

# ONE BODY, THE CHURCH.

BY

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WHEN the marvellous work of redemption had been fully accomplished by the blessed Son of God—the one perfect sacrifice of Himself offered up to God; the veil of the temple rent from the top to the bottom; death and the grave triumphed over in resurrection, and the Lord had gloriously ascended into heaven to take His place at the right hand of the Majesty on high—then came that memorable day of Pentecost, when the promise of the Father was to be made good to Christ's disciples.

“Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” Luke xxiv. 49. While waiting at Jerusalem for this, “they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts ii. 1-4.

Never before had such a remarkable event of this nature occurred; nor indeed could such a wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit take place until the Lord Jesus had been

glorified, as we learn from John vii. 39 : "The Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified ;" and in John xvi. 7 : "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Doubtless this was the great baptism "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" spoken of by John the Baptist. And most marvellous and blessed were the results that followed this unprecedented coming down of divine power from heaven ; for thereby a new spiritual state was called into existence, and a totally new order of things established as to God's relationship with mankind, such as had never existed before. This was the gathering together of all the saints or true believers in Christ, out of all nationalities and peoples and tongues, into one united Assembly, to constitute a new testimony for God on the earth, which was never known before, even by the inspired saints of the Old Testament days.

The believers, thus gathered together for the first time by the Holy Ghost around the person of the risen Lord as their centre and head, were now being builded up as living stones into that spiritual house, which in its continued history should ever after be known as the Assembly or "Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

This great day of Pentecost was therefore the ever-to-be-remembered birthday of the divinely constituted Church of God, whose existence was destined to continue to the eternal ages.

And it is evident from the Scriptures that such a peculiar Assembly of saints could not have been called into existence before this time, when as yet Christ had not died, risen, and ascended into heaven, so that the Holy Ghost might be sent down in power to constitute it.

In Acts ii. we see this unique Assembly fresh from the hand of God in all its pristine beauty, wherein heaven-born love, real single-minded devotion, genuine unity of heart and soul, and the most perfect oneness in all things, were beautifully displayed. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 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, praising God, and having favour with all the people."

The three most prominent features of this remarkable gathering of saints together into One Body, which shone out so brilliantly at the first, were ardent love and attachment to Christ the Head, the purest and most unselfish love to one another, and perfect oneness in all their thoughts, feelings, purposes, and actions. And it is evident that these features in the divine purposes of God were ever to be the distinguishing characteristics of His Church, that the world might believe that it was born of heaven, and not of earth, and that its Founder and Head was no other than the blessed Son of God Himself, the Lord of life and glory.

All humanly formed assemblies or societies have, as we all know, notoriously failed, especially in the maintenance of continuous unity among their members, being based, for the most part, on some principles of worldly policy; but in direct contrast to all this the Assembly of God was, among other things, intended to stand out perpetually before the whole world as the heaven-wrought pattern of Godlike love and perfect oneness, and as such to be an ever-abiding and visible

testimony to the great fact that Christ's mission on earth was wholly from heaven; that the Christianity He came to establish had nothing whatever of an earthly element in it, but was entirely of God, and heavenly. "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." John xvii. 21.

Now, it is most interesting and important to note the prominence that is given in the Scriptures to this oneness of the Church of God; partly, no doubt, in view of the efforts that Satan would make to break it into fragments or sections—as to its outward testimony at least, which unfortunately he has been too successful in doing—and thus mar the blessed testimony it was intended to bear, as set forth in the verse just quoted.

We see, moreover, in John xvii. that this oneness of the disciples of Christ was to flow and derive its strength from their common union with Him, their divine Head: "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." *v.* 23. And no less than five times, in this wonderful chapter, does our blessed Lord use the words, "That they may be one," showing how precious to His loving heart was this oneness. Surely, in view of these touching expressions of our Lord, no one needs to be told how very precious Christian unity ought to be to every member of His body, and how therefore every one should earnestly strive to maintain it.

Then, when we turn to the Acts of the Apostles, where the history of the Church is first unfolded, we see how all the believers of that time, in all their happy fellowship one with another, ever kept this thought of oneness before them, and

practically maintained it in every action that had reference to the Assembly of God. Indeed, it is apparent that the apostles, and the saints gathered to the name of the Lord then, never conceived the possibility of there being more than one undivided Church in the world.

There might be local assemblies in Jerusalem, Antioch, or Ephesus, geographically separated from one another, and sometimes alluded to as churches, but for all that they constituted but one united family of God.

We never read of churches in Jerusalem or Ephesus, or in any other city. To the apostles and the saints of their day the Church could be no other than an indissoluble unity, consisting of all believers everywhere, gathered solely to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and they could scarcely have imagined the sad state of things that now prevails in Christendom, where a number of so-called churches in the very same town and neighbourhood are completely separated from one another, never having the slightest Church fellowship, and being at times even antagonistic to each other; holding the most divergent views as to Church doctrine and ecclesiastical practice, and each of these independent groups or sections claiming the meanwhile to be the true expression of the Assembly of God on the earth! Can they all be right?

Then again, when we look at the epistles, in which we have the doctrines and principles of the Church so fully made known and clearly explained ("The mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit," Eph. iii. 4, 5), we cannot but see how emphatically and uniformly the important fact of the oneness of the Church is set

forth and repeatedly dwelt upon. "One body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." Eph. iv. 4-6. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." 1 Cor. xii. 13. "We being many are one bread and one body." 1 Cor. x. 17. And many other similar passages tell out to us, in the most lucid and striking language, the mind of the Spirit on this divinely important truth of the Church's oneness.

The remarkable figure of the human body, so often employed in the Word to describe the constitution and unity of the Church, as well as to show its wonderful connection with its divine Head, is doubtless the most significant that could be used for the purpose of showing its oneness also, while the many precious lessons that are set forth under this metaphor are indeed fraught with instruction of the deepest import to all Christians.

"There is one body." Eph. iv. 4. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Rom. xii. 5. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1 Cor. xii. 27. "For we are members of His body." Eph. v. 30. "And gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body." Eph. i. 22, 23. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. iv. 16.

How clearly and forcibly, and yet how simply, the Spirit of God unfolds to us in these beautiful scriptures the grand truths of the close and perfect union—formed by the Holy

Spirit—between Christ the glorious Head, and every Christian believer, the consequent union of every believer to every other believer throughout the whole world; and the inestimable blessings and privileges that must naturally flow from such a wonderful union as this, the One Body, the Church.

And yet how sad it is to hear Christians, in the very presence of these clear and solemn statements of the Word, speak of “joining the Church,” or becoming by their own voluntary act members of it; thus ignoring in a sense some of the most patent facts of Scripture, that the Church is wholly the creation of divine power, and that God alone, the moment that a person is converted, and becomes a child of God, sets him as a member in the Body.

The will or power of man could not, as a matter of course, have anything whatever to do with it, either as to forming or unforming it; for all true Christians are “by one Spirit . . . baptized into one body.” 1 Cor. xii. 13. “Ye are God’s building.” 1 Cor. iii. 9.

What some Christians, alas! do is, they gather themselves together into little groups or societies under some human leaders, having for a rallying or gathering centre some special doctrines, or the names of some leading persons among them, frame a number of rules for the guidance of their independent little group, establish a system of organization of their own, and call themselves by some distinctive name, so as to be thus known and separated from all their brethren who will not join their society. Then they say, they have formed a church (or it may be *the* church), and invite others to join them, or become members of their self-constituted and humanly formed society!

How painfully does all this contrast with the lovely picture of the primitive Church of God recorded in the Acts; while it clearly shows that the true scriptural idea of the Church—its divine origin, oneness, and the union of all its members with Christ as its Head—has to a very large extent been lost in these latter days.

We have also another very striking description of the Church under the figures of a house, a building, and a temple, which tell out, under a somewhat different aspect, the same blessed truths we have been commenting upon. “The house of God, which is the Church of the living God.” 1 Tim. iii. 15. “Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we.” Heb. iii. 6. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.” 1 Peter ii. 5. “Ye are God’s building.” 1 Cor. iii. 9. “In whom [Jesus Christ] all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Eph. ii. 21, 22.

These remarkable passages present the true Church of God to us in another light or aspect, that must ever be deeply interesting and instructive to every child of God.

In the Church, viewed as the One Body, we have more especially brought out and emphasized the important facts of the headship and authority of Christ, the close and intimate relationship of all its members with Christ their Head, and the perfect union of all the members one with another; while in the house aspect we have the additional thoughts illustrated, of a spiritual house, habitation, or temple, in which God can both dwell and be worshipped.

In other scriptures too we see it described as the “one

flock," having "one Shepherd" (John x. 16), and the "flock of God" (1 Peter v. 2, 3); while in the prophetic vision of John it is prospectively announced as the "bride, the Lamb's wife," the most exquisite and wonderful of all the metaphors employed to set forth this most unique and privileged of all assemblies.

Now, in considering these varied ways in which church truth is presented to us in the Word, it is of the first importance to bear in mind the few foundation principles that underlie the whole of these divine instructions, so as to have a comprehensive and clear apprehension of the mind of God on this great question. These principles may be briefly enumerated as follows :

*First.* The true Church, which was in the counsels and purposes of God before the foundation of the world, is wholly in conception and constitution the work of God alone. Man could not have anything whatever to do either in making or unmaking it. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." No man, no, not even an apostle like Paul, could put one stone into this spiritual house.

*Second.* It is entirely composed of true Christian believers, who have been renewed and sealed by the Spirit of God. Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Cor. i. 2. "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." Acts ii. 44-47. "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. i. 22. "We are members of His body." Eph. v. 30.

*Third.* Christ alone is the one supreme Head of this

mystical body, and it is His possession by right of purchase. "The Church of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His own." Acts xx. 28. "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body." Eph. i. 22, 23.

*Fourth.* And as Christ is the Head, it follows, of course, that He is both Lord and Master over that which is His own; the dispenser of all the gifts to His saints, the source of all power and authority over every member; and possessing the sole prerogative to order and direct *all* the affairs of His own house, as to worship, ministry, or service.

Nor does the Lord delegate this divine right or prerogative to any, whether they be popes, bishops, clergymen, ministers, pastors, or teachers so called. "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Eph. iv. 8, 11. "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." 1 Cor. xii. 18. "As the Church is subject unto Christ." Eph. v. 24. "The Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Col. ii. 19. These and many other scriptures of like import which may be cited, clearly show that all rule and government in the Church are wholly committed to Christ the Head; as He alone has the power, as well as the right, to rule and direct His servants.

*Fifth.* There is, moreover, perfect equality among its members. No distinctions of position or office are given to any, by virtue of which they might be regarded as superior to or higher than their brethren; or having the slightest right to

lord it over God's heritage. "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Matt. xx. 25-27 ; Luke xxii. 25, 26 ; Mark x. 42-44. "Neither be ye called masters," "for one is your Master, even Christ ; and all ye are brethren." Matt. xxiii. 8-10. "There is no respect of persons with God." Rom. ii. 11. "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." 1 Peter v. 5. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Eph. v. 21.

*Sixth.* As God's testimony on the earth, the Church was destined to show forth the grace and the glory of God, and make His power and wisdom more fully known to all the higher intelligences of the universe. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. iii. 10. And as Christ's possession it is to be "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. i. 18), by which He should ever be honoured and exalted before all worlds ; while He cleanses, sanctifies, and prepares it for Himself, that ultimately it may be caught up to meet Him in the air, and ever after be associated with Him in heavenly glory as His "Bride," and rule with Him when the "New Jerusalem" is seen over the earth. Rev. xxi. 24. "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 26, 27. "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. iv. 16, 17. Later on the announcement will be made: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Rev. xix. 7.

In these leading features of the blessed Church of God presented to us so clearly in the Scriptures—with much as to details besides—we see what in the purposes and counsels of God it was destined to be, as called into existence by Himself for His own glory, and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus: a glorious company of saints cleansed through the atoning work of Christ; and thus made meet to be ultimately His honoured associates in heavenly glory throughout the countless ages of eternity; while for a brief period it was to be God's special witness on the earth, "The pillar and ground of the truth."

Thus was it perfectly constituted in the beginning, and so it continues, and ever will continue before God (though man may mar its outward appearance and testimony), the same unalterable and most precious work of His own hands, in which He ever delights.

But, alas! it was not very long before there came a sad change as to its outward testimony before the world (though its original constitution, as we have already remarked, could never, of course, be changed), and then that lovely and heaven-born unity, by which it was specially distinguished, was rudely broken; and, as we all know, the Church has ever since continued to appear in this its sadly broken and divided condition.

And now, after divisions have multiplied and the number of religious sects has gone on increasing for centuries, we have the sad spectacle before us of a totally disunited Christian Church, at which the world points with the finger of scorn, and with humiliating reproaches asserts, that nothing so contentious and divided has ever appeared in the world, it being in every sense the very reverse of what our Lord prayed for. Thus we now behold developed the wide-spread and corrupted tree of Christendom, in which the fowls of the air have found a lodging-place.

Strange too that this deplorable evil—the schism of the Body—should have had its beginning even as early as the days of the apostles, as we find from 1 Cor. i. and iii., where the apostle Paul so sharply rebukes the Corinthians for introducing it. “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?” 1 Cor. i. 12, 13. “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4.

And yet how extraordinary does it appear that, in spite of these most solemn censures in the inspired Word of God, the evil of sectarianism, which had its origin over eighteen hundred years ago, should still continue to grow, and become worse and worse, until Christendom is now filled with a host of rival sects, that are, even in the eyes of the world, a reproach to the religion of Christ. For in principle the evil is precisely the same as it was of old, when it first appeared at Corinth; only the language of the modern sects is now changed into,

“I am of the Church of England;” “I of the Wesleyans;” “I of the Baptists;” “I of the Methodists;” and “I of the Presbyterians,” etc. etc.

No doubt the unholy alliance of the Church with the world, which began early in its history, and has continued to this day, has had much to do in perpetuating the evil of denominationalism, and in building up the huge, unsightly fabric that now appears as the Babel of Christendom.

And this mixture of the world with the Church—of unconverted professors with true believers—we have prophetically announced by our Lord Himself, particularly in the parables of the Tares, the Leaven, the Mustard Seed, and the Net, as a state of things that would unfortunately exist later on.

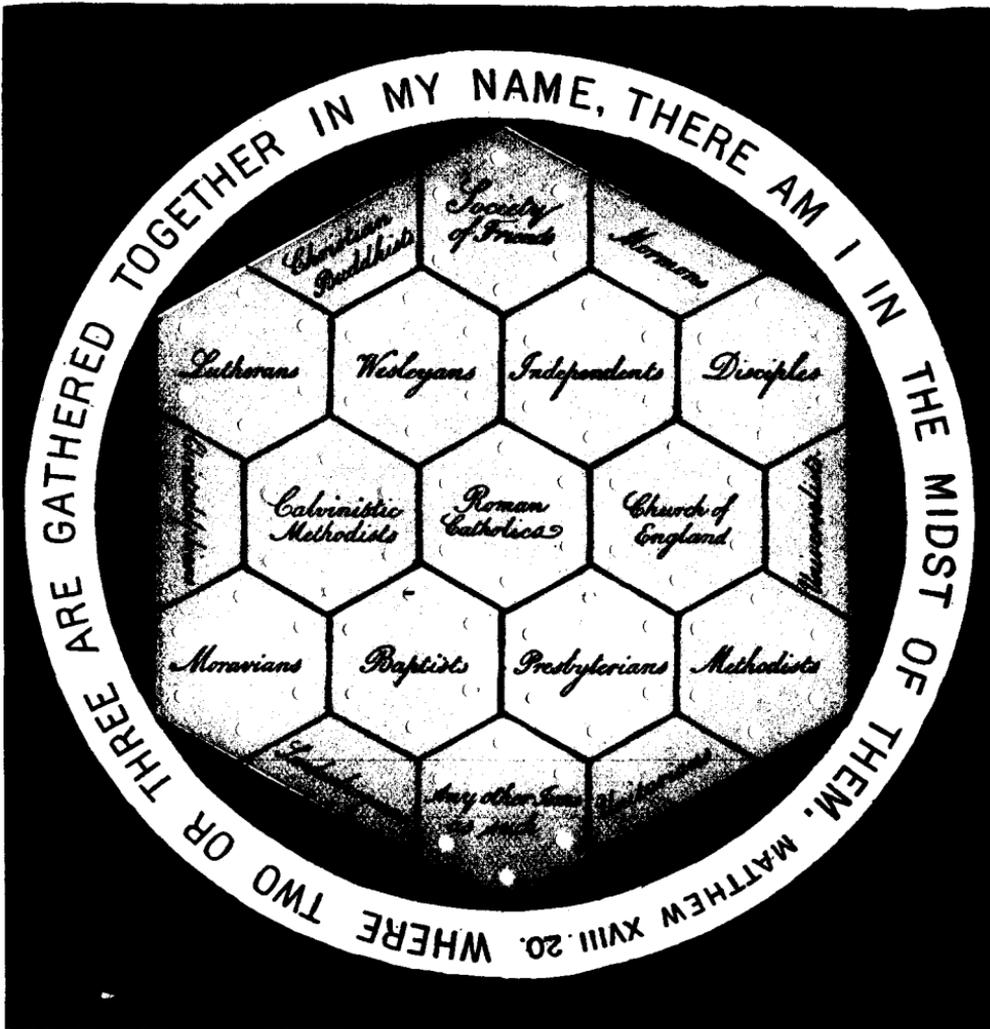
In consequence of this disorder, we have now to observe a distinction that did not exist at the beginning; namely, between Christianity and Christendom; *i.e.*, between the true Church of God—the One Body—and the mixed assemblies, which are often confounded, and the terms used interchangeably, as if they meant the same thing.

