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# We Are One in Christ: The Task Before Us

Ernest Beam

W. L. Jessup

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*We Are One in Christ*



*The Task Before Us*



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# WE ARE ONE IN CHRIST

By Ernest Beam

Ministers have commission from the Lord and must be true to that commission. Upon all sides of us today is division, re-division, sub-division and more division. Our leading men are casting each other out as unsound. And very few of the "greats" of yesterday would be counted loyal among us today. The times cry for a rethinking of our positions. I have tried to do that in a few matters that follow. All attempts to get the following published in our journals has been unsuccessful. This is very unfortunate. Our editors are, so to speak, presiding over large meetings. No one desires his name called in meeting unless he himself have right to be heard also, whether or not he always exercises the right. This is the "golden rule"—the second greatest

of all the commands in Holy Writ, says our Lord. (Matt., 22:39; Matt., 7:12)

The violation of this heavenly rule by our editors encourages younger ministers to do the same. Unholy warfare and disregard for the rights of assemblies and of persons is everywhere manifest in our midst. One is reminded of Isaiah, Chapter one. How many elders of local assemblies have the present hour burdened with sorrow because of the violation of their rights by violent men?

Wherever the positions below have been heard and properly represented they have made for good progress. I am confident they will make for that with every unprejudiced reader hereof.

## FOUR ITEMS

If we will plant our feet firmly upon Jesus' command with reference to the golden rule (upon which we do agree) the fruits of this will be golden for us. If no man would attack another in his absence and cast reflection against him; no editor violate the rights of assemblies, institutions and ministers, but all would ask, "Am I willing the other man shall do unto me as I do unto him?" and be governed by honest answer, we could return holy morals and manners to our assemblies and contacts with one another. This is devoutly to be prayed for and every minister and every editor should practice it. Violations against it today are inexcusable—from some of the highest among us to some of the lowest. We shall try not to violate that great command in these pages.

In addition to an acceptance of the golden rule—there are three other items to which we have called attention, viz; making division among us with anti-premillennialism, and perpetuating division over the use of extra organization and over all use of an instrument in connection with the songs in worship. Let us look at these three items just as we would desire a man sprinkled to look at the evidence for immersion.

1. Take anti-premillennialism first.

David Lipscomb in "HERESIES" points out that men form parties (sects) to cast out error, and the party thus formed may come to hurt the church more than the error it would cast out. This is true of all these parties including this latest one. The past fifteen to twenty years have witnessed one of the most disgraceful periods in our history centering around anti-premillennial partyism. The Boll-Boles debate closed this study in fellowship. O what we would have been spared had we left it there! Men of outstanding talents have all but ruined their usefulness over this partyism. We should greatly regret this for we need one another—all our brethren with talent.

And like a cancer these anti-movements eat on and on. Now an editor holds (and preaches) that none of premillennial views is worthy of public capacity among us. And still another editor joins the dissimulation. The dead like Abel yet speak so we must decimate the ranks of the faithful for more than a hundred years if we would follow these editors. Good men are crowded off into prison so to speak because of their honest views upon this question.

Partyists lose a proper sense of proportion. Partyists become their

own victims. There was no reason why brethren should not have continued fellowship despite differences over prophetic views. A hundred years of peace, and now this fifteen or more years of awful strife, both declare the wisdom of that conclusion. Trouble-makers—brethren unduly pressing it this way or that—could have been marked by the elders. And if a few good writings in our journals from this point of view, and a few from that, had been permitted, all this wasted energy could have been turned to usefulness in the house of God.

We became so disgusted with the journals several years ago we almost threw all of them away. Then we decided upon another course: let a whole flock of them come to the desk. This helped us to keep our balance. We would not put our salvation in the hands of any of these preachers. (Editors are just preachers in another office, and usually a self-appointed office at that.)

During all these years we have been no party to this anti-premillennial partyism and expect to be no part of it the next twenty or fifty. Neither can we accept the pre-millennial views but we do not dis-fellowship brethren who do have them. The chances are when this period is finished we will find all partly right and partly wrong.

2. Our editors have perpetuated division over the use of organization in the church extra of the New Testament assembly with the bishops and deacons. The theory is we cannot at all use extra organization to do work God gave His church to do. Now the editors themselves preside over such organizations! The date of the **founding of the institution** is often carried on the editorial page or elsewhere. Editors, associate editors, staff-writers, co-editors, and like officials, make up the organization. These are but a group of preachers and are precisely of the same standing as would be another group of preachers if organized here in Southern California without a journal. The editor decides what goes into the paper and what stays out—and who goes in and who stays out. The gospel is preached through these organizations and souls are built up in the faith. They have been in very much grand sentinels

of the faith. They have likewise been the leaders of every division in the house of God. An editor is identified with every division we can bring to mind. They are great servants while they remain in their places and great powers for evil when they get out, which they often do.

The front page writing of one of our oldest journals about two years ago had these significant words: "It (naming the journal) would not be true to its mission and to its faithful readers if it failed or refused to do the service that it is capable of doing in **keeping the churches free from unworthy and unfaithful preachers. . . IT STANDS READY TO ENDORSE . . . IT ALSO STANDS READY TO DENOUNCE. .**" (All emphasis mine, E.B.)

"It" is an organization of preachers and "it" did not misrepresent what "it" is doing this very hour. Paul would not exercise dominion over the faith of saints (2 Cor., 1:24). The best friends of "it" will not submit at all to this extra organization of preachers bestraddling the local autonomous assemblies. No preacher ever got more out of place than this.

