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CHRISTIAN UNITY

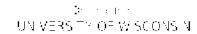
THE TRUTH OF IT AS PRESENTED IN THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES

An examination of its character, principles of action, and way of realization



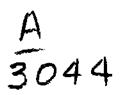
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PREFACE

The treatment of the subject of Christian unity may well begin, first of all, with a study of the teaching of the Lord Jesus, having in view the purpose of gathering together the ideas which He presented in His ministry concerning it. Then, to follow on with the consideration in as brief a way as possible of what necessarily flowed out of this, namely, the ministry of His apostles as led and directed by the Holy Spirit. This should result in obtaining the divine and scriptural point of view, from which alone we can get the proper conception of this great and vital subject, a subject which should be full of lively interest to every Christian.

Christian unity reaches into every department of life. The thought in many minds to-day seems to be that it consists in aggregation, and in a unity of effort along given lines of action, which are to be lines of least resistance. This involves compromise which more often than not brings in compromise of truth, which, scripturally considered, constitutes the foundation of right Christian unity. In present-day conditions there is real need of earnest contention for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude. 3). It seems as though the spirit of combination which so thoroughly dominates and animates both the business, social, and political spheres of the world must also now become active in the religious sphere, and effect a Christianized world trust of the "churches" which

may need, ere long, "federal supervision," or governmental regulation, as much as any other giant combination of these days. Who, I wonder, will be its head when this religious trust shall have been incorporated? I venture to remark that such things, and in as far as any such spirit animates the modern efforts at so-called Christian unity, that such efforts are far removed from the scriptural standard and teaching concerning the unity of Christians, both in its spiritual and practical aspects.

The inextricable confusion in which Christendom finds itself, its babel of voices, and the accompanying evils of the condition, are entirely due to wholesale departure from scriptural simplicity, the very first signs of which began to show themselves in the apostolic age; and, moreover, they stand out clearly to-day as the fulfilment of apostolic warning, and so tend to furnish a good proof of the foreknowledge of the Divine Spirit who spoke through the Apostles, and so also become a clarion call for return to the simplicity taught in the very Book which so positively foretold present-day evils and conditions. It is little wonder, since this is the testimony of the Book, that men are doing their best to get rid of it, or nullify its force and truth. The theological professor and the Christianized scholastic infidel of the university have all but claimed divine inspiration. Do they not presume to be able to sift out the words of God from the Book which lays claim to inspiration by the Holy Spirit of its very words? But they are very modest. these men of colossal and most laborious investigation. and their erudition is marvellous! Satan was the first "Higher Critic." He cast doubt upon the Word of

God, and by believing the doubt the creature fell from his place of privilege and blessing. It has ever been so. But the Word of God has remained, no jot or title of it has changed, nor will until all be fulfilled. "Scripture cannot be broken," are the words of Him who, if He be not an imposter, is the Eternal Son of God, the only Saviour and Lord. It is through what He has said with His own lips, or through those of His chosen servants, that the whole truth of Christian unity can alone be known, both as to doctrine and practise. My purpose, then, has been to make clear what Christ taught on this subject; suggest the practical and workable ways connected with the realizing of it, and the spiritual blessings alone to be found in this realization. I trust that through His help, which alone could suffice, I have been able in some measure to accomplish this purpose. May it avail to turn the hearts of God's people to consider what Chrisitian unity is and should be in the light of the Word of God.

JOHN BLOORE.

Plainfield, N. J.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The fundamental idea and governing principle of Christian unity has its roots in that sublime and allessential truth of the trinitarian unity of the Godhead.

No adequate or full revelation of this glorious truth could be made until, and indeed only in conjunction with, the advent of Christ. That which is unity, true and real, and which alone can be denominated Christian unity, was brought to light in all its distinctive beauty with His coming. The travail-pain of the ages then passed; the aimless groping in the dark, whether it be the darkness enshrouding the untutored, uncultivated of men, or that which marked the philosophy and wisdom of the cultured Greek, ended then, for the true Light had shone forth, and the birth of a new day, and a new hope, shed its lustre upon the world with the prophecy in it of a unity at once heavenly and divine, if men would receive it.

Perhaps some may trace in the beclouded reasonings of the human race, whether they be engaged with religious ideas or purely philosophical speculations, an underlying sentiment that there must be, and ultimately would be, a unity established between the Creator and the creature. This, some may even suppose brought about the association of Deity with humanistic forms in religious worship; but all sadly merged into the grossest forms of idolatry so that the creature was worshipped and served more than the Creator. With this there came in the most debasing practises of both a moral and physical nature. The Greek and

the barbarian peopled both mountain, valley, river and sea with multitudinous gods,—neither the culture of the one, nor the total lack of it in the other, delivered from this, and its resultant debasement. Moral and spiritual darkness enwrapped the whole world.

All this is traced back to its inception by the unerring pen of God. For speaking of the very unrighteousness of men to which I have referred, it is said, "What is known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested it to them,—for from the world's creation the invisible things of him are perceived, being apprehended by the mind through the things that are made, both his eternal power and divinity,—so as to render them inexcusable. Because, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but fell into folly in their thoughts, and their heart without understanding was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of corruptible man and of birds and quadrupeds and reptiles. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness, to dishonor their bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into falsehood, and honored and served the creature more than Him who had created it, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Rom. 1.19-25 New Tran.) Even with the Jews the inroads of idolatry had been very marked, and with this, the corresponding loss of the power of the truth committed to them by revelation which gave the knowledge of the one true God besides whom there was none else. He was set forth by law, and in prophetic utterance, as the only Lord, Creator and Sustainer of all things, holy and righteous in Himself, and in all His actions, infinitely above all creation, and the one Source of all blessing and ministry to it. But with the glory of even such a revelation, and the accompanying majesty of the Person it made known, there was no real presentation of the idea of unity, underlying which there must be community of life and nature between God and His creature. He is presented as the high and lofty One condescending in mercy to bless, or act on their behalf.

In the night that had thus fallen upon the world, a Star of peculiar glory arose and wended its way through the heavens above till it rested over a stable in a town called Bethlehem of Judea, wherein a newborn Babe lay in swaddling clothes. Concurrent with this, the night's darkness as it lay on the plain beyond, where humble shepherds guarded their flocks, was illumined with heavenly light, and the stillness broken by celestial voice announcing the birth of the Babe, forecasting the character of the glory of His advent, the very utterance of which constrained the heavenly choir to sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men." Wondrous anthem! for no word like that had sounded in the ages past. Like the star of the morning, it heralded the break of a new day, bright with the shining of new hope.

The voice of prophet and prophetess unite in acclaiming Him as the Coming One, the only Hope for all. Then all is silent. Is it possible that this has been a phantom, a mirage of the moral desert of the world? Suddenly, without public herald or heavenly

witness, a man appears on Jordan's banks. He stood in simple garb declaring an hour of judgment, the ax being laid at the root of the tree, and sending forth a clarion call to repentance. With him stood the poor, the sinners, the despised of the people, who were baptized in the "River of Death," acknowledging their sinnership, owning themselves worthy of judgment, and so becoming the suppliants of mercy. And another man comes among such as are gathered on the river bank. He, too, offers Himself for baptism, and as He comes up out of the water, lo! the heavens are opened over Him, and a mighty voice declares who He is,-the Son of God upon whom His Spirit can rest, and in whom His perfect pleasure can be found. A MAN! but God manifest in flesh; the Eternal Word tabernacling in human form among His creatures; mighty prophecy of a unity to be established of such fashion, and after such an order. as shall exhibit a blessed oneness between God and man,—Christian unity. Not a chimera, but a divine reality, instinct with life, possible of the most practical expression, exhibited in perfect unity, with harmony characterizing the whole of its varied activity.

I have said that every idea and principle of such a unity finds its primary expression in the truth of the unity subsisting between the three Persons of the Godhead. This finds its exhibition in the life, teaching, and sacrifical death of Him about whom I have been speaking. This concert of action has already been indicated in that the Father had opened heaven to speak His mind concerning the Son, and as expressing fellowship with Him as become man, while the Holy Spirit had manifested Himself as united with

Him in this, and in the place and service He had taken as the Son of Man, yet God's Son.

Amid the darkness, the gross darkness, of the world's thoughts, the light of the glory of this manifestation of Deity and manhood in perfect union shines in its lustre of moral perfection, exhibiting in its practical expression all the blessed depths of love and grace, tenderness and strength, weakness and suffering, truth and power, mercy and compassion, sorrow and joy, and in every conceivable form of work in love to meet the whole condition through which He moved. But the innate goodness which was displayed in His every act, word, and step did not draw forth the adoration and worship of men, but smote them in heart and conscience, bringing out their pentup hate to all that was of God. They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil,-the darkness with linked Deity with humanity in producing abhorrent sin, rather than the Light in which God and Man were displayed in union producing the most perfect good.

To Him, then, we turn to learn the primary character of Christian unity; to gather from His teaching, from the character of His life, and from the meaning of His death the whole foundation upon which it is built, the distinctive features of which give character to the whole superstructure, whether that be viewed from the inward spiritual side, or from the external display in the world, of what this unity essentually is.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRINITY ACTING IN UNITY.

When as yet only twelve years of age, we are called upon to notice Him in the Temple at Jerusalem where, in the midst of Jewish doctors, yet not in the forwardness of a precocious child. He was about "His Father's business." His Father! was He not the son of Joseph, the carpenter, what business could he have with the scribes and doctors of the law? It is the first intimation from His lips of that deep eternal purpose to which the prophetic Spirit had given anticipative utterance: "Lo in the volume of the book it is written of me, I am come to do Thy will, O God." Ah, HE was the manifestation of His Father, and the glory beheld in Him was that of an only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth; and, as we have before remarked, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit unite in owning Him as the Son in incarnation. There is essential oneness between the Divine Persons in the assumed creaturehood of the Son. This He enforces in the most absolute way. The works He does, the words He speaks, every act and thought of His are of the Father who gave them to Him, the Son, to do, the perfect Performer of all, the Holy Spirit in power and energy pervading the whole. "I and my Father are one." "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me. And the Father himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. . . Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. . . . I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him. . . . For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." (John 5:36-37; 14:10; 8:29-29; 3:34.)

But we turn instinctively to that sublime and most exquisite expression of this fundamental unity, John 17, where we find the expansion of its glory, so as to include those who had believed, and those who would believe in His name. Here we find, for the first time, the broadening of that blessed oneness between the Father and the Son so that it shall become inclusive of all who are linked with Him by faith. It means the forming of not simply a spiritual, invisible unity, but one producing the most practical results in manifestation before the world, that it might be clearly discerned by all. Let us ponder then in detail, the outpouring of the thought of Christ in this wondrous chapter.

He had just been in earnest converse with His disciples, speaking to them especially in these last conversations with them before He suffered, of the gift and coming of the Holy Spirit, of which we will speak more particularly when we consider the beautiful unfolding of the character and fulness of Christian unity, as expressed in the words of the Divine Son.

Often had His disciples heard His voice as in love

and tenderness He spoke revealing the Father and His word to them; but now they were to hear Him speaking to the Father, and that on behalf of themselves, unfolding in connection with them the wondrous unity—Christian unity—which filled His vision, reaching into the glory of the eternal ages in its full accomplishment and display. Yet He clearly emphasizes the practical side of life and testimony to be displayed before the world, the demonstration of the spiritual and inward union established through faith with the Father and the Son, the power of which in its every aspect is the Spirit of God.

He speaks to the Father, first of all, concerning His own unique position, character, and work with all of which we are to learn our link in that which He is going to make known. To apprehend the full meaning of what He says we must take our stand with Him as He turns His eyes heavenward, for in anticipation He is beyond the suffering; the glory of resurrection illumines His brow, and He is looking forward to the hour of His ascension. The Spirit could not come until the time of His glorification; and both are bound up in the most intimate manner with the formation of that blessed unity, tripartite in its essential features, which was filling His thoughts at the close of His path of toil and bitter travail. This indeed would be the breaking forth of the glorious first fruits of the corn of wheat which had fallen into the ground and died, that it might not abide alone —Himself.

His opening words accord with that principle of moral glory and beauty which ever animated His whole course,—the glory and the glorifying of the Father. His reason for requesting that the Father glorify Him—the Son—is solely that in the new place He would thus enter upon He might still further glorify the Father. He speaks of the work given Him to do as completed, the Father glorified; and now desires the bestowal upon Himself, as the perfect Man and Servant, of the glory proper to Him as the Divine Son. This meant His resumption as a man of that place and position of co-equality with God the Father; and His taking of this place is fundamental to the full and blessed character of the unity before His mind, since it is a unity to which the presence in this world of the Spirit is essential, who could not come until He (the Son) was in this place and position of glory.

Now He speaks especially of the disciples, they whom He looked upon as the Father's gift to Him. He marks them off in the most distinct and absolute manner. He says He is making request for them, not for the world. He looks upon them as not of the system and condition of things with which they are surrounded. They are the Father's, as well as His own, "for all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine." He had in reality introduced them, these poor despised disciples, into the meaning of His own unique and blessed place as the Sent One of the Father, fully knowing His perfect mind and purpose of love. He had manifested the Father's name to them, for of the Father He alone possessed full and perfect knowledge. And He had made them know all that the Father had given Him, for the very words the Father had given Him He had communicated to them; they had received them, and were in the full knowledge

of His coming from and being sent by the Father.

As we contemplate the blessed Speaker here summing up the wondrous object attained by His converse with these humble men, we may well marvel at the exceeding wonder of the Divine grace that stooped to bring such (men of like passions with ourselves) into this unity of knowledge, fellowship, and one-mindedness with the Father and the Son, all in the power of eternal life given to them, for being brought into the knowledge of the Father, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He sent, is eternal life. the word of these men is but the telling out to others of the same blessed testimony which He, the Son, communicated to them; and so those who believe through their word are introduced into the same blessed place as they occupied. For those who will thus believe on Him, He also prays, that they with his disciples may be made one. But of this we must speak in more detail as we go on.

He speaks now of not being in the world, and is plainly thinking of the time when He will be in the glory of the Father into which, at the hour of His ascension, He would enter. He invokes the Holy Father to keep these men who were given to Him through His own name, "that they may be one as we are." This blessed Man, though in the place of highest glory and power, will not say, "I will keep them;" but commits all into the Father's hand, significant evidence that the Father and He were absolutely one; so that, what had been committed to Him, He could as absent give all into the Father's keeping. And as the Father and the Son were indissolubly united in one, so were those to be who were His. While

here, He had kept them banded in one with Himself through the revelation of the Father's name; and they had known that He came from the Father and went to Him. But now they are to know the keeping power of the Father Himself, and so to have the ineffable joy of the Son fulfilled in them,—the joy of His perfect fellowship and oneness with the Father. This He ever enjoyed, never more than when glorifying the Father as man. That which He enjoyed He communicated to His own in as far as they were able to receive it. But now they are to be in the place in which He was when here, and that joy which He had is to be fulfilled in them, and they are to be one in this blessed place as He and the Father are one. They had the revelation of the Father's name, the possession of His words, all as imparted by the Son; and they now were to have the Son's joy as their own.

As possessors of all this there was another side to their position. It separated them from the world, the world which hated Him and gave Him the gibbet of shame. If they are introduced to His place, its hatred will be equally toward them, for they are not of it, He says, "even as I am not of the world." But out of it they are not to be taken. They are left in it for a very distinct and definite purpose; but His prayer for them is that they should be kept from the evil, and that which will keep them is the sanctifying power of the truth, its power to set apart for holy purposes. The Father's word is truth—the very word He says He had given them, and which the Holy Spirit, when come, would effectually bring to their remembrance and unfold in fresh power. Then as equipped in this way they are sent into the world after the same character as His own coming into it from the Father. Now He links Himself with them in this place, for on their behalf He sanctifies Himself in the new place of glory and power, which in anticipation He already occupies, that their sanctification through the truth might be accomplished.

In His closing words we come to that unity of which we have spoken, and indeed to which all has been leading up. In considering it many of the things previously mentioned will need detailed examination, and thus will it be seen how all perfectly fits together.

CHAPTER III.

"NEITHER PRAY I FOR THESE ALONE, BUT FOR THEM
ALSO WHICH SHALL BELIEVE ON ME THROUGH
THEIR WORD; THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE;
AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND
I IN THEE."

This is the first aspect of Christian unity of which our blessed Lord speaks. Summarized, it is the unity of the whole body of believers after the pattern of the unity subsisting between the Father and the Son. This is the first grand principle underlying the unity of God's people. I am not concerned at present with the question of how far or how little this unity has been realized by Christians in inward or outward pracpresentation of the truth as given to us by Christ, the tical character. But I am deeply concerned with the knowledge of which alone can be the foundation upon which the superstructure of Christian unity can be erected, so that the practical expression of it may attain its full moral character. This unity is to find its example, may I say, reverently, its model, in that which is expressed in the Lord's words, "as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee." Now we have the full revelation of this in the life of the Son as recorded for us in the Gospels. We discern therein the character and principles which the Lord requests shall be made operative in His people, effecting oneness-a divine unity of them after the wondrous example thus displayed.

He possessed full knowledge of the Father.

He perfectly revealed the Father.

He was the depository of the Father's words, and made them known.

He was the true and perfect heavenly witness sent from the Father in grace and truth.

The Spirit of God displayed His full power through Him.

The Trinity acting in unity is the glory of the life and work of the Son.

This first aspect of unity is one of testimony, fellowship, and resultant blessing in which all share. That which the disciples, who are here first spoken about as we have remarked, communicated in "their word" was the same as that which Christ had communicated to them, which was the same as the Father had communicated to Him; and those who believed through the word of the disciples were brought into the same blessed place as they occupied with the Son, and which in turn He occupied in relation to the Father. It will be essential, therefore, as we pursue our subject, to consider "their word" as given to us in the Epistles which they wrote, and which embody the full development of the Father's word which the Son had given to them,—a development under the infallible guidance of the Spirit of Truth who, according to the Son's own word, would lead into all truth. There were things which He himself said they could not bear now, and things concerning which they needed their understanding opened, and which not having apprehended when He spoke to them would need to be brought to their remembrance. All this the Spirit would do as coming after Jesus was glorified.

Let us weigh well the Lord's words, "as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." This is more, by far, than the thought of association. It is oneness in life, nature, affections and activity in all the fullness of absolute moral perfection in righteousness, holiness and love. And all this not only in an inward spiritual union, but in a manifest display before all. For it is the Eternal Life that was manifested. Here we cannot do better than revert to the words of that one who leaned upon the Master's breast. which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." (I John 1:1-4.)

It is evident that John has in his thought that unity for which the Lord is here praying. It was the revelation, the words of life and truth, which they had seen and heard from the Word, which he and his fellow disciples declare to us, that we may have fellowship with them; and their fellowship, indeed, was with the Father and His Son. Furthermore, he assures us that they wrote these precious things that our joy might be full. This echoes the Lord's own blessed words in the prayer we are considering when He says, concerning His disciples, that He spoke as

He did that "they may have My joy fulfilled in them; and then there is the evident corollary of this that through their words it is to have its accomplishment in us.

Here, then, we have epitomized the blessed oneness to which the Lord refers, the absolute oneness of all His own in a divine fellowship with the Father and the Son after the same order and character of that subsisting between these divine persons themselves. They are bound in one as being called to participate in one fellowship in which all are equally privileged to partake of that which has been made known. And so John again speaks, saying, that as walking in the light of the glory of this revelation of the Eternal Life "we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

First, then, Christian unity is that of one fellowship into which all are introduced by the truth, and in which all are called upon to fully participate apart from all distinction of class, caste, or title. This was the Lord's request, granted in its fulness by the Father in that the men He gave the Son were made the ministers of the Father's word, first of all given to them by the Son,-ministers of it to those who believe, that they all may be one, having thus one revelation, one word in which all are to participate. This has been provided for in the most complete manner by "their word" of which the Lord Himself speaks. The New Testament is this: the ministry of the Holy Spirit through these men whom he thus led into all truth, as the Lord announced. This has been so perfectly and completely done that Christians can be one, even

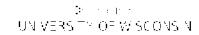
as the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. Nothing has been left undone by the Father. or the Son, or the Holy Spirit to accomplish this perfect unity in the truth. The actual accomplishment inwardly, or in the inner man, and outwardly, or in practical testimony, either individual or corporate, is to be attained only by strict conformity to the truth which has been revealed in all its heavenly purity and divine simplicity without adding the complexity of our own reasoning to it; but abiding without qualification by the written Word, not privately interpreting it, that is taking texts apart from their context or apart from the light which other parts of Scripture may afford, for we must ever remember that Scripture is not the words of men, but is God's revealed mind uttered as holy men were moved by the Holy Spirit to utter it. They spoke of the things of God "not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means." (I Cor. 2:13.) "Their word," then, is a divinely inspired unity of revelation and expression; and must be so since it is the reporting, as John says, of that which they heard and saw, the words and works of the Son which are the words and works of the Father, the evidence of the Father in Him and of His being in the Father. With this perfect provision, and adherence to it, Christian unity is an assured reality, no matter what phase of it we may consider.

As to how much or how little the Church of Christ has entered into this one divine fellowship to which Christians are called I do not now enter, except to remark that the babel of voices which characterizes the multitudinous divisions of God's people constitutes a sad and appalling witness to evident failure to rightly apprehend and participate in that one fellowship which, from its nature, could never produce such devious results.

The idea of Christ is evident. The utter failure of those who are His, at least by profession, to realize it is equally evident. The cause for this must also be abundantly plain, for it cannot be that the revelation of the truth is full of discordant voices which have confused and misled the people. Was there any discordant note in the fellowship together of the Father and the Son? Anything to mar the unity subsisting between these divine Persons? Can, then, the making known of that which subsisted between them be productive of every possible form of discordance? If such has resulted, must it not be as a consequence of those to whom this has been made known having wrested out of form and place all the precious truth revealed through His and "their word" to the destruction of the unity which this truth would have otherwise established? Has not the effort been to make the truth square with our thoughts instead of making our thoughts square with the truth? Let the clarion note of recall be sounded! The battle-cry of Christian unity be heralded the wide world over. standard lifted high with hearts beating true to our blessed Lord and Leader, with hands eager to plant it upon every opposing battlement. Back "to the teaching and the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no light for them," (Isa. 8:20.)

If this is to be our watchword, it is evident that





the fundamental necessity for us is to take up in a fresh and non-partisan spirit of earnest inquiry the study of the word of truth which has been once for all delivered unto us. This calls for a patient taking up of "their word," and the permitting of it to speak to us with its own force, and then be obedient to it. There must be, as John would say, a return to "that which was from the beginning."

We may do well at this juncture to consider together the words of the Lord and those of the chief of the apostles, who received his commission to carry forth the revelation and word of truth to its completion (Col. 1:25) from Christ in glory, making him one in place and authority with those who companied with the Lord when on earth.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:16-17.)

"The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.)

"If I depart I will send Him unto you"; and "when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear He will speak and the coming things He will announce to you. He will glorify me, for of mine will He receive and will announce to you. All things whatsoever the Father has are mine; because of this I said, that of mine He

will receive, and will announce unto you." (John 16: 7-14.)

These words make manifest the Trinity acting in unity in this revelation of the truth, this to the disciples and through "their word" to us. In the power and blessing of this we are to be one, as in it God is One. The Lord's prayer has been answered in this full and complete provision that we might be ONE as the Father was in Him and He in the Father.

Of one weaving with these words of the Lord are the words of the Spirit by Paul to which I have already referred, but here will quote in full: "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory; which none of the rulers of this world hath known; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but as it is written, things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; communicating spiritual things by spiritual means. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolish-

ness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:7-14.) apostle clearly affirms the revelation of the truth by the Spirit, the reception of the Spirit by us that we might search and know the truth, and the all-essential truth (for "we speak," he says) that "their word" is that taught of the Holy Spirit, and not of human wisdom; it being the absolute expression of the Spirit of God through them. They were divinely inspired to communicate by these spiritual means the spiritual things of divine truth. And, furthermore, with the Lord he affirms that the world, "the natural man," does not receive the things of God's Spirit. It is the spiritual who do, those who have received the truth of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," the power and the wisdom of God.

One fellowship by and in one Spirit, in and of one revelation of the truth, that this has been given makes possible "that they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in Thee." Has this aspect of Christian unity been realized and accomplished? That there is one Spirit and one revelation cannot be denied, if we are Christians, but is there one Fellow-SHIP, speaking practically? What means sectarian name and position? What means adherence to this tenet of belief and to that? What means this camp and that camp of opposing factions? What means it that you are called by that name, and we by this? That we hear on every side, "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Has Christ been divided?" Has the unity of the Father and the Son been broken? God has called, he had just said, "Into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER IV.

"THAT ALSO THEY IN US ONE MAY BE, THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU DIDST SEND ME."

The first aspect of Christian unity upon which I have been dwelling pertains exclusively to the unity of Christians in the fellowship of the truth, and also what is involved in this, but which I have not particularly touched upon, that is, the manifest and practical activity of the truth among them as one producing works of love and grace in accordance with the fellowship and truth into which all are called.

The second aspect which we are about to consider goes beyond this in its depth of meaning; and leads into not only the practical manifestation of the truth among Christians as a unity, but also the display of it in practical manifestation before the world which, as we have been assured by the Lord, cannot receive the Spirit and His things, hence, needs this manifestation that it may know that the Father sent the Son "to be the Saviour of the world," with all that this implies.

It is not now that all may be one simply as exemplified in the oneness of the Father and the Son, but that all may be "ONE IN US,"—one in the Father and the Son. A wonderful expression! This is not unity according to comparison as in the first aspect, but unity in relation through community of life and nature. For if Christians are one in these Divine Persons, it means that that which makes them one also operates to make Christians one, not only with

Furthermore, since it can only be the same power which makes Christians one with the Divine Persons as also makes them one in themselves, they are one in Them. It is not the thought of position, but of relation of the most intimate nature. It is not position because that would mean equality with God which no one could rightly think of as being implied. But having faith in Christ as our Saviour we are given eternal life, the life of God, so that this one life abides in all who believe, like the root-sap of the vine in the branches. Thus the Eternal Life in its infinite vastness which can alone be received through faith enwraps us, so that the Lord can say in effect, "Ye are one with us."

This is made of the fullest possible character by reason that those who now possess eternal life are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, for "He abides with you and shall be in you," is the Lord's own assurance. The Spirit of the Father and the Son dwells in the Christian, in all such, unites them into one, and makes them one in the Divine Persons. As, then, it was the revelation of the truth and its perfect communication to us which linked with the first aspect of Christian unity, so in this it is the grand and wonderful fact of the third person of the Trinity having taken possession of the Christian, of all such, making them one in the Father and the Son, and one with each other by reason of the fact that all have the same Spirit indwelling them. This is the force of the Lord's own words, and it is made doubly sure by "their word" in which the truth is expanded for us, as the Lord also announced that it would be.



"He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Gost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

"Living water" is the figure the Lord uses in speaking of the Spirit, and He first mentions it to the poor Samaritan woman.

Since it is this gift and its great blessing for us which characterizes this second aspect of Christian unity it may be well to consider the Lord's teaching, and that of His apostles concerning it. This will also make clear the link between these two aspects of unity. For if the first is a unity established through the fellowship of the truth, it is the truth we must consider in speaking of the teaching to which we have referred. All depends upon believing, upon having faith in the revelation made. The disciples believed the word of Christ, the Father's word declared and made known by Him. And we believe through "their word," and so come into their blessing as our own.

This teaching of our Lord as to the work, presence and power of the Spirit of God, both as to its individual application and that which more particularly concerns us at this time, its corporate application, its application therefore to Christian unity, is especially set forth in John's Gospel. Before passing, however, to that which is our immediate concern it may be well to consider the individual application in its three broad features as He sets them before us in John's gospel, chapters three, four and seven; and then consider more particularly the personal coming of the Holy

Spirit and its consequences as set forth in the latter part of the gospel.

New Birth and Eternal Life.

Јони 3.

This subject which I propose to briefly consider lies at the threshold of all spiritual relationship and blessing. It is the fundamental necessity, and involves by its very nature a complete change of position and condition.

Man by wisdom, by his reasoning, has never and will never, find out God. Communion and fellowship between God and His creature can alone be in a natural life of unfallen character and condition, or else in the power of spiritual life which results from being "born from above." The former, man has lost through disobedience, sin; the latter, he has not; nor can attain by or through himself; it ever has been and only can be through a distinct operation of God himself who alone can quicken, impart life, for man has become morally and spiritually dead toward God. It has been immutably decreed by the lips of divine Truth, "Ye must be born from above."

That spiritual life has been imparted, bringing the creature into fellowship with God, from the very beginning, Scripture clearly witnesses to us. Abel obtained witness that he was righteous; his offering, clear evidence of his faith, was accepted; and John assures us that he who practises righteousness is begotten of God. (I John 2:29; 3:12.) To this early case we may add the long list of worthies mentioned in Hebrew XI, and so through all the ages past, and through time which is yet to come this great blessing has been and

will be bestowed. The reason for it is evident: there is a God of goodness and mercy on the one hand, and man, His creature, ruined by sin and alienated from Him, on the other, whom nevertheless He desires to have in living fellowship with Himself. And so the Son, come in grace to bring to full fruition these desires, can say, "My Father worketh hither," and now He, the Son, was working also. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will"; and further He can say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." I have associated these thoughts because it must be evident that new birth, if it be that which the words imply, is the impartation of life,—a new life. This then is the fundamental necessity for seeing or entering the kingdom of God,—the sphere of His rule and blessing in contrast to that kingdom of darkness and evil ruled by Satan in which man in his natural state now finds himself. Thus comes about that translation spoken of by the apostle Paul. (Col. 1:13.)

The Lord amplifies His statement as to this birth of which He speaks by saying, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." In the terms He here employs we have expressed the manner of accomplishment, and an expression of the character belonging to this new birth,—this being born from above,—while also its absolute distinction from all else is clearly emphasized. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." There is no change in either, and no intermingling. The former cannot in-

herit the kingdom (I Cor. 15:20); the latter ever abides in its full divine character.

But let us consider the terms,—"of water and the Spirit." Now the meaning of water as a figure is plainly attested by Scripture. It is employed as a figure of the Word of God. The cleansing effect of the Word is spoken of, thus the idea of water is associated with it. (John 13:10; 15:3; Eph. 5:26; Psalm 119:9.) It is a beautiful type of the Word of God as it deals with man, effecting first of all conviction of his uncleanness. For as the face is mirrored in the clear pool of water (Proverbs 27:19) so the heart of man in its uncleanness and evil is fully manifested in the Word, while it also, like the water, becomes the means of cleansing and practical separation from evil. This, however, is not apart from the Spirit of God. He it is who brings the Word home in all its power to the soul, effecting both conviction and cleansing. Faith lays hold of this. The soul accepts the testimony as to its utter sinfulness, and avails itself of the God-given way of cleansing as declared by the Word, the sacrificial work of Christ which puts away all sin. In this way we are begotten of God "by the word of truth" (James 1:18); and purify our souls "in obeying the truth through the Spirit . . . being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever . . . and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (I Peter 1:22-25.) The nature thus received is so characteristically God's work and absolutely conformable to His own nature that John can say, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (I John 3:9.) "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." (I John 5:1.)

We have, then, in this a distinctively spiritual work wrought in the soul so that one who is a subject of it is said to be, "born of the Spirit." (John 3:8.) Moreover, it is that in which the whole Godhead is engaged as other scriptures testify. It is attributed to God (John 1:13; I John 3:9; 5:18; I Peter 1:23); to Christ (I John 2:29); to the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, 6, 8; Titus 3:5). The whole Godhead is concerned, and connection with each is for the purpose of unfolding specific relations between those new-born and the Godhead.

It may not be out of place to briefly consider the character belonging to new birth, and the results derived from it. The life and nature communicated to us by the Spirit through the Word is devoid of all taint of sin,—"doth not commit sin," "cannot sin" (I John 3:9), "sinneth not" (I John 5:18). The believer is, therefore, a partaker "of the divine nature." (II Peter 1:4.) Characteristic of such is "walk in newness of life"; that is, a new kind of life. (Rom. 6:4). And connected with this we get the thought of resurrection. The sentence of death has been passed upon all that is of the flesh at the cross, so that now as a believer I live unto God "in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:25; John 3:3, 6, with Romans 8:5, 6.) And the law of the Spirit is life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1-4), which life we possess as "born again" or from above. Its manifestation in practice is another matter. What we are to understand is that our whole link as

born again is with Christ in resurrection. This is the character belonging to it. (Rom. 6:4-11; Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 2:12; 3:1.) It is life perfectly beyond the touch of death. Blessed and wondrous possession entered upon through obeying the truth! Another character belonging to it is "New Creation" (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). As our old birth brought us into this old creation, so the new birth brings us into New Creation, old things have passed, and all has become new. There is new birth with its new life by the Word, and of the Spirit, producing now practically "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4) as to kind, in "newness of Spirit" (Rom. 7:6) as to motive and desire. Thus we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:10.) Now the results derived from this are also very important for the believer. Such are "children of God." (John 1:12, 13, R. V.) What a blessed place to be given, and with it abundant riches and glory, for "if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:17; I John 2:29; 3:1-2.) Our link now is with God as our Father. As born again, we are insured as to final results of full conformation to the image and likeness of Christ; to this end we are begotten of Him. (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:20, 21.) Another result of being born of God is that we are possessed of power to keep ourselves (I John 5:18; James 1:27; Jude. 21), and so be preserved from the touch of the Wicked one, who, resisted by this power, flees away (James 4:7). Again, what is begotten of God overcomes the world, all of which is not of the Father, but lies in the Wicked one. (I John 5:4; 2:16; 5:19) As born of God, we love Him that begat, and love all those begotten of Him. (I John 5:1.) Thus, in

New Birth, we receive a life and nature like unto God, given by the Spirit through the word.

Here, then, the Lord has emphatically announced the necessity for new birth and given clear intimation as to its character, all of which as we have seen is strongly enforced by "their word," the word of His apostles which has been put in our hands. He now rebukes Nicodemus for his ignorance, especially when the Old Testament prophets had testified to the need of just such a change, though not in the clear and positive manner conveyed in the Lord's words. It was eminently suitable that when He spoke there should be a fulness of revelation surpassing all that had gone before. Yet associating Himself with the prophets of old, though the Peer of them all and the consummation of their testimony, He says, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." That to which they bore witness was "earthly things," the establishment of the kingdom on earth in outward display of power and blessing, for entrance into which, however, new birth was necessary. But, though He witnessed to earthly things, He had come to tell of "heavenly things." To such things there could only be one Witness, even the Son of Man who came down from heaven, yet who, though on earth, was in heaven (John 3:12-13),—the Divine Son. He it is who speaks here, the Eternal Life who was with the Father, and has been manifested unto us.

This being so, how marvelous is the next statement. Nicodemus had questioned, how can these things be? The Lord is now going to open out how they can be accomplished. The great basis of all is His work

upon the cross. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." He, the great antitypical sacrifice, displaces all the shadowy forms of the past ages. In it God is fully glorified, the whole question of sin fully dealt with, and all His claims of holiness and righteousness fully answered. God's response to the simple faith which believes in Him is deliverance from all condemnation, and the great gift of eternal life. Blessed and marvelous grace!

Since birth and life are concomitants, so here the Lord links new birth, the birth from above, with the heavenly gift, eternal life, imparted to him that believeth. This is the life given at the moment of being born of God. It is the giving of life and nature in community with Himself so that it can be said we are the children of God, and that by the most intimate and unchangeable tie.

The absolute identity of this new nature and life with that of God Himself is very clearly enforced in Scripture, especially in John's writings, as a consideration of the passages already mentioned will fully show. There also must be the manifestation of this new life. Thus only can it be known to others, for the internal operation of being born again is not visible. And so the Lord speaks to Nicodemus. (John 3:8.) The practise of righteousness is characteristic of such. (I John 2:29.) This implies the following of God as dear children. (Eph. 5:1.) As being already partakers of the divine nature, we are possessed of like desires, affections, and character to God Himself, and these are exhibited in us and witness to the accom-

plishment of new birth. To walk in fellowship with God means to be those in whom fruit is produced. The fruit of the Spirit in us witnesses to the truth of our being born of God. (Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 5:9.) Brotherly love is an evident token of the reality of the work (I John 3:18, 19; 5:1-3), because it is love of that one family to which, as born of God and loving Him, the believer now belongs. And this love is love that flows in service after the pattern of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, in the knowing of whom alone have we learnt what love is, and its true character, what therefore God is Himself. (I John 3:16, 17; 4:8-13.)

This then is the great fundamental accomplishment in the grand work of bringing about Christian unity. True, this is of individual character. But there could be nothing of a corporate character had not this individual work first place. For that which links the individual soul in common life and nature with God is that which underlies the broader and larger sphere, the unity of all in one, though it must not be forgotten that there is much, very much more in every way, brought in as part of the corporate truth.

The Holy Spirit as the power of fellowship with the Source of all blessing and favor—the Father and the Son.

TOHN 4.

This chapter presents a scene of great blessing. From Him, the great Source of all blessing, there is flowing the stream of immeasurable grace to fill and satisfy a poor outcast, ruined soul. The munificence of the grace which has come out with the coming

of the Divine Son is given a fresh and further manifestation here. We have not simply new birth, the giving of life—eternal life; but something that is more than the life as given to be in us, for it must ever be as in us dependent life; the possession of it does not make us independent of Him who only hath immortality. (I Tim. 6:16.) What is spoken of here is "living water," drinking of which the thirst is forever satisfied. But even more than this, "the water that I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." If we have the fact of eternal life given to us in the previous chapter, here we have the power of it, and that as a well in the person who has believed in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

What we have presented to us here is a divine source of joy and blessing, "the gift of God," constantly springing up, as the figure of the well aptly conveys; and its bubbling water in constant flow was after oriental simile as "living water." It is not the nature of life to be its own source of supply, and the same is true of the eternal life in us. Here we have the Source, a Spring of unfailing blessing, even the Spirit of God. However, let it be noted that we have not the distinctiveness of His personality set before us; that will be presented in its own place; we have, though, His power, and that as an inward source of all joy and fellowship with the Father and the Son, both in worship and service. This is so absolute in its character that the Lord can say, he who drinks "of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." The thirst which the soul knows as having drank at this cistern, or at that, the thirst of being unsatisfied after perchance having well drunk, is never known

by that one who has this well within, ever upspringing in its soul-satisfying draught; and never does it fall short of the life, for it springs up "unto eternal life." But of what does this well of blessing consist? It is Christ! Christ in whom all the fulness of God is revealed to me; and having Him I have all. Shall I then ever thirst again? I shall drink, and drink, and drink again; but ever to know only the greatest possible satisfaction. There are many wells in this world, and one may drink from them all and thirst again and seek yet another to try. There is only one well for eternal life, it is God's gift, it is the Holy Spirit. If the infinitude of God can be exhausted then shall I "thirst again," never otherwise.

But there are two thoughts, most important in their bearing for us, which are directly linked with this precious subject. I have already mentioned them. The first is worship. What the Lord has to say about it in answer to the woman's question is of the deepest import. She is a Samaritan, and to her Samaria's mount is the true centre of worship; yet she is not ignorant of the Jewish claim. The Lord is the faithful witness. He declares that they of Samaria know not what they worship; but the Jew does, for "salvation is of the Jews." I desire for a moment to note the precious grace here exhibited by our blessed Lord. He sits at Sychar's well as the rejected Messiah. The leaders of the nation will have none of this lowly Man, so full of grace and truth with His power, the power they would be glad of could they use it in their own way; but the grace and truth their hardened evil hearts cannot bear. Yet with all this weighing upon His spirit, when He is in the presence of

the enemies of Israel and of their privileges, He insists upon their special place, and utters no word of judgment against them; but when in their presence he faithfully exposes in burning words their true condition. "Salvation is of the Jews." Yes! And here He is "the Salvation" for which they had waited, but now rejected. However, He would not press His own claims. They will be pressed in due time; and the stone which the builders rejected shall become head of the corner. He came to do the Father's will, and so it is the Father's will He now makes known. In brief words He sweeps away the boast of Samaria, and the vaunted principle of tradition upon which it built its claim to recognition. Jerusalem, too, with all its ordinance of law and sacrificial service, though ordered and established by God for a season, but only partial in character as a revelation of Himself, He declares is to pass away. In neither of these systems is worship to be given to the Father. "But the hour cometh, and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Here is the kernel of the matter. He presses it to the then present moment—"now is"—and why? Why at that very moment must Jerusalem herself be no longer the designated place for worship? Surely, because He, the true Shekinah of divine glory, the Revealer of God, who alone could have filled the then empty temple (for the glory had departed long before) with the fullorbed glory of God, was rejected, despised, and hated. This being so, it shall be no longer a temple made with hands; no edifice, be it ever so grand, shall be the centre of worship; no material structure shall con-



stitute the gathering point for those who worship the Father. In the presence of the Divine Son all must pass that HE may be the centre. In His presence false systems, and partial revelations, must go and give place to Him who could say "Destroy this temple [the temple of His body] and I will raise it up in three days." In the glory of this accomplishment we see the prophecy of that marvelous fabric, that temple as being raised, expanding and growing into a wondrous building of divine unity and construction, composed of new-born creatures built around Him, "in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple IN THE LORD," (Eph. 2:21),—a building composed of the "living stones," those who have tasted through salvation that the Lord is gracious, built up around Him as "a spiritual house, a holy. priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (I Peter 2:1-10). "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of the lips confessing His name." (Heb. 13:15.) This is worship in spirit and in truth such as the Father seeks. This is a glorious spiritual temple instinct with life in every joint and band, every "stone" of it a vessel of worship; and thus in the midst of the praises of His redeemed children the Father dwells. This worship · is such as comes from that up-springing well of which the Lord has spoken, the Holy Spirit in power in the new-born soul possessing eternal life. What place is there in all this for tradition, or ordinance, or prescribed form? Such things can only contribute to prevent the upspringing of that blessed well. The Spirit of God is here, the Spirit of God is within,



dare we prescribe by form or regulation how HE shall lead the Father's children in worshiping Him? He is with us. Himself the divine spring of joy and power, and He is "the Spirit of truth," which in fulness He has communicated to us. Need we more for worship "in spirit and in truth"? Sights and sounds of worldly, earthly character have no place, and are a rude intrusion in the sanctuary of spiritual worship where it is to be only the music of the soul expressed by the lips, and not the music of a man made instrument; the architecture of God's temple in the Lord and not that of man's creation; a ritual of one rite, that of giving the Spirit of God His place as Leader and Governor, and in simple faith depending upon Him to lead and govern. There would be no confusion among the gathered worshipers because it is an invisible Leader upon whom they depend; could there be when it is God who is given the place? Here then, too, though we began with what is strictly individual we see the thought expanded to include what is essentially Christian unity as viewed from the standpoint of worship.

I pass now to the second thing I mentioned,—service. This poor woman herself knew more than many who profess to excell her. The Lord's answer awakes in her mind thoughts of the Messiah who, at His coming, she knew would declare all things. I feel assured that she felt that when He came neither Samaria nor Jerusalem would count for anything; the fulness of what He would reveal would necessarily displace all other systems. But do all who profess to worship the Father in this our day accord to the Son this place of supremacy as to all? With her every-

thing passed into oblivion when she heard those wondrous words, "I that speak unto thee am He." She now hastens to spread His fame. She is in His service. This teaches us that true service for Him can only flow from the knowledge of Himself as revealed to us by Himself. To her it was by His own word; to us now it is by the Spirit of truth sent forth by Him when glorified. Christian unity can alone be realized through worship and service patterned according to the Lord's thought here made known, but much more fully developed through "their word," of which I have so often spoken, and the consideration of which will come more largely before us in treating of the corporate features of the truth. That which we have considered is at least part of the things connected with that unity mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and by which the world is to believe that He was the Sent One of the Father.

The Holy Spirit, the link with Christ in glory, and and the power for all service to the widest extent.

JOHN 7.

In the foregoing remarks we have had before us the truth of the Holy Spirit as the divine well of power and fellowship put within the Christian to fill and satisfy him, also leading him out in worship apart from all of the old economy, and every form of willworship according to man. How this led out into service was also referred to, and it is the fulness of this which is connected with the new and special blessing here promised as consequent upon Jesus being glorified, just as with the former the true and proper character of worship is attained according to the

Father's mind. It is the fulness of service meeting the dire need found all around in the power of the the Holy Spirit which is involved in the words, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And undoubtedly it is by this mighty and wondrous outflow contemplated by our Lord,-meeting with its gushing freshness the souls of men, who in this arid wilderness-world are being consumed with their death-thirst, and thus bringing to them life and blessing of the highest heavenly character,—that the world is to be led to believe that He was the Sent One of the Father. I count it to be an expression of the preeminent character, though not apart from true worship, of that unity spoken about at the commencement of this chapter,-"That also they in us one may be, that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me." It is by such an outflow of blessing through those who are in the Father and the Son,—"in us,"—and are united in one by this, that the end here expressed and desired by the Lord in His prayer is to be attained. If Christian unity in its practical expression is our object and desire we do well to pay strict heed to the Lord's words.

It is interesting, first of all, to consider the whole setting which the Lord takes as His opportunity to utter this promise, and make known yet another advance in the widening stream of heavenly things and their blessing, which He came to bear witness of as He told Nicodemus. The occasion is that of the Jewish feast of tabernacles, the consummation of Jehovah's set times in the service and worship of Israel. This feast continued over the eighth day, as no other did, thus signifying the commencement of a new time after the full cycle of seven days had been

completed, a new time of glory and blessing when the wilderness journey from Egypt to the land is only a memory, fruitful, however, in the lessons it has taught. It was a festive season, and a time for the display of what God wrought. Jesus is urged to go up to the feast, and manifest Himself and His works. But those who so urged were not in tune with His perfect moral perception and judgment. He was the rejected One, rejected as the One who had come not to do His own will, but that of the Father who had sent Him. How could He, then, press any claim on His own behalf or show His power for His own advancement? He must be accepted as what He presented Himself to be, and if not He would have no place, could have none; and for Him to have sought it would have been the loss of all. And so He says, "My time is not yet come." He could not be king under such conditions; they might come by force to take Him and make Him one, but He would not submit Himself to any such action. He goes up to the feast in the character they have given to Him, rejected. He goes up privately. The world hated Him for His faithful testimony; glad to use His power for themselves if they could, they would none of His truth. Unheralded, and the object only of men's empty reasonings, not of their love, He suddenly appears about the middle of the feast. What for? To claim His place and kingly right? Nay, but to press His Father's claim, and the revelation He brought from Him. Precious, and full of blessed truth, are His ensuing words. I cannot now consider them in detail; but pass to the announcement with which He closes, "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him



that sent Me." He is going to leave them. who would give Him no place shall not be made to accord any to Him at this time. His Father will receive Him again, for still it remains true that His time has not yet full come. While the heavens retain Him, He is still the world-rejected and hated One. He is still saying, not less to-day than on the occasion here referred to, "My time is not yet come." A weighty word for all Christians, for if such are one in the Father and the Son it is true of them that their time is not yet come. Fellow Christian, will you seek the applause of men, and the glory the world can give while He is rejected? Can you have your time now while He has not His? Can this be compatible with our intimate association and link with Him in life, and nature, and glory? It is owing to the fact that such things have been so considered, that the truth and testimony of Christian unity are blasted and withered. The church has sought to reign in this world while her Head and Lord is still rejected, while He is still saying, "My time has not yet come," in testimony to which He went back to the Father, and has not as yet come back to take His great power and reign over the earth. But this going away, and this absence of His, is accompanied with the manifesting of the most wonderful purposes, and the outpouring of the greatest blessing.

In immediate connection with the announcement of His departure He unfolds the riches of grace and mercy. How marvellous that it should be so! Why not an unfolding of dire judgment upon His rejectors? Nay, but the deeper the sin and guilt of the world, the more rich the bounty of sovereign grace displayed.

The greater the evil, it only serves as the occasion for the greater display of the love and mercy of God. And His departure, though it be by way of the cross with its awful testimony to the attitude of the world toward the full revelation of God in the Son, even this is made to redound to its blessing; and His departure which meant His being glorified, became the occasion for the gift of the Spirit to the believer after such a manner of fulness as is implied in "rivers of living water" flowing out in a moral and spiritual wilderness, arid and barren,—this world which had rejected Him who alone could be life and light to it. notwithstanding all that the world proved itself to be in His rejection, He, as seated upon the throne of glory to which He departed after the accomplishment of the mighty work of atonement at the cross, poured out in the depth of His infinite compassion the Holy Spirit in such a way that He can flow out of those who are now linked with Him, one in the Father and the Son,-unity, the like of which cannot otherwise be found,-in "rivers of living water." Thus, through faith, is overcome the awful blighting power of sin which makes this world an arid, barren wilderness, for by such rivers the soul is brought into green pastures of heavenly blessing and ministry. The dreariness, the emptiness, the unslaked thirst, the burning heat, and the lack of all rest pass away before the outflowing flood of the Spirit. It is as the givers and ministers of such blessing in this world that Christians are to live, thereby making known the link of unity with the departed, but glorified Jesus. How inexpressibly precious are the thoughts of Christ about His own people! Would that they were entered into. Then



would Christian unity have its full expression. We have, then, not only new life through birth by the Spirit, but the Spirit also as the well of divine blessing within springing up ever to satisfy and fill the believer, leading out as well into true worship according to the mind of the Father; and also the Spirit in such fulness as to flow out of the believer in abundance of refreshment and ministry in service to the whole need of the scene around. These are ways in which Christian unity properly manifests itself in those who constitute that unity, and are one with the Father and the Son.

The personal presence of the Holy Spirit, and its consequences.

John 14, 15, 16.

"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

This "Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."

"It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comorter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and

of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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 shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

This is the teaching of the Lord concerning the Holy Spirit in these chapters, and a distinct advance beyond what He has given before is readily perceived. It is not now simply a divine source of blessing, or a divine power for ministry and service, but a Divine Person to whom we are here introduced. This, the Lord's language, distinctly brings before us. A truth wonderfully grand and full of blessing,—the truth of the personal presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer individually, and also the whole body of believers corporately. He is the only divinely appointed Leader for the people of God who, if given His rightful place, is the One who will and indeed is alone able to rightly lead into exercise every spiritual gift; to lead individually and collectively in all worship, ministry, and service apart from all human regulations and man-made systems which can only hinder instead of help. It is "the unity of the Spirit" we are to keep, and not a unity according to man's wisdom and organization.

But we cannot consider our Lord's words apart from giving some attention to the context, without examining a little the setting in which He frames His teaching. We find at once that one fact of great prominence which is connected with the personal coming and presence of the Holy Spirit in the world is that of the Lord's departure from this world. This was both expedient for Him, and for His own. This was His return to His proper glory, His exaltation as Man to the right hand of the Majesty on high; at once God's answer to Him because of the perfectness of His work below, and God's condemnation of the world who rejected and crucified Him. This departure of His meant for His own their being brought into the place of fullest blessing and power. He is going to prepare the place above for His own, and He is coming again to receive them, that they may abide with Him forever. Bright and blessed hope!

He tells His disciples that they know the way He goes. He had told them often, but their hearts were The cross was the only way for Him. dull. when Thomas expresses their ignorance, evidently having in mind their going, not His, His simple and beautiful answer is, "I am the Way." He must pass through the unutterable sorrow that lav across His path, the baptism with which He was to be baptized. But as for themselves they were to find, just because of the cross, that He himself was "the Way" for them. Yea more, in Him all truth and life were centered so that He was absolutely both these, and could rightly take them as His titles. To know Him, then, was to know the Father; and His words and works were the perfect manifestation of the Father.

He goes on now to the immediate point with which the coming of the Spirit was connected. "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." And He gives the assurance that whatever is asked in His name (which of necessity means what could be rightly linked with that name) He will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. With this there must be connected the love which prompts the keeping of His commandments. He speaks now of the Spirit who will be sent by the Father to dwell with the believer forever. In the truth of this personal presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit lies the possibility of accomplishing those greater works of which the Lord has spoken, and of asking in His name what would be in accord with His mind, and which He would do for the believer. We may marvel that He should say "greater works" than His own. It does not mean we will possess a greater power than He had, but in a certain place He says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened till it be accomplished." The full outflow of His love in activity was under restraint until the accomplishment of the mighty work of atonement in which He was baptized with fire, the fire of God's holiness dealing with the whole question of sin in unmitigated wrath so that God was fully glorified about this whole question, and the dishonor and disaster it had brought upon the whole creation. With this great work fully wrought out in perfection by the Perfect One, purification of sins having been made, He could sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Now there can be the unhind-



ered outflow of His mighty power in love's activity, not by His being present on earth, but now through those who believe on Him, the Holy Spirit being personally present in the world with believers and indwelling them. He emphasizes the identity of character between Himself ("I am . . . the truth") and the Spirit by calling Him, "the Spirit of truth"; and then states the very solemn fact that the world cannot receive the Spirit "because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." He assails the gross materialism of the world in these simple, but powerful, words. It will only believe what it can see. But had they not seen HIM, and had they believed? Had they not looked upon God manifest in flesh? Had they not heard a human voice speak to them the wonderful words and works of God, and give the most wonderful commands, and all be fulfilled? Had they not seem human hands perform the most wonderful miracles ever known? And had the world believed? Nav! It had rejected. The world, then, as such is given up to its unbelief. The testimony to His glory and power, and the doing of those works which accompany this testimony, will be under the direction of an invisible Person whose power, nevertheless, shall be mightily felt in the world. During this time the world will not see Jesus, but the believer does, not materially, but by faith, the lack of which is the reason of the world's blindness. And the assurance linked with the realization of that life possessed through Him, eternal life. and, too, through the coming and ministry of the Spirit, is the knowing the blessedness of that unity here expressed. There flows from this the precious promise of His manifestation to the individual who,

as controlled by the Holy Spirit, keeps His commandments and loves accordingly, so that the blessed oneness of which He has just spoken is to be realized in the mutual love of the Father and the Son. Manifestation after the order He here indicates was a new thought to the Jewish mind. Judas (not Iscariot) had heard Him announce that the world would not see Him, but that they would see Him; and this He further enforces by telling them of His purpose to manifest Himself to them individually, founded upon the keeping of His commandments and loving Him. This, I repeat, was new to the Jewish mind. Hence the question, "Lord, how is it Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The prevalent idea of the manifestation of the Christ was that of His presentation before the whole world in resplendant glory and irresistible power. But this is not to be as yet. His time had not yet fully come. Meanwhile there is to be the abiding of the Father and the Son with the man who "loves Me," says the Lord, "and keeps My word" (lit. singular). And "the word which ye hear," He further says, "is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." But if the blessing of this manifestation depends upon this keeping of His word by me, and I am a weak and failing creature liable to assault by every form of evil which would operate to prevent the keeping of this holy trust, what assurance can I have that I shall enjoy the blessing of which He has spoken? As though He was answering the unspoken questionings of the heart, He says, "But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, . . . He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said

unto you." Herein lies the answer to every question, and the banishing of every fear, for "Peace," He says, "I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Blessed, loving, tender Lord!

In the fifteenth chapter a somewhat different connection introduces what is said about the Spirit. In the beginning of the chapter the Lord presents the absolute necessity of abiding in Him, and that thus only could there be fruitfulness, for the life-sap is in Him and the branch must be in vital connection with the stock, or barrenness will result. To abide in Him is to depend entirely upon Him, to know no source of strength and vital energy except Himself, as He says, "without Me ye can do nothing." But there is another great principle besides dependence which is essential to spiritual fruitfulness. It is obedience. The Lord connects it with love. His love for the disciples is the same as the Father's love of Him; and to abide in this love He has for them, that is to find it their portion and joy, they are to be obedient according to the pattern of His own blessed obedience (ver. 10). And the joy He had in this path of obedience He desired to abide in them, so that their own joy might be full. To this end had He spoken of these things.

He speaks now of what His commands are, of the intimacy established between those who do them and Himself; and then goes on to speak of the world's hatred and persecution owing to His own faithful and true witness of the Truth and to the Father, warning His own that they too will be sharers in this, "for the servant is not greater than His Lord." But He

is going away, leaving behind the world in its hatred and rejection; and is going back to the Father. And they, His disciples, are to be left here to face the world with its hatred, rejection, persecution, and death. How can they meet this, even for His name's sake? How can they bear the brunt of such a battle? Ah! had He not said He would not leave them comfortless? Would the love in Him toward them, which was as the love wherewith the Father loved Him, permit them to be alone? Had the Father left Him alone? Nay! and He would not leave His own alone! "But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." Blessed Comfort! Infinite provision and sufficiency with which to confront the world, and all its opposing forces. We find then that the Holy Spirit dwells with believers, and is in them; and this Divine Person is to be the Teacher of all truth; and He is to be the great Witness with whom is associated the witness of those who believe. He had told them these things that they might not be offended. He thus forewarned and forearmed them. He now goes on to give much more detail as to the Holy Spirit. He outlines the great subject-matter of the Spirit's witness, first in relation to the world, and then to His own people.

He introduces His remarks by saying, "It is expedient for you that I go away;" and the reason for this is that only so could the Spirit come. He must depart, returning to the Father; and then He will send the Holy Spirit. Hence, His absence and His being glori-



fied are essential to the Spirit's presence in the world. The witness of the Spirit to the world shall be concerning sin, righteousness and judgment. He will convince the world of sin, of being in a state of sin, and in fact under its dominion. This is proven conclusively by the fact that the world does not believe on Him. He, as viewed in relation to the world, is the rejected Christ. His time has not yet come. Meanwhile. He is exalted to the right hand of power in heaven until all be made His footstool. The Spirit will deal with the world about righteousness, "because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." The world has no righteousness. It is to be found alone as inseparable from Christ, for God has displayed His righteousness in setting the world-rejected Christ on the throne where He is not seen by the world, but is proclaimed in it to be both Lord and Christ. Furthermore, the Spirit convinces the world of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged. At the cross this prince exercised all his power against Christ; but Christ rose again, and took His seat on the throne in heaven. This is the selfevident judgment of the prince and the world which joined hands with him against God and His Christ. Their victim is in the place of, and has been given, all power in heaven and earth. The cross is the consummating expression of the enmity and hatred of Satan and the world to God and His Son, to which only one response can be made by God, and that is judgment. The execution of it may linger, but its inevitableness is unquestioned; and to this the Spirit bears witness. The presence, then, of the Holy Spirit in the world is fraught with solemn consequences for

the world. His witness to it during the absence of Christ is of very serious import, both to it and for the individual who, believing and accepting Christ, really takes sides with Him against it and its rejection of Him. This only can mean moral and spiritual separation from it in every way, as witnesses against it in unity with the express witness of the Spirit of God.

The Lord now speaks concerning the relation of the Spirit to His disciples, and so to all who believe. He had many things to say to them. They were not as yet, however, ready for them. The Spirit would guide them into all truth. He would, therefore, communicate the "many things." What He hears that will He speak, making manifest things to come. That which He hears and receives are the things of Christ, and these are also the things which He communicates. His special purpose all through is to glorify Christ. Furthermore, the precious things the Spirit will thus communicate are the Father's also, for all that the Father has belongs to Christ; and if the Spirit took of His things and made them known, they were none the less the Father's things too. Thus we see a perfect and beautiful acting together of these Divine Persons in connection with the revelation of Christianity.

From what we have been considering, it is quite evident that the Lord's departure from the world, and His presence in glory, are intimately connected with the personal presence of the Holy Spirit in this world; and His indwelling of believers individually and corporately; and as being the distinctive witness for Christ in the scene of His rejection and death. These truths,

both of the Spirit's presence and the place of Christ in glory, are of preeminent importance to all Christians, and have the most important bearing upon all their relations together. It is clear that if the Spirit of God is present here, we must have in Him a divine and all-sufficient source of blessing and power for all ministry and service, the divine Leader of God's people. He, surely, is divinely able to order aright all activity in the body of Christians, and to cement together in perfect unity. But at this juncture I am constrained to say that a testimony to, and activity in accordance with this great truth is deplorably lacking among Christians in general. What is the meaning of all the elaborate systems of Church government and ritual, with the high offices and the weighty influence wielded in the affairs of the Church by those who hold them? Who fostered this incubus upon the people of God? Where in the things the Spirit of God has communicated do we find a hint, even, of these things? If men believed there was a Divine Person present to order and control the workings of the Church, and to use in the accomplishment of its service and ministry whomsoever He would according to His own perfect system of Church government and order, would the Church be so encumbered? could be more simple than that in faith the Lord's people should trust unreservedly to a Divine Person to direct ALL! The Holy Spirit is here, and is in each believer. Is He not capable of free and sovereign action? Should He not be accorded the place of acting in sovereignty? And if He has an order for all activity in service and worship, can He not make it operative? And if all depends upon Him, it matters



not whether there be few or many to gather together. His power and order is available for the two or three as for the two or three hundred. If He be given the sovereign place in the midst of the gathered company, there will be no more confusion because of a great number than there would be among a small number. If a company of Christians who have surrendered their own wills to walk in subjection to God, believed a Divine Person was present in their midst, would not everything be governed by this great fact? There is no fact so potent in the accomplishment of unity as that of there being one centre of authority, power and service. That Christian unity might be practically realized, the one potent factor was supplied in the personal presence of the Holy Spirit and His immediate indwelling of every believer. The loss of this truth, in its pristine blessedness and power, by the Church, lies as the root cause of its disunity. return to this truth, and the abandonment of all that conflicts with its absolute supremacy in the midst of Christians, is the first step back toward the unity of the broken and scattered sheep of Christ.

I wish now to say a little about the office of the Spirit as thus come into the world, to be with and in God's people. This, for the present, I simply gather from the term used by the Lord in speaking about the Spirit; a term rendered in our Authorized Version "Comforter," but the thought conveyed to us by this, hardly, in any adequate way, sets forth the fulness of the name. While the thought of comfort and consolation is associated with the fact of the Spirit's presence here, the term implies much more. Indeed, it means one who takes up our case and, as fully enter-

ing into it, identifies himself with all our interests. How blessed to think of the Spirit of God in this way! What a wonderful display of divine grace and mercy toward us! What immense possibilities of blessing lie enwrapt in this mighty truth! May Christians everywhere awake to this, and throw off every influence which would restrain them from giving the Spirit of God His rightful place among them as collectively meeting together in this or that place, and so no longer do despite unto the Spirit of grace.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT, AND THE UNITY OF CHRISTIANS RESULTING AS BEING BAPTIZED BY HIM
INTO ONE BODY OF WHICH CHRIST IS THE

HEAD

Having traced the teaching of the Lord concerning the Holy Spirit, I wish now to examine the teaching of the apostles, that is "their word," as the Lord speaks, which is the communication of the Spirit to them, being in result the expanding of His own teaching and the making known of what He could not make known when here Himself. The Spirit of Truth had to come to lead into all truth. To the consideration of the fact of His coming let us first turn our attention.

I. The promise and its fulfilment.

In the Synoptic Gospels, with the exception of the testimony of John the Baptist, we have only three instances of the Lord Himself speaking about the Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:13; 12:12; 24:49.) In the first case He assures the disciples of the readiness of the Father to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. In the next instance He emphasizes dependence upon the Holy Spirit; and finally, He makes this announcement after resurrection, "I send the promise of my Father upon you," instructing them to remain in Jerusalem until clothed with power from on high. The teaching of the fourth Gospel we have noticed; there remains only the last mention of the Holy Spirit by the Lord in that Gospel (20:22) where He says to

the disciples, "Peace be to you; as the Father sent me forth, I also send you. And having said this, He breathed into them, and says to them "Receive the Holy Spirit." This act of breathing into them undoubtedly signified that they were participators with Him in resurrection-life, in the glory of which He was standing among them; and as in the place of supreme authority He assures them of being recipients of the Holy Spirit, of course at the time when He would come, which, as we have already seen, could not be until after the departure of Christ. What we may consider His concluding word is given us in Acts 1:5-8, which is "John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence"; finally, again assuring them that they "will receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Following this we have the well known accomplishment on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) of all the promises of the Lord. Peter fully affirms this in His address saying, "This Jesus has God raised up whereof all we are witnesses. Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which ve behold and hear." He then announces a little later how this gift is to be obtained. "Repent, and be baptized each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.." (Acts 2:38). And, furthermore, before the council in the temple Peter boldly declares "The God of our Fathers has raised up Jesus, whom ye have slain, hav-



ing hanged Him upon a cross. Him has God exalted by His right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things, and the Holy Spirit also, which God has given to those that obey Him." Obedience to Him would be shown in repentance as before commanded.

Thus far the bestowal of this gift had been restricted to Israel, but when we pass on to the tenth chapter of the Acts we find it recorded "that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost," and then in recounting the circumstances of this, Peter says, "Forasmuch then as God gave them (the Gentiles) the like gift as He did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ." In his first Epistle, too, Peter speaks of "those who have declared to you the glad tidings by the Holy Ghost sent heaven" (1:12). We thus have clearly set before us not only the promise, but also its fulfilment, and the condition of its reception, that of repentance and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ; we have also the complete breaking down of the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile, for both are seen to be equally made recipients of the same gift on the same condition. The exceptional cases of receiving the Spirit which are mentioned in the Acts do not militate against these essential fundamental facts; and these cases need not detain us now.

II. The evidence of the Holy Spirit acting in and through individuals, and also acting in and through the Lord's people as a company.

These two main facts which give evidence of the

truth that the Holy Spirit is present in power with, and as acting through, those who believe is clearly brought out in the history of the Acts. One after another is spoken of as being "filled with" or "full of" the Holy Spirit,—Peter, Stephen, Philip, Paul, and disciples. Several instances are given of the Spirit's action through the assembly of believers as such.

In the closing chapters of the Acts we find Paul has become the prominent figure among the assemblies; and so from the history recorded in this book we naturally pass on to his epistles and their teaching in which the full truth concerning the Holy Spirit is developed for us. I have already made reference to some of Paul's teaching, but it is very necessary that it be examined in detail. He was the one privileged to complete the Word of God, not to write the last book of Scripture, but to give the full measure of revelation, to complete the making known of what God had in His purpose and counsel to reveal. is, therefore, very largely the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to make known the full truth as promised by the Lord Himself, which we have been considering in John's Gospel.

Paul fully confirms the testimony of Peter as to the coming and gift of the Holy Spirit. In I Thess. 4:8, the earliest of his writings, he speaks of God, "who has given also His Holy Spirit to you." And in the last of His writings we have his word to Timothy, "Have an outline of sound words, which words thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Keep, by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us, the good deposit entrusted." (II Tim. 1:13-14.)

And so he can speak of believers being sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13; 4:30); of the reception of the Spirit by the Galatians, and of the Spirit being sent into their hearts so that they cry "Abba, Father." When we turn to His epistle to the Romans we find the relation of the Spirit to us individually very fully dealt with. He speaks of the Holy Spirit which is given unto us (5:5), and says with assurance "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (8:9). Accordingly he speaks of "the Spirit that dwelleth in you," of them being led of the Spirit of God, and again of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits, while He joins His help to our weakness, taking up our cause, and making intercession for us. In this Paul fully confirms the thought given by the Lord in calling the Spirit the Comforter or rather Paraclete, to which we have previously referred in a brief way. In the early chapters of I Cor. he speaks of the Spirit revealing the deep things of God; and this fulfils the Lord's promise that the Spirit, when come, would lead into all truth. Paul affirms again the fact of the Spirit's indwelling, and that the body of the believer is His temple. (I Cor. 2:10-12; 3:16; 6:10.) This brings me to the twelfth chapter of this epistle which I wish to consider in detail, as it presents truth of the most important nature, and which has a most essential bearing upon the subject of the Spirit and the unity of Christians.

A unity in blessing and spiritual manifestation is evidenced in the history of the Acts, marked by very great simplicity,—breaking of bread, ministry of the Word, praise, and prayer are the exercises participated in, evidently all as led and directed by the Holy Spirit. The salient features of this testimony were the declaration of the crucifixion, resurrection and glorification of Jesus, and His being made both Lord and Christ. And then more particularly with the advent of Paul. the preaching of Him as the Son of God in connection with which there was the making known of a very intimate link existing between the glorified Man and those on earth who were called by His name, for the Lord had said to Paul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Saul had been hounding to death in every quarter the despised sect of the Nazarenes, and lo, the Lord of glory says to him in the midst of his frenzied execution of the mission of persecuting these despised people, "Thou art persecuting Me." A very wonderful revelation, indicative of that future unfolding of the oneness subsisting between Christ and those who are His, especially brought out in Paul's Epistles.

It is well to note that in this present time, the Christian age, it is not simply in the manifestation of power and testimony that the Spirit's presence is known and realized. There was both the Spirit's power and testimony before Christ came, before Pentecost. To this the Old Testament fully witnesses. For Christians, that which is so distinctly new and of the highest possible importance, and which involves the unity of all such in the most positive and practical manner is the personal presence of the Spirit and His indwelling of every believer; it is what constitutes the gift of the Spirit. There are also the gifts of the Spirit, but to consider them opens up quite another line of truth, which, however, is brought before us in this twelfth chapter of I Cor. By the wondrous fact

of this indwelling all are united in one, for there is only "one Spirit," and furthermore He makes the Assembly of Christians His temple. (I Cor. 3:16, 17.) But for geographical considerations there would be only one assembly in all the world; of necessity, as occasioned by those geographical circumstances, there are assemblies. Thus this term, assembly, is used in several ways: first, of the whole body of Christians (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; 9:4-5, with I Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 29, 32; Col. 1:18, 24; I Tim. 3:5, 15; Heb. 12:23); then, of individuals of the whole gathered as a company in this or that place or locality (Acts 8:1 13:1; 20:17; Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 1:2; Col. 4:15-16; I Thess. 1:1); also in the plural, of such companies in any given country (Acts 9:31; I Cor. 16:1, 19; Gal. 1:2; II Cor. 8:1); and finally, of all such companies (II Cor. 11:8, 28; II Thess. 1:4). The apostle, however, affirms of each that they are, as being an assembly or church in this or that place, the temple of the Holy Spirit. In their midst He will manifest Himself in power, ministry, and testimony, just as He would do if there was only one gathering together of all who composed the Assembly or Church of Christ. Thus we are introduced to the spiritual temple which replaces the material structure of the Jewish order.

III. The spiritual manifestation of the unity of the Holy Spirit.

This twelfth chapter, of which we have spoken, deals with spiritual manifestations concerning which the apostle does not desire the Corinthians to be ignorant, and of course none of us, for the Epistle is

addressed not only to the Assembly at Corinth but also to all those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus,the whole company of believers throughout the world. From a consideration of the first three verses it seems that the apostle intended, first of all, to show the difference between the manifestation of evil spirits, of which there were many, as there were idols many (I Cor. 10:19-21), and the manifestation of the one Spirit of God. He suggests at least the multiplicity of agencies for evil manifestations in contrast to the one all-sufficient and divine agency for the manifestation of good,--the Spirit of God. Hence, the keynote of the whole chapter is Divine unity, the unity of every agency for spiritual good under the one Spirit who directs and leads in the diversity of manifestation. The development of this is presented in a seven-fold way which reaches into the most intimate operations and relations together of God's people. Here we find the basic principles of our unity as Christians,—of Christian unity.—which, if allowed to operate in their normal Spirit-led and ordered way would cement God's people together in the bonds of love and fellowship by which the world would know the true power and blessing of Christianity. That this result is sadly lacking is plain to all; and this becomes the evidence that these principles have not been allowed to govern; hence, a divided Church, to the shame of Christians, and the mockery of the world. Consideration must then be given to these principles before it can be stated what is the practical way of accomplishing in this present time the desired and longed-for Christian unity.

We have the working together, in difference of rela-



tion, of the three Divine Persons, so that it is made clear that each has direct connection with the manifestation of the unity of Christians, which is so largely dwelt upon in this chapter.

"There are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit."

"There are distinctions of services, and the same Lord."

"There are distinctions of operations, but the same God who operates all things in all."

Notice, first of all, it is not now the gift of the Spirit we are to consider, but His gifts, those things which manifest His presence among and in the Lord's people. Furthermore, whatever difference may be found to exist between the gifts, this does not mean a multiplicity of spirits; but all are given and used by the "one and selfsame Spirit." All this is accomplished as service to one Lord, the Spirit is not independent of Him, nor is there any separation between these Divine Persons. Christians are not spoken of as servants of the Holy Spirit, but of the Lord Jesus; and all service is looked at as under His authority, and as being done for Him. Then the operations, or effects,-as being what is wrought in the service resulting from the exercise of the gift, whichever of the particular gifts it may be,—are of the one God, not the Father simply, but Father, Son, and Holy Spirit acting together, for observe that while in this verse God is mentioned, in another place (ver. 11) it is said, "All these things operates the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each in particular according as He pleases." What is attributed to God in the previous verse, is here also attributed to the Spirit, who acts as to distribution according to the sovereignty

of His will. It is evident that they are co-equal in activity and power. This essential unity of the Godhead is the solid foundation underlying all that is now developed for us in the seven aspects of unity presented in this chapter.

First, we have unity in the diversity of workings because of the one Spirit (verses 7-11). The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each for profit. Thus care has been taken that the blessing of all might be attained. Somewhat of the diversity is shown in the gifts which are mentioned. There are nine in all which may be divided into three groups. The first gives us the gifts which especially deal with the need of the Lord's people themselves,--the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and faith, doubtless faith of that order which manifests itself in special ways. In the second group we have those gifts used as a special testimony to, and as a divine seal upon, the truth proclaimed, accrediting it as being from God who, it is said, bore witness with His people "both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Spirit, according to His will." (Heb. 2:4.) These were needed during the time in which Christianity was being established, but when that was accomplished the need for this display of supernatural power ceased; and especially so when the Word of God was completed, the whole revelation of His mind being in the hands of men. Still, I would not say that these manifestations of the Spirit might not be found even today, but, I should judge, only where it was a question of accrediting the truth as of God to those who may never have heard or known of it before. In the last group the gifts are such as

have to do with the overcoming of the results of the enemy's power. The discerning of spirits was the pointing out in a positive way the workings of those evil spirits who might seek to invade the assembly of God's people and bring about its degradation by their activity. Now, with the completed Word of God in our hands, such a gift is not needed, as the test of all spiritual activity is by IT, and should be by it alone. The gift of tongues was the supernatural work of the Spirit in overcoming the results of that judgment which befell mankind in that day of impious pride when Babel was built,-mark, not a removal of the judgment, but a very gracious overcoming of it that the wonderful grace of God in salvation might Then, there was the necessary be known by all. accompaniment of this, the gift of interpretation by which those who might be present, but did not know the tongue spoken, would receive the blessing of what was ministered. How evident in this is the gracious care of God for the blessing of all! These gifts also, I doubt not, are no longer in exercise among God's people, as the special need for them has long since passed away.

But we must pass on from these things, which might be enlarged upon with much profit, to the second aspect of unity here presented,—the unity divinely formed by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit (verses 12-13). This is of great importance, and I will quote the verses in full. "For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ. For by one Spirit we have all been baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free,

and have all been given to drink of one Spirit." The human body is taken as a figure. Its oneness and innate unity none can deny. Its diversity in members and operations, yet essential unity, is equally evident. "So also is the Christ," and immediately we are assured that this is spoken, not simply of the glorious Person in the heavens, but of Him and all those who are called His members, for we have all been baptized into one body by the one Spirit, and thus we are joined to the Lord; so that this body of which He is Head has His name called upon it. In this divine unity and relationship all human distinctions pass away, they must be given no place. Any condition in which class distinctions are allowed, be they of a religious order as suggested in the comparison of Jew and Gentile, or of a social order as in bondmen and free, is a contradiction of the foundation principle of Christian unity. In it there is no provision made for human pretension, or self-exaltation. Whatever diversity of gifts there may be, and consequent diversity of operations, there must be accorded the fullest liberty for The segregation of ministry to one man or a set of men in any company, or companies, of the Lord's people is a denial of this unity; for there is a fundamental spiritual equality which gives to each what is needed to exercise their special function in the one body, we "have all been given to drink of one Spirit." This unifying of all and every believer into one body of which Christ is the Head, is the distinctive work of the Spirit of God. We read elsewhere that it is the Church which is His body, so that membership in the body gives me also membership in the Church, the Church of God, the only one

recognized in Scripture. It is the only one in which I can rightly speak of being a member, and it is not a question of my joining it, but of my being joined to it by the Holy Spirit, to Christ as revealed in the Word of God. There is another very precious truth which we may well bring in at this point, though not mentioned in the chapter before us; it is that of the Headship of Christ in relation to the body. This we find particularly spoken of in the Ephesian and Colossian Epistles. He is Head over all things to the Church, or Assembly, which is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. (Eph. 1:22, 23.) "And He is the Head of the body, the Church" (Col. 1:18); and we are to "grow up into Him in all things, who 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. 4:15, 16). How beautiful is the thought presented to us by the Holy Spirit in these words! There is the unity of One Head; there is unity in structure; unity in supply and mutual work; unity of increase; unity in edification and love; a working together of every part, not any one part having given to it, or taking to itself, the exercise which belongs to any one or many of the other parts. Such an absurdity is absolutely foreign to the human structure, which is used as a type of the spiritual, and therefore such a condition should be as foreign to the spiritual as to the natural. If the contrary be found, it is not of God. wonderful organism of spiritual activity and blessing here spoken of is entirely dependent upon the Head.



From Him comes all that which furnishes true nourishment and causes the increase through each joint and band of the body. And so when the apostle refers to those things which in result displace Christ, and which are the product of man's fleshly mind (Col. 2:16-18), he says of those occupied with such things that they do not hold the Head (Col. 2:19); there is a loss of vital connection with Him, and His direction, and ministry. In effect, congestion has come in, so that one of the channels of supply has become clogged, and a consequent abnormal condition ensues; for it is only from the Head, as the apostle here affirms again, that "all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. 2:17-19.)

I have mentioned the impossibility in the human structure of any one part, or member of it, assuming to exercise the functions of another, or of several other parts or members, but that every part has its proper activity, its distinctive use, and must have liberty to exercise it. It is this which is emphasized in one way in the next aspect of unity (verses 14-20). is unity in the distinctive use, or office, of the many members, for there is "but one body." This at once disposes of the spectre of independency, of usurpation, and the superiority of one above another in any way. There is unity, a unity in which every member is needed in the particular place and relation in which God has been pleased to set it, and because of this. equally important with every other, although the diversity of spiritual manifestation being very different. there may seem to be greater importance in some than in others; but it is even so in our human bodies, yet there is no schism; and there should be none, therefore, on such an account in the spiritual body. There are the many members, the body is not one member. If this is so, it means that each member has its own part to play in the activity of the whole, whether foot or hand, ear or eye. Thus there must not be independence or separation because of diversity, but unity in it and that according to the pleasure of God (verse 18). Indeed, we could not speak of a body if all were one member. The very idea of a body suggests many parts, but unity among them, and each performing its own part without interfering with any other. The foot cannot say, it is not of the body because it is not the hand. Moreover, if it foolishly does take such a position, this does not separate it from the body, it still remains part of it. Its foolishness, spiritually speaking, may impair its usefulness, but the unity cannot be broken.

There are, then, many members but one body—unity in organism—in which every part needs every other part; and, hence, we get the next expression of Christian unity,—unity in the mutual dependence of all the members. Not only can no member say, he is not of the body because he is not this or that; but no member can say to another, "I have no need of thee." The less honorable are as much needed as any other, and must be given their place, yea, sought out in the love by which all must work together that they may not be thought of as of no account. "God has tempered the body together." Can human wisdom, then, arrange its parts and order its activities according to its own dictates? Can it apportion the work to be done to each of the several members? It

can observe and recognize the work done by each, but can have nothing to say, or do, with the ordering or control of the work or activity engaged in. This is evident as to our human bodies. It should not be one whit less so as to the spiritual body. The power that orders and controls the normal activity of the natural body is unseen, but man does not, therefore, presume to interfere with the working of the body, or seek to change them; if he does it results disastrously. The power that orders and controls the spiritual body is also unseen, being the Spirit of God. Man in human wisdom has presumed to interfere with His working and to change His order, and the results have been disastrous to the Church of God, the spiritual body. A usurping of the functions of the many by the one is characteristic of present Church order, a practical denial of the truth of God's word; and a gross dishonor to the Spirit of God. It is a serious interference with God's order, of His way of tempering the body together, giving to each and every member its function to perform in the liberty and power of the One Spirit. Man's interference has resulted in mutilation. There should be no schism in the body, no class distinction, no sacerdotal or secular divisions, n) ministering body and non-ministering body, but in every way that form of unity we shall next consider, unity in mutual care (verse 25). This is not one caring for the many, but each caring for the other according to the individual place and relation in the body exercised in that blessed and holy bond of Christian love which, as the next chapter (I Cor. 13) shows us, is the great animating principle of all spiritual activity.

Now, we have what very properly flows out of this,



and which it is very precious to have stated in this connection. That is unity in community of interests (verse 26). "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." It is a unity in which all are bound together and are affected by whatever is the need or prosperity, suffering or honor, sorrow or joy, good or evil pertaining to each and every member. There is truth in this as to the natural body, how much more so should it be as to the spiritual body.

Finally, we have the seventh aspect, that of unity in membership. The apostle says to the Corinthian Assembly, "Ye are the body of Christ." (Verse 27.) It is to be noted that the article is omitted in the Greek. making the statement a characteristic one. It is not that the Corinthian Assembly was the body, but they were part of it; not only that, but in measure there was to be exhibited among them the characteristic marks of that body. Every aspect of unity here mentioned was to find its expression in their midst, so that it would be clearly seen and known that they were of the body, and representative of it. And so with every Christian Assembly wherever found, and among the aggregate of such assemblies, the same aspects of unity should find expression as would be found among the individual members of each assembly. Thus would the oneness of the spiritual body be known and seen in the world.

This truth has been almost entirely lost to the Church of God, and as I have already intimated it is not given any place in the constitution of church order and government. According to what we have been considering, there should be the fullest freedom for

the exercise of gifts, yea, "diversity of gifts," in the same congregation. If the exercise of this diversity is put into the hands of one or more individuals, no matter how gifted, it is contrary to the Word of God. The language of Scripture is that there is one Spirit, not one minister. It is clear, if we maintain the authority of the Word, that whatever by declaration of principle, or practise denies this liberty of spiritual activity to the people of God who constitute the Church, the one body, it is not of God; and none who acknowledge such an order can lay claim to recognition as being a company or congregation expressive of, and properly representative of, Christian unity. Such becomes only a human association governed by man-made order and arrangement. I do not say that those who constitute it are not individually Christians; but I speak of their collective character and testimony, this is opposed to the Word of God and the order established by the Holy Spirit.

The Church as to its constitutents, formation, activity, present place, and future destiny was a mystery hid in God to other ages (Ephesians 3), but it is now revealed. Christ built it (Matt. 16:18), and the Holy Spirit is the Person and Power indwelling it, so that in every way it is a divine institution, "the Church of the living God"; not "our Church," or "your Church." What presumption, then, for man to form his own rules and establish his own forms for the uniting together, and working together, of Christians who constitute this Church concerning which God, whose it is, has been so careful and particular to make known His mind as to its whole order, action, and relation together of its every member. The failure to

heed God's order has wrought the disunity of the Church, the return to it, and establishment of it among Christians, is the only way to produce true unity which can be rightly called Christian unity.

The deplorable confusion which has resulted from man's pride and self-assertion in the things of God's Church has not prevented the Holy Spirit from acting for blessing through individual members of the one body; but it has destroyed the whole glory of that blessed testimony which should have been rendered in the world to the essential oneness of the body of Christ,—in other words destroyed Christian unity. But let it be remembered that whatever the wreck and confusion, the responsibility remains; and as individual Christians we are responsible to judge of all by the unerring Word of God, to give our sanction to, and our presence be found alone with, what will abide the test of that blessed and all-sufficient guide,—the Christian's compass. In the present distracted, dislocated, and consequently weakened condition of the Church, especially as to its manifestation before the world, the only hope lies in a return to its pristine simplicity by all who will acknowledge it. This will give the Holy Spirit His appointed place and the order of God in ministry, service, and government among His people will be recognized and acted upon, so that thus a testimony may be given to the scriptural thought of Christian unity. Man may, but God does not look at numbers. With Him the great question is that of faithfulness to His revealed will. The question is, who are on the Lord's side?

Now, before closing this chapter, I wish to consider the last few verses of I Corinthians XII, and also to



link with them the teaching of Ephesian IV. We are informed that God has set some in the Church or Assembly, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings. helps, governments, diversities of tongues. enforcing the point of diversity in the gifts, the apostle asks, Are all apostles? are all prophets? and so on. Certainly not. Moreover, it is evident that it is of the whole Church he is speaking, and not of any particular local assembly, or congregation. In Ephesians IV we get an enumeration of similar gifts; but it is to be noted that miracles, gifts of healings, and tongues are omitted. I doubt not that the reason for this is that consideration was being given only to those gifts which are distinctively for the nourishment of the body itself, apart entirely from the question of those gifts which were given to the early Church as an accrediting of the truth, a matter which would not be in harmony with the subject of the Ephesian Epistle. more, the continuance of such gifts is not promised to the church in any part of the Word, but those mentioned in Ephesians IV are to continue in activity "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And then it is so beautifully stated that they are "for the perfecting of the saints for (i.e. in order to) the work of the ministry [the saints are to be perfected for this, not a select few], or the edifying of the body of Christ." The thought here, as I have already mentioned, is that of ministry from the Head through these chief channels, and in turn through every joint and band, each part active in its own divinely appointed measure to the edifying and building up of the whole body in love. And the realization of such a unity in mutual service and labor is evidently the safeguard against being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (verse 14). This blessed unity has not been, and is not, realized. The consequence is that we find Christians subject to all of the grievous evils mentioned in this verse.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy [which is speaking unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort, by no means simply, or even largely, the foretelling of future events. I Cor. 14:3], let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." (Romans 12:1-9.)

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

In the light of what we have been considering there is a very evident difference between the simplicity of the scriptural order governing the practical working together of Christians, and the order generally maintained among them, as we see it to-day. Throughout the whole of the New Testament there is no provision made for ritualistic forms in Christian worship or service; there is no provision made for Church dignitaries of various grades of distinction to whom are given the right to officiate in this and that way to the exclusion of all others in the Christian body; there is no provision for the multifarious systems of Church government, and activity, which are found existing today, and which hang like a burdensome stone about the neck of the Church, the carrying out of which entails so much that makes the heart sick if things are judged by the standard of God's Word,-a standard well nigh antiquated in the minds of many. Indeed, how much of all this has resulted in the commingling of the world and the Church to such an extent that it is hard, if not impossible, to distinguish the one from the other. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.) "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." And the world lieth in the wicked one. "What

concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (II Cor. 6:15; 7:1.) God's temple during the present time is His people, the Church, which is the body of Christ, the Church of the living God, "which is builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:22.) The world-system is the temple of Satan, for he is "the god of this world." (II Cor. 4:4.) The two cannot be built together in practical relations without the most disasterous consequences; and these very consequences are not dimly foreshadowed in the New Testament itself. In the midst of such a condition the apostle's instruction is, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (II Tim. 2:19-21.) This introduces a principle of the weightiest importance, and which has been disregarded by the Church in a degree equal to the disregard of the scriptural idea of Christian unity. What I mean is that separation from evil is ever the accompaniment of this unity, and must be an essential characteristic of the Christian body, if it's distinctive place of testimony is to be maintained.

Separation from evil has been, and is still, God's principle of unity. "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Did the Lord mean it? Did He not mean that this should be practically true of His people? Is the Church of God to be a beggar at the feet of the world? Must it have the money of the world to support its enterprises, and provide for its material support? Is it to court the favor of a pleasure and sin-loving world, or is it rather to be the reprover of the unfruitful works of darkness? And how can it seek its favor and monetary support while also testifying against its evil course? If the Church had, and would to-day, hold to the narrow path of obedience which God counts better than sacrifice (I Sam. 15:22-23), it would, indeed, be a poorer Church materially speaking, a despised Church, and not a social organization, or the show place of fashion, but a spiritually powerful Church, the beacon light of salvation and hope in a world of lust and sin, a unity characterised with spiritual love and ministry potent for blessing and service to all the abounding need of this sin-cursed world. But it is not so. The Church has been made a system in which personal ambition is exploited, individual aggrandizement sought and struggled for, wealth wielded so as to obtain the dominant place of influence, it has become to how large an extent a system developed and governed after the pattern of an earthly kingdom. I speak not of individuals whose names spell the deepest devotion to Christ and truest loyalty to the truth, whose lives have been laid down upon the altar of their faith, the record of how many such adorn the annals of the Church's history, and make its pages lustrous with heavenly



light. I repeat, it is not of individuals I speak, but of the system so contrary to the order of God's word. What would Church unity be today, could it be accomplished? I make bold to say it would not be Christian UNITY! Rather would it be like one of our great industrial trusts, and methinks I am not far wrong when I say, it is but a seeking to apply the principle of industrial combination to religion. Why not have a religious trust to keep company with the multiform trusts of the day? It, I refer to the Church, has become a world-system as much as anything else which belongs to the world. Oh, the burning shame of it all! The truth, the holy truth of God, bartered at the mart of this world with its own goods, yea indeed, for their possession.

How absolutely contrary all this condition of things to the simple and beautiful thoughts of Christ which we have been considering, and with which the teaching of the Epistles fully agrees. They cannot be spiritualized away as though they were impracticable of fulfilment, as though there could not be a practical expression of the unity unfolded to us in these precious teachings. The order is so simple, humble, and unpretentious, so like the One who is the chief cornerstone, in whom and, indeed, by whom the whole spiritual fabric is built up. It does not provide for an hierarchy. There is no House of Bishops with its gorgeous setting, nor House of Deputies, nor Presbytery, nor priestly theocracy even hinted at in the New Testament. If a kingly, or royal, priesthood is spoken of, it is what belongs to all, and not a select or separated class. How far removed is all that I have mentioned from the spirit of the Master, so glorious in humility. When there arose a strife among His own as to who should be greatest, He said to them, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42-45.) How like the Gentiles the Church of God has become! But it would seem as though it was intended to be very distinct; for whereas before Pentecost there was simply Jew and Gentile, afterwards the apostle can speak of Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God.—three classes now instead of two. Is it an easy matter, practically speaking, to find the three in this our day?

But I wish, in a sort of preliminary way, to sketch a picture of what would be a practical expression of Christian unity, both as to its form outwardly; and as to how activity in worship and service would develop. It is not a matter for the imagination, but a question of the sober teaching of God's Word which is as plain in this respect as in any other.

The spirit which is to animate and move in every act of worship or service is given to us in Chapter 13 of I Corinthians. It is LOVE. The language is so simple and beautiful that I feel there is not need of comment, but rather the need to let each statement of this chapter sink into the heart and rule it, therefore I can do nothing better than quote it in full.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of



angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail (or, be done away); whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether ther be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

We are, then, to "follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts (or, manifestations), but rather that ye may prophesy"; and this latter not because it is a display of the individual and his spiritual power as the speaking in unknown tongues, but because it is a speaking "unto men to edification, and exhortation,

and comfort." In this love shines out for the blessing of all, even the unbeliever. (I Cor. 14:24). It seems quite clear that the Corinthian assembly had many who possessed the gift of tongues, and, indeed, the apostle can say of them "ye come behind in no gift." (I Cor. 1:7.) But the trouble was that in their carnal condition, for which he reproves them, they were making use of these gifts for personal gain and self-exaltation. The spirit of love which sought the mutual edifying of all did not animate their activities. It seems they especially liked to display the gift of tongues, and that in the Church or assembly where it really had no place, unless what was spoken could be interpreted. To this, however, in their carnal ways they were quite indifferent. This speaking with tongues was distinctively "a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" (verse 22). The proper display and use of this gift is illustrated for us on the day of Pentecost. It would be the way of love to "rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue (verse 19). And so it is said to them since "ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excell to the edifying of the Church" (verse 12).

A very serious lesson is pressed upon us by the apostle's corrective ministry in this fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians. It is that where carnality of thought and ways intrude themselves into the Church of God, and there is the following of the way of worldly wisdom rather than that which is spiritual, then there is a complete displacement of God's order for His gathered people. This has proved true, not one whit less

in the whole Church as it is to-day, than it was of this one assembly in Paul's day.

It is then evident that the form of ministry which would best promote the spirit of love, since it verily flowed from that spirit itself, is prophecy. This is not the mere foretelling of events, though that in its season God gave by the Spirit before the Word of God was completed, but it is that form of ministry which edified, exhorted, and comforted (verse 3), serving especially for them that believe (verse 22), but blessedly availing for the unlearned or unbeliever (verse 24); so that there is conviction, judgment, and manifestation of the heart before God, and worship to Him results (verse 25). What a precious and blessed issue! The character of prophecy, then, is to unfold the truth, to minister its blessings to others, to bring them to God Himself. And what is this but God manifesting Himself in His habitation, or present temple, which the Church is, the whole body of Christians. Now it is very clear from verses 26 and 30 that such ministry is not by any means restricted to one, but ALL come with something, or may have something given to them at and during the time of being gathered together. Would not this be a fruitful cause of utter confusion? must there not be some presiding officer to keep the congregation out of choas? We do not read of any. There is the simple direction that all is to be done unto edifying. It is the love that seeks the good of all which is to control. The prophets, then, are to speak one by one that all may learn, and all be encouraged (verse 31). Order of this kind is the work of God, by the Spirit through the various members of the body; and He is not a God of dis-

order, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints (verse 33). Hence, there is no need of a human director of these spiritual manifestations. The Spirit of God must be given His place, and then there will be no confusion. The lack of faith on the part of God's people to trust all to the Spirit's divine leadership has resulted in putting man in His place. Consequent upon this grave evil, confusion and every kind of distortion has come into the Church, destroying the beauty and blessing of all as ordered by God. Liberty for the Spirit and of the Spirit with an entire absence of all officialism in form, position, or personality, is what should characterize a true expression of Christian unity in the meeting together of those individuals who form part of that unity, the one body. It is such features which are conspiciously absent from the Church to-day. This has resulted in a condition which effectually destroys all true expression of Christian unity among the people of God. Yet Paul demands recognition of what he has written as being the commandment of the Lord from any man claiming to be a prophet, or spiritual, which really means that if such do not acknowledge it they are neither the one or the other.

A fellowship together in mutual ministry exercised in the power of love as being of one body, of which all who believe are members, is what the thoughts which have been before us most plainly teach. Now an integral part of such true Christian fellowship is the breaking of bread, that blessed and holy feast instituted by the Lord in remembrance of His death. It is that for which Christians should gather together regularly and constantly. It is our open confession

of our fellowship with the blood of Christ, and the body of Christ, while the united keeping of this memorial is a witness that we are "one bread, one body." (I Cor. 10:16-17.) Nowhere in Scripture is it presented to us as a means of grace, or as an action bringing some special form of blessing to us; or as saving us. It is distinctly a remembrance of the Lord in His atoning death by His people, by believers in Him, such as are already saved through having faith in Him as their Saviour and Lord. In connection with it there is to be the discerning of the Lord's body, that is the recognition of its absolute holiness and sanctity, and that, as being in communion with it in this memorial feast, there is to be holiness of character and association. Hence, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and dring of that cup." There must be self-judgment. Evil is not to be connected with this holy remembrance of the Holy One, for where two or three are gathered unto My name, He says, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). The Christian gathering is the place of the Lord's presence, and from it evil is to be excluded. He is present when there is the gathering together to remember Him in the breaking of bread, He is present when, and wherever, two or three gather unto His name, be it for prayer or whatever spiritual exercise. But be it noted that it is unto HIS NAME. This is the fundamental feature of any gathering which is to be rightly an expression of Christian unity. For has not His name been named upon the Christian body? To this I have already called attention. Christians constitute "the body of Christ." When speaking of the body and its many members

as a type of the Christian body, the apostle says, "So also is Christ," thus the body is called by His name. To what other name, then, are Christians to gather? Dare it be to any other? Will it do to own and gather to the name of this or that party? To this or that man, no matter how worthy and distinctive such may be? Sectarianism has been the bane of the Church since the days of the apostle. It showed itself in Corinth, and received its well-merited rebuke from him,—a rebuke which it would do well for the people of God to take heed to in this day. Has Christ become divided? Is a Paul, or an Apollos, or a Cephas to be the centre of gathering for God's people? CHRIST ALONE IS TO BE THAT CENTRE! Christians must be gathered unto His name. All else is but human form, wisdom, and expediency; an association of fleshly, not spiritual, character. It is because the blessedness and peculiar glory of that Name was soon lost that men became the centre of attraction instead of that One of whom it is said. He is the Head of the body, the Church, and who Himself said, "where two or three are gathered together unto My name there am I in the midst of them." Where is the faith that counts this true, and acts upon it? It is only in this same way, that is by faith, that salvation through the work of Christ is realized and possessed. By faith alone is all blessing from God realized, and it is alone by faith, which is believing and acting upon the truth, that God is pleased (Heb. 11:6.)



CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES: MEETINGS, DIFFERENT LINES OF WORK, WOMAN'S PLACE, THE MONEY QUESTION, AMUSEMENTS, THE CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATION TO GOVERNMENTS, AND HIS POLITICAL RELATIONS.

Meetings.

If, as Christians, we discountenance human order and form in Christian service and activity, the Word of God must become the recognized standard from which to gather knowledge and wisdom concerning the Godly order and form of all Christian work. His Word must be sufficient for this, as for all else. "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. (II Tim. 3:16, 17.) In Scripture, then, we have a perfectly complete guide for every form of Christian activity.

Mention has been made of the great characteristic gathering of Christians. I mean that gathering together which is for the remembrance of the Lord, in accordance with His request on the night of His betrayal, "This do in remembrance of Me." (Luke 22:19.) Later, by special revelation, this request is again communicated to the Church by the apostle Paul. "For," he says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus

the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (I Cor. 11: 23-26.) The character and meaning of this blessed institution of the Lord I have briefly spoken of in the preceding chapter. It figures our communion with the holy body and infinitely precious and efficacious blood of the Lord (I Cor. 10:16), and also signifies the oneness of all believers in that one body which is the Church. It has, thus, both an individual and corporate character. For, it is as individual believers we have fellowship with the body and blood of Christ, who is "our Passover, sacrificed for us." (I Cor. 5:7.) Hence, this remembrance of Him as God's Lamb sacrificed for us is a holy "feast," to be kept "not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (I Cor. 5:8.) Thus, it has connected with it the requirement of holiness according to the Lord, a distinct separation from evil; and also, as the apostle just previously remarked, a purging out of evil (I Cor. 5:7), not only separation from evil, but non-allowance of it within that company gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 5:4, Matt. 18: 15-20.)

The foregoing furnishes us with the precept as to this matter. As to example: first, at the beginning

of the Church, it is recorded that the three thousand who were added to the nucleus who were gathered together on the day of Pentecost, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and prayers." (Acts 2:41, 42); secondly, "upon the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread Paul discoursed with them" (Acts 20:7); and thirdly, we have Paul's instructions in the Corinthian Epistle to which we have already referred. Again in Hebrews the assembling together is spoken of, and the not forsaking it is strictly enjoined. (Heb. 10:25). We have, then, in these brief notices definite forms of activity,-teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. This is very comprehensive. "Teaching" certainly includes all manner of instruction in the truth as given to us in the inspired Word of God; and it may well be thought of as including evangelization in the world at large for that, too, is teaching,—first of all the imparting of the true knowledge of the existing need, and then presenting what alone can meet it. The thought of "fellowship," embraces every possible expression of true Christian love in service and labor, for and with all who believe. "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (John 1:7.) This, however, is fellowship in the light which God is, in whom there is no darkness at all; therefore, our fellowship together is to have the same character of holiness which belongs to God.

In the gathering together to break bread, we have the chief and all important meeting of the Church. It also is the only one distinctly specified; and it evidently occurred once a week, on "the first day." It is clear, too, from the way in which the historian records this occasion, that not only was it a regular custom, but that the breaking of bread was the distinctive feature, or object, for which they came together. The presence of an apostle did not change this. He was there and could make it the occasion for a discourse; but they were "gathered together to break bread." From I Cor. 14 we learn that when the Church thus came "together into one place" (verses 23, 26) that it could be and was made an occasion for teaching, or prophecy, for prayer, for singing (verses 15, 19, 24). But whatever spiritual activity was engaged in by the assembled congregation, the breaking of bread was the primary object, the motive for this gathering together. "Prayer" is the blessed privilege we have as children of God. We thus approach and address Him as our Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This, of course, is individual, but is also connected with "fellowship," as the Lord says, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask." (Matt. 18:19.) And needless it is to remark that prayer can be either in private or in public.

The four main features of which I have spoken might be developed in greater detail, but the foregoing must suffice for the present. However, it may be well to clearly state that while there is only this one chief Church meeting specifically mentioned, this is not a bar to having other meetings as the spiritual need of the Church may require; but this meeting for the breaking of bread must ever be kept as the prominent and distinctively necessary one, never permitting

any meeting to assume a character contrary to the order given in the Word of God. Nothing but good can come from weekly meetings for prayer and the reading and study of the Scriptures, and for conferences of Christians. All, however, must be carried out in accord with the truth, and as recognizing the Spirit of God as supreme and all sufficient to lead in ministry of whatsoever kind among the gathered people of God. Dependence upon God in simple faith can never result in confusion and evil work, just because He is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (I Cor. 14:33.) Only let it be tried in faith, and the blessed results will be manifest of the Spirit having liberty to use whomsoever He will. Then, too, it cannot be out of place to have meetings at which some special servant of the Lord, a teacher or an evangelist, may give addresses on the Scriptures; but such meetings depend entirely upon the responsibility of the individual taking charge of them, and necessarily therefore are not properly assembly gatherings. There are, also, those solemn occasions when the Church gathers together to consider or act in matters of discipline and government for maintaining the holiness of the house of God. The Lord, Himself, speaks of such an occasion in Matt. 18:17-18; the Apostle Paul in I Cor. 5; and such action may well be suggested in the address to the Assembly at Ephesus (Rev. 2:2), when it is said. "Thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." A marked example of an assembly gathered to consider a matter of Church government is given in Acts 15. It may be



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well to call attention to its general characteristics. Paul and Barnabas, returning from their work among the Gentiles, are deputed with certain others to take up at Jerusalem the question of circumcision as being applicable to Gentile believers. Upon their arrival at Jerusalem they are "received of the Church," this has first place, then the apostles and elders. The matter is considered, and the decision reached is said to be according to the pleasure, not only of the apostles and elders, but of "the whole Church" so that it is evident that the whole assembly at Jerusalem were considered, and concerned in this matter. In writing the letters to the other assemblies concerned note carefully how the supreme place of control and direction is given to the Holy Spirit. "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us." If it be said that James takes the place of control in voicing his sentence, and which evidently is accepted by all, I reply, No, it is not James in control, but James being controlled, so that it can be said "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit,"a distinct example of what I have spoken about in considering I Cor. 12, in a previous chapter. This last point, and the fact of the Lord's presence in fulfilment of His promise, are the things of major importance in relation to all assembly meetings. It is not human presidency we require, but that of the Spirit. This alone can suit the place of the Lord's presence.

Different lines of work.

Many suggestions as to Christian work are given to us in the Word of God. We cannot do much more than call attention to them. It is not a question of our own plans or expedients. These have resulted in much work that is entirely contrary to God's thought, and whatever the show may be, the results are not abiding; but all such is like the "wood, hay, stubble," which will be burnt up, while the doer of these kinds of work will "be saved; yet so as by fire." (I Cor. 3:12-15.) It is only what the Word of God sets us to do, the good works for which it furnishes us, and which like the gold, silver and precious stones, abide the test, and are found unto the praise of God, which receive due reward from Him.

The subject of "good works" is very generally referred to throughout the New Testament. Their character is, perhaps, nowhere more conprehensively stated than in these words, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Col. 3:17.) This manifestly sets both a very high standard for, and also imposes a divine limitation to, our words and deeds. It certainly means that what the name of Christ stands for is to be the guide. Can we do what we contemplate in His name? Can we rightly, with good conscience, associate His name with our plans and purposes? Are they such that we feel assured our thanks for them will be acceptable to God the Father? For we are to walk "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." If our lines of work, then, are to be associated with a walk pleasing to the Lord, and accompanied with a growing knowledge of God, it is not hard to realize that our work must be governed and guided by the revelation of God's mind. This is to be found in the Word of God; nowhere else. "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." (II Tim. 3:16-17.) We are to be prepared for (II Tim. 2:21), furnished unto, zealous of (Tit. 2:14), and ready to every good work (Tit. 3:1), and further, to learn to maintain such. (Tit. 3:8, 14.)

These good works are spoken of under the figure of "fruit,"—the fruit of the vine, or of trees, or the seed sown is used to illustrate the spiritual. gives the idea that as the natural fruit partakes of the character and nature of the tree that bears it, so "good works," or Christian fruitfulness, are to be the fruit of that new spiritual nature about which the Lord has taught us in John's Gospel. Hence, this Christian fruitfulness is called the, "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 5:9), all the features of which mark it as being diametrically opposed to the works of the flesh, or natural man. Moreover, such fruit is alone produced through the hearing and believing of the Gospel (Col. 1:5, 6), in which the wisdom and power of God is found. Good fruits can only proceed from what comes from above, the characteristics of which will necessarily be given to them. God is, then, the One who supplies the grace and sufficiency for every good work, and enables for the increase of the fruits of righteousness with which we are to be filled. (II Cor. 9:8-10; Phil. 1:11.)

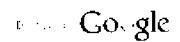
The truth is we have a double standard for Christian work; first, the name of the Lord Jesus in which all is to be done; and, secondly, all is to be of such a character as the Holy Spirit would produce who alone

can furnish us through the Word with that heavenly wisdom, as James speaks, which is needed for the performing of all that is fruit unto God, good works pleasing to Him.

While we may think of the foregoing remarks as applying more especially to what is individual, they, nevertheless, have a large measure of application to the more public work of those who follow specific lines of Christian service, and also to that which may be done by the Christian body. All surely must conform to the standard I have spoken of, and this is again further enforced by the truth that the Christian gathering is to be unto the name of Christ.

But now as to the very distinctive lines of work and ministry which are to be carried on in connection with the Church. While this is of necessity done by the individual members, it all is, as I believe I have clearly shown from Scripture, not confined to any specific class; but all is under the direct gudiance and ordering of the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that we have the various lines of work specified; but not a class of men to perform them, a specifically designated class to whom work or ministry belongs. As to this point all is left in the most general way. There is no defining of who should do this or that, it is rather, "If any man desire." The character, associations and manner of life of those who engage in any form of public service is very clearly defined; and we, therefore, could not say that the Spirit of God was leading in this or that line of work anyone who did not conform to these requirements which He, the Spirit of God, has given.

Before detailing these lines of work, it may not be



amiss to consider, briefly, the only two offices seemingly mentioned in the New Testament which alone gives us the order of the Church. The office of a bishop, "If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1), and a little further on the apostle speaks of those who have "used the office of a deacon" (ver. 13). To attain the first there is quite evidently no such elaborate system of Church promotion as we now know. The character and qualifications of the man who is to fill this place are clearly set forth. Many such men are to be found in the Church who bear no title of dignity, but who fill the scriptural requirements and, if they have the desire, are entitled to do such work. The Greek word rendered "bishop," and "overseers" in Acts 20:28, gives us the whole meaning of the "office." It means "one who superintends or cares for the welfare of anyone,—overseeing or visitation." A passage from James (1:26, 27) may aptly describe a bishop's work, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Now, if we consider carefully Titus 1:5-7 it is plain that bishop and "elder" are identical, and that the latter term simply indicates the kind of person who is to do a bishop's work. It certainly would not be suitable for a young man to fill such a place. It is a question of advancement in spiritual understanding, and years of discretion. But then, plainly, it can be any elder in the Church who meets the requirements

laid down in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. Now, it is with such men that the work of rule in the Church is connected, as we read in I Tim. 3:4, 5, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God"; and I Tim, 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." And to such reference is made in Heb. 13:7, 17, 24, where we are directed to "remember," "obey," and "salute" those who thus take the lead among God's people. This work of rule is mentioned among the gifts according to grace in Rom. 12:8, while also a very similar thing, if not the same, is referred to in I Cor. 12:28 as "governments," a term primarily meaning "to steer," that is, "pilotage." The character of this ruling is indicated in the comparison made with the family relation. Thus, the injunctions given to fathers in the Word may well be used to help in guiding actions in that larger sphere of service here mentioned. The meekness and gentleness of Christ exercised in all love, truth, righteousness, and holiness is surely to mark this work.

The office of deacon, or minister, as the word properly means, and is so translated in nineteen cases, as servant in seven cases, and deacon in three, is simply that of an "attendant or a waiter at a table, or in other menial duties." An example of this is given to us in Acts 6, when seven men were appointed to attend to the daily ministration or serving of tables. The character of these men fully accords with the inspired instructions given as to those who should use this

office. (I Tim. 3:8-13.) But I wish to pointedly call attention to the fact that the words, "office of," have no authority from the text, and so the Revised gives "served well as deacons." Then, it is not a question of office, but purely of ministering; and this, I feel sure from the extended use of the word, to be in the widest sense. A consideration of the 29 cases in which the word is used will confirm this. I wish it also noted that there is not the slightest manuscript authority for the words, "office of," as connected with bishop. The words, "the office of a bishop," are used to express one Greek word which more strictly speaking should be rendered "overseership," as mentioned in the margin of the Revised Version in Acts 1:20. This really disposes of all reference to official place of any kind in the New Testament. It cannot be found in any part of it. There is no officialism in the Church of God.

Now the main lines of work which may be mentioned in relation to the Christian body are, Prophesying, Evangelizing or Preaching for kindred terms are used for both in the Greek, Teaching, Exhortation, and Prayer. Prophecy, as I have previously remarked, is far more, according to the scriptural definition, than foretelling events. That character of it has long since passed away because the Word of God has been completed. Then there is also the ministry of means to care for the poor, and the needed provision of supply for those servants of the Lord who especially devote all their time to the ministry of the Word. As to the general character of such ministry the word to Timothy may be suggestive, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,



exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (II Tim. 4:2-5.) As to activities which should go on among the individual members of the Church there is much instruction in Scripture, but it would go beyond our special purpose to consider these at this time. It is clear, too, that there are those who engage especially in one or another of these lines of work. For Christ "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." (Eph. 4:11.) Apostles we have not, nor could have now; but with the others it is different, they remain for the blessing and upbuilding of the Church. Plainly, it may be one man's distinctive ability as of the Spirit to prophesy unto edification, exhortation, or comfort, as it is another's place to evangelize, that is preach the gospel of Christ to win the souls of men for Him. Pastors and teachers are linked together as the other two are not, and so the shepherding of the Lord's people is closely linked with the work of instruction in the Word of God, unfolding its precious and wonderful teachings. Pastor and Shepherd are the same Greek word, and in the two cases where instructions are given to feed the Church or Flock of God (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4) it is correctly shepherd. This work is given to the overseers or bishops, those who are elders, as both of those passages intimate. Out

of seventeen occurrences of the word rendered "Pastor" in Eph. 4:11, that is the only instance of it being so rendered. In every other case it is "shepherd." Therefore, we might legitimately read, "some, shepherds and teachers." To be a "Pastor," then, is not to be given or assume an official place.

Without further developing these things we may look a little at the ways in which these various lines of work are to be pursued. Plainly, a teacher must have those he teaches gathered about him. Ordinarily speaking, the Sunday School affords excellent opportunities for such work; or a meeting for Bible reading, or the giving of a lecture, or an address to a conference of Christians. These are some of the more public ways of doing such work, while there is unlimited scope for it in private converse or visitation. Hence, it is required of an overseer or bishop that he be "apt to teach." The Pastor's work, that of feeding or shepherding the flock, is not so public an exercise as it is an intimate acquaintance with God's people so as to minister to them, not simply food, as the teacher may do, but lead and rule for the blessing of all; and so this, as I have remarked, is closely connected with overseership and those who are elders. evangelist, generally speaking, must gather a company to hear his message, though much can be done along this line by house to house visitation, the distribution of literature, while in this connection, too, the whole vast field of missionary work, both home and foreign, opens up to the laborer, for in it distinctly the evangelist finds his place, calling souls to the Saviour who in due course will need the work of both Pastor and Teacher. The Spirit of God and the Word of God

must be, and alone can be, the effectual factors in all such work, coupled with constant, fervent, and believing prayer, both collective and individual, as Scripture directs.

I have only touched the surface of this important subject in which, indeed, we are to trace the working out of real Christian unity in its practical expression before the world that it may know the oneness of all. It is needless for me to enlarge upon the fact that under present conditions this is effectively defeated, and so the purpose of Christ as expressed in John 17 is not being realized in any full measure by Christians at large.

Woman's place in Christian activities.

If in any measure we find in the Church that women have taken, or are seeking to take, a place not accorded them by the Word of God it is little wonder that this element of disorder should also come in when the Spirit of God is denied His supreme place of control among God's people. This initial departure from God's order has opened the door to all forms of disorder. The Word of God is the alone sure guide in all. Woman's place is not a public one. It is positively denied them in I Cor. 14; 34, 35. Hence, it is evident that their prayer and prophesy mentioned in I Cor. Cor. 11:5, is of a private nature, or among her own sex. (Titus 2:4, 5.) "I suffer not a woman to teach or usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (I Tim. 2:11-14.)

We have the record in the Word of how the Christian women served in a manner acceptable to God. Dorcas (Acts 9:36-39) is a beautiful example. She "was full of good works and alms deeds which she

did," and her labor of love indicates a sphere of service no less available to-day, than in her time. In another case we find a woman who opened her house as a place of gathering for prayer. (Acts 12; 12.) How seemly for a Christian woman's house to be used for such a purpose instead of entertainments of a worldly and solely pleasure-loving character! Then, there is Lydia, who opens her home to the Lord's servants that they may abide there during the time of their ministry in her neighborhood. A little later we read of Priscilla with her husband Aquila taking into their home another servant of the Lord to whom they proved a help by expounding the way of God more perfectly. Here we oberve a woman able to teach; but doing it in the privacy of her own home, not in a public manner, thus setting an example which is in accord with scriptural injunction elsewhere recorded. In Romans 16, several women are mentioned. First, Phebe who was a servant (same word as for deacon, or minister) of the Church at Cenchrea, and when we take into consideration the teaching of the Word concerning women in the Church we see from this how simple and unpretentious the place of deacon or minister must have been when she could fill it. Priscilla and Aquila are again mentioned, this time as Paul's "helpers in Christ Jesus." What a beautiful commendation! And may we not suitably recall in this connection the Apostle's word in I Cor. 12, where as I have endeavored to show he so fully treats of the manifestation of the Spirit through the various members of the body, when he says, "And God hath set some in the Church first apostles . . . then . . . helps" (v. 28)? Again, Mary is mentioned as one who

had bestowed much labor on the Lord's servants: and another is tenderly spoken of by the apostle as his mother, who was the mother of Rufus, one doubtless who had acted after the manner of a mother to him as the servant of the Lord. How all these instances show the simplicity and lovely homeliness of the woman's place and activity in the Church of God. A place which in its very quietness and private character can reach into those places which no man can effectually reach because his place is so distinctively of a public order. There is a beauty in womanliness after the scriptural order, which in its exercise among the Lord's people is of itself a distinct help in upbuilding and strengthening the body-spiritual, or in other words in exhibiting Christian unity according to the Word of God. The instances I have called attention to indicate large fields of service for the woman which are within the bounds of Godly order; and are of such a nature that the man cannot engage in them.

The money question.

The needs which have occasioned the expenditure of large sums of money are largely such as would not have arisen had Christian simplicity, along with the truth of Christian unity, been maintained by the Church. How came it to be counted necessary that the places of Christian gathering must rival in architectural magnificence the temples of heathendom? And though different forms and styles be used, and different symbolism, yet in result the effect is the same, and the purpose also, as that of the temples of mythology. The Lord said that Jerusalem with its gorgeous temple, and Samaria with her mount, would pass away; and

all be replaced by worship of the Father in Spirit and in truth. In the New Testament examples of Christian meeting places the utmost simplicity is manifest. Often they were in the house of some brother or sister, or in some upper room. In addition to this matter of Church buildings we have that of the minister and his salary: it must be a large one if he is to be an attractive and eloquent preacher. What a degradation of the most sacred service to a worldly commercial basis! This has made the so-called ministry little more than a professional enterprise like any other secular calling. It is an utter disregard of true scriptural order. Then there must be provision made for specially trained singers, and a musical program of good quality to please and attract the crowd and so help to fill the Church building, which will further ensure a full collection basket when it is passed. Why not charge for admission and be sure of the receipts? It comes down to a question of entertainment, not of scriptural ministry, though a little of what is spiritual may be mixed in to give the whole performance a religious color. That the unconverted contribute, that amusements and entertainments are given which will please such, and so their monetary support be secured, seems to be a matter of no account as long as the money is received. It is of little consequence that in all this the Holy Spirit is ignored, the Word of God disobeyed, and the whole order of Christian worship debased. It is no wonder that Christian unity, practically speaking, is not known or acted upon.

But there are legitimate needs among God's people. There is the need of the poor; the need of supporting those who serve in the missionary field; the need of providing and maintaining some suitable, but simple, place of meeting; the need of printing and circulating Christian literature; the need of supporting those who devote their time and labor to the ministry of the Word, of the Gospel. Who can doubt that to our God money is a matter of very small concern? To Him whose the earth is and the fulness thereof, to Him who takes account of the fall of a single sparrow; are not His children and their need much more than many sparrows to Him? Undoubtedly, He desires His people to display the power of that divine unity into which He has formed them, and make the world to see the beauty and spiritual blessing of it. Can He not supply the means needed to carry on its rightful activities? "My God shall supply all your need." The Word of God gives us instruction in this matter as in all else needful for the Christian course. I have no thought of community of goods. I believe such a plan foreign to Scripture, and a denial of the distinctions it fully recognizes. The rule is simple. "On the first day of the week [the day when Christians are to gather together to break bread] let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him" (I Cor. 16:2); and again, let "every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Cor. 9; 7.) This was specifically as to the poor (II Cor. 9; 1, 12); but who can doubt the validity of its application to all questions of need where money is involved. As to the Lord's servants, we are plainly told, "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things"



(Gal. 6:6); and "if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (I Cor. 9; 7-15; I Tim. 5; 8.) From the Philippian Epistle we gather that the assemblies were looked at as one of the channels of ministry in this way. (Phil. 4; 15-17.) Furthermore, be it noted that monetary support is not to be received from those who are not Christians. John in his third epistle speaks with commendation of those who had gone forth for His name's sake "taking nothing of the Gentiles." If it be objected that the Church is very largely composed of Gentiles, I reply that it must be remembered that now there are three classes, the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God.

In this matter all is left in such a way that Christian love of the character given in I Cor. 13, which we have already considered, may act out its part in meeting the need found to exist both in the Church and in the world. (Gal. 6:10.) Where love of such an order animates the heart there will be no lack: and if there is the lack because there is not the love the remedy is not to employ the way of the world to supply the deficiency. Such a course can only add to the difficulty, instead of removing the underlying cause. If the love of Christ is known and enjoyed, if it is shed abroad in the heart, there will be no money stringency, for the rich will give according to their abundance and the poor according to their ability. God judges according to the heart, not according to the amount given.

If the scriptural simplicity of Christian giving, and the blessedness of Christian unity were maintained, we would not have Gothic cathedrals or classic temples to house the gatherings of Christian congregations; we would not have highly paid choirs and other officers; and a more or less elaborate ritual; but we would have spiritual worship controlled and led by the Spirit of God, spiritual service and administration, all of which in unity of action would constitute the Church a living spiritual power in the world as God purposed it should be.

Amusements.

There were all manner of public and private amusements in the world at the time of the apostles, even as now. Where do we find one word giving instruction about the association of such things with Church work and testimony? Yet the Word of God declares it is able to furnish the man of God for every good work.

"Bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." (I Tim. 4:8.)

There is no instruction as to the use of such things to attract or draw people to Church meetings. The distinctive feature of Christian testimony is that it is apart from all such things. At least it is so, if it be modeled according to the scriptural standard. Anything contrary to this means the bringing of the world into the Church, whereas God's thought is that they should be most plainly separate, for only so can the true testimony of the latter be maintained. The meeting-place of Christians should be devoted to and kept for holy purposes, and not be given up to secular enterprise in any form. It is not the place for the sights and sounds that please a world away from God which by its wisdom, let alone any of its other multifarious activity, He has declared cannot know Him. (I Cor.

Christian to know God better? In the apostle's day, did not the world have its banquets, its festivals, its entertainments, its public games? Does he say, then, let us eat and drink and be merry? The whole tenor of the instruction given by the Spirit of God through the apostles is opposed to this kind of thing. And it is evident that in their day the Christian path was entirely apart from these worldly things. Then, remembering that the Spirit is to rule, lead, and order all in the Church it is not hard to realize how all of this would be seriously affected, if His mind as to the practical things of every day life is disregarