this. "For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the

very heavens" (Ps. 89:2). This is said in direct comment on David's throne (See Ps. 89:4). "His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven (Ps. 89:36-37).

The land promise to Abraham cannot be used as evidence of a future earthly kingdom because that promise was fulfilled in the days of Joshua. "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein" (Joshua 21:43). Christians by faith, not Jews by blood, are now the seed of Abraham, the "father of the faithful"—for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28-29).

Jesus proved a bitter disappointment to the Jews by refusing to become an earthly king. Perceiving the Master's remarkable powers they tried by force to make him become a temporal ruler. Jesus flatly refused (John 6:15). Christ did not refuse to set up an earthly kingdom because the Jews rejected him, as some would have us believe. Instead, the Jews rejected Christ because he did refuse to establish a material kingdom. Commenting on his kingdom Jesus said: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Jesus added that if his kingdom were of this world he would have pursued an entirely different course of action.

Furthermore Jesus convinced every one at the time of his trial and death that he did not plan an earthly kingdom. The Jews wanted a temporal monarchy and they cried: "Let him be crucified." Pilate, who,

as a representative of Rome, would certainly have opposed any and all attempts to set up a temporal state said: "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4) and "I am innocent of the blood of this just person" (Matt. 27:24).

Jesus now reigns from heaven where he sits at the right hand of God. "We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1). Psalm 110:4 declares: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch—shall build the temple of the Lord: and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech. 6:12-13). In Hebrews 8:4 the writer says: "If he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all." Certain conclusions are evident:

- (1) Christ now reigns in heaven as priest and king.
- (2) He is a priest forever.
- (3) Therefore he will never return to this earth to set up or reign over a temporal kingdom.

### "Then Cometh the End"

The reign of Christ on David's throne will continue until Christ returns to judge the world and gather his loved ones home. Paul specifically says so: "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For

he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:23-25). The second coming of Christ will mark the end of his reign, not the beginning.

The second coming of Christ will be the consummation of God's long and costly effort to redeem the human family from the bondage of sin. God sent his Son to save us. To that end Jesus died, arose, ascended to heaven, established the kingdom and reigns over it tonight. Some day, Jesus will return to judge the world. The redeemed will be delivered to God the Father; the remainder condemned forever. The work of salvation will be finished. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17). I pray that we may be among that number who shall "ever be with the Lord."

### A Solemn Warning

Paganism ever knocks at the door of Christianity with its materialistic conceptions of spiritual truth. The ancient religions of Persia, Greece, and Rome were built around a politico-religious dream of an earthly empire where ease and luxury would prevail. This whole structure is exactly the opposite of the spiritual realm which God did establish through Jesus Christ.

Judaism developed the same physical picture of the



kingdom of God. In their selfish, nationalistic minds they thought that the Messiah would literally restore the physical glory of Israel as it was in the heyday of Solomon. They crucified Jesus of Nazareth because he refused to fit into their crude plans. Like their pagan neighbors, the Jews could not rise in their thinking above their national and temporal ambitions.

The total collapse of the Jewish state in 70 A. D. should have buried forever the literal and earthly restoration theories concerning the kingdom and the throne of David. Unfortunately certain teachers in the church revived the idea under the general head of premillennialism. Irenaeus and Tertullian were prominent among these teachers asserting that Christ would reign for 1000 literal years during a period of universal bliss. Clement and Origen opposed these heresies so vigorously that they were practically stamped out. De Principiis II. 11:2.

Periodically since then premillennial teachers have appeared with fallacious materialistic doctrines concerning the kingdom of God, the throne of David and the second coming of Christ. Alexander Campbell wrote a refutation of some of these false doctrines more than ninety years ago. These were republished in the Gospel Advocate during 1938. (See Vol. 80, pp. 863 and 911). In recent years such teachers have been especially active. As a consequence in some places the body of Christ has been seriously disturbed. The whole brotherhood has been adversely affected and handicapped in its work of preaching the gospel to the whole creation by the disputes, divisions and misunderstandings which the teaching of the premil-

ennial doctrines has occasioned. Whatever may be the attendant aggravating circumstances the primary blame must fall upon those who insist upon teaching their speculative theories, just as those who brought in the instruments are responsible for that division. Therefore, these teachers by willfully and stubbornly continuing to teach their unscriptural views (views which they themselves do not consider essential to salvation) have assumed frightful responsibilities before God in judgment.

These false theories, and all other false teachings, must be steadfastly and unequivocally opposed by those who love the truth of the Bible and the unity of God's people. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9).

### In Conclusion

God has faithfully performed the promises which he made of old to Abraham and to David. The Messiah came according to the Scriptures, received the throne of David on the first Pentecost following his resurrection and sits enthroned tonight at the right hand of God. The vital question for your personal consideration is this: Does he reign in my heart? Have I enthroned him in my life? Since Jesus is our King our lives must be subject to his rule. It is a shameful tragedy to see thousands of nominal citizens in the kingdom of God allowing Satan to rule their lives.

This troubled world could have peace, now and forever, if Christ truly governed the hearts of men. May

we who enjoy citizenship in the kingdom of God take every precaution to elevate the Christ before our fellowmen. Weary souls are looking our way. Nations tired of carnal strife may turn their eyes upon us. I humbly pray that they may see in us and through us "The Light of the World."

**AN EFFICIENT ELDERSHIP****(Acts 20:28)****By Otto Foster**

“Take heed unto yourselves”: This was spoken by Paul to some elders in the long ago. Peter said in 1 Peter 5: “The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder.”

Ordinarily, I like best the preacher who leaves his family at home and does not take them with him into the pulpit; therefore, I should leave personal references out, but I have really longed for an opportunity to talk to a lot of fellow elders. I have been an elder in the church for many years, and I have heard them criticized severely for this action and that, this attitude and that; but mainly for being inactive, by our preaching brethren. Upon investigation, be it said regretfully, I have found much of the criticism to be at least somewhat justified.

“Take heed unto yourselves.” Have you really ever taken heed unto yourself? Regardless of how or when you were chosen as an elder, deacon, teacher, if you are a leader in your congregation the fact remains that you are a very important cog in God’s machinery for the saving of the world. Are you working as you should work? In the Bible the elders are also called bishops or overseers; presbyters or rulers; pastors or shepherds; according to the phase



of the work under consideration. The King of kings has ordained, selected, and specified the offices in his kingdom, who would dare to include any other or change their duties? The Holy Spirit has given very definite qualifications of the kind of men the church should select to rule over them. As we have it and practice it largely today, "If you are a fine Christian man, humble and always agreeable, plus possibly a child or two, good or bad, you make a good elder or deacon."

"Take heed unto yourself," look to your life, does it measure up to God's qualifications?

1. Do you more nearly correspond to these qualifications now than you did when you were placed in that position, or is your life a detriment to the church?

2. If the church of which you are an officer were choosing now, would they select you again as an officer?

3. How is your life, my brother?

4. How are your actions as an elder in the church of the Lord?

5. Examine yourself today if you have never really done so before?

6. Do you love the church?

7. Is it really first in your life?

8. Or do you love your profession, your vocation, the Masonic Lodge, the Rotary Club, or even your wife, or your life better?

9. Do you spend more money for tobacco, coffee, tea, cold drinks, golf, football, any or all of these combined than you give to the church?

10. What do you talk about when you meet a

friend, is it the church, or is it the war, politics, price of cotton or wheat, or what not?

11. Where is your treasure? There is your heart also.

12. Our God is a jealous God, and he will not occupy second place in our hearts and especially is this true as applied to an officer of his church.

13. Again I ask, how has your life been since your elevation to the most responsible place in God's church, with the exception of the preacher or his word?

### "Take Heed Unto Yourselves"

"And to the flock"—"Feed the flock."

What are you doing for your church? Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." It pleased God by the preaching of the gospel to have the gospel presented to the world and that those who did the preaching were to be supported by or because of, giving of their time to this work, by the church. Are you feeding the flock over which you are an overseer? Is the preaching of the gospel being supported by you?

1. What is the size of your congregation?

2. If you have ten members that earn a living could you not support the eleventh? The Jews did it. Could not we do it if we wanted to badly enough?

3. Do not we do the things we want to do?

4. If you lost your car, wouldn't you get another?

5. How often do you have preaching? How much do you pay the preacher? \$5.00 per trip? \$10.00 perhaps.

6. Is that discharging your obligation?

7. Have you taught the church to give? Isn't that a part of your responsibility? Do you realize that the Bible says more about giving of your means to the Lord than it does baptism? If you fail to warn the members of your congregation of the consequences of spending all they earn on themselves and not giving God his part, robbing God, then their souls will be required of you. If not, why not?

Well, if you have done all this, given liberally yourself, really sacrificed, been an example in giving as well as in living, and taught the congregation to do likewise, you have preaching regularly, and look after the local work, then what else do you do? "Go into all the world." Are you doing any preaching except in your own home town? Are we really in earnest, my brethren, wanting to save souls, or are we just fooling ourselves?

One of the qualifications of an elder or deacon is that he must not be greedy of filthy lucre—a lover of money. Not a "skin-flint" or a "tight-wad" as we would say. I know one elder that seemingly tries to keep his congregation from spending any money. He is perfectly satisfied to come on Sunday morning, to teach a Bible class in which the teaching of the different sects is condemned in no uncertain manner and the Truth held up in bold contrast—then have the Lord's Supper with little or no comments, go home and await the coming of another Lord's day. If and when anything worthwhile has been done or will be done there, it is when some of the good women rebel and raise money or a fuss and get some concession. He is the watch dog of the treasury of the church. The ladies are called on to can the

grapejuice so that the ten cent bottle will not have to be purchased for each Lord's day. Are any of you the watch dog for the treasury of your church, always afraid the church will be broke?

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is not a saving institution. On the contrary it is a spending institution. It was founded by a supreme sacrifice, it has been and will ever be kept alive and increasing in numbers and power over the hearts of men and nations by the same principle. The church that gets money in any way and keeps it for years to spend in some special way for some special purpose is doing wrong, as is any church that strives to create a large bank account. The world needs the gospel and as much as we can get, given by those who love the Lord, and no one ever gave too much to the church, should be spent in preaching it. May the Lord direct us in spending it. He will never be pleased with our attitude of trying to save it.

### **An Efficient Eldership**

The church cannot develop as it should without an efficient eldership. My brother elders:

1. An efficient elder will be doing more than other members of the church. Giving more in proportion to his ability.
2. The best elders do not do all the work themselves, but pass it out to others.
3. Elders who study their job do not have the deacons exclusively wait on the congregation in the observance of the Lord's Supper, but use other mem-



bers to do that and thereby start these to working in and for the church.

4. Good elders will have mid-week prayer meetings. Even if those who attend are few, they can sing together such wonderful prayer songs as "I Am Thine, O Lord" until all will be in the spirit of prayer, and then those who will can lead in prayer. Twenty per cent of the songs in most of our song books are prayers set to music and any Christian needs and will ever be benefited by a service like this; and we certainly need to take time to get nearer to God in this hurried age in which we are living. Yes, "Take time to be holy, Speak oft with thy Lord." A devotional mid-week service is necessary if we would develop spiritually as we should.

5. Elders who understand and appreciate their responsibility will attend all services of the church if at all possible.

6. They will meet together for council.

7. They will consult the membership and not arbitrarily decide all questions on their own judgment.

Elders are only men, and when they exceed and emphasize their authority to rule God's people they should remember they are dealing with Christians and the greatest thing in the world is an humble Christian. We are to be leaders rather than rulers in the present accepted meaning of the term "ruler." "Follow me as I follow Christ," said Paul.

8. We should endeavor constantly to get our congregation to do more, and not be weary in well doing but exercise patience because in due season we will reap.

9. We should never be satisfied with the work we are doing but have a vision of greater things—more preaching, more work. “My people are lost for want of a vision.” Every year our work, if possible, should excel the previous year.

10. Elders and deacons should cooperate with the preacher, and they should council together. If not, why not? They should plan and work together in the great work of the church. Being fellow workers with God, neither officer, nor preacher, should seek to excel the other in authority or influence. (The request of the mother of the sons of Zebedee.)

11. Leaders should have no outside interests that hinder. Our business is serving the Lord.

12. Elders should be training others to take their place. Some fifteen or twenty years ago I noticed that one of our younger men was secretary of the several Masonic bodies in our town, and I said to myself that if he is a valuable man to the Masons, he should be to the church; and I courted his interest in the church and ere long asked him to teach a class in Bible school. He consented and gradually became a good worker in the church. When the church selected officers, he was one selected as a deacon. Later he was likewise selected as an elder and became one of the most valuable officers the church has had in many years. In addition to being secretary of the officers' meeting and keeping a set of records that would be a credit to any man, he could and did do anything that was to be done. Did he keep up his lodge work? Nay, verily! He found that working for the Lord and his church was more glorious. He

was living on a higher plane and those things ceased to attract.

13. We should strive daily to be better teachers of God's word, better directors of the Bible school and the work of the church.

14. Broaden your knowledge by learning how the other churches of Christ do their work.

15. Of all men we should spend much time in prayer. If you are striving to attain the high plane of leadership in the greatest institution on the earth—the church—the bride of the Lamb—then you will ever need and ever want contact with our God in prayer.

Are you growing as a leader? None of us can stand still in the Christian life. Neither elders, deacons, teachers, nor others remain stationery. We either go on or we slip backward. When you assumed leadership of your congregation you thereby agreed to learn and perform the duties of your office to the best of your ability. Are you doing it, my brethren?

“Over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer.” How did you happen to be an elder anyway, did you just happen to be? Did some preacher suggest you? Did your congregation after much prayer and study and deliberation, considering the qualifications laid down by the Holy Spirit, select you to fill the place you are now filling, select you to be their ruler and to decide the many problems of the local church, and you in turn were to look after and give an account of every member of the congregation?

Then should we not feel our responsibility and earnestly and zealously work every day that God will help us to be more efficient in our work, to lead by

precept and example, those under our care to greater fields of usefulness in the great work of saving the world.

“Heaven is not reached by a single bound  
 But we build the ladder by which we rise  
 From the lowly earth to the vaulted sky  
 And we mount to its summit round by round.”

I desire above everything to get to heaven. I do not remember when I did not so desire. That desire has increased as I have learned more day by day and year by year of God's wonderful plan of the ages; and I am, therefore, intensely interested and fully determined to measure up insofar as in me lies, to my place in the church. It has been and will be my life's study to be more efficient in my work in order that I may be useful in the Master's vineyard.

“Wherefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” That is the way to be and to have a more efficient eldership.

And why should we always abound? “For as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” No men ever worked for a more certain or a greater reward. “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.”

Let's here and now rededicate our lives to better service, more study, greater usefulness, to the laying aside of any weight that hinders and start anew for the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.



## THE TRIUMPH OF THE KING

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By Paul Southern

Any study of the kingdom of heaven is incomplete without a discussion of "The Triumph of the King." We like to feel the handclasp of the man who has won true fame, the man who has achieved the supreme goal of his life by pursuing a great ideal. We admire the man who has grappled with the forces of adversity and emerged triumphant. There is something about victory which has a universal appeal.

Since the Christian was made for success and not failure, the triumph of the King is one of the grandest thoughts that ever engaged the mind of man. The word "triumph" suggests victory, conquest, and exultant joy over a well earned success. In the Roman empire a triumph was an imposing ceremony in honor of a general who had gained a decisive victory over a foreign enemy. He was permitted to enter the capital city of Rome crowned with laurel and bearing a scepter of authority in his hand. The procession advanced to Capitoline hill where a sacrifice was offered and the general was entertained in regal fashion.

In like manner the King of kings conquered his enemies, and in royal splendor advanced to the summit of heaven's highest hill. Crowned with glory and honor, he sat down in majesty at the right hand

of God where he will rule with all authority in heaven and on earth till the last enemy becomes the footstool of his feet.

It shall be our purpose in this discussion to consider the triumph of the King of kings, and to show its effect upon the human family. Of course, time would fail us if we should attempt to tell of all his triumphs. From the beginning of his personal ministry, the unassuming role of Christ made him a conquering hero and he left a long list of triumphs upon the sacred record. For instance, in the wilderness, of temptation, where for forty days and forty nights he did neither eat nor drink, Jesus met the prince of the demon world and emerged victorious. On other occasions he calmed the troubled waters of Galilee, cast out demons, healed the sick and caused the grave to give up its dead. These truly were great events in the career of Christ, but all of them were dependent upon the supreme triumph of his resurrection and ascension. So in this address we shall confine ourselves to this pivotal point of the Christian religion.

### Prophecy of His Triumph

In this kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world, the triumph of the King was a matter of prophecy. Prophets of the ages predicted that the heavenly King would conquer. Immediately after the fall of man, God said to the serpent: "and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). In the light of subsequent history, this becomes a prophecy

of Christ's humiliating death and of his triumphant resurrection. Enoch's translation that he should not see death demonstrated the fact that there are two worlds, the seen and the unseen. Jacob's vision at Bethel proved that God is in touch with both worlds. When Isaac was snatched from the altar of sacrifice, God showed that he can raise up even from the dead.

Fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, the patriarch Job asked: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job. 14:14). Perhaps his conception was clouded, but Job must have had some idea of immortality for he said: "Oh that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol, That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" (Job. 14:13). The Psalmist David must have had the resurrection of Christ in mind when he said, "For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10). On Pentecost, Peter said that this prophecy was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25-35). From Isaiah, the court prophet of Jerusalem, came a similar prediction. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:3).

The triumph of Christ was repeatedly foretold by Jesus himself. "From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matt. 16:21). When he returned from the mount of transfiguration, he charged the apostles to "tell

the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead" (Matt. 17:9). On another occasion Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 3:19). After the resurrection the apostles understood that the temple referred to was his body.

### The Fact of His Triumph

Truly, the triumph of the King was a matter of prophecy. But the minds of the disciples were so filled with notions of a political kingdom that they could not conceive of Christ as actually dying. His death left them confused, and their hopes of a triumphant King were crushed. To all human appearance, the cause was hopelessly lost when Jesus died on the cross. The hopes of the disciples were buried with the body of Jesus. If he had not risen from the dead, their hopes never would have revived.

The simple fact of our Lord's glorious resurrection is one of the sweetest stories ever told. We have heard it hundreds of times, but it will be fresh and animating as long as time shall last. The appearance of the angel in rolling away the stone from the grave truly was a majestic sight. He descended in dazzling splendor and with mighty hand rolled back the stone. For fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men, and the ground trembled with an earthquake.

It must have been a sad day and a darksome road which brought the women to the tomb that they might anoint the body of Jesus with spices. But daybreak brought delight on that darksome road.



Like cool water to a thirsty soul came the angel's message to the women. "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, he is risen from the dead" (Matt. 28:5-7).

### Proof of His Triumph

Since the disciples did not believe that Jesus would rise from the dead, testimony was necessary to convince them. Fortunately, the proof of his resurrection is as convincing as any which the world has ever produced. In the first place, there is the integrity of Jesus himself. He promised and prophesied that he would rise again the third day. And then there is the empty tomb. Whereas it was sealed by constituted authority and guarded by Roman soldiers, on the third day it was empty. This fact, no one could deny, and its affirmation triumphed against the most hostile surroundings. The proclamation of Christ's resurrection was made in Jerusalem only a few days after the event, when all the material for refuting it was at hand.

We also have the testimony of eye-witnesses. "He showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). At least ten appearances of Christ after his resurrection are recorded in the sacred text. Doubting Thomas viewed his nail-pierced hands and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). As one born out of due time, Saul of Tarsus saw the

resurrected Savior, and in response to the question, "Who art thou, Lord?" heard the Master say, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9:5). But we need not argue this point further. The only evidence against the resurrection of Jesus was the testimony of hired soldiers who were bribed to tell a falsehood. Such evidence would be invalid in any court in the world.

Greater than all other evidence is the fact that faith in the resurrection is a spiritual and moral force in the lives of men. The influence of Jesus since his resurrection is the miracle of history. Christ has left the prints of his hands upon every generation since he walked the earth. Earthly empires rise and fall, but the empire of Christ goes on forever (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 16:18). World rulers flourish and vanish away, but Christ is King for evermore. The inevitable march of earthly events is toward death. The great heroes of earth conquered by their lives, but Jesus conquered by his death. They conquered by shedding the blood of others, whereas Jesus conquered by shedding his blood for others.

In his famous conversation with General Bertrand, Napoleon said: "The spirit of Christ overawes me. His march across the ages and kingdoms is a mystery insoluble. You speak of the conquests of Cæsar and Alexander, and of the enthusiasm they kindled in the hearts of their soldiers; but conceive of a dead man conquering by means of an army devoted to his memory! Cæsar and Alexander and myself have founded empires; but we rested the creation of our genius on force. Jesus alone has founded an empire on love; and at this hour millions would die for him." This

moral force inspired by Christ is conclusive proof of his resurrection.

### Necessity of His Triumph

The life of Jesus demanded that his work should not terminate on the cross. Although his was an ignominious death, it could not end everything after such a noble career. His resurrection was just another step in the unfolding of his mission as Savior. The empty grave assures us of the completion of his redemptive work. It established the divine origin of his mission and teachings, and gives God's sanction to all the claims of Christ. He claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, to speak by divine authority and to be one with God. When challenged to give some sign in support of his claims, it was to his future resurrection from the dead, and to it alone, that he appealed (Matt. 12:38-41; John 2:20-22). The resurrection of Christ is the pivotal point around which the religion of the new covenant turns. Joseph's empty tomb proves Bethlehem's holy manger and is prophetic of heaven's occupied throne.

### Blessings of His Triumph

Having noted the prophecy, the fact, the proof and the necessity of Christ's resurrection, we now turn our attention to the blessings it confers. Outstanding among these blessings is the pledge and prophecy of our immortality. Throughout the centuries men have nurtured the thought of life beyond the grave. The hope is as old as the heart-beat and just as na-



tural. For hundreds of years the question remained unanswered except by prophecy. But Jesus answered it when he unlocked the grave and came forth triumphant. Years later he appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos and said: "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. 1:17, 18). It is comforting to know that the key to every grave hangs suspended from the Son of God. Apart from Christ, death has always been the king of terrors. But the resurrection of Christ has bridged for us the river of death. "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). "Because I live, ye shall live also," he said (John 14:19). "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). The voiceless lips of the dead testify to the triumph of our king. Even in death, "hope sees a star and listening love hears the rustle of" angels' wings.

"Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die," the Master said. The richness of the present life comes from a deep sense of a triumphant immortality. A man does not rise to the abundant life on earth until he has grappled with death and, by faith, come forth conqueror. The living Savior whispers to us, "Ye shall never die." We enter into the fulness of this heritage when we pass from death unto life in this world. Then the end of our earthly pilgrimage ceases to be a tragedy, and the passing of our loved ones ceases to be painful. The triumph of the



King helps us to live with poise and power, and gives us complete victory over the flesh, the devils and the slave drivers of sense and sight. No deceiving demon, no subtle, sinister sophist can defeat the man who is moored to the triumphant Rock of Ages.

The man who is convinced of immortality never loses a day in the eventful chapters of his continued existence. His life becomes one continual round of triumphant joy. He does not have to take time out to get old and prepare for unwelcome death. He has conquered death way back on the earthly pilgrimage, and so has nothing left but life. He feels in himself the future life, and is rising toward the sky. Winter may be on his head, but eternal spring is in his heart. The nearer he approaches death's portal, the clearer his vision becomes. Immortal symphonies of the world to come invite him to fairer climes. When I go down to the grave, I can say that I have finished my day's work, but I cannot say I have finished my life. My day's work will begin again the next morning. In the language of Victor Hugo, "The grave is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes on the twilight, but it opens on the dawn." This blessing of immortality is ours now, because a living Christ guarantees a living people.

The life of man is futile and inexplicable if he does not live again. All things run their course and fulfill their ends. In this tabernacle of clay man does not reach the supreme goal of his life. Many powers are undeveloped and many hopes are never realized. Hence, as in the case of Christ, another life is necessary to complete their development. Furthermore, consciousness attests to the immortality of the soul.

Last night I lay down in peace to sleep. For eight hours I was completely lost to this physical universe. But today I am the same person I was yesterday. My mind functions properly; I can think, feel and understand. I can recall all that went through my mind, even up to that split second when I lapsed into dream-land. In this connection the philosopher Descartes said: "Cogito, ergo sum," that is—"I think, therefore I am." I am a soul, a unit, and cannot be dissected into parts, and perish as organized things do. Plato said: "You may bury me if you can catch me." In this respect he was right, for this is not I that you see; it is merely the temple in which the real person dwells.

Nature likewise furnishes many striking analogies that suggest the ultimate triumph of the soul. This thought was used by Paul and also beautifully employed by the late Wm. Jennings Bryan. The Great Commoner said: "If the Father deigns to touch with his divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the acorn and to make it burst forth from its prison walls, will he leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator? If he stoops to whisper to the rosebush whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze the sweet assurance of another springtime, will he refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay? No, I am as sure that there is another life as I am that I live today!

“There is in the grain of wheat an invisible something which has power to discard the body we see, and from earth and air fashion a new body so much like the old one that we cannot tell the one from the other. If this invisible germ of life in the grain of wheat can thus pass unimpaired through three thousand resurrections, I shall not doubt that my soul has power to clothe itself with a body suited to its new existence when this earthly frame has crumbled into dust.”

But there is another blessing which results from the triumph of our King. Faith in the resurrection produces good results. This at once becomes a proof of immortality, when we remember that uniformly good results do not follow from falsehoods. If Christ hath not been raised from the dead, then is our preaching vain and his kingdom would fall. But his kingdom has come with power and is increasing by the hour. Its foundation is as firm as the rock and its message is the dynamics of the world. Infidelity as an institution has failed because it is built upon falsehoods. It never has lifted a single burden from a frail pilgrim's back; it never has added a rosy tint to the life of a weary soul. On the other hand, the hope of eternal life has inspired the musicians of the ages to burst forth in rapturous song. Only the Christian can say with assurance: “There is a land beyond the river, where the surges cease to roll.” This thought would cease to console us if Christ had not triumphed over the grave. I am a child of the King, so I share in his glorious resurrection. As travellers toward the celestial shore, we rejoice in the thought that some day we shall see our pilot face to face, when



we have crossed the bar. Infidelity cannot rob me of this faith because it has nothing to offer in its place.

I know that immortality is a fact because I have tasted it. When I looked into the cold and lifeless face of my father, and heard those Christians sing, "In the sweet bye and bye, we shall meet on the beautiful shore," I got a new vision of the "land that is fairer than day." And from that day until this, the spirit of my father has been an ever-present and ever-increasing personality. How do I account for it? Simply by the fact that God has put eternity into the bond that unites loved ones in the Lord. Death might have broken that bond, but thanks be to God, death is dead. Christ Jesus "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). Death has been swallowed up in victory, so we can exclaim with Paul: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? . . . Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

But the triumph of our King would not be complete without his ascension. It is the natural result of his resurrection. The unique departure of Christ from the earth was just as logical as his supernatural birth and his perfect life. He led his apostles out toward the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, over against the village of Bethany. There he became the center of a group of adoring men, in a thrilling conversation about his coming kingdom. With hands uplifted in benediction, and with lips moving in gracious speech, the living Savior of men rose from the earth. All the laws of the universe bowed at his command as he rode the ethereal waves. The attraction of heaven



was stronger than the gravitation of earth. The cloud received him out of their sight and folded about him in coronation fashion in preparation for his triumphant enthronement. Far beyond the starry skies, the angelic chorus welcomed him to the strains of that age-old Psalm: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: And the King of glory will come in" (Ps. 24:7). "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8). God had stooped to man that he might lift man up to God. It is no wonder then that Peter said on Pentecost, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36). He went hence to receive a kingdom over which he now rules as King of kings and Lord of lords. Before him, angels cast their glittering crowns and worship for ever and ever.