W. T. Moore in "Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ" pointed out that our editors and journals have exercised authority approaching that of episcopal bishops. Did they get this authority from heaven? Or of men? Behold the **brotherhood!** Imagine one of our colleges using such a voice of authority.

We can see no difference in principle between teaching the gospel through a missionary society, a journal or a college. We see no difference in principle between that and caring for orphans through homes, and the aged through homes. We are everywhere using extra organization. Perpetuating division over such is inexcusable.

One of our school presidents recently declared in published writing, "In no sense does the school propose to supplant the church or to do the **work of the church.**" (Emphasis mine, E.B.) Now here we have a most remarkable statement. This school asks the brethren everywhere—members of the church—to give money for something in "no sense"



the "work of the church." According to published reports the Lord's Day offerings of brethren have gone to this school and to be used in something in "no sense the work of the church!" In this fine school born again men and women whose every thought, word and deed belongs to Christ, will teach daily, weekly, monthly and yearly, and over and over again the **Holy Scriptures** to young men and women, baptizing some of them and edifying all of them and fitting them for life's capacities everywhere, and yet we are told this is in "no sense the work of the church"!!

Our journals—extra organizations—have preached in them against extra organizations for more than a half a century! Free men of God are duty bound to have no part in perpetuating blindly and inexcusably divisions in the house of God over such items.

Our editors and schoolmen are all **churchmen** at work in these capacities. So are those in the homes—both public and private homes. The church is at work in, through and by all these. We owe a debt to them all for **CHURCH WORK** even though some of the presidents and editors "know not what they do". As elders, teachers, ministers, evangelists—in those capacities—they all can be supported for they are doing **CHURCH WORK** when they teach the word of God. Only the church is commissioned to do this. The necessary organizational capacities are purely and necessarily **incidentals**. Don't we all feel we have had enough foolishness in perpetuating division with reference to extra organization **we are all using?**

But organizations can go wrong just as can the men who form them. I have felt for a good long while we need a good look at our editors and journals—these extra organizations. I have felt the elected president of the U.C.M.S. could not, and does not, get away with more power over the churches than have our editors without an election of any kind. All preachers, congregations and institutions can be put upon trial in these journals in their absence and often with all denial of their right to be heard. (God forbid!) But we

cannot get these journals to publish a good look at themselves even while they are right there to preside over it all and to have their own say in the same issue.

The weakness and sinfulness of perpetuating division over these matters will appear to every unprejudiced reader hereof.

3. In addition to the need of everywhere practicing the golden rule, of ending division over prophetic views and over the use of extra organization, we also should end this wholesale division over any and all use of the instrument.

The instruments have been used for entertainment, the satisfying of artistic tastes, dressing up the services, on a par with singing, and sometimes in the atmosphere of cheap theatricals. We believe all of this is error and sin. But where the instrument is used for none of these but purely as an aid to master the **incidentals** to singing without confusion and disorder, what is the principle and the law by which you and I may disturb that fellowship?

If a hundred persons should stop their ears so that none can hear the other, each could sing the same song **alone** as he would, and if from the heart, God would accept it. But if now the stops are pulled out of the ears so that each man can hear the other man singing, the confusion and disorder would drive out all ability to worship. One would have this tune; one that. One this tempo; the other that. One this pitch; the other that. One this emphasis; the other that. It is a **common standard** in these **incidentals**—the ability to do this singing **TOGETHER**—that is needed. Anyone of us can sing alone (and it can be very acceptable singing to God too.) without any **common standard**. We may simply make our own standard. But when a group of us are going to sing **together** we still need no help to **SING**, but rather help to start, stop and to stay **together**.

We use a song director with his pitch pipe, voice and motions to master these incidentals. Others use an instrument for alone and only this purpose. And neither of us has Scripture for the one or the other.

## THIS WHOLE FIELD

This whole field of expediency—the realm of necessary judgment—of necessary opinion—the realm where God did not specify HOW—has played so great a part in our now having six to twenty non-cooperating and disfellowshipping churches of Christ. This is the very sectarianism the Campbells and others set out to end. They saw what horrible damage it does to the image of Christ in the heart. See what it has done to us—in the eyes of brother toward brother and in the eyes of the world toward us all.

Campbell covered this realm of the incidentals—the circumstantial—of the gospel and pointed out changing exigencies and agencies of society would bring a change in the wisdom in this field. In this field he rightly held that the law of expediency is but the law of adopting the best present means to attain a given end.

Now that is how we came to use individual communion cups, Sunday schools, uninspired literature, colleges, orphan homes, religious journals and all the rest. Division has come over almost if not all of them, and over others like them, and ever for the same reason.

We are disfellowshipped for using colleges and homes in the systematizing—the organizing—of the work of the church precisely for the same reason we turn around and disfellowship those using an instrument in connection with the worship in the church. We are disfellowshipped for using uninspired literature in the teaching of the church as we disfellowship others for aids in the teaching during worship. We are disfellowshipped for the use of individual cups as an added humanism precisely for the same reason we disfellowship others for the same thing.

Each is "another kind" when compared to its field: thus, cups another kind compared to "cup"; uninspired literature another kind when compared to inspired; colleges and homes another kind when compared to the only organization revealed in the New Testament. So is it true of all. And Romans 2:1 forbids us in any of the realms to use any such means or aids to enable us to obey God and then to deny

the same principle to our brother. If one congregation is being kept together by use of an instrument and another by the song director and his motions, the one is no more singing and playing than the other is singing and "swinging". Both are singing—the thing commanded—and each congregation has exercised its own judgment as to the how of doing it together.

All of these aids are in the realm of necessary opinion where God specified nothing; they are not in the realm of faith where God specified all. The failure to make this distinction has wasted many a golden hour for us.

Yet all of these items can be used to violate the realm of faith. Uninspired literature has been added to Scripture by Adventists, Mormons, Christian Scientists and others. (And many of our own brethren have in effect done the same with our journals.)

The prophets' blood (Matt., 23:30)—even as that of Abel—was shed because they did right. Suppose we had a cup in memory of each of them too. That would indeed be to put "cups" into the worship where the Lord put "cup".

The instrument has so often been used as a part of the worship and a violation of it, it is hard for us to think of it as no part of the worship when but used to meet an incidental, just as we make use of things to enable us and to aid us in all other phases of the church work, worship, teaching and practice.

And because the conscience of our brethren is opposed to the instrument it would be sin for us to have it. We do not need it. Too, there was sin when brethren forced the instrument in over the conscience of good brethren. (We have done the same with these other items.) But to think of these items as all in the realm of faith and to perpetuate tests of fellowship is for ourselves to violate the law of faith—to make matters a test of fellowship—a condition of salvation—which violates Scripture vitiates the gospel for us, and indeed gives us as many brands of gospel as there are non-cooperating churches of Christ.

Brethren are now using visual-aids. New inventions indicate the



wisdom of their use in teaching. So these innovations—new items—have come down through the years and always with dear brethren supposing they are added to the faith. Ministers, schoolmen and editors should all rise above this and not yield to the small-minded and often the mean among us who press such matters to division. We should make these items clear to all. We owe this to Christ and to the church. We will be temporarily questioned but right thinking men will agree with us as they know the facts and reflect upon them.

I discussed this matter with the late beloved T. B. Larimore. He was never for the instrument nor for the wholesale disfellowshipping either one and was resolved never to be a partyist. He said, "I may be lonely but I propose to stand there". Editor John F. Rowe was vehemently opposed to the instrument but also opposed to keeping the church divided over it. His son, Editor Fred Rowe fellowshipped his brethren counting them brethren in error (we have no other kind) and gave me great encouragement to continue working along these lines.

According to Galatians, chapter 2, the "Judaizing" type of brethren are

always for pushing matters and bringing brethren into bondage. Even the Peters and Barnabases are led to dissimulation. But the Pauls stand in the gaps and reason "before them all". All three of these items—anti-premillennialism, extra-organization and the instrument, found great and good brethren differing but YET fellowshiping for years. The Judaizers fan them and press them to division. Men of God must do better than this. No editor, nor all his staff writers, nor any combination of them, has the right to proclaim who is loyal and who is not in the brotherhood. Free men must watch this and stand against these wolfish practices. Thus only do we guard the sheep and feed the lambs.

J. N. Armstrong was utterly opposed to going to war, but he did not separate from his brethren. Lipscomb was for calling upon sectarians in prayer and getting close to them and recognizing the truth they have. There is hardly a great and good man of yesterday who would be counted "sound" among our many factions today. Brethren, we can, we must and I think we will do better. This is a time when to be counted "sound" by men should occasion as much of a question as when counted "unsound" by others.

## OTHER SCRIPTURES

Not only would the practice of the golden rule protect all free men, congregations and institutions, and give them equal right to be heard and such a free press would bring to us a new day, but other Scriptures give added emphasis to this.

Note carefully the reading of Acts 21:20-25 together with Ephesians Chapter 2. The Jewish Christians were zealous of the law. The Gentile Christians did not have this law bound upon them. Here these brethren differed in conviction and in practice over more important items than any we have driven to general division in all the years of our history. The whole theory we can only be one by conviction of tenets and truths in common, is a mistake. We have a ONENESS IN CHRIST despite the errors of us all, says the revelation of Christ in the New Testament. This is of such great import-

ance I beg every reader to consider it well.

The disease among us is this disfellowshipping wherever there is serious difference and consequently error upon one side or both. That is what has brought us so many brands wearing the name "church of Christ". But the New Testament shows with more serious differences (and therefore error) they did not divide. Men among us who have "seemed to be somewhat" have been asked to stand "before them all" in these journals and to defend this disfellowshipping or to surrender it. A whole year has failed to get them to do it. The writings herein will likely be attacked behind editorial walls and in pulpits where the writer is absent. That shows the weakness of these keeping up these divisions. If they open up the pages for the very strongest men or man



among us to defend this, that man will fail. This unholy warfare has run its course and we need to bring on a new day at once.

Note Romans 15:7 commands us to receive one another as Christ received us to the glory of God. He received both Jew and Gentiles with more errors (Note the Jews clinging to the law; see the Gentile church at Corinth) than any we have pressed to general division. We are violating the commandment and love of the Lord. We are not saved by law but by grace—not by subjective righteousness but in His righteousness.

Note Romans 16:17-18 commands us to mark these amputaters who are always cutting good brethren off by tests of fellowship—new conditions of salvation. We have reversed this; we count them God's servants.

John 13:34,35 commands us to love one another as Jesus loved us. Love stands in the other man's shoes, sees through his eyes, and helps to lead. Isn't that the way Christ does with us all? The Apostate church, the creeds, and the papers so largely make men's disciples. Men's disciples will not receive one another for they have not that all-powerful and purifying love. But Christ's disciples have that, and it is that which marks us as His disciples.

John 17:20-23 finds Christ praying for a oneness like unto that between His father and His flock. Many sins were there but the blood of Christ was there too. Law and justice—grace and mercy—are met in Christ. This dualism—this mystery—is almost “unbelievably” good news. It is only so we may have the oneness for which Christ prayed. And by this love we can have it for this love is Christ. Law makes for separation, nullification and futility. But love holds and builds up and eliminates the immaturity, weakness and sin. So are we ordained to fellowship, not by uniformity of agreement upon all things but by a sin-

cere persuasion this Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God our Saviour. This brings the unity of the SPIRIT long before there is or can be precise unity in outward things. It was so in the first church and it must be so now.

Romans 14:17 tells us the kingdom of God is not meat, nor drinks, nor day, nor cups, nor colleges, nor instrument — though in all such there is truth and error—but “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”.

In that first church of Christ the Christians at Jerusalem had the ancient temple and they worshipped therein and therewith. They were neither endorsed in nor disowned for, this error. What wisdom is here for us and how different things could have been with us!

The gospel of Christ will do more for all of us than we have let it do. It will do more for our papers, our colleges, our ministers, our congregations. We are losing too many valuable men and time and energy. We need one another and by love can have so much more help from one another and from those whom we have long counted of no standing in the kingdom.

We should mark those erecting these tests of fellowship. We can refuse to employ them and to encourage them, yet reason with them and we will recover some of them surely. They are so largely sensual “having not the Spirit” and they “separate themselves”. (Jude 19) All the brethren can be true to their present convictions — and all such are brethren—but if they make tests of fellowship of those convictions we have a duty to mark them. Indeed we are all guilty over extra organizations and the instrument and if all were marked we would all be out, would we not? But the Lord will give us time to work out of our honest mistakes and sins. Let us have the patience with one another He has had for us all.

## WORST SECTARIANISM OF ALL?

One brother recently took the position John 17:20 does not refer to believers among Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and such. He has them all as of those in the world, believing yet not at all. This I think is my first time ever to hear this and I count it the worst of all sectarianism. How many of us have had part in bringing this preacher to such a state?

How different were the thoughts of Campbell, of Lipscomb, and the good and great—back in the days when we were **uniting** believers instead of **dividing** them. Thousands among the generality of the old sectarians have been immersed into Christ upon their belief as have we, and have come to the Lord in the only way there is for them to come. This is so true Brother Larimore would put it, "We do not claim to be the only Christians but Christians only". Again he would say, "We are not right, the Bible is right". We made progress then.

The generality of all the old sectarians believe in Jesus for their sins—dead, buried, resurrected, and coming back. How could we teach them and make them believers when they already do believe? Far wiser it is to rejoice in this belief, to **fellowship that**, and to encourage unto the showing of that faith in all things. That is what we are doing in all our poor assemblies with sins upon every hand. Let us pass that on outside our circles as well as inside and rejoice to find Christ wherever any sincerely believe in Him.

Our brethren have all — each "right" church of Christ against all other 6 to 20 who are equally "right"—have all used 2 John 7-11 each against the other. But this text with **peremptory** demand was given to be used against those who had not the faith at all—they did not accept Christ had come in the flesh. With such we have nothing in Christ in common at all. But with all sincere believers we have the greatest thing of all in common. With the latter we are to strive for oneness, but with the others we have no foundation for it at all. How cruelly wrong and sectarian for us so to wrest this text.

Many Scriptures demanding dis-fellowshipping show it is to be like punishing a child for a season and then receiving him back into good graces everywhere.

Yes, the Scriptures themselves reveal the Christ of that first century who just will not fit into this new sectarianism among us. More and more voices are heard for us to return to **UNITING** believers and away from **DIVIDING THEM**. We need more **UNITY** effort and less of this so hurtful **DISUNITY**. The end of religion is to give us charity, a good conscience and faith unfeigned—in short to bring us to **CHRIST HIMSELF**. In all our treatment of and regard for **brethren** our religion should show itself. If it does not affect us in these things it just isn't doing enough for us.

Because of my treatment by editors especially and other brethren who have said so many things in my absence and even with a denial of my right to be heard (a fairness not lacking in the humblest court in California) I could have mentioned some names and could have said some very harsh, personal things here. But I do not like others making impressions against me in my absence and try in pulpit and in page not to violate this rule toward others. The Lord will judge and bring out the rightness and also the error will be reprov'd.

Suffice here to say we see editors and staff writers now losing power over the brethren—almost twenty years too late. We have other editors and writers whose violations are indelibly before us. Must we have another twenty years of folly from them?

There is no more sinister institution in any religious group anywhere than that of a preacher (editor) astray from the golden rule and the respect God demands for persons, for autonomous assemblies, and for the bishops thereof, forming his **own congregation** (subscribers) made up of parts of scores and hundreds of local churches and professing to be "keeping the churches" in the name of that extra organization, ready to "endorse", ready to "denounce". The judgement of the mother of harlots will not show



more blood of saints, proportionately, than will the judgment of these preacher combines reveal "confusion and every evil work". Peace will come by leaps and bounds when we break up these monopolies governing the inter-communications between saints. A new birth of freedom and of fairness will return them to as great a field of service as they are now rendering disservice.

A "Commission on the State Of The Press" headed by Robert M. Hutchins, made Report to the federal government some months ago. After three years study and spending \$215,000 for investigation it found what it called two factors which combine to form "the two greatest dangers" to the freedom of America—"wide spread monopoly" and the "low quality" of the offerings of movie, radio and newspaper. Recommendation was made that the "government be given power to compel papers to print retractions, or to re-state facts in such way as to preserve rights of persons they may injure who do not want to invoke libel laws".

There can be few observing churchmen today who do not see the relevancy and urgency of this matter in the religious press among us, both as to monopoly and as to low quality of so much material offered the brethren. Men of maturity and good will with the golden rule and that found in John 3:20, 21 can change this.

In pleading with brethren to cease division over cups, over regular ministers, and over Bible colleges, and now these items, I have found the path is ever the same. Bro. Daniel Sommer called me a "young heretic" and would permit not a word in his paper. But the ending of that division was one of the most constructive steps forward for all our work here in the West. When Bro. Sommer came to Long Beach we had a three hour conference. He modified his position, took me by the hand, fellowshipped me to the day of his death (and I my "college brethren") and he went south to see his "college brethren", too. He was honest, courageous, and could think. There is no reason why we cannot have victories like that over these three tests of fellowship and I think they are coming immediately.

Laying aside all personalities and efforts to hurt one another, and just taking the honest, brotherly look, will do the job. Joy and peace will come and energies will be turned to constructive good everywhere.

We know the difference between making a thing a TEST OF FELLOWSHIP and a subject of labor of love in a hundred things in our midst now. There is no reason why these three items should not be so treated too for the very same reason. It is the TEST OF FELLOWSHIP playing havoc with us. The man who makes a TEST OF FELLOWSHIP has made a new condition of salvation. He has changed the gospel. He must make good or surrender it.

We should not be primarily interested in men shifting about from here to there but in their working for Christ where they are, as long as they can. (Acts 19:8, 9). Both inside our sectarian ranks and in the sectarianism outside our ranks we should pull for that.

I close with a strong statement from Alexander Campbell:

"This plan of making our own nest, and fluttering over our own brood; of building our own tent, and of confining all goodness and grace to our noble selves and the 'elect few' who are like us, is the quintessence of sublimated pharisaism. The old Pharisees were but babes in comparison to the modern; and the longer I live, and the more I reflect upon God and man — heaven and earth—The Bible and the world—the Redeemer and his church—the more I am assured that all sectarianism is the offspring of hell; and that wherever there is a new creature, or a society of them, with all their imperfections, and frailties, and errors in sentiment, in views, and opinions, they ought to receive one another, and the strong to support the weak, and not to please themselves.

"To lock ourselves up in the bandbox of our own little circle, to associate with a few units, tens, or hundreds, as the pure church, as the elect, is real Protestant monkey—it is evangelical pharisaism.

"It is lame charity which requires all its objects to be as rich, as wise, and as strong as ourselves. . . . .

"The history of the world does not afford one instance of any man, or set of men, reforming, or restoring, or enlightening, or converting the society from which they separated. And the systems and sects which they built, in the lapse of a few years, were as much in need of reformation as those from whom their founders separated".

(Christian Evangelist, May 14, '47, Frederick Sommer)  
May all the words herein be read

as though given in kindness and be of help to all, without exception, who want to be dear children of our great Father through His Son, Jesus the Christ.

With love to all,  
(Signed) ERNEST BEAM

P. S. Consider what Bro. W. L. Jessup has to say in pages following. They have the instrument where Bro. Jessup is and have always been considerate of me when I speak there. He and his and a thousand like them are our brethren in Christ. Let us recognize our oneness until it is felt for good in the ways he presents in pages following.

E. B.

## "THE TASK BEFORE US"

By W. L. Jessup

Brother Beam has covered our problem in a very thorough manner and it would hardly be necessary for me to add anything more. But then my brethren, who use the instrument, might get the idea that all the fault was on the other side and go deeper into sectarianism. We need to humble ourselves and see our own divided and sectarian condition. Our skirts are far from clean. The message by Brother Beam applies as much to us as to his brethren. We have stubbornly argued our position and have tried to force our opinions upon those who do not use the instrument, as well as among ourselves. Since Brother Beam has covered many of the scriptures I had planned to use, I will cut down some on my material and ask my brethren to study and pray much over the material submitted by him. I will repeat a few scriptures to illustrate my thoughts. I count it an honor to labor with Brother Beam in such a needy field. My prayer is that the Lord will lead all of us out of sectarianism and division into the full light of the glorious gospel.

There was a time when the churches of Christ made heavy inroads into the denominational world with a Scriptural plea for unity upon the Word of God. At that time the movement was "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". However, in recent years, we have lost the power of our

original plea because of the many divisions within our own ranks. The sin of sectarianism and division among our own people is appalling. Until we are able to apply the Scriptures to our own divided conditions, we will never be able to reach the denominational world with any plea for unity. All of us need to be concerned about the conditions and begin to go into action. We have manifested a proud, haughty spirit long enough. The "come join us" attitude must be put away as a filthy garment and sincere hearts must seek to be clothed from above with garments of righteousness that lead us on to unity in Christ. The devil is pleased when we sit back with an "I haven't sinned" attitude or "I don't care" attitude. To criticize and pick to pieces those who do make an effort toward unity is to become a tool in the hands of the devil. Brethren, this is such a serious matter that I would far rather try and fail, than not try. I am firmly convinced that if we come with sincerity of heart and purpose, striving to do the Lord's Will, we cannot fail. God wills that His people be united. Eph. 4:3; I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:1-5, etc. The problem of unity rests upon us. What will our answer be?