Now, to help in some measure (by an appeal to the eye) to make this distinction clear, and at the same time to show the apparent connection between the true Church and Christendom, the little Chart attached to this work is given as an illustration.

On the first leaf of the Chart the principal sects of Christendom are represented by a series of hexagonal figures, divided from each other by strong lines of demarcation, to indicate the distinctive creeds and doctrinal differences by which they are separated. The white spots that appear in each figure are intended to represent the true Christians that may be found in the denominations. But it will be observed that these white

## CHRISTENDOM

Is here represented by a series of six-sided figures, each one denoting a different denomination. The white spots in each are intended to represent the true Christians that may be found in each sect. But on turning over the leaf it will be seen that the white spots,



while they *appear* to be in the different sections, belong to, and are in reality in, the white circle on the other side, which is intended to represent the Church or true Assembly of God, the "One Body," having Christ in the centre as "Head of the Body."

[See page 16.]



## THE ONE BODY.

THIS white and undivided circle is intended to represent the real Church of God, which is composed of all true believers, who, though they may unfortunately *appear* scattered and separated from one another among the various sects of Christendom (as represented on the first leaf), yet constitute one complete and undivided circle,



or "One Body," as seen by the eye of God; gathered to the name of Christ as their *only centre* by His own blessed promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Such ought the Church ever to appear to the world, as it did at the first.



spots are only *apparently* among the different denominational figures; for on turning over the first leaf it will be seen that they in reality belong to, and are a part of, the white and *undivided circle* on the second leaf, which is intended to represent the One Body, or true Church of God. The illustration is thus intended to show, that while true believers may be found scattered among and mixed up with the different sects of Christendom, and unhappily separated from each other in that way; yet, as seen by the eye of God, they are all members, or parts, of the One Body of which Christ is the Head and Centre; to whom all are indissolubly united; and who are thus consequently united to one another, as shown by the white circle on the second page, in which no lines of separation appear. But there are six spaces around the margin of the hexagonal figures in which no white spots appear. On those spaces are the names of certain denominations—Swedenborgians, Universalists, Unitarians, Mormons, Christian Buddhists, and Christadelphians—that consider themselves to be Christians, while in reality they have not the slightest claim to such a designation, because they deny the very foundation truth of Christianity; namely, the atoning work of Christ.

As such cannot therefore be regarded as Christians at all, no white spots are made to appear in these six spaces, seeing that the parties represented could not be members of the true Church of God, the One Body.

The white circular rim too, that appears around the denominational figures, containing Christ's gracious promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," belongs in like manner only to the true

Church of God, and not in any sense to companies of mere professors. For though this rim *appears*, like the white spots, around the figure of Christendom, it in reality only belongs to, and encircles, the true household of God; as will be seen in the illustration, on turning over the first leaf; when it appears on the edge of the one white and undivided circle, that has Christ for its centre. Clearly none but genuine Christian believers have the right or privilege to appropriate that blessed promise to themselves; for it must be obvious, that none but those who are truly and simply gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, and who recognize no other gathering centre whatever, can fairly claim the realization of the blessed promise of the Lord's presence in their midst. It is the divine Master's call to His own disciples, to gather around Himself; and only such can therefore be considered as constituting the true Assembly of God on the earth.

Now, the practical bearing of these great truths concerning the Church must, it is evident, be of the utmost importance to every child of God, seeing that grave responsibilities naturally flow out from such a highly privileged and wonderful union with Christ, and with one another. Therefore it is we have so much valuable instruction in the Scriptures as to how we are to behave ourselves "in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God;" and how, moreover, we are to strive to preserve its heavenly unity and its holy testimony before the world.

With regard to this unity, which, as we have already seen, was so marked a characteristic of the Church when it first appeared in the world, we are plainly admonished to endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Eph. iv. 3. This doubtless means that we should in every possible way strive to maintain and practically exemplify, in all our relations and intercourse with our fellow-Christians everywhere, the great truth, that there is but one Church, and that we are all brethren, united to the one glorified Head, Christ. We can, of course, have nothing to do in forming this unity, for it is already formed, and is solely the invisible work of the Holy Spirit, such as can never be broken.

But we can *outwardly manifest* to the world around us this grand fact, that God has called and gathered us all as believers together in one to the name and around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it is this we are called upon to do in accordance with the Scriptures, and so fulfil the desire of our Lord, who prayed, "That they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." John xvii. 21, 23.

How then, it may be naturally asked, in view of all the numberless divisions of Christendom, can this blessed unity be maintained? Well, that indeed is the great and difficult question that has been so often asked, and for which such a variety of the most dissimilar and impracticable answers have been furnished; because the enquirers have sought for a solution in their own clever devices, or in human schemes, instead of going at once to the sure Word of God, where alone the true answer may be found.

For we cannot be mistaken as to the practicability of the question when we look at the early history of the Church, given to us in the Acts of the Apostles; for there we see how this divine unity was fully exemplified in the daily

walk and conduct of those early saints, as well as in all their united actions of worship, discipline, and service.

There are, no doubt—even in these degenerate days—many true Christians in the churches, who sincerely and earnestly desire to see manifested the oneness prayed for by our Lord, but who are utterly at a loss to know how this can be realized.

For in their endeavours to find some firm standing ground, upon which all Christians can come together in true harmony, and be practically united as one body in all their outward acts of divine worship and service, they are confronted with the sad confusion that now prevails in Christendom, arising out of the accumulation of centuries of ecclesiastical error, and the task consequently appears hopeless. Still there is such a ground of unity, and happily it is not left to us either to form or formulate it, seeing it is most clearly made known to us, with every necessary detail, in the infallible Word of God; so that wayfaring men, though fools, may not err therein.

Indeed, to say there is not such a ground of unity for the Church in the revealed mind of God to His saints is to charge God with being the author of all the confusion that now exists in Christendom. “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

What is required of us, in order to discover practically for ourselves this plain pathway of God, is simply to go back and recover that which was from the beginning—the foundation principles on which the Church was built by God Himself at the first, but which have been overlaid and obscured, and are now even ignored, through centuries of erroneous teaching, crystallized into fixed traditions and systems of men. Those

Christians who have the courage and faithfulness to break away from these traditions, have no difficulty in finding that one and only true way of God as to Church doctrine. For it must be obvious in all this, that there can be but one right way, and that is God's way, as clearly revealed in His Word, and nowhere else. Totally different modes of Church action, based upon distinctly different principles, with different gathering centres, cannot all be right in the sight of God. Such a thought would evidently contain as great a contradiction in itself, as to say that a principle or an action could be both right and wrong at the same time.

It is therefore incumbent on every servant of God to discover and act up to this one true and right way of God, and to search for it in the Scriptures alone; while regarding every other source, however learned and plausible it may appear, as totally devoid of the slightest authority in this matter.

But some will say, God has given us only very general principles for our guidance in all Church matters, and has left it to the saints to fill up the details, according to their times or circumstances, or their own desires and necessities. In other words, that God has given us a bare skeleton of principles, and left it to us—or our self-constituted ecclesiastical superiors, all poor, erring mortals at best—to cover it with the muscles and sinews of such Church arrangements as we may think proper!

Alas! it is in this false and unscriptural thought—so generally entertained—that we have one of the main roots of all the differences and confusion in Christendom; whose bitter fruit is nothing less than downright disobedience to

the direct commands of God. Each person, instead of obeying God, covering his imaginary skeleton according to the wretched devices of his own poor heart, and then in his self-assurance claiming his to be the only right way!

Now let us consider for a moment the tabernacle in the wilderness, which may be regarded, in some respects, as a type of the Church. In Exodus xxv., and the two following chapters, we find most remarkably elaborate instructions given by God to Moses concerning the construction of this tabernacle; and one cannot but be struck with the *minuteness* of all the details that are given in these instructions, as to the materials to be used, the quantities, sizes, shapes, and colours, as well as the exact manner in which everything was to be made, even down to the very number and colours of the little loops of the curtains; while Moses was *strictly* commanded to do all "according to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. . . . And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." Exodus xxv. 9, 40. Can any one imagine Aaron, or any one else, in that day, venturing to suggest that the colours of the curtains, or the number of the loops, might be different from what was so precisely specified by God Himself, or that any other alteration whatever might be made in these exact instructions given to Moses? Certainly not; for that would be nothing less than gross and wicked disobedience to God.

Then is it not reasonable to conclude that the same all-wise God, who alone is the source of all order, beauty, and harmony in all His works, who appointed and fully specified every detail

with regard to the construction of the tabernacle (which was designed as only a temporary structure), and left not a single item to be added by Moses, would be in like manner as particular in giving the same minute instructions, and indeed every detail that would be needed for the ordering and management down here of that which is so precious in His holy eyes, the Church; that which was in His counsels before the foundation of the world, the creation of His own almighty hand, that which bears the holy and exalted names of the "House of God" and "Body of Christ," and which is to be eternally associated with Christ in glory?

Assuredly this must be so; and we have only to look into the New Testament, while sincerely desiring to know the truth, to find that this is what has been exactly done; for all necessary details, as well as general principles, have been given therein for the guidance of the Church.

What could be more ample and complete than the instructions given to us concerning the Church, in such portions as Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xi., xii., and xiv.; Eph. ii., iii., iv., and v.; and 1 Peter iv. 10, 11, as to details as well as principles, not to mention other passages of like import? The Scriptures are the only true authoritative canons of the Church of God; and they alone, without one word of addition, have any claim upon the consciences of the saints in Church matters.

All other canons that have been formulated from time to time, and imposed upon the Church by men (however learned and pious they may have been), ought to be regarded as the direct fruit of self-will and disobedience, and consequently as having not the slightest authority in the Church. Indeed, the very existence of such humanly framed canons is a denial of

the sufficiency of Scripture, and an insult to the Head of the Church, who has so amply provided for every need of His own house.

But here the learned men, who claim to be the expounders of the truth, step in with their subtle theories, to break the force of God's plain teaching, by telling us that some of the scriptures just referred to are not applicable to the Church in our times, because some of the gifts mentioned were miraculous, and have long ceased. It is true that a few—*i.e.*, three—of the gifts enumerated have ceased; but is it either good sense or reason to assume, therefore, that all the instruction given with respect to numerous other gifts, and the way they should be used, together with much valuable direction as to assembly matters, should be entirely swept away as obsolete, or not applicable to the Church of God now, because a few miraculous gifts (which were needed at the beginning only as *sign-gifts*, "Tongues are for a sign," 1 Cor. xiv. 22) are mentioned in these instructions? Surely not.

Yet it is by some such plausible theories of the accredited theologians, that much of the direct teaching of God's Word is often set aside; and thus, as of old, "made of none effect through . . . tradition;" or, in this case, by apparently learned but really erroneous interpretations.

The most remarkable thing however is, that while those who wish to bolster up their self-constituted systems, find it convenient for obvious reasons to almost ignore 1 Cor. xiv., they are most careful to retain the last verse, "Let all things be done decently and in order;" and actually often quote it in vindication of their own particular systems, apparently forgetting, in their extraordinary blindness, that "decently

and in order" necessarily refers to and includes all the teaching, of that chapter at least, of which this last verse is the summing up. Strange too that all the denominations, though marked by such diversities of doctrine and practice, quote this verse in support of their respective systems; each claiming that their own Church arrangements are the true exemplification of all things being "done decently and in order."

But these important words, if they are to have any practical value at all, must obviously refer to the instructions given in Scripture, and especially to the teaching in 1 Cor. xiv., where the passage occurs, and where full directions are given to "the whole Church come together into one place" (v. 23); therefore it is only strict obedience to these directions that can claim to be the true fulfilment of this injunction. If this were but fully recognized, no doubt much of the diversity of opinion, and consequent divisions that now exist, would come to an end, and that happy oneness that appeared at the first would become once more apparent.

Now, in view of all this, and the responsibility that is laid upon us to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit, it behoves every true child of God to seek to get a clear apprehension of what the One Body, the Church, really is; and how in harmony with the mind of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, he is practically, as a member of that body, to bear a true and consistent testimony to the great truths involved in such knowledge.

In the preceding remarks I have been trying, in some feeble measure, to show what the true Church of God is, as presented to us in the New Testament; and now it may be profitable

to consider *some* of the ways, at least, in which we as Christian believers should strive to bear testimony to, and be practical witnesses of, the truths made known to us in the Word concerning this One Body, while endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

In the first place it is evident that we should regard all true believers in Christ as our brethren in the Lord, however they may be scattered and separated from us in the various religious denominations, and act towards them on all occasions with that brotherly love and kind forbearance that becomes those who are all members of one family, the household of God. To regard only those of our own particular party as our brethren is sectarianism, and a denial of the truth of the One Body; and that by one Spirit we are all (irrespective of all outward distinctions) baptized into that Body. "Ye are brethren," surely includes every true Christian in the whole world; and that divinely constituted relationship ought ever to be recognized and acted upon, outside of all party considerations and differences of opinion. "Let us do good unto all men, *especially* unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. vi. 10.

In the next place it is manifestly the duty of all Christians to meet together for the worship of God, and the observance of the institutions which our Lord has appointed. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Heb. x. 25.

How sadly solemn that at this important point all our ecclesiastical difficulties should come in. And it is exceedingly strange and lamentable, that in connection with so sacred a subject as the worship of God, and the ministration of His

Holy Word—which to the early saints must have been the simplest and plainest matter of duty—such endless difficulties should have arisen ; producing the bitterest strife and contention, and that deplorable multiplication of sects or parties, by which the testimony of the Church has been so grievously marred, in the midst of an ungodly and sneering world.

Owing to this sad confusion young converts have often been perplexed as to where and with whom they should meet to worship God ; and some, on account of the many conflicting claims around them, have been stumbled at the very outset of their Christian career.

Yet there should not, of course, be the slightest difficulty in finding out how and with whom we ought to meet in Christian fellowship for worship and service, while we have ample instructions on the subject in the sacred Word.

What is wanted in searching for church, as well as for any other truth, is simply “singleness of eye.” “If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Matt. vi. 22. Doubleness of vision, owing, it may be, to some preconceived notions or preoccupations of our own, is doubtless the main cause of all our misunderstandings of God’s Word, and the endless diversity of opinion that now prevails. Still, notwithstanding all this diversity and confusion, no one with the New Testament in his hand can claim to be excused for not knowing all the mind of God on Church truth, and how he ought to maintain a true and right testimony as a member of the One Body. Therefore the solemn responsibility rests upon every believer to discover for himself what this true and right ecclesiastical position is before God. That the various religious denominations, marked as they are by such distinct dissimi-

larities both in doctrine and practice, *cannot all be right*, must be self-evident. Some, if not all, must be wrong, and we are bound in simple faithfulness to discriminate as to what is right, and keep ourselves clear from all ecclesiastical as well as moral evil. Then again it naturally follows, from what has already been said, that there cannot be more than one right way with regard to that which has been wholly appointed by the all-wise and unerring God, and clearly revealed in His Word; so that we ought therefore, as His faithful servants, to find out that one right way of God, and follow it at all costs.

The following further references to a few scriptural thoughts may help earnest Christians sincerely desiring to see their way through the dark mists of human schemes and systems—by which so many have been, and still are, bewildered—to ascertain the way of truth and true ground of Christian fellowship; and thus enable them to take their right place in the assembly of God, according to the Scriptures.

In this, as in every other enquiry after truth, we should follow the noble example of the Bereans, who “searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts xvii. 11. Yes; not only read, but search diligently, as for hid treasure, until we find the precious truth. We know that all the truth is in the Word—every needed principle and practical direction required by the Church; and if we would be successful in our search, we must resolutely discard every other source of information as devoid of the slightest authority in this matter.

Books innumerable, and of the highest learning too, have, as we all know, been written on the Church; but, after all, not one of them, or all put together, can furnish us with a

single atom of Church truth that is not in the Scriptures themselves; *i.e.*, such as should have any claim upon our consciences.

Then we should go direct to the fountain-head, and hear what God Himself has got to say to us concerning the Church; so that we may have, for every step we take, a clear and authoritative "Thus saith the Lord." But the difficulty with many is to disentangle themselves from human authorities whenever they take up Church questions; hence the endless array of different opinions we have now to encounter. In order to escape these we must, as of old, solely appeal "to the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. viii. 20. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

With reference to everything connected with the assembly, such as worship, prayer, and ministry of the Word, *etc.*, the words already quoted, "Let all things be done decently and in order," cover the whole ground, when taken together with the direct commands on these matters given to us in the Word; especially in the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Ephesians.

Now, it is clearly of the utmost importance, when the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. xiv. 37) are in question, to enquire how far we are acting in true obedience to all His commands with regard to the Church; and if, in company with all who are faithful to the truth, we are striving to do all things "decently and in order" in the assembly; strictly in accordance with the revealed mind of God.

Those believers who appear to be thus walking obediently, and bearing a true though it may be feeble testimony as to God's order in the Church, are :

1. All who are gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ *alone*; and who, therefore, disclaim all other names as gathering centres, whether they be some great leaders or teachers, special doctrines, or some external circumstances; recognizing rightly, as they do, that there is but one Lord and centre, around whom the whole Church is gathered. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20. And who regard the setting up of any other names than that of Christ as a gathering centre—such as are now known in the numerous denominational distinctions of Christendom—as a perpetuation of the old evil of Corinth, so sharply censured by the inspired apostle when he said, "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4.

2. Those who fully and practically recognize Christ alone as the sole Head of the Church—the one Lord and Master over His own house. "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body." Eph. i. 22, 23. "He is the Head of the body, the Church." Col. i. 18. And as He alone is the source of all power and authority, and the sole dispenser of all spiritual gifts to the saints, by which alone they are enabled to minister in the Church, and preach the Word, they look to Him as their Head, not only for those necessary gifts, but also for power and guidance as to the use of them; seeing that He alone has the right to appoint and direct His own servants in the exercise of all the gifts He bestows upon

them; so that they take the right and privilege direct from the Master Himself, to use these gifts as He may see fit, without waiting for the sanction of any human authority whatever.

“When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” That they “may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Eph. iv. 8-16.

The apostles, it is true, ordained elders or overseers (never preachers or teachers); but as there are no apostles now—nor even deputies like Timothy or Titus—because not needed since the canon of Scripture has been completed, these believers, who strive to walk in harmony with the divine order of things, rightly regard the gifts received direct from the Lord Himself as the credentials of their appointment, to serve Him in any sphere or work to which He may be pleased to call them. Therefore they go directly from Him to their work without looking to, or waiting for, any sanction from humanly constituted authorities. This alone they consider a divinely appointed ministry. As the apostle Paul said of his own calling to be an apostle, “Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead;” and, “Neither went I up to

Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me ; but I went into Arabia." Gal. i. 1, 17.

Nor do these Christians, when they see the great need of evangelists to go forth and preach the Word, apply to colleges of learning, or theological seminaries, for these labourers, but remembering the word of the Lord, who said, " Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt. ix. 38), they pray to Him accordingly.

If this is God's way, as it certainly is, because so clearly made known to us in His Word, what can we say of all the clerical assumptions, the sacerdotalism, the humanly constituted authorities, and the various appointments of officials in the Church that now hold such a prominent place in Christendom, but that these things are not among the " all things " that are to be done " decently and in order," according to the mind of God, but the very reverse ?

3. Those who, in all their meetings for worship, prayer, breaking of bread, and ministry of the Word, look for and entirely depend upon the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit in all their proceedings ; believing as they do that the Holy Spirit is always personally present—and not as a mere influence—in all the assemblies of the saints, who are sincerely gathered together in the name of the Lord.

And, furthermore, that He is thus present to guide and take the entire control of all such meetings ; directing the saints in everything that is being done, as to the Lord's Supper, worship, or reading and ministry of the Word, when not hindered by any waywardness or vanity on the part of the worshippers. " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? " 1 Cor.

iii. 16. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come." John xvi. 13.

Then it follows from this view as a natural consequence, as we are further taught, that the saints thus gathered with Christ in the midst, and the Holy Spirit guiding, are all equally privileged, in happy liberty, to take part in the meetings when taught and led by the Spirit (except, of course, the sisters, "Let your women keep silence in the churches," 1 Cor. xiv. 34); and that for one person to be appointed as an official to conduct all these services himself, is directly contrary to the very plain and explicit teaching of the Spirit of God in 1 Cor. xii. and xiv.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit. . . . But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. . . . For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have

no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." 1 Cor. xii. 7-22. "Let the prophets [teachers who make known the mind of God, 1 Cor. xiv. 3] speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches [assemblies] of the saints." 1 Cor. xiv. 29-33.

How beautiful all this divine order appears, in which God is graciously pleased to use even the feeblest member of the body in the services of His house, as He may see fit, without the least respect of persons, when contrasted with the sacerdotalism so prevalent at the present time ; by which certain humanly appointed officials take the entire ordering of everything into their own hands ; thus setting aside the Holy Spirit's exclusive prerogative, in wilful disobedience to God's direct commands.

4. Every Lord's-day, the first of the week, those who gather round the table of the Lord to take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of His dying love, and to show the Lord's death till He come ; because they read in the Word that it was the custom of the saints at the beginning—before the Church was corrupted—to do so. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." Acts xx. 7. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts ii. 42.

And this they do, moreover, in response to the loving request of their adorable Lord, who said, "This do in remembrance of Me;" while they esteem it their happiest privilege on earth.

Nor do they look or wait for any so-called ordained minister to "administer the sacrament," as it is commonly expressed, simply because they find not a single word in the New Testament as to any one being appointed to give the supper to others; nor do such words as "administer the sacrament" ever occur in the Scriptures. It is not even stated that the apostles ever claimed the exclusive right to give the Lord's Supper to their brethren. And in 1 Cor. xi., where the supper is specially set forth by an express revelation from the Lord, the disciples are exhorted, in the concluding remarks, simply to "tarry one for another;" showing that they were privileged to take it for themselves, but to do it all together in Christian fellowship.

Moreover, if it were to be administered by some one appointed for the purpose, surely this was the very occasion (when a special revelation concerning the supper had been given through the apostle Paul) when it would, no doubt, be mentioned, instead of the exhortation, "Tarry one for another," which would then be unnecessary.

True, the Lord, as a matter of course, *gave* it to His disciples when He instituted it; but can any one be so presumptuous as to argue from that circumstance, that he could take the place of Christ to dispense the supper to his fellow-Christians, and thus assume to be Christ's substitute even in His own house and in His own presence? Surely not. The Pope may claim to be the sole "Vicar of Christ" on

earth, but we know the awful blasphemy of such an impious assumption.

What plainly appears in all we read of the first believers is, that the happiest liberty was permitted to all when gathered around their Lord's table to take the appointed emblems direct from their unseen but present Lord Himself; through such instrumentality as the Holy Spirit (who alone has the right to preside over God's Assembly) might be pleased to direct.

5. Who also strive to preserve a holy separation from all evil in the midst of an ungodly world, and the corruptions of Christendom.

Taking the Scriptures in this, as in all other matters, as their guide, they find two classes of evils from which all believers are strictly enjoined to separate themselves.

The first is **EVIL CONDUCT**, or deliberate wickedness; such as immorality, lying and stealing, etc., as well as general and manifest inconsistency of walk and behaviour on the part of any who profess to be Christians; and with such not to have any fellowship.

“Not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” 1 Cor. v. 11. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.” 1 Cor. vi. 14, 17. “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour.” 2 Tim. ii. 21.

And it is seen that the second class of evils from which all Christians are plainly taught to separate themselves is FALSE DOCTRINE, and to have no Christian fellowship whatever with any who maintain and teach doctrines evidently contrary to the express teaching of God's Holy Word. "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Gal. i. 9. "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." 2 Thess. iii. 14. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [the doctrine of Christ], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." 2 John 10; Rev. ii. 11-14, etc.

Acting on these and other plain scriptures, they endeavour, in all their associations with their fellow-Christians, to bear a distinct and faithful testimony against all error, and to hold fast the truth.

6. Those who, in order to give practical expression to the foregoing point, also consider it most essential always to maintain and exercise true godly discipline and brotherly care over all who may be in fellowship with them, by putting away all defilement—either of conduct or doctrine—from their midst, and thus endeavour, as far as it lies in their power, to preserve the purity of God's holy Assembly. And furthermore, that while this discipline should ever be a consistent testimony against evil, the manner of its exercise should be in all gentleness and brotherly love, with a view to the correction and ultimate restoration, it may be, of the offender, when real repentance is the result, its character being not so much judicial as the outflow of true Christian love and brotherly

kindness for the spiritual deliverance and welfare of the erring.

Moreover, as the true Church of God all over the world is really but One Body, and every believer a member of it, all the decisions of godly discipline, conducted in the solemn presence of God, with much earnest prayer and true waiting upon God, should be accepted by all the saints, in every gathering throughout the world, as the expression of the mind of God with regard to such discipline.

For some assemblies to accept such decisions, and others not, would be equivalent to a denial of the truth of the One Body, and a practical sanctioning of the sad divisions of Christendom, that are so manifestly contrary to the Word of God.

“And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” 1 Cor. xii. 26. “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” Gal. vi. 1. “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I

say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xviii. 17, 18.

The foregoing are some of the leading features that should ever distinguish all those believers who are really desirous of being gathered simply to the name of the Lord Jesus, and of conforming in every detail to God's own order of things in the Church, as they are clearly revealed in the Scriptures.

Let the reader, then, judge for himself, by going to the only standard of truth, God's infallible Word, and see if what has now been set forth is strictly in accordance with the commandments of God ; and, if so, to let the truth have its due weight upon his conscience. " Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good " (1 Thess. v. 21), remembering also the words of the apostle Paul, " Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do : and the God of peace shall be with you." Phil. iv. 9.

In conclusion, the sum of the whole matter may be expressed in a few simple words.

There is but one Church of God, formed by the one Spirit of God, having one Head—the Lord Jesus Christ ; one Book—the Bible, containing all the instructions that are necessary for the guidance of this one Assembly, direct from God Himself ; which gives us God's own way, and obviously the only one true and right way, because it is given by God.

Therefore there can be but one way by which Christian unity can be maintained and outwardly manifested, and that is by implicit and unquestioning OBEDIENCE to the commands

of God on this important subject. Yes, there cannot be a doubt that if all true believers were to set aside their own rules and humanly devised systems, and bow in true subjection of heart and sincere obedience to the clearly revealed mind of God, as made known in His precious Word, all the strife, the dissensions, and the divisions of Christendom would soon come to an end, and the whole Church would then bear that blessed testimony of oneness before the world that our gracious Lord so earnestly desired.

Not another word from heaven is needed to secure this happy end. Nothing but simple obedience on our part.

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” 1 Sam. xv. 22.

“We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts v. 29.

“If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” John vii. 17.