By virtue of the triumph of the King we have the honor of being citizens in his kingdom. This is a greater blessing than any earthly ruler or potentate can bestow. But we must be raised with him before we can reign with him. Therefore we are "buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead . . . . If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye

also with him be manifested in glory" (Col. 2:12; 3:1-4).

How beautiful heaven must be—with its walls of jasper and gates of pearl, and where the glory of God is the light. And in that capital city of the everlasting kingdom, all redeemed saints will dwell for ever and for evermore. Surely every normal person wants to go there. So we urge all weary pilgrims to unite with the Lord's happy throng now marching in triumph to Zion.

## THE POSSIBILITIES OF CHRISTIANITY IN AUSTRALIA

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By Colin Smith

This year college debate teams throughout this country will be debating the advisability and possibility of this nation's pursuing a policy of strict economic and military isolation from a great portion of the world. I am not here to discuss that question from the economic or civil standpoint; but from the religious standpoint I have no hesitation in assuming that the churches of this land have no intention of adopting such a policy. My experience among you has shown me that you realize that the church has a world-wide mission. Every nation is included in the Great Commission, and the kingdom of God can become nationalized only at the peril of its own existence. For us, national barriers have ceased to exist. My presence here on this program is proof of that. The church throughout the world is one, and an opening in any country is a challenge to all Christians in every other country.

I believe that in Australia there is an open door of opportunity and, of course, many adversaries. The latter I do not believe are unconquerable if a deliberate and determined attempt to overcome them is made.

My faith in the power of the simple New Testament

gospel has been greatly increased as a result of my visit to this country, and particularly to this college. I came here expecting to find a few small groups of Christians scattered over the land, struggling for an existence as are all religious bodies in Australia. I did not dream that you could have succeeded in establishing New Testament churches to the extent that you have. Like David you have routed the giant Goliaths of erroneous ideas and unscriptural practices and all that remains is to possess the land. In Australia we have not yet found the sling, nor even learned to recognize the giant when we see him.

Nearly a century ago the movement to restore primitive Christianity sprang up in my country, but early in our history visitors from this country, coming to us as wolves in sheep's clothing, began gradually and cunningly to lead away the flock of God. Admittedly the infant church in the far away land should have been watching, but it thought that this country was the center of our present civilization; it thought that American people were so much like Australian people, that anything coming from the restoration movement in this country would be beneficial in Australia.

First the young church, before it was old enough to form properly its own ideas, was told that effective evangelistic, educational and social work could be done only when the churches were acting as a unit. I believe that the church must be united; a house divided against itself must fall sooner or later. But under the influence of visiting teachers, the small churches were led to believe that united efforts could be made only through conferences and the committees and societies that result from conferences. As



a result of that idea a system of district and state conferences grew rapidly, and usurped the responsibility that God had placed on the local congregation. At least they aimed at doing that, but succeeded only in crippling the individual initiative of the churches, and stifling any progress that might have been made.

The barrier having been broken by the introduction of conferences, other innovations followed, until today practically every congregation uses instrumental music in the worship.

Of course, that all happened before my time, and the voices of protest became lower and lower until today they are almost inaudible. If one dares to protest against unscriptural innovations he is silenced with the argument that in this country the non-progressives are rapidly dying out, while the progressive or liberal element of the restoration movement is growing by leaps and bounds. That was the opinion I had, in common with others until Brother John Allen Hudson visited our shores about two and a half years ago. Then I began to see that his reports could not be harmonized with the impressions left by other visitors. I thought the conservative section was composed of a few ignorant and bigotted people who were rapidly dying out; but even with such a misconception many of us were dissatisfied with conditions in the churches of Christ in Australia. We could see that no progress was being made, and we began to blame the system under which we were working. The coming of Brother Hudson served to stimulate our thinking and confirmed us in the belief that such things as conferences were introduced

without Scriptural authority. Today, many in Australia, though not separated from the digressive element are beginning to realize that there has been something of a departure from the restoration plea, which of course means a departure from the New Testament as an all sufficient guide able to completely furnish us for every good work.

Our task is to stimulate that line of thought, and save something from the whole body in Australia. Let me add, that I know none in Australia who would endorse all of the practices of the First Christian Church in this country. All are much more conservative than that, and believe that they are working towards the restoration of Christianity as taught and practiced in the first century by the apostles. Inside congregations that have introduced unscriptural innovations, there are numbers who are opposed to those things. Because religious prejudice is not so marked in that country as it is here, we have an opportunity to reach those people.

There are some groups that have remained loyal, or as we say in Australia, "in the old paths." In these groups there would not be a total of more than 100 disciples. Most of them are in the vicinity of Sydney, a city with a population of almost a million and a half people. Some of these small loyal churches are meeting in homes; some of them have their own church houses; none of them has ever used instrumental music in the worship, nor have they been connected with conference organizations. Sydney then, becomes our logical centre from which to work. There we would have access to the pulpits of the more liberal churches, and for at least a few years

there would be no clear line of demarkation between the "Old Paths" churches and the digressive churches. The division would most likely come along later when the "Old Path" section gained strength and became worthy of attention. However, considering that the Australian people fear division more than they fear an innovation, I do not think there would ever be the prejudice and bitterness that unfortunately exists in this country.

Besides the opportunity that exists for teaching inside the liberal churches, there are, I believe, remarkable opportunities in other fields.

Our State educational regulations give recognized religious teachers the right to enter all the schools for the purpose of giving religious instruction. Naturally there are some requirements that have to be met lest children receive instruction from incompetent teachers, or against the will of their parents. But the people are so indifferent to religion that practically every child in the public elementary and high schools could be reached once a week, if we had sufficient workers. Our educational system presents an open door that is being neglected by every religious group in Australia. About a month ago I received a letter from a teacher whom I have never met. He deplored the fact that no religious instruction was being given in the schools of Tasmania despite the provision made in the laws of the land. Naturally we cannot expect the state to give education in religious subjects, but Christians should be alive to their opportunities and obligations. Religious instruction is particularly necessary in the schools of Australia because of the absence of religious colleges.



Some day we may be able to remedy that lack, but at present will have to plan on reaching the students in the high schools. Much also could be done in the primary grades, but without a whole army of workers I think it will be more profitable to work with the high school boys and girls. In the Universities too, much could be done if we had the workers, but I have referred to the high schools because I believe the students there are much more impressionable than college students.

To supplement the work in the schools and churches, we also have an opportunity to teach by means of the radio. Our radio system in Australia is similar to that here. No religious body is at present using the radio to any extent. I do not at present know whether we can attempt anything along that line, or whether it will prove too expensive.

In this country much of your success has been due to the printing press. You are fortunate in having men who are prepared to publish literature and periodicals devoted to the preaching and defense of the gospel. In Australia the Austral Publishing Company publishes a weekly paper, "The Australian Christian," representing the churches of Christ. This paper however, does not represent our ideas, and will be of no use to us. I hope that we can soon arrange for the publication of another paper. Until about nine years ago "The Restorationist" was published monthly, but the publisher dropped it. Whether or not he can and will re-commence publication, I do not know. Whether or not he does, we can use large quantities of literature from the churches here in America. However, literature published there would possess advantages



that are obvious. Supplemented with tracts and periodicals from here, mimeographed matter could also be used to good advantage. Perhaps too, we could do something with a library of good doctrinal books to circulate amongst the churches.

Thus you can see, we have three great open doors of opportunity at Sydney. Every school door is open invitingly. Work done in the schools would bear fruit in later years. Further the name of one speaking to the students in the high schools would become known, by name at least, to the parents and friends of the boys and girls. Boys and girls there are the same as boys and girls here, and would talk to their mothers and dads about the preacher whose coming brought a welcome respite from the monotony of regular lessons. That is casting no reflection upon the school teachers, but may be assuming that the preacher has something to say, and can say it in an interesting manner. Thus we can build up easily a potential radio audience. Then with the parents and children interested in the preacher, some of them would read tracts and other literature.

The opportunity is there, but the work is not going to be easy or rapid. With forty years of digressive teaching, error is firmly entrenched. The Australian people are conservative, and largely indifferent to religious matters. An estimate made last year showed that only about 7% of the people attended religious services. We will have to start with the rising generation, and educate them spiritually. Naturally results will not be seen immediately. Here a preacher has a large body of Christian school teachers who have been educated in this and similar colleges. They

can influence the boys and girls in the schools. In Australia most teachers are religiously nothing, and are a hindrance, rather than a help to our cause. Ultimately we may be able to establish some religious colleges in that country, but for the present perhaps we had better aim at having some of our young men attend this and similar colleges in America. Probably we should arrange to have someone come here from the churches in Australia and major in music, so that he can return to Australia and help with the singing. However I have been treated so well here, that I would be compelled to advise a restrictive clause placed in his passport so that he would have to return to Australia rather than settling down here where it is much easier to do religious work, amongst so many Christian associates.

I have been talking about the opportunity at Sydney because that is our largest city; but similar opportunities exist in many other cities. Australia is approximately the same size as the United States. It does not have any cities as large as New York, but it has several states larger than Texas. Not one of all our states has in it a single preacher devoting his time to the preaching of the New Testament gospel, and opposing the introduction of unscriptural innovations. As you cast your eyes on the map of the world, you can visualize a whole continent populated by a people who are speaking your language and enjoying the same standard of living that you enjoy; many of them worship the same God, and have been baptized with the same baptism, but have been led astray by men pretending to represent the churches of Christ in this country. A whole conti-

ment without a single preacher devoting his time to the work of extending the borders of God's kingdom and fighting against errors from within. A nation that has taken the cross as its symbol because every night the Southern Cross shines over it, and yet a nation led away from the simplicity that is in the Cross of Calvary. I look forward to the time when the cross that has been placed in our sky and in our flag will be a symbol of the cross that has won our hearts.

I have taken time to tell you about the opportunities at Sydney because I am planning to make that the center from which we will work. Melbourne is almost as large as Sydney; it is the religious center of Australia, and its inhabitants have a greater interest in religion than do those of Sydney. But it has been the center from which the seeds of digression have been sown. Tares there are getting so thick that the wheat has been choked out. As far as I know, there is not a single "Old Path" congregation in Victoria, the state of which Melbourne is the capital.

Tasmania is my own state, and like the others presents plenty of opportunities. I would like to work from there as a center, but that state is not centrally situated geographically as you will see if you look at the map we have here. The history of the restoration movement there has been glorious in the past, but with a departure from the Bible as an absolute authority in faith and practice, a decline followed, and over the doors of many of the buildings could be written "Ichabod," for the glory has departed.

However, Tasmania is not so far from Sydney that



it could not be visited sometimes. In the state there are two or three small groups that are loyal. Two of these are in country districts; the other is in a city about the size of Abilene. Like Elijah of old, they are beginning to think that they are the only ones left. If only through the years we had been making some contacts with the great body of Christians here, we would have felt less discouraged; but we believed that here too, the people with instrumental music and conferences were making all the progress, and that the conservative section was doomed to almost certain extinction within a generation or so. A message from here occasionally would afford great encouragement, and would show them that God has reserved for himself a great host of people who have not bowed the knee to Baal. I know those people; I believe I know every family in every church in Tasmania whether they are "Old Path" brethren or not. I know that many who have in the past year or two occupied positions of distinction in various conferences and committees, are beginning to see that such aids are a failure. And they are a failure. If better work could be done by means of conferences etc., God would have included them in his plan. Like David's new cart, that he made to carry the ark, they shift the load from the Levites to the oxen, but sooner or later the oxen stumble. Then there are plenty of men like Uzzah who are ready to steady the ark. Uzzah tried to help with his hands; the modern method is to add a few more conference committees to help preach the gospel, and a few mechanical instruments to aid with the singing. So effectively do such things aid the church in her work



and worship, that groups of Christians, once welded together by the faithful preaching of some good man, have nothing for which to live, and we see the spectacle of churches closing their doors!

I could relate similar facts about each of our six states, for the experience in all has been the same. New Zealand too, is in a similar plight. A few small churches struggling against almost overwhelming odds, and discouraged by all sorts of inaccurate reports from this land! Why it is that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, purchased by his own blood, and established in all whiteness and purity to be his bride, should be the victim of erroneous teaching from within similar groups in other lands, I do not know. I am not going to assert that the church of the Lord in Australia and New Zealand was free from error before the advent of teachers from this country. From the very first the influence of Christians there was handicapped by their failure to see the need and scripturalness of supporting their evangelists. Believing in the British "Mutual Ministry" system, they considered that preaching and teaching was the work of the elders. I would be the last to assert that elders are absolved from that work even when they engage the services of an evangelist or preacher. However the experience in Australia has shown that a preacher is terribly handicapped when forced to earn his living at secular work, while trying to prepare sermons for the Lord's day. Perhaps if we had given some men an opportunity to study as well as to preach, innovations would have been more difficult to introduce. In fact such things gained an ingress because the preachers sent from

this country were more highly educated than the unpaid preachers in the Australian churches. Then realizing the influence that educated and trained preachers could have, many promising young men were brought over to attend such colleges as Bethany, and Butler, and T. C. U. These men on their return to Australia naturally became leaders in the movement, and for forty years have watched their ideas take root and grow. Truth and error cannot exist together, and the growth of one results in the suppression of the other.

We need now a succession of men who will work to uproot the errors that have got a foothold in, and ultimately taken control of the church in Australia. I said we needed men because all of God's movements to save men and women have been conditioned upon human cooperation. In his conflict with Baal in Old Testament times, God used Elijah; after Christ finished his part of the atoning work he used Peter to preach the first gospel sermon; when he wanted to get the message to the Ethiopian eunuch, he took Philip away from a successful meeting in Samaria because without the help of some man the Ethiopian did not understand what he was reading. Jesus went back to the Father in heaven, where he will remain until the times of restitution of all things whereof God spake by the mouths of the prophets, but the work of human redemption was not finished, and will not be finished until the gospel has been taken to every creature in every land and country. This part of the task was left to the church. If we fail, then Jesus fails because he has made no other

provision for the extension of his kingdom and the salvation of men.