Christian brethren have been estranged for many years in different warring divisions. It is now time to seek for a restoration of fellowship. By restoration of fellowship I mean



a friendly association which will eventually lead to a complete restoration of fellowship. Before unity will ever come, there must be friendly relations with each other. Each must respect the earnestness and convictions of the other. Unity will never come by isolation and the throwing of anathemas back and forth. There can be a friendly association without fellowship in any false doctrine. People will never be won out of false teaching until there is a real loving, friendly association, saturated by the Spirit of Christ.

In approaching this subject I believe we need to restudy the plan God gave for the salvation of men. The steps are outlined in the Book of Acts and are very familiar to all of us. There must always be the presenting of the Gospel which includes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. I Cor. 15:1-8. God has ordained that by the foolishness of preaching men should be saved. I Cor. 1:21. The facts of the Gospel presented brings faith to the individual. Rom. 10:17. Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto the Lord. Heb. 11:6. True belief will bring godly sorrow for sin which will result in a reformation and transformation of life. II Cor. 7:10; Acts 17:30. In turning away from sin and the devil, one is now happy to acknowledge Christ as his Savior and is anxious to confess openly his faith in Christ as The Son of The Living God and accept Him as the Lord of his life. Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10. Realizing that one is dead in sin the person hurries to bury the old man. He wants to be a new creature through the process of the new birth. Wanting his sins washed away in the blood of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life, he is now baptized into Christ. In this union with Christ, sins are washed away in His blood; an old life is buried and a new birth takes place; the Holy Spirit moves in and one is added to the church of the firstborn enrolled in heaven. Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-6; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:47; Heb. 12:23. Anyone who has truly given up the world and who has had his sins washed away in the blood of Christ and has been filled with the Holy Spirit is a child

**of God and is in fellowship with Him.**

If this new babe in Christ continues to grow in grace and knowledge, living a true life of separation from the world and in holiness before God, meeting weekly in the Lord's house with the Lord's people around the Lord's table; bringing unto the Lord his thanks and offerings; daily reading and studying the Word of Life; praying without ceasing; doing good works in the name of Christ and growing in all Christian graces, **this fellowship with God remains unbroken.** All who have thus obeyed the Gospel and who are living a life hid with Christ in God are in fellowship with Him. It is hard to accept but I believe it with all my soul that brethren who are in fellowship with God **must** be in fellowship with each other. I Jn. 1:3, 6-7. Brethren, how can we continue to disfellowship each other when all born again, blood washed, Holy Spirit filled, Christians are in fellowship with God? This should sober our thinking and draw us out of our sectarian shells to see each other as God sees us. Traditions, human standards of fellowship, unwritten creeds, sectarian shibboleths, man made opinions and personal prejudices need to be set aside and we need to see the true fellowship of God's people. We have made it far more difficult to be in fellowship with men than we have with God. To me this is the beginning place for unity among our people, for until we accept all penitent, born again, blood washed Holy Spirit filled Christians as our brethren, we can never expect oneness in Christ. With this in our minds let us now proceed to the task before us and seek friendly relations animated by the Spirit of Christ which will eventually lead to a restoration of fellowship among brethren who are at present estranged.

**The glorious past should challenge us to seek a restoration of fellowship.** The first century church was a united church. They were of one heart and one soul. Acts 2:1-4; 44; 4:32. Great growth was manifested because the unity of The Spirit was kept in the bond of peace. Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7. It was not long until the whole Roman Empire was shaken by Christianity. Great differences of belief were

manifested in the march of the early church but always the unity of the Spirit was kept. The Jews and Gentiles were far apart in their respective beliefs, yet they were one in Christ. Eph. 2:11-21. The majority of the Jewish Christians were zealous for the old law. Acts 21:17-26. Sabbaths and observance of ceremonies were still kept. The Gentiles were not concerned about the law of Moses. Their background was different. In our present day thinking we would consider sabbath observance and the ceremonies of the law definitely as matters of faith. Using our reasoning, if we had been of the Gentile Christians in that day, we would have withdrawn fellowship from the Jewish Christians. We should ask the Lord to forgive us for we cut this one off and that one off because we believe he is practicing something out of line with what we class as a matter of faith. When we look at such things as organizations, methods, names, helps and ways, I wonder if they are not minor differences compared to sabbath observance and keeping of ceremonial laws. We disfellowship brethren for any cause, forgetting that in the New Testament days brethren were encouraged, admonished and moulded into one through the Blood of the Cross. We fail to exert enough patience in guiding people that all might attain full growth in Christ.

The church in Corinth is another good example as we deal with the problem of unity. Spiritual gifts were misused and especially the gift of tongues. Paul admonishes them as a father to seek the greater gift of love. I Cor 12, 13, 14. Knowing our hearts, we certainly would not have shown any patience in this matter. Many of us would have at once disfellowshipped the church in Corinth for we class tongues in the realm of faith. Even though there was an abuse of God's power, yet we know the fellowship was not broken. With such examples before us, how can we go on cutting off brethren for every cause? I am reminded of God's law concerning marriage. God ordained that two become one and fornication is the only cause for breaking that union. Man in his wisdom divorces for any reason breaking the law of God. In questions of union with Christ, God has

spoken plainly that the union should be kept. We have divorced people of God for every reason. In all imperfections of the Corinthian Church, there was only one person disfellowshipped and that was because of a serious case of fornication. I Cor. 5. We have done a lot of raving and misapplying Scripture in matters of fellowship. Let us go to our knees and ask God to lead us into a proper understanding of His Word.

Another illustration will suffice in this place. We read in I Cor. 1:11-13 and in 3:1-6 that parties were formed and names of preachers were being attached to the parties. One said, "I am of Paul" another "I am of Apollos" another "I am of Cephas" and still another, "I am of Christ". There isn't a doubt in my mind, for the scripture is plain, that the Corinthian people were wearing these different names. Many of us when we think of the name to be worn, think again in realms of faith. With our spirit, had we been living in Corinth, we would have disfellowshipped those wearing the names of Paul, Apollos and Cephas. We would have done like those in that day (and like we still do) sectarianized the name of Christ and worked with the Christ party. We need again the spirit of the great apostle Paul. He didn't disfellowship them, he spoke to them as weak babes in Christ, still unable to eat meat and admonished them in Christian love that they might come out of their carnality and be full grown men in Christ.

I believe the New Testament teaches us the names to be worn by the people of God. Different names are used such as, church of God, church of the Living God, church of the Firstborn, body of Christ, churches of Christ, churches of the Saints and the Church. We should wear all the New Testament names because they bring honor and glory to the head of the church. I believe it is wrong to sectarianize any of these names to the exclusion of the rest. Among our brethren there are those who disfellowship all who wear the name, "Christian Church". Some good arguments are put up by brethren who use that name. I have not personally accepted that name because it needs explanation when used. I would rather wear Bible names that need no explanation.



Applying the principles found in I Corinthians, I do not believe we have any right to disfellowship brethren over the use or non-use of a name. To disfellowship our brethren who are in Christ because we believe they are wearing the wrong name is to stand on the quicksands of sectarianism.

A thorough study of the churches in the New Testament will reveal their utmost freedom in Christ. There were wide differences of belief and practice, yet a true unity of the Spirit. No wonder the church conquered a pagan world. May God hasten the day when we can catch such a vision that there can be liberty and differences, yet be united in Christ.

A like study of the restoration movement will reveal a spirit of unity, yet men varied in beliefs and practices. We all owe our existence to those pioneers of the faith. We could do well to hear again Thomas Campbell in his "Declaration and Address"— "That all that are enabled to make such a profession, and to manifest it in their conduct, shall consider each other as the saints of God, should love each other as brethren; children of the same family and Father; temples of the same Spirit; members of the same body; subjects of the same grace; objects of the same Divine love, bought with the same price and joint heirs of the same inheritance. Whom God hath joined together no man should dare to put asunder." Mr. Campbell never thought of founding a community to reflect and perpetuate his own theological opinions. He fastened his opinions upon no one in any way. In the department of opinion, he left every man as free as Christ left him and bravely insisted that none should be permitted to destroy or abridge that freedom. With such spirit filled men it was natural for the new movement to spread like wildfire. Free men banded together under the banner of restoration and swept across the land. Many differed in belief and practice, but the unity of the spirit was kept and free men spake as their conscience dictated. By 1860 New Testament Christians numbered from 500-600,000. Missouri alone had over 50,000 Christians only. In 1863 at Vacaville, California, 5,000

brethren met for Gospel preaching. In 1864, 8,000 met in a good old camp meeting under the trees in Northern California. In these meetings many were won to Christ. In 1850, the population of the United States was 25,000,000. By 1900 it had increased to 76,000,000. While the population increased 3 times, the churches of Christ, during the same period, increased 10 times. It was the fastest growing movement in the country. This remarkable history should cause us to put aside our differences and cleave again to the motto of our forefathers that there might be unity in doctrine, freedom in matters of opinion and love toward all. When we return to these principles, we will again see a revival sweep this nation.

**The present shameful divided conditions should spur us to action toward a restoration of fellowship.** Division in the ranks was a gradual process. At first men differed without dividing. Then those of like mind teamed together and differences were magnified and open breaks came. Some of the earliest points of divisions were over—publications, colleges, missionary societies, organs and helps. (Sounds like today, doesn't it?) Party lines in these respective fields were drawn and brethren withdrew from each other. With the many divisions great losses came within the ranks. This was natural for when brethren lose the Spirit of Christ and argue, souls go to hell. If the growth had continued in the same proportion from 1900-1940 as it did between 1850-1900, there would have been over 11,000,000 New Testament Christians. As it is there is only a few thousand more today than there was in 1900. The forces are now divided into 3 main divisions with many subdivisions and all divisions out of fellowship with each other. Look at us who gave to the world the plea of unity upon the Bible and the Bible alone, all divided up into many warring sects. In nearly every city there are several churches claiming to be patterned after the New Testament order out of fellowship with each other, making the name of Christ a laughing stock in the community. Here are a few actual conditions and they could well picture every city in the land. In Bakersfield, a city of 80,-

000 there are 6 churches of Christ. Only 2 have any fellowship together. In Visalia, a city of 11,000 there are 4 churches and all out of fellowship with each other. Yuba City has 5,000 people with 3 churches of Christ, all out of fellowship with each other. Ceres is a small community of 1,500 people with 3 churches of Christ out of fellowship with each other. No wonder the world doesn't believe. In every community two to six different churches advertise to the world that they are the church of Christ. Recently in a certain city, I bought a paper and on the church page I saw two church advertisements. Both were for local churches of Christ, wearing the same name, located within 6 blocks of each other, with practically the same order of service. One ad read at the bottom, "The Church you read about in the New Testament". The other had at the top, "The Church you read about in the Bible", yet both churches were out of fellowship with each other. What does the world think? **What church is the church of Christ? Which group has reached perfection?** I think we need to prayerfully and seriously do some studying in Ephesians 4:11-16. When all of us begin to see our imperfections and when we see that no group among us has attained unto the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ, then we will begin to manifest a different attitude toward those who differ with us. We have assumed an arrogant, Pharisaism and condemned all who have dared to differ with us. While we continue to manifest this spirit, the torn body of Christ continues to be further rent asunder. We need more of the "Lord be merciful to me a sinner" attitude. Having seen our own shortcomings let us press on to higher ground. We need to stop our stubborn rebellion and count others better than self. It is time for us to quit saying, "Come over to our side" and all of us find the Lord. I believe when we all find the Lord, we will all be on much higher ground and will find ourselves united in Him. He is the center of unity. Unless we do move upward with Him, we might as well give up the ship. Our present wave of sectarianism must stop or we will die as a people. We must stop try-

ing to make converts to our particular ways and get men converted to Christ. We need to spend more time getting people transformed by the power of Christ and quit seeking for men to agree with our pet hobbies. The Lord has always raised up a people for His program. I believe God raised up our forefathers for their day. We have sectarianized the movement and unless we awake out of our present bigoted sleep, we will find ourselves on the side lines watching, while the Lord uses some other group of people to carry on the work we were supposed to do. May our spirits truly be disturbed and burdened over this condition and may our prayers be that God will open our eyes to see our sectarianism and lead us out to true New Testament Christianity.

**Then the responsibilities of tomorrow should force us to a restoration of fellowship.** We are now living in an atomic age. The war of nerves is on among nations. Homes are being blasted by the evil one. Everything holy is being ridiculed. Truly these are perilous times and the people of God need to go into action for God. If we fail in giving the Gospel to the world at this time, this generation may be wiped out by destructive weapons concocted by man. To meet the onslaught of Satan and the forces of hell, we need to rethink and restudy and reshift, if necessary, our whole position and seek the will of God that there might be the unity of the Spirit. The world will never see Jesus in our present fog of sectarianism and division. The prayer of Jesus needs to be rethought and applied to our own lives. John 17:20-21. Our lives are not complete in Christ without the fellowship of all the saints. As free people we have the right to differ but not to divide. Woe unto anyone of us if we try to force our personal convictions upon anyone else. To force the instrument on those whose convictions will not permit its use is sinful. To force other convictions such as eating in church buildings, methods of finance, ways of missionary work, etc. upon others is likewise out of the realm of New Testament liberty. Brethren, we literally hold in our hands the destiny of the world of



tomorrow. What are we going to do about it?

As I close these thoughts, I refer again to the Jewish and Gentile Christians. If God could take them with all their imperfections and make them one, He certainly can do the same for us. Our differences are mole hills compared to the mountainous differences between those two groups of people. Eph. 2:13-22. God can take all of us and make us one if we will allow Him to do so. It means we will have to love as Jesus loved. When we begin to love people who love the Lord, as we love Him, differences will soon disappear. Paul prefaces the seven pillars of unity in Eph. 4:4-6 with a worthy walk. Read verses 1-3. Brethren, the devil and all his angels could not keep people apart who were really on fire for God and living for Him. The piano, colleges, organizations or any other like differences would roll away as the fog before the bright sun if we all loved the Lord above everything else. If all of us had the love and that love manifested itself, we would all be willing to give up anything to keep the body pure and holy. That love will bring good brethren together and what a power the churches of Christ will be. No longer will we build spite churches but we will enter new fields together and take a city for Christ. Brethren will be free to worship as their conscience dictates. There will be a new surge of great gospel preaching. Sermons that are now filled with our own particular doctrines will be filled with the Living Christ. Hungry souls will find salvation. The Lord's house will again become a house of prayer. People will assemble in worship and praise to God. Entertainments, band concerts, novelties, book reviews, and foolishness will be banned forever from the house of the living

God. Prayer will take the place of play and feasting.

The home will take on a new appearance. Christ will be the head of every home. The beauty of holiness will circle the home. The family will worship together in study, song and prayer in the home. This awakening must begin with every local church. It will not be any mass move to unity. In communities where there are several churches, efforts should begin at home to create a friendly relation that will lead to restoration of fellowship. People should visit each others services, prayer meetings need to be held together, preachers need to exchange pulpits. In many communities there could still be 3, 4 or more churches all with a work to do. If they put forth a united front to a city, that city would sit up and take notice. What power, if for illustration, a city like Bakersfield with 6 churches could all work together and hold a revival meeting with all working together for souls. The city would feel the effects of the church of Christ. Soon we would challenge the denominational world and I believe we would again see whole churches come out of denominationalism.

I plead with brethren in Christ to **begin now** seeking a friendly relationship with all baptized believers. It doesn't mean that any one of us must sacrifice his personal convictions. We can keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and allow every local congregation the freedom God intended it to have.

Oh, church of Christ, let us remove sectarianism from among us, thus allowing the torn Body of Christ to be healed and press on to victory under the blood-stained banner of the cross!

"And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18.