In one generation the message of reconciliation was preached in all the known world, and the apostle could go to the martyr's grave saying, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." Surely those who love his appearing, are those who are busy doing his will, preaching the gospel either personally or by means of their wealth and influence, throughout the whole world.

I can think of no field that presents greater possibilities than does Australia. Occupying the position it does, it is the key to the myriad islands of the Pacific Ocean: it is the key to India with its countless multitudes of men and women made in the image of God, and ignorantly bowing down to idols of brass and wood and stone, vainly groping after something they cannot define. It is the key to Papua with its millions of cannibals who can be helped only by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But the task in Australia is not going to be easy in Australia. Before us we have a long and tedious job, but we know that the gospel is the power of God, and what has been accomplished here in America can be accomplished among people of the same blood in Australia. Over there, the church, the pillar

and ground of the truth, is weak and sickly because it was led astray while it was yet a little child. Starved, or fed on adulterated food when it should have been getting the sincere milk of the word, it is looking to its older brother in America, and with a voice already feeble, is pleading, "Come over to Australia and help us."



## UNITY OF THE CHURCH

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By V. E. Howard

Friends, Brethren, Ladies, and Gentlemen: It is indeed a distinct pleasure for me to appear before you this morning to discuss a matter of grave importance, "The Unity of God's People." Yes, it is a genuine pleasure to be here because I am glad to be back home. I shall always be grateful for the influence of Abilene Christian College in my life. It was here that I came, after having begun to preach the gospel, to better prepare myself for the work I have chosen. This is my first time to speak here since I was in Abilene Christian College about eight years ago.

Although I consider it a pleasure to address you on this occasion I am not unmindful of the serious obligation resting upon me. I am addressing you, most of you, many years my senior in years and experience, as a young preacher of the gospel. I am to call your attention to a further discussion of the most important subject, "Unity of the Church."

While Jesus, our Lord and Master, was in the very shadow of the cross, on which he was to give his life for the church, the thought uppermost in his mind, seemingly, was the unity and oneness of God's people. Hear him as he prayed unto his Father and our God, "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which

thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:11, 20, 21).

The predominate need of the religious world is unity. It is indeed deplorable to look about and see the division and strife existing in the realm of religion, yet all are professing to be Christians, representing Christianity before the world. It is a cast of reflection on God for men to assert that they cannot read and understand God's word alike, thus being united. The earnest plea of the inspired apostle was:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). To dispute these truths is nothing short of mockery of God, but be not deceived "God is not mocked." Indeed, I believe that division is the champion breeding bed of infidelity.

Yes, it is lamentable to think of the division of, so called, Christendom, numbering more than two hundred distinct denominations, with their respective branches numbering more than six hundred bodies, all purposing to present Christ to a sin-cursed world through conglomerated entanglement of doctrines and creeds of men, each contradicting the other. How could man have the audacity to accuse

God of being involved in such scandalous misrepresentation of himself.

One thing is certain, the Bible is not responsible for any division. "God is not the author of confusion." We are not divided over what the Bible teaches. The difficulty is that men introduce foreign teachings and practices. There are no agencies in the kingdom of God, not provided for in the word of God. It is indeed an arrogant assumption that God left his kingdom incomplete and deficient, and that the wisdom of uninspired, mortal man can supply such deficiency. We are forced to the following conclusion:

1. God's word is complete and thoroughly furnishes every man unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:15-16).

2. or, God in his infinite wisdom left the Christian system incomplete which necessitates man's wisdom to complete what infinite wisdom left incomplete.

There is no organization in the kingdom of God, larger than the local congregation of the church, and no authority higher than authority of Christ. Any additions or subtractions is a transgression of God's law, which brings about division and disfellowship.

I shall confine further discussion of this subject to the division within the church of Christ, his spiritual body, which cost his life and blood upon the cruel cross. A body that is near and dear to our Lord, and should be to all of us; yet there have been, and still are, those who would thrust a spear through his body, or cut it in twain, thereby bringing

sorrow and grief, disabling the church of our Lord, and retarding its rightful function in this world.

My mind goes back to that timely warning and exhortation of Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus as recorded in Acts 20:28-30: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."

Oh, how we need to ponder these truths. No outside force alone can defeat the church of Christ. The danger is from within.

It is marvelous to read in the New Testament of the early church, a zealous and united body that grew by leaps and bounds, in the face of unsurmountable foes. Yes, a church that, within but a few short years, carried the gospel to the then known world. Men and women by the thousands become obedient unto the gospel. Yes, the Lord "added to the church daily," and not just on the Lord's day, because a united church labored faithfully together daily.

But the time came that men arose teaching false doctrines, as the apostles warned, and carried the church away into an apostacy and human ecclesiasticism, known as Roman Catholicism. A disunited body could no longer meet the foe.

This opposition to the truth, however, could not last forever. The church of the living God can nev-



er be obliterated from the earth. God's will and purpose can never be defeated. There were those who led the church into darkness, but thank God there were others who braved the storm to restore Christianity.

There may be those today who would lead us astray, but there are still those with the faith and courage to "cry aloud and spare not," holding aloft the doctrine of Christ, to lead us back to Jerusalem.

From the beginning of the 19th century this old world began to tremble and shake its very foundations under the power of the gospel of Christ. Indeed, the battles were many and bitter but there was no compromise. Literally thousands were rescued in the ark of safety, the church of our Lord, from the curse of denominationalism and sectarianism. Again the church was growing by leaps and bounds, but soon division crept within and disrupted the peace and tranquility of the church, thus, retarding its growth and hindering its influence in the world.

Perhaps some in this audience may remember some of those sad and bitter experiences. I am too young to know, but I do know today that we of the younger generation are benefitted by the battles fought by those pioneer preachers. Yes, most of these brave Christian soldiers who fought those battles from dawn to dawn, have laid aside their battle scarred armor and crossed to the other side. Just two weeks ago another one of those great souls, one among the last, made his departure, Brother F. B. Srygley. He is gone but his influence will ever be present. I appreciate the great battles and victories that have been

fought for me. As best I can I shall try to take up that sword of the spirit, the word of God, and fight for the truth and for victory.

Brethren have transgressed the will of God, disregarding the authority of Christ, introducing into the church institutionalism and unscriptural practices, causing a division. In 1849 the societies were introduced and in 1859 and in 1869 the mechanical instruments of music were brought into the worship. The body of Christ was rent in twain. God's law had been transgressed. The church divided. Now where is the responsibility? On the transgressor, of course! There can be no unity on this issue until the transgressors repent, disposing of all the innovations, and come back to God's word on which all can unite. The loyal disciples of Christ have not transgressed in this regard and have no concessions or terms to make. God has stipulated the terms. Anyone who would offer to compromise is equally guilty with the transgressor. Hear the apostle John regarding this matter. Quote: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not his teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (2 John 9:11).

With the introduction of the organized societies and the mechanical instruments of music came the cries of: "Let Alone," "Peace," and "Freedom and Liberty." They did not want anyone to oppose their unscriptural practices. Oh, yes, they were very deceit-

ful and cunning in promoting their cause at first, persuading privately, going from house to house, until they secured a following. And that same thing, brethren, is being done today. Those who have caused division, in practically all cases, have not done so publicly. They have done their destructive work privately until they could master a following.

Brethren, listen, any man that teaches and promotes his cause privately, and does not publicly do so, is dangerous. Not only is he dangerous, but he is a coward. It is cowardly for a preacher or elder to teach something privately that he does not teach publicly. Remember that!

During recent years there have been other factions within the church. Some have opposed the class system of teaching God's word. Also, this same faction has contended for the "one cup" idea; that is, all Christians should drink from the one cup, an absurdity and impossibility; a contention purely without Scriptural basis.

The "how" here seems to have been as important as the teaching itself with these brethren. However, they failed to note that Jesus commanded "go teach," but he did not say how go, nor how teach. I might ride a donkey, walk, swim, or "fly." The Lord has not legislated here. The thing that must be done is the going. We may use our own wisdom and convenience in choosing how we go. The same is true respecting the teaching. I may teach by word of mouth, by writing, and by manner of living. I might write that truth on a blackboard, or in a newspaper, it is still God's word. Or I might teach the person in a building, in the auditorium, or in a separate room,



on the building, or under the building. The thing to be done is, teach!

It should be said, however, that no longer are there any strong contentions over these matters for the exponents of such whimsical ideas seemingly have vanquished.

Of course there are those within the church, and always will be I presume, who are contentious and factious, always making "much ado about nothing." Some brethren seem to have been born in the "objective case" and the "kickitive mood." They object to anything and kick about everything! Such a person is a menace to the cause of Christ; yet, is to be pitied. Sometimes I wonder if that sort of person shouldn't be given the "leather degree." By that I mean, if you'll pardon the expression, he should be given a kick with the toe of a boot! Now I wouldn't take that too seriously. That isn't God's method, but it is tiresome and aggravating to have someone constantly kicking and objecting without cause.

In recent years there has been another serious threat prevailing against the church. I refer to the speculative theories concerning the second coming of Christ, commonly known as "Premillennialism," the earthly establishment of the kingdom of Christ and a material reign of 1,000 years. The Lord's church has been divided, and for awhile it seemed that this "cism" would spread throughout the body of Christ. Thank God, however, for the courage, faith, and stability of all those who have fought this false doctrine, exposing its fallacies. Had these battles not been fought, and were they not still being fought, there is no way of determining its fatal results.



Suppose a notable division had come within the church because of these speculative theories, on which side do you suppose brethren would be, who have refused to expose and condemn these false doctrines, even manifesting a critical attitude toward those who have engaged in the fight? Where do you suppose brethren would have been, who have, seemingly, tried to be neutral, not lifting their voices and influence against these errors, but decidedly showing a sympathetic attitude toward those teaching the error? Brethren, one can't be a neutral on these matters; not when false doctrines are being taught and the body of Christ being divided because of false teachers. In such cases, the so-called neutral will usually ally himself with the side of his sympathies after he sees which way the "wind is blowing."

No one can be a neutral concerning the doctrine of Christ. We know of the results of the so-called neutrality during the early days of the "Christian Church—Digressive—movement." Nearly all of those who refused to engage in the fight went with the "digressives" after a following had been mastered and partial control had been gained within the church by these brethren in error. No, they were no longer neutral after they determined the popular side! Those who refused to give up were then driven out of their buildings into the cold to struggle for existence.

Again the cry has been loud and long, "Let alone," "Peace," "Freedom and Liberty," and "Don't Disfellowship." But, friends, the Bible is clear concerning what should be done about those who refuse to cease teaching false doctrines and disturbing the church. Hear the apostle Paul again: "Now I beseech you,

brethren, mark them that are causing divisions, and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and turn away from them" (Rom. 16:17). And again: Titus 3:10, 11: "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such one is perverted, and sinneth, and being self condemned."

Brethren, I am going to make a charge I believe to be of serious consequences. That charge is: the leadership in the church is largely responsible for division and factions within the church. The elders and preachers are largely responsible! It is the solemn duty of the bishops of local congregations to oversee and feed the church, as the apostle charged the Ephesian elders. Preachers and teachers are many times responsible for bringing into the church false doctrine, which, of course, may include an elder, or elders, but the elders are responsible for the teaching in their respective congregations. Too often personal friendship and misappropriated love have allowed false teaching to come into the church, causing division and bringing many heartaches.

On the other hand, the lack of investigation or thorough knowledge of the teacher has allowed false teachers and contentious persons to sow seed of discord within the church. Even in some cases, a man known to have sown seed of discord and cause division in the church, may be given a recommendation by the elders of the church in order that they may get rid of him, thus allowing other congregations of the body of Christ to become victims of false teachers and disturbers. Brethren, here is a serious responsibility of the leadership of the church. Effi-

cient and faithful bishops in the church can largely keep division without the church. Are we fully assuming that responsibility without respect of persons? Remember, Paul charged, "Take heed unto yourselves—feed the church!"

It is not infrequently that you hear the urge, "Have the spirit of Christ," when one uncompromisingly opposes false doctrines. This cry often leaves the impression that Christ was a "weakling," and would not be so aggressive as to expose a false teacher and his doctrine.

We must all appreciate the kind, gentle, and forgiving spirit of our Lord, but no one can study the life and teachings of Christ and conclude that he was a "weakling," who was so tolerant that he would overlook the false teachers who would pervert his gospel and divide his spiritual body, the church. No, my New Testament does not picture Christ as such! He was kind and lovable, but he was equally brave and courageous, never fearing, nor refusing, to condemn false teachers in unmistakable terms! And he spoke with "authority," not apologetically as some of my brethren do today when they endeavor to expose error, fearing, it seems, that someone's feelings might be hurt, which would make them unpopular.

It was Christ who went into the temple, overthrew the tables, and drove out the money-changers. Yes, it was he who said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but you thieves, (and I want you to get that word) you thieves have taken possession of it—Get out!"

It was the Christ who rebuked the scribes and Pharisees, religious false teachers, declaring, "Woe



unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye made him two-fold more the child of Hell than yourselves!"

Can you imagine some of our "sweet-spirited" brethren of today, who refuse to expose false teachers and false practices, saying such things? No, not them. They have the "spirit of Christ," they say! Too bad it is that some of our modern preachers could not have been back there and given Christ some good advice concerning "methods of approach," etc. They might have preserved the lives of some of those who exposed themselves to death because they so boldly proclaimed the truth and condemned error. Ridiculous!

No, Jesus did not hesitate to pronounce them: "Whited sepulchers, full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness—ye serpents—ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?"

I am sure that Paul had the "spirit of Christ," yet he publicly condemned Philetus and Hymenæus, who "concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:17, 18).

Surely it was with no personal delight that Paul denounced and exposed Hymenæus and Alexander, whom he "delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme," but he had the courage to do so. I should think that those false teachers would like to have had the mouth and pen of Paul stopped. No doubt they would like to have been "Let alone" and given "Freedom and liberty," but the great apostle was discharging his duty and respon-



sibility, giving us a good example of how he imitated Christ, which he declared he did (1 Cor. 11:1).

Had we more men and women of the faith and courage of the apostles and early Christians in the church today, perhaps there would not be so many threats of division within the church. Without question, there is a distinct need for more plain, forceful gospel preaching, and less compromising and "soft soaping." How often have you heard preachers deliver a wonderful discourse, but at the conclusion of his address you couldn't even intelligently discuss what he had to say. Nothing "stuck," or pricked the heart! Sometimes such discourses are classed as "deep sermons," and it is usually these deep sermons, or statements, which are so easily misunderstood. Friends, muddy water always looks deep!

There is one thing certain, and that is: when the apostles and early preachers of the gospel declared the counsel of God it brought conviction to hearts of their hearers. The people didn't have any difficulty understanding them! They could tell others what they had been taught. The results of sound gospel preaching in the early days were usually one of two things: the people were convicted of their sins and errors, because they were pointed out, and they obeyed the gospel, or, they stubbornly rebelled and became the enemies of those who were preaching the gospel. You remember, Paul once asked his own brethren, "Am I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" And there are examples after examples where the early Christians were persecuted and sought to be put to death, just because they uncompromisingly

taught the truth and exposed error. On all of Paul's missionary journeys, about the first place you would find him, was in the synagogue teaching the truth and exposing error.

Ladies and gentlemen, the mission of the church of Jesus Christ is to preach the gospel, both positively and negatively, and not to build programs to become the most popular church. The person that courts the favors of denominationalism, and the people, is not a loyal exponent and defender of God's word.

Just here I would like to pause for observation of two or three inevitable conclusions regarding the teaching of false doctrines that may cause the church to become divided. First, it must be admitted that a man can be a Christian and not believe in Methodism (for example), but one cannot be a Christian without obedience and adherence to the gospel of Christ, therefore, Methodism, so called, is no part of the gospel and is not necessarily related to Christianity.

Now, let us apply the same logic to the "isms" in the church. It must be admitted that one can be a Christian and not believe "Premillennialism," or any other sort of "millennialism," but no one can be a Christian without obedience and adherence to the gospel of Christ, therefore, "Premillennialism" is no part of the gospel and is not necessarily related to Christianity.

Since it takes the gospel, and the gospel only, to make Christians, and it is admitted that one can be a Christian and not believe these peculiar theories, it must, therefore, be concluded that "premillennialism" or any other "ism" is no part of the gospel, nor

Christianity, for a man cannot be a Christian and not believe and obey the gospel. These conclusions are inevitable! On the other hand, this doctrine is destructive for it dethrones Christ our King.

I am not unmindful that someone might object to these conclusions, suggesting that one does not have to believe all the gospel to be a Christian, for when one believes, repents, and is baptized he becomes a Christian, but does not necessarily believe all the gospel, or the whole thereof. This reasoning is unsound, however. It is true that one must believe certain facts and commands of the gospel in order to become a Christian, yet not necessarily believe everything in the New Testament, because he has not been taught all, but to remain a Christian one must study, or be taught, the gospel in its completeness, obeying the same and growing thereby in order to be a "man of God complete."

Now why all this cry about, "Let us alone," "Dictators," "Popes," etc.? Beloved, there can be but one logical answer. These brethren want to teach their speculative theories unopposed so that they may have opportunity of promoting their interest to a greater degree. They well know that their success will not be so great when they are being exposed before the brotherhood.

Yes, these brethren would like very much to be "let alone" while they are propagating their theories and laying a foundation for division in the church. All sorts of plans and schemes are used, and money is not spared in promoting these false doctrines to the disruption of the peace and tranquility of the church; yet it must be admitted, as I have pointed



out, that, even if the doctrine were not destructive, it is no part of the gospel, nor is it related to Christianity!

Why, brethren, these same plans, schemes, and cries were used by those promoting the Christian Church interest a few years ago when they brought about division in the church. Why, did you not know that the Christian Standard magazine (their church paper), was organized for the purpose of destroying the efforts and influence of those who were opposing their unscriptural practices? This journal was organized as a stock company with a capital of \$18,000.00. Isaac Errett and his assistants made no concealment of the fact that they intended to crush the Christian Review, which was edited by Benjamin Franklin, who was contending earnestly for the truth and condemning the unscriptural practices of the "digressives." According to the Biographical Sketch and Writings of Benjamin Franklin, page 44, and I quote: "By its own confession, the Standard sunk \$50,000.00 of the people's money before it was permanently established, while the Review all the time was made self-supporting, and sunk nobody's money." (Unquote).

Think of it! Brethren were willing to lose \$50,000.00 to promote admitted non-essential interests that were dividing the body of Christ. I wonder if it isn't possible that today there are those who would be willing to spend \$50,000.00, or more, to promote their interests to the hurt of the church of our Master. Friends, we need to think! What do you suppose would be the results if someone, who is opposed to open and free discussion and condemnation



of false teachings and practices, should get control of our gospel papers and have all of them "copyrighted"? Brethren, from all indications, there are some who would like to do that very thing today!

Regarding the responsibility of division and contentions within the church because of speculative theories and doctrines, it surely must be true that those who have taught these doctrines are responsible for the disfellowship. Of course, those in error will deny it is their responsibility. That is usually true. The Christian Church folk do not assume the responsibility for the division that came about because of the introduction of the mechanical instruments of music in the worship and institutionalism in the church either. Denials do not change the truth of the matter and facts of the case, however.

To illustrate who is responsible in these matters, I shall relate the following example that has come within my experience. While in Abilene Christian College about eight years ago, I preached once or twice each month for a small congregation nearby, while another preacher, who lived in Abilene at that time, I believe, preached there regularly also. It was not long until I learned that my preacher brother, just mentioned, was endeavoring to teach these speculative theories concerning the second coming of Christ. Of course he did not do much teaching publicly, if any, concerning these matters, but he did so privately, or perhaps occasionally, in disguise, publicly. This brother would make trips to Louisville, Kentucky, and spend several weeks of study under Brother R. H. Boll, and then come back and teach the speculative and pernicious theories he learned, thus causing disturb-

ance in the church. Brethren, it seems to me that one, who cannot see who is responsible for division in these matters, just doesn't have his eyes open. Perhaps it would be well for us to open our eyes and look around some!

Other divisions in the church may include "localized" divisions. It is quite possible that a congregation may be meeting in the same house, under the same roof, supposedly engaging in the same worship and services, yet far from being united, "being perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Sometimes brethren will not even speak to each other. It may be jealousy, prejudice, envy, stubbornness, or "preacheritis," or "elder" factions, but beloved, these things ought not to be. It is displeasing to our heavenly Father, and will surely hinder the growth and progress of the church of our Lord.

We are told by the apostle John that brethren who do not love one another, whom they have seen, surely do not love God whom we have not seen. Also, we are told that one who hates his brother is a "murderer." All of us in the church, need to recognize one great truth: the church was not made to serve elders and preachers, but preachers and elders made to serve the church! The church was not made just for the convenience of its members, but members of the church were called out from the world and added together to serve God, to serve each other, and save the soul of man. Let us think on these things.

Unity is essential in the home, the community, the nation, the church! Where there is division within a home there is usually someone with a heavy heart

almost all the time. Where there is division in the church it grieves our Lord, who died for his church, and causes many sorrows and heart-aches in the church. Open division will hinder the mission of the church of Christ in this world. Division will cause souls to be lost.

May we endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." God has always demanded that his people be one. In the long ago man disregarded God's law and terms of union, so he sent the flood and destroyed all who were not in fellowship with God and his people. God's people then came forth from the ark of Noah united as one family, but man has since again corrupted his way upon the earth. Today the world stands a divided, confused and rebellious people. Out of all this world of confusion and strife God will some day bring about unity and peace once again. All the unfaithful and disobedient will be gathered and cast into everlasting punishment, while the faithful and righteous few shall be gathered home with God and Christ, and the redeemed of all ages, to live together forever and ever. Then will be perfect joy, peace, and happiness—unity beyond our comprehension!

"Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

## THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

(Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)

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By Paul C. Witt

Little is said in the word of God about the selection and appointment of elders. Enough is said, however, to let us know that a congregation of saints was not completely set in order according to divine pattern, and could not fully function, without elders. In any congregation it was necessary that there be direction or oversight, and instruction or nurture. It was God's intention that the bishops or elders should supply these needs. In Acts 14:21-23 we read, "And when they had preached the gospel to that city (Derbe), and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed." Again, in Titus 1:5, we read from Paul, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; . . ."

In the first of these Scriptures it is said that Paul



and Barnabas appointed elders in every church. In the second it is recorded that Paul instructed Titus to appoint elders in every city.

When the saints in the Gentile church at Antioch sent relief to their needy Jewish brethren in the church at Jerusalem, they sent it, ". . . to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11:30).

Likewise, when Paul wrote to the congregation of saints at Philippi he directed his message, ". . . to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1).

It is thus made clear that completeness of order and efficiency of functioning depended upon the appointment of elders in every church or in every city.

Concerning the selection of elders two things seem very evident. In the first place, they were chosen from among the men of the congregation which they were to serve. In the second place, they were chosen according to very special and exacting qualifications. If it had been possible for the same group of elders to serve from church to church, or from city to city, there would have been no need to appoint elders in every church or in every city. Furthermore, such qualifications as "without reproach," "given to hospitality," "good testimony from them that are without," and so forth, could only be evidenced by long residence and service in a given community. These same qualifications indicate, too, that the men who were to be appointed as elders were selected by their fellow saints. How could one know whether or not another possessed such qualifications as those enumerated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:5-9, without being intimately and extensively associated with him?

How else could such qualifications be demonstrated than by social inter-relationships and service?

The Scriptures reveal no specific examples or directions in connection with the selection of men to be appointed as elders. There is recorded for us, however, an example which many believe reveals to us a procedure in principle. When the seven were selected and appointed to serve the congregation in Jerusalem in connection with the "daily ministrations" the twelve gave the instruction, Acts 6:3, "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom ye may appoint over this business." That this suggestion met the approval of all concerned is indicated in the words of Acts 6:5-6, where it is recorded, "And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus a proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the apostle: . . ."

In this instance, those to be served were instructed to choose, from among themselves, according to specified qualifications, those who should become their servants. According to the same principle, and in harmony with the laws of expediency and fairness, men may be selected for appointment as elders.

Concerning the appointment of elders we have more definite information in the Scriptures. We have the instance where Titus was left in Crete to appoint elders according to Paul's charge, and we have the example of the appointment of elders in the churches at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. We know, too, from the statement made by Paul to Timothy, in 1 Tim.

3:1, that the office or work to which the elders were to be appointed is very sacred. In the words of the apostle, "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

Other references to the elders indicate that the work or office is very comprehensive and exacting, and the discussion of the duties of an elder will make this point clearer.

According to the word of God, the appointing of elders either accompanied, or was preceded by, a "setting in order" of the churches involved. This would indicate that elders were to be appointed after an established congregation had come to a certain stage of development or organization. How long a congregation of saints should be permitted to remain without elders we do not know. Neither do we know exactly what a "setting in order" consisted of. We do find some very vital suggestions in the passage already quoted from Acts 14:21-23, where reference is made to "confirming the souls of the disciples," "exhorting them to continue in the faith," and to suggesting to them "that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." In this instance there was a strengthening or reassurance, accompanied by an exhortation or encouragement, and an admonition concerning the patience and steadfastness necessary if one would enter God's eternal kingdom. It doesn't take any stretch of the imagination to see a parallel between a "setting in order" and a "strengthening, assurance, and admonition."

After the selection of men possessing the qualifications demanded of those appointed, and after having "set in order the things that were wanting" in



the congregation in point, the actual "ordaining" or appointing would be in order. Just what constituted this act of formally bringing those chosen into their work, and just who had the authority to consummate the act of appointing, has been the subject of much discussion. In the cases in point the appointment was made by men outside of the congregations involved, for in the churches in Lystra, Antioch, and Iconium, Paul and Barnabas "appointed for them elders." In Paul's charge to Titus he instructed Titus to do the "setting in order" and the "ordaining" in every city. Following the same principle today would enable us to avoid, on the one hand, the unwarranted and undesirable assumption of the office and work by one seeking to impose himself on the congregation, and to avoid, on the other hand, the imposition of the office and work on an unwilling or unqualified person by a congregation.

Concerning what constitutes the act of ordination or appointment we shall consider first the case referred to in principle—the appointment of the seven, in the church at Jerusalem, to attend to the daily ministrations. In this case the consecration service was accomplished by prayer and the laying on of hands. Then, in the case of the appointment of elders in the churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, fasting and prayer were associated with the service but the laying on of hands is not mentioned. In the directions given by Paul to Titus no specific details are mentioned but Paul did say that the appointment should be, ". . . as I gave thee charge; . . ." It is not illogical to presume that Titus would use the same



procedure that Paul and Barnabas had used, and if he had not understood what to do it looks reasonable that Paul would have given him the necessary specific directions along with the charge.

The contention that the laying on of hands was always for the purpose of imparting to the recipient some special blessing or some added ability or qualification may be dismissed as without sufficient foundation. In the first place, only those were to be selected who already possessed the necessary qualifications, and, in the second place, we have cases on record where those of inferior rank or qualifications laid hands on those of superior rank or qualifications (Num. 8:9-10; Acts 13:3). The laying on of hands was an act of consecration or dedication; a sign of a covenant between the servant and those whom he should serve. From the beginning of the restoration until the present time many have contended that prayer, fasting, and the laying on of hands should be the procedure in appointing selected men to the office or work of an elder. Others have maintained, however, that any procedure that is orderly, and significant, and reverent, is acceptable.

All are agreed that the appointment of properly qualified elders in each congregation is a part of the divine economy, and, as such, demands such solemnity and procedure as will impress the saints to be served and the elders appointed with the gravity and sacredness of their mutual relationships and responsibilities. If such an ideal with reference to the appointment service is attained it will not be difficult for the members of the congregations served to re-

spect the appointed elders, "... and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake" (1 Thess. 5:12); "... and submit to them" (Heb. 13:17). Neither will it be difficult for the elders to realize that they are, "... exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God" (1 Pet. 5:2).

## “HAS THEIR PLAN FAILED?”

By Melvin J. Wise

The plan or plea of the leaders of the restoration movement for bringing about unity among believers has been well presented. The results obtained through their efforts have been forcefully recalled to our minds. It is now my obligation to answer the question: “Has Their Plan Failed?” It goes without question that their plan was successful when first applied.

Perhaps the best expression of the great objective of the restoration movement is expressed by Moses E. Lard in the following: “The restoration was to consist in holding precisely and only to what is taught in the word of God and in founding our practices strictly thereon. It was determined that the final end to which the restoration should look is a complete return to primitive Christianity in doctrine, in practice, and in spirit. All of which is concisely expressed in the following decision: To believe precisely what the Scriptures teach, to practice only what they enjoin, and to reject everything else. Hence, the restoration proposed was to be marked, positively, by accepting as matters of faith, what and only what the Holy Scriptures teach; practically, by doing everything and only what they enjoin; and negatively, by rejecting everything which they do not sanction.

Hence all practices having their origin in tradition, human reason, or expediency are utterly eschewed. Such was the restoration proposed by Mr. Campbell and his brethren" (Lard's Quarterly, 1863).

Hence their plea was an undenominational plea for the apostolic order "in doctrine, in practice, and in spirit." In short it was the same plea made by Peter, James, and Paul; expressed well in Paul's words "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Hence, to say that their plea has failed is to say that the gospel, from which their plea came, has failed. But the gospel is to endure for ever (1 Pet. 1:25).

But there was a departure from their plea. Just as there was an apostacy from the primitive order of things during the early centuries of our era, there was a departure from the plea of the restoration movement of the past century. It shall, then, be my task to show that the plea is not at fault; it has not failed; but that religious division came within the ranks of those who claimed to be aligned with those who were so earnestly endeavoring to reproduce the church that was built according to the divine pattern. History was repeating itself, and men arose within the ranks of the church "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." The transition of the apostolic church as established by Christ, with its simplicity of organization and worship, into the apostate church, with its multiplicity of corruptions and innovations, was gradual, covering a period of five or six centuries; but the departure from the restoration plea was more rapid, covering only a few decades.



The plea for Christian unity, which characterized the restoration movement, has been so completely surrendered by one group of people that a great gulf now separates the two bodies, who at the beginning of this great movement were both one. They no longer "speak the same things," but divisions exists among them. So divided are they that they are known by different names. One group call themselves "Progressives," while they refer to their opposing brethren as "Non-Progressives." When they think it expedient to refer to them in a complimentary manner they use the term "Conservative Brethren." The other group call themselves "Loyal Brethren" or "Non-Digressives," while they refer to their opposing brethren as "Digressives." Personally I think that the late and beloved Brother F. B. Srygley named them well when he gave them the name "Transgressive Brethren." The United States Census Bureau lists the two groups as "Disciples of Christ" and "Church of Christ."

This situation forces us to accept one of these two alternatives: Either to "Speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent" will not unite the disciples of Christ into one body and restore the New Testament church as the leaders of the restoration movement so earnestly plead that it would; or else somebody has failed to apply the plea, and has, therefore, departed from the original position. Let us notice the plea again: "To believe precisely what the Scriptures teach, to practice only what they enjoin, and to reject everything else." Hence the essence of the plea is to have Bible authority for all things that we do in religion. To fail to do this is

to digress from the apostolic order. Which alternative shall we accept? To say that the plea has failed is to say that the Bible is not a sufficient rule of faith and practice, and not sufficient as a basis of unity. We cannot agree to this. Then we are forced to the other alternative—that somebody has departed from the original ground and surrendered the plea. Who is it, and how have they departed?

Without misgiving, we charge that our brethren who call themselves "Progressives" have surrendered the restoration plea, have digressed from the ancient order of things. So far have they departed that they have no right to claim any just relation to the restoration movement, nor any Scriptural identity to the New Testament church. They are a denomination among denominations.

There are two evils of digression: Innovation and Organization. They go hand in hand, and seldom, if ever, separate. These brethren have introduced into the worship and practice of the church things unmentioned in the Scriptures, so that their worship is in many instances on the level with entertainment. They have organized and departmentized the work of the church, so that the church is merely a by-product of these organizations.

Let us now notice some innovations and unscriptural practices of the "Progressive brethren." In these they have gone "beyond that which is written."

### Instrumental Music

This was not the first departure, but I mention it first in the list. The man does not live that can

prove by either sacred or profane history that any New Testament church ever used instrumental music in its worship. There is no command, example, or inference in the New Testament authorizing its use in Christian worship. Neither did the churches of the nineteenth century use it for more than sixty years. In 1867 the Christians worshipping on Vine Street in St. Louis, Missouri, decided that they needed a better house of worship in a better location. They purchased a meeting house from the Episcopal people on Seventeenth and Olive Street. It was well furnished with carpet runners in the aisles, cushion seats, and a \$3,000.00 organ had been built into the brick walls up in the organ loft. Soon after they began meeting in this building the question arose as to what should be done with the organ. The debate waxed warm and the feeling got so strong on one occasion that the organ party locked the anti-organ party out, and they had to go to a private home to worship. A committee was appointed to arbitrate. L. B. Wilkes, of Columbia, Missouri; J. K. Rogers, president of Christian College, Columbia, Missouri; and Isaac Errett were selected as arbitrators. These brethren were eminent Bible scholars and able defenders of the apostolic faith. They decided against the organ party, and the organ was torn out of the walls of the building and sold. The organ party withdrew from the congregation and began meeting in a rented hall. They afterwards built the Central Christian Church of St. Louis. The Olive Street church grew rapidly, but later among them there arose those who were not satisfied with the decision of the committee, and in 1869 an organ was placed



in the Olive Street church. At other places instruments were forced in over the protest and prayers of the faithful, and those who would not concede to the innovation were forced to worship in their homes, and elsewhere.

In many places the question of ownership of the property arose, and the matter was taken into the civil courts to the reproach of the church, a direct violation of 1 Cor. 6. Much strife, animosity, and faction resulted. All of this was over what? Something for which there was no command, example, or inference of sanction in the New Testament; yet the very plea of the restoration movement was "Where the Bible speaks we speak, and where the Bible is silent we are silent." Those who advocate the use of instrumental music in worship have exhausted their efforts in quest of some Scriptural authority for their practice. Among their stock-in-trade arguments is: "The Bible does not say anything about not using instrumental music in Christian worship." In making this argument they overlooked the latter part of their plea: "Where the Bible is silent we are silent." Thus they fail to recognize the silence of the Scriptures.

Eight miles from Paris, Kentucky, there still stands an old meeting house called Cane Ridge. This was built in 1791 by a small Presbyterian church, which had as its minister, Barton W. Stone. In 1804 he was successful in leading the whole congregation to repudiate all human names in religion, abandon all human creeds, be called by the name "Christian" only, and accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. This was the first congregation of the res-



toration movement. (This was three years before Thomas Campbell came to America, and five years before Alexander Campbell set foot on American soil, yet, brethren, the people insist on calling us "Campbellites"). But today, just a few feet from where Barton W. Stone preached to the earnest and pious souls who gathered there in the long ago, there sets an organ. If it were possible for him to arise some Lord's day morning from his deathly sleep in the old church graveyard, he could not go into the old meeting house and worship God with those who now gather there.

Hence this innovation is a definite departure by these brethren from the plea of the great restoration.

### Missionary Societies

The man does not live who can read out of God's Book anything about a missionary society, save the church of Jesus Christ. God's wisdom is to be made known by and through the church (Eph. 3:10). The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

But about the middle of the nineteenth century some began to advocate the organization of churches into a society to do the work of evangelism. Those who were making a plea for the divine order admitted the Scripturalness of cooperation of sister congregations to do this work, but to form an organization of churches would not only be going "beyond that which is written," but that it would also destroy congregational autonomy. It was a case of not being able to see the difference between cooperation and

organization. The difference is between man's wisdom and God's wisdom. The church at Philippi "sent once and again unto Paul's necessity" (Phil. 4:16); but this was cooperation and not organization.

Nevertheless in October, 1849, the American Christian Missionary Society was organized at a general convention of churches in Cincinnati, Ohio. Alexander Campbell was made the president of this society when it was first organized, and was kept as its president until his death on March 4, 1866. Thus for sixteen years he was its president, yet he never presided over any of its sessions. Rather a unique experience for a president was it not? He was named president because of his great influence in the brotherhood, thus to give the organization all of the prestige possible.

But Alexander Campbell was never in favor of organization to the extent of overshadowing the church. His attitude toward organization was expressed in the *Millennial Harbinger*, 1850, page 64: "It was intended and ordered that the glorious work of evangelizing the heathen should be committed to the church itself, not to separate societies within it and around it."

Other societies were organized, but they have all merged into what is known as the United Christian Missionary Society.

One great evil of the missionary society, aside from its unscripturalness, was that it dominated the churches. It began to dictate to the churches and became a conference to locate preachers with the churches. If the preachers were not supporters of the society, they were not recommended by the society to the churches.

## Conventions

A contemporary with the organization of the society, was the holding of conventions. Both are outgrowths of each other. The watchmen on the walls of Zion protested and endeavored to show that such meetings were not held among apostolic churches, but that such meetings became the medium of an apostacy during the second and third centuries. The "Progressive" brethren insisted that such meetings were for everyone who might desire to attend, and that no power to legislate would be in the hands of any one individual. But the extreme which is now about to be reached in this organization is that no one shall have a voice in the meeting unless he be sent as a delegate from his home church. This, of course, will make the convention develop into an official, law-making body. Churches sending delegates will be bound by the decision of the delegates reached at the convention. In New Testament times churches cooperated by means of a messenger. A messenger is the bearer of a message. He has no authority delegated to him to act for those sending him other than to deliver the message. When he delivers the message and returns the answer, if any answer is necessary, his work as a messenger ends. A delegate is one sent by a body to speak for the body he represents in forming plans which are binding upon the body he represents. In New Testament churches they had no delegates, they sent messengers.

### Ladies' Aid Societies

What authority have we for them? Not any.

Their purpose was to aid in raising money to help in the church expense and paying the preacher. How did they do this? By having socials, suppers, and bazaars; by selling doughnuts, chili, hot tamales, hot dogs, and candy; by selling old clothes to the poor that should have been given to the poor at least a year or so before. This, of course, brought another innovation and usurpation of Scripture. How is the Lord's work to be financed? Not by the church going into a commercial business, but by each one giving upon the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2) as he has purposed in his own heart (2 Cor. 9:7). But suppose enough money will not be contributed? But enough will be given, for Paul said: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

### Receiving the Unimmersed into the Church

The charge is not made that this unscriptural practice is universal among the "Progressive" brethren. This, like all other innovations, has started only in some localities among them. The New Testament teaches that penitent believers are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27). The New Testament teaches also that baptism is performed by immersion (Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). The New Testament further teaches that there is "one" baptism (Eph. 4:5). Hence to receive the unimmersed into the church is a definite departure from the faith.

Time will not permit me to point out in this lecture the innovations of paid choirs, pianists, and or-



ganists; the partaking of the Lord's Supper on other than the Lord's day; and the dedication of babies. Again I say that these are not practiced universally among the "Progressive" brethren, but nevertheless they have been practiced in some localities under my own observation.

If Alexander Campbell were alive today he would not be akin in any religious way to these transgressive brethren. His writings show his attitude toward their innovations and organizations. Yet they unhesitatingly propagate the falsehood that they are identified with the Restoration Movement. If he were here today, those who try to ride upon his fame and loyalty would call him a mossback, and treat him in the same indignant way that they treat us.

### Some Evil Tendencies Among Us Today

I want to point out some dangerous tendencies which are among us today. By "us" I mean those of us who still claim to "speak where the Bible speaks, and to be silent where the Bible is silent." By "tendencies" I mean those things that are apt to cause us to shipwreck in the midst of peril and turmoil, and give up entirely the Restoration plea. Now to consider briefly some of these tendencies.

#### Institutionalism

Just as the transgressive brethren departed through the route of organization, so it is possible for us to take a similar route; the route of institutionalism. I am interested in all things that the church is to

do, but I am intensely interested in keeping any movement or institution inferior to, and apart from the church, even though it may claim relation to the church. It is so easy for us to develop a one track mind. It is so easy for me to decide that the thing that I am most interested in is the most important thing in the church. Thus one says that Orphan Home work is the most important work that the church can be engaged in. Some say that the church will die unless we take more interest in the young people. Some say that the hope of the church of tomorrow lies in the Christian colleges. Then some say that the religious periodicals keep the church alive with vision, zeal, and activity. These various causes are helpful in advancing the great cause of Christ, but they are in no sense subsidiaries of the church. You may organize an institution or movement today larger than the local church and you will soon have an authority dictating to the churches.

### The Modern Pastor System

It will not be denied by any of us that the New Testament church had elders to oversee the flock. Evangelists preached the word to these churches from one to more than two years; they were sent out by these churches to evangelize the virgin fields; but nothing is inferred in the sacred Scriptures of any preacher "taking charge," "taking the work," or "running the church."

The only names for the officers of a local church were elders (also called bishops, presbyters, overseers, shepherds, pastors) and deacons. There is nothing

said in the oracles of God about a "board of elders and deacons," the "chairman of the board," or the "senior elder."

### Losing Sight of the Mission of the Church

It cannot be denied that the mission of the New Testament church was the salvation of lost souls. The mission of the church is co-extensive with the mission of Christ who is the head of the church. ". . . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . . ." (1 Tim. 1:15). Jesus said: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Since "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), it then becomes the duty of the church to preach the gospel. The New Testament church was animated with a passion for souls. After the dispersion, the members of the Jerusalem church "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). It is too evident to be denied that many congregations have lost their true mission. Many congregations today are more interested in a "program of work" than in the proclamation of the good news. Many are more interested in the "building program" than the "mission program." How many churches today can hold a mission meeting on a city corner lot or in a country schoolhouse and enlist the support of half of its members?

### The Peril of Compromise

The compromise is twofold:

1. A compromise in doctrine.

When Peter and Paul preached the people were stirred. When Peter preached to the Sadducees (Acts

4) he preached to them on the resurrection of Christ, the very thing which they opposed, yet the very thing which they definitely needed to hear. When Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica the people cried out: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also" (Acts 17:6). When Stone, Campbell, Scott, and Smith preached, they preached both a positive and a negative message. Positively, they preached that which was authorized by the Scriptures; and negatively, they preached against all that which was practiced and taught by the various sects of their day, which was not authorized by the Scriptures. The leaders of denominationalism opposed them; they could not oppose them with the truth, but with prejudice, bigotry, and enmity.

There is no more love today among the ranks of sectarianism for those who are contending for the apostolic order than there was in Stone's and Campbell's day. Only the manner of opposition has changed. They do not come out and openly condemn "Campbellism" so-called, as they once did from the press and pulpit. They no longer cross swords with us as they did in the earlier days. Since they have discovered that our plea is scriptural and our position is as impregnable as the Rock of Ages, they have decided it wiser and more effective to retire from the conflict and try to overcome us by compromise and fraternalism. Many of our brethren have fallen victim of this strategy. Many gospel preachers, so-called, no longer aim their guns at denominationalism. They have fraternalized, compromised, and are holding conference with the foe.



But all such have sold their Lord for popularity and fame, and have become enemies to the cross of Christ.

## 2. A Compromise with Sin

Even though many of our brethren have gone in for a stand-for-nothing religion; yet I am persuaded that the majority preach the truth. But not all have cried out in thunderous tones, in tones of Jeremiah, Elijah, and John the Baptist, against worldliness and sin. There is entirely too much levity among preachers; there is among us a laxity of piety and purity. The increase of the divorce evil, the laxity of morals, the peril of worldliness in the church can never be legislated out; they must be preached out, beginning with a sermon by example on the part of the ministry. We need to learn and ever remember that we must "keep under our bodies, and bring them into subjection, lest that by any means, when we have preached to others, we ourselves should be a castaway."

## Conclusion

I trust that we have been able to see that the Restoration plea has not failed; but that it has not been faithfully adhered to by some, and as a result they have departed from the primitive pattern; they have definitely become a sect.

I trust that we have also been able to see that there are also currents that beat upon us today, and that these currents tend to sweep us from our anchorage in the faith.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE LEADERS OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

By Raymond Kelcy

Six score and sixteen years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a nation . . . a holy nation . . . conceived in unselfishness and dedicated to this proposition: The restoration of the New Testament church.

In discussing that movement and its purposes we have before us a very interesting, as well as inspirational, theme. I am sure that a nobler purpose never animated any group of men than that suggested by this subject today. It seems to me that in order to appreciate the purposes of this movement, it is necessary to understand something of the movement itself and the conditions calling it forth, for it, like every effect, had its fundamental causes.

When Luther arose the people were groaning under a bondage that had reached its zenith in twelve hundred and sixty long years of gradual development. Luther inaugurated the Reformation movement. However, at the close of that great movement, in which he sought to reform a corrupted church, the bondage had been only mitigated. The Reformation had its good effects for which the world will ever be grateful, but that it had numerous failures is only too evident.

In a few words we might get a slight glimpse of the conditions brought about by the Reformation.

The divided ranks among religious followers, and the warring attitude assumed by the most of them, was indeed a hindrance. The theology was greatly beclouded. No one seemed to understand the proper divisions of the word. One was as likely to consult the Psalms for the plan of salvation as he was to consult the Book of Acts. Human creeds, ever the separating wedge, were plentiful. The clergy was arrogant . . . assuming that it had the key of knowledge, and the people relied upon this clergy for the settling of all religious questions. And, to be expected, the final outcome of all of this was an alarming increase of infidelity.

A few years ago scientists observed that the planet Uranus was being disturbed. They began to try to locate the seat of the disturbance. Telescopes were turned toward the skies, and as a result the planet Neptune was discovered as the disturbing attraction. This is a fitting illustration of the religious unrest one hundred years ago. At the beginning of the nineteenth century men began to observe the trouble, and there seems to have been in the different parts of the earth an almost simultaneous turning of minds toward the same direction. Figuratively speaking, men remotely removed from each other were focusing their telescopes upon the same star. As we now view the matter we see these men here and there, wholly unknown to each other, reach conclusions that were remarkably in unity.

In Scotland the Haldane brothers plead for a return to apostolic Christianity, affirming that division was wrong. However, they were only sowers of seed, for their ideas did not take root.

Thomas Campbell had much the same trouble with the Presbyterian church that the Haldanes had with the church of Scotland. He tried diligently to unite Presbyterian churches. While he was trying to unite those churches, Barton W. Stone was, in this country, organizing congregations after the New Testament order. That was in the year 1804.

Other movements in the new world which had as their plea the restoration of New Testament Christianity were headed by James O'Kelley of the Methodists and Dr. Abner Jones of the Baptists. All of these movements were giving momentum to a similar plea made by Zwingli who had been so overshadowed by Luther as to be given no heed whatsoever.

The most significant of these movements was that inaugurated by Barton W. Stone. Calvinistic theology gave him no little worry when he decided to become a Christian. After he had given the system a thorough investigation and had weighed it in the light of the Scriptures, he said, "Calvinism is among the heaviest clogs in Christianity in the world. It is a dark mountain between heaven and earth, and is amongst the most discouraging hindrances to sinners from seeking the kingdom of God."

When he was a candidate for the Presbyterian ministry and when asked if he accepted the "Westminster Confession of Faith," he replied, "As far as consistent with the word of God." He thus showed himself in harmony with the later slogan of the Campbells. His first sermon at Cane Ridge was on "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every



creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

The preaching of Stone and his helpers was in direct conflict with the confession of faith of the Presbyterian Church. So after a short time they were tried for heresy . . . in the synods and presbyteries for preaching uncalvinistic doctrines. Then Stone and a few others drew up a protest and withdrew from their jurisdiction. They formed themselves into an organization known as the Springfield Presbytery. They sent a letter to their congregations telling them what had happened and stating their determination to take the Bible and the Bible alone as their only rule of faith and practice. After a year they saw that their distinctive name smacked of partyism. So they threw it aboard and substituted the name "Christian." It would seem in the light of all of this that the honor of first restoring a New Testament congregation belongs to this group.

They soon published "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery," one of the unique productions of religious literature. They were not long in abandoning infant baptism. Also they were all immersed upon discovering that only immersion is baptism.

The churches resulting from all of these efforts were ideal in their aim if not in their attainments. They believed that the only way to restore the power of the New Testament church was to reproduce that church in the present age. They were in the main independent of each other, and had little knowledge of each other, but the fact that each was trying to

restore the primitive faith upon the same basis brought them into substantial agreement.

The religious world was ripe for a movement of this kind. It came in the fulness of the times. The world was ready to be led out of bondage even as was Israel many years ago. But as Israel needed a man of God to rally her forces and press the battle, so that little group of majestic souls needed another Moses. They needed a leader to take up their noble plea and press it before the world.

Thomas Campbell's arrival to this country proved to be a great stride forward. He had come from the old world because of failing health. His first clash with the Presbyterians of this country came when he expressed his regrets that other branches of the Presbyterian Church could not be invited to partake of the Lord's supper with him and those of his branch. He made those statements while holding a communion service in the Allegheny Valley. The Presbyterian Church declared that he should suffer for such conduct which was contrary to the "usages" of the church. He appealed to the supreme synod in a masterly way, pleading for an elimination of errors in the Presbyterian Church and for a return to apostolic authority. But his appeal was in vain, and there was only one thing left for him to do . . . that was to absolve all connections with the Ministerial Synod of North America.

He continued to preach in the homes of friends, and it was at this time in the home of Abraham Altars, that he reached a thrilling climax to one of his great sermons in these words: "Where the Scrip-

tures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." The enunciation of that principle was a mighty stride forward. This mighty man had come from a world too occupied with other things to heed his plea, to plant the seed of the kingdom in the greatest republic on earth.

On September 7, 1809 another important meeting was held. At this meeting they decided to organize "The Christian Association of Washington." About a month later Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address" was adopted and ordered published to the world. In that same year Alexander Campbell, the son of Thomas Campbell came to this country. In the old world he had been attending Glasgow University. While there he had associated with the Haldanes. Before his arrival here his long periods of meditation and his association with those men had caused him to determine to forsake denominationalism forever.

The first thing Alexander Campbell read upon his arrival was his father's "Declaration and Address." Father and son rejoiced when they found that their views in regard to denominationalism and unity were practically the same. The circumstances under which they reached their conclusions were wholly different. They both, however, because of their integrity and sincerity, had been forced to the same conclusions.

In 1810 Thomas Campbell applied for membership in the Pittsburgh Synod but was refused. At the next meeting of the Association, Alexander Campbell addressed them, setting forth their spirit and purpose. Little did they or the synod realize that this lad who stood before them was soon to overthrow giants.



From that time Alexander Campbell was the recognized leader. He was the Moses who had come to liberate an oppressed people.

So, with a membership of thirty, they organized a church at Brush Run. At the first meeting several of the members declined the emblems on the ground that they had not been immersed. It was discovered that nothing short of immersion would satisfy them. So, without any discussion, they were buried with their Lord in the waters of Buffalo Creek. A year later, Alexander Campbell, his wife, his parents, and others were baptized by Mr. Luce, a Baptist preacher. By examining the Scriptures in a study of infant baptism, a study occasioned by the birth of a little girl into the Campbell home, the decision was reached that only immersion is baptism and that they had never been baptized. An interesting thing in connection with that event was that the confession that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God," was made prior to the baptisms instead of the usual relating of an experience. It seems that here for the first time the good confession which was made in apostolic times was made and honored on this continent. At the meeting on the next Lord's day thirteen others at Brush Run made the same confession and were baptized by Thomas Campbell. Many others followed, and in a short time the church was made up almost entirely of baptized believers.

In 1813 the group entered the Redstone Association. Alexander Campbell became one of the most relied upon men of the Baptists. At their request he met Walker and McCalla in debates. At the close of the McCalla debate, he candidly said to a number of the



Baptists: "Brethren, I fear that if you knew me better, you would esteem and love me less, for let me tell you I have almost against you Baptists as I have against the Presbyterians." While in this Association, Campbell preached his famous sermon on "The Law," in which he showed the superiority of the gospel over the law of Moses. He also began editing the "Christian Baptist," and later the "Millennial Harbinger."

However, there was trouble brewing in the Association, and because of irreconcilable differences, the Brush Run church withdrew and united with the Mahoning Baptist Association of Eastern Ohio in 1823.

In the meantime in Kentucky men like "Raccoon" John Smith, Vardeman, Morton, and others were spreading the cause like wildfire. In Ohio, Adamson, Bentley, Walter Scott, and others were greatly arousing the people. The same was true on a smaller scale of Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee, and Virginia.

About this time the Campbells were realizing that their mission could not be accomplished within the confines of any denomination. There had been much antagonism aroused against them and especially in the ranks of the Baptists.

The Baptist historian, Benedict, speaking of the First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, says: "It increased between three and four hundred members, when the Campbellites succeeded in making proselytes to their views nearly the whole of this great and growing interest. The pastor and people with their chapel all were brought under the influence of the reformers." The New York Baptist Register of

1830 says: "Mr. Campbell's paper, and their vigorous missionary efforts are making great achievements. It is said that one-half of the Baptist churches of Ohio have embraced this sentiment, and become what they call Christian Baptists. It is spreading like a mighty contagion through the western states, wasting Zion in its progress." Another Baptist, writing to Mr. Campbell in 1828, said that in "travelling twenty-five hundred miles I found only four regular Baptist preachers whom you have not corrupted."

A split was inevitable. Before the separation came, Mr. Campbell said to the Baptists: "If there be division, gentlemen, you make it not I; and the more you oppose us with the weight of your censure, like the palm tree, we will grow the faster. I am for peace, for union, for harmony, for cooperation with all good men. But I fear you not. If you fling firebrands, arrows, and discord into the army of the faith, you will regret it, not I. You will lose influence, not I. We covet not persecution, but disregard it. We fear nothing but error; and should you proceed to make divisions, you will find that they will reach much further than you are aware, and that the time is past when an anathema will produce any other effect than contempt from some and a smile from others" (How the Disciples Began and Grew—Davis, page 97).

And finally when it was necessary that they leave the Baptist fold, he said: "All the world must see that we have been forced into a separate communion. We were driven out of doors because we preferred the approbation of the Lord to the approbation of any sect in Christendom. If this be our weakness we ought

not to be despised; if our wisdom we ought not to be condemned. We have lost no peace of conscience, none of the honor which comes from God, none of the enjoyments of the Holy Spirit, nothing of the sweets of Christian communion, by the unkindness of those who once called us brethren.

"We have always sought peace but not peace at war with truth. We are under no necessity to crouch, to beg for favor, friendship, or protection. Our progress is upward, onward, and resistless. With the fear of God before our eyes, with the example of renowned worthies of all ages to stimulate our exertions, with love to God and man working in our bosoms, and with immortality in prospect, we have nothing to fear and nothing to lose that is worth possessing" (Ibid. pp. 97-98).

The year 1830 is about the time this separation took place. From that time on Campbell and his brethren became known as "Christians," or "Disciples of Christ," the legal title usually being, "The church of Christ." The "Declaration and Address" was issued in 1809. Now, twenty-one years from that time Alexander Campbell and others have loosed themselves from all entangling alliances. At the age of forty-two he stands ready to launch out on one of the greatest religious campaigns this world has ever known.

Stone and Campbell met in 1824. At first when they compared views there seemed to be great differences, but upon closer inspection it was found that these were more imaginary than real and they were able to unite in their work. J. H. Garrison beautifully illustrates the union of these people. He says:



“As two streams having independent sources in the high mountain ranges, in flowing toward the sea, by the law of gravitation often meet and mingle their waters in one river, so these two independent religious movements—the one organized by the Campbells—the other by Barton W. Stone—having the same general aim, the unity of God’s children, naturally flowed together under the law of spiritual gravitation, when unhindered by sectarian aims, forming a mighty stream of reformatory influence, whose effect has been felt in every part of the church universal.”

The Stone movement was several years older than that of the Campbells, but it is usually regarded as a tributary. This is because all that was vital and permanent in the teaching of Stone, and more, were found in the teachings of Campbell. Someone has contrasted the two people in these words:

“While the features of this organization . . . the Stone wing . . . were thus, in a good measure similar to those of the reformation in which Mr. Campbell was engaged, there were some characteristic differences. With the former, the idea of uniting all men under Christ was prominent; with the latter the desire of an exact conformity to the primitive faith and practice. The one occupied itself chiefly with casting abroad the sweep-net of the gospel, which gathers fishes of every kind; the other was intent on gathering the good into vessels and casting the bad away. Hence, the former engaged mainly in preaching; the latter in teaching. And thus they supplemented each other. Where one was strong the other was weak. One appealed mainly to the head, the other to the heart. In one the protracted meeting “was prominent



and converts were multiplied; in the other the mists and clouds of theological speculation were dissipated, and the church of apostolic days was being brought back into view. In a word, one was gathering fuel and the other fire, and when the two were properly adjusted, the world as stirred as it has not been since the days of primitive Christianity."

Thus was the beginning. And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me were I to tell of their later labors, their trials, and triumphs. Their plea was put to the test and stood. It would be interesting to notice in detail three of the world's greatest debates . . . debates with the champions of infidelity, of Catholicism, and of Presbyterianism . . . debates that have made history, and which can be found today in the library of almost every gospel preacher. Interesting indeed are the labors of that group of men who turned the world upside down.

What was their purpose? Luther, Wesley, and others had tried to reform denominations which already existed . . . their purpose was reformation. However, that was not the purpose of that group that we are discussing today. They did not intend to form or reform a denomination. Oftentimes we probably have wondered why they were so long in breaking entirely away from sectarianism. Thomas Campbell, in the "Declaration and Address," gives us the reason. He said, "So fully aware were we of the evils of schism, and so reluctant to assume the attitude of a new party, that we proposed to continue in the Presbyterian connection, even after we were convinced of various imperfections in the form of its government, in its system of discipline, in its ad-

ministration of Christian ordinances, and of the want of scriptural warrant for infant baptism; provided only that they would allow us to follow our own convictions by not obliging us to do what we could not approve, and allowing us to teach and enforce those matters for which we could produce clear scriptural authority and make all the rest a subject of forbearance until further enlightened."

Although the movement never really started moving until they had severed connections with all denominations, their purpose in standing with them for awhile was a noble one. They were trying to keep from being counted as another sect . . . trying to keep the people from looking upon them as another denomination. Then, as today, it was difficult for the average religious man to view Christianity apart from denominationalism. One of the great tasks was in getting the people to understand that they could be Christians only, members of the Lord's church, without becoming identified with any sect. Awhile, for the sake of union, these leaders tolerated some error, but when they broke away from those alliances, they determined to go back of all denominationalism and restore the New Testament church as it was in the beginning. As the keynote of Luther's movement was Reformation, the keynote of the Campbell's was Restoration.

Speaking of the primitive church as described in the New Testament, Thomas Campbell said: "Let us do as they did, say as they said; that is, profess and practice, as therein expressly enjoined by precept and precedent, in every possible instance after their approved example, and in so doing we shall realize and exhibit all that unity and uniformity that the primitive church

possessed, or that the law of Christ requires" (Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, Vol. 2, pp. 11-12).

He also said in the "Declaration and Address," "Let none imagine that the subjoined propositions are at all intended as an overture toward a new creed or standard for the church, or as in any way to be made a term of communion; nothing can be further from our intention. They are merely designed to open up the way, that we may come fairly and firmly to original ground upon clear and certain premises, and take up things just as the apostles left them, that thus, disentangled from the accruing embarrassments of intervening ages, we may stand with evidence upon the same ground on which the church stood at the beginning."

In the Christian Baptist, Alexander Campbell stated: "We have no system of our own or of others to substitute in lieu of the reigning systems. We only aim at substituting the New Testament in lieu of every creed in existence, whether Mohammedan, Pagan, Jewish, or Presbyterian. We wish to call Christians to consider that Jesus Christ has made them kings and priests to God. We neither advocate Calvinism, Arminianism, Socinianism, Arianism, Trinitarianism, Unitarianism, Deism, nor Sectarianism, but New Testamentism" (Vol. I, p. 90).

He also declared that, "To see Christians enjoy their privileges, and to see sinners brought from darkness to light are the two great objects for which we desire to live, to labor, and to suffer reproach. In endeavoring to use our feeble efforts for these glorious objects we have found it necessary, among other things, to attempt to dethrone the popular reigning



clergy from their high and lofty seats, which they have been for ages building for themselves. While we attempt to dethrone them, it is solely for this purpose . . . that we might enthrone the holy apostles on those thrones which Christ promised them; or rather that we might turn the attention of the people to them placed on thrones by the great and mighty King" (Ibid. p. 89).

In that great restoration they proposed to restore the unity of the children of God. In the "Declaration and Address," Thomas Campbell deals in detail with this phase of their purpose. Three of the propositions in that document are as follows:

"Prop. 1. That the church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct; and of none else, as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.

"2. That, although the church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions among them. They ought to receive each other, as Christ Jesus hath also received them, to the glory of God. And, for this purpose, they ought all to walk by the same rule; to mind and speak the same things, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

"3. That, in order to do this, nothing ought to be



inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted as of divine obligation, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New Testament church, either in express terms or by approved precedent."

So, we can see that they proposed to unite all of God's children by the observance of that now famous slogan, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." Not only did they make that plea, but they also observed it in all of their religious actions. It was by observance of the plea that Alexander Campbell first decided that the Scriptures do not authorize infant baptism.

When in 1812 an infant girl was born into their home there was a demand that the question of infant baptisms be restudied. Not only did Campbell study the English version of the Bible, he went into the original. Soon he was satisfied that only a penitent believer was a proper subject of baptism.

In this same study he learned that the word meant immersion, and although his ancestral faith was being destroyed, he and many others of his family were baptized. It was upon the same occasion that he requested to have the privilege of making the confession made by Peter in Matthew 16 instead of relating a "religious experience." The discovery of one truth led to the discovery of others. The principle of speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where it

is silent led them to forsake infant baptism, discover that only a penitent believer is a subject of baptism, and make the good confession.

That the plea practiced will lead one to know the truth is evidenced by this. That it will unite those who practice it is seen in the fact that when Stone and Campbell who were making the same plea met, they were substantially united.

In giving his reasons for not being a party man Alexander Campbell said:

"1. Because Christ has forbidden me. He has commanded me to keep the unity of the Spirit; to be of the same mind and judgment, and to call no man master on the earth.

2. Because no party would receive into communion all whom God would receive into heaven. God loves his children more than our creeds.

3. But if I am asked by a partisan, 'could you not join us and let these things alone?' I answer, no, because . . . .

(1) The man who promotes the interest of a party stands next in guilt to the man that made it. The man that puts the second stone in a building is as instrumental in its erection as the man that laid the first.

(2) All parties oppose reformation. They all pray for it but will not work for it. None of them will dare to return to the original standard. I speak not against any particular denomination, but against them all."

Of course, all of those men were not united in their opinions, but in their faith they were, and another famous principle enunciated by them was, "In faith,

unity, in opinion liberty, and in all things charity." In connection with this, "Raccoon" John Smith said: "God has but one people on the earth. He has given to them but one book and therein exhorts them to be one family. A union such as we plead for . . . a union of God's people on that one book . . . must, then, be practicable. Every Christian desires to stand in the whole will of God. The prayer of our Saviour and the whole tenor of his teaching, clearly show that it is God's will that his children be united. To the Christian, then, such a union must be desirable. Therefore, the whole union practicable or desirable must be based on the word of God as the only rule of faith and practice.

"There are certain abstruse and speculative matters . . . such as the mode of divine existence and the nature of the atonement . . . that have for centuries been themes of discussion among Christians. These questions are as far from being settled now as they were at the beginning of the controversy. By a needless and intemperate discussion of them, much feeling has been provoked and divisions have been produced. For several years past I have tried to speak on such subjects only in the words of inspiration, for it can offend no one to say about those subjects just what the Lord has said. Whatever opinions about these and similar subjects I may have reached, in the course of my investigations, if I never distract the church of God with them, or seek to impose them upon my brethren, they will never do the world any harm. I have the more cheerfully resolved on this course because the gospel is a system of facts, commands, and promises, and no deduction or inference



from them however true forms any part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. No heaven is promised to those who hold them, and no hell is threatened against those who deny them. They do not constitute, singly or together, any item of the apostolic gospel. While there is but one faith, there may be ten thousand opinions; and hence, if Christians are ever to be one, they must be one in faith and not in opinion.

“For several years past I have stood pledged to meet the religious world, or any part of it, on the ancient gospel and order of things, as presented in the Book. This is the foundation on which Christians once stood, and on it they can, and ought, to stand again. For this I cannot depart to meet any man in the wide world. While for the sake of peace and Christian union, I have long since waived the public maintenance of any speculation I may hold, yet not one gospel fact, command, or promise will I surrender for the world” (How the Disciples Began and Grew—Davis, pp. 117-118).

Isaac Errett said: “In matters of opinion . . . that is, matters touching which the Bible is either silent, or so obscure as not to admit of definite conclusions . . . we allow the largest liberty, so long as none judges his brother, or insists on forcing his opinions on others, or in making them an occasion of strife” (Ibid. pp. 133-134).

Barton W. Stone is equally clear on this matter. Speaking of the union consummated at Lexington, he said: “It may be asked, is there no difference among you? We answer we do not know, nor are we concerned to know. We have never asked what was their opinion, nor have they asked us. If they have opin-



ions different to ours, they are welcome to them, provided they do not endeavor to impose them on us as articles of faith" (Ibid. p. 132).

In his debate with N. L. Rice, Campbell said: "We long since learned the lesson to draw a well-defined boundary between faith and opinion, and while we earnestly contend for the faith, to allow perfect freedom of the opinion, and of the expression of the opinion, as the true philosophy of union and the sovereign antidote against heresy" (Ibid. p. 131).

Also in the "Declaration and Address" these words are found in the proposition numbered 13:

"Lastly. That if any circumstances indispensably necessary to the observance of divine ordinances be not found upon the page of express revelation, such, and such only as are absolutely necessary for this purpose, should be adopted under the title of human expedients, without any pretense to a more sacred origin, so that any subsequent alteration or difference in the observance of these things might prolong no contention or division in the church" (Memoirs of Alexander Campbell—Richardson, pp. 261-262, Vol I).

So, we can clearly see that they emphasized the distinction between faith and opinion, and between matters incidental and matters essential. If many in the brotherhood of today could learn that valuable lesson, it would be a happy day for us.

Although the whole purpose of their plea might be summarized in the word, restoration, it included these fundamental points:

1. The plea for Christian unity.
2. The proper divisions of the word of God.





## HOW ONE MAY CEASE TO BE A RULING ELDER

By Jas. F. Cox

1. By a ruling elder, we mean a Christian man who, with another or others, has the oversight of a group of Christians. He is doing the work or performing the functions of an elder, bishop or shepherd of a local congregation of Christians. He has been duly selected for the office by the local group, and he is well qualified according to the standard set for such a leader by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul, in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9.

Having been selected by the congregation as such, he is a ruling elder, "exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly according to the will of God, nor yet for filthy lucre; but of a ready mind, neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:1-4).

He is a ruling elder such as is mentioned in 1 Thess. 5:12, 13 and Hebrews 13:7 and 17. He is doing the work of a bishop.

The question now is, how may such a one cease to be a ruling elder. There are three possible ways: 1. He may cease voluntarily on his own accord and without the consent of the congregation. 2. He and the congregation may agree that it is best for him not to be a ruling elder any longer. 3. The congregation may de-



sire to be rid of him as a ruling elder and so notify him and ask him to give up the office and the work.

1. In the first instance a capable well qualified elder may cease to do the work of that office on account of old age, infirmity or death. He may see his own physical, mental or spiritual weakness better than the other members of the congregation and recognize his inability to continue to do the work to the best advantage of the group, and so he gives it up. While such a one would not and could not be active as an elder, I can think of him as still rendering to the congregation much service because of his "wisdom from above" which enables him to give much needed spiritual advice and guidance. He sees other younger and more vigorous men in the congregation who, because of strength, ability and willingness to serve, should be given the responsibility of leadership. He urges that they be put forward. He voluntarily retires.

2. The second way that one may cease to be a ruling elder is for the congregation and the elder both to agree that it is best for him and for the congregation that he retire from his position of leadership in the congregation. In this case he simply quits doing the work of a ruling elder at the request, maybe, and certainly with the sanction of the congregation. There may be several reasons for this.

Maybe he hasn't been living as he should and he has brought reproach on the church. He may make proper acknowledgment of these sins and be forgiven by the congregation, and still it would be best for him to cease to be a leader because he is not well reported from without and he might, therefore hinder the "cause."





we are not "Bosses nor drivers," but are teachers and leaders—shepherds after the pattern of our chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. We should follow him who said, "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own and mine own know me even as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." The sheep hear his voice and he calleth his own sheep by name—he goeth before them and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep," but the hireling fleeth when danger comes. One who does not love his flock to the extent that he will lose self in his service to them is not a good shepherd—elder. If one is not willing to surrender self to the will of God and to the spiritual welfare of the congregation, he cannot be a good shepherd. If he is not a good shepherd, he cannot be a ruling elder.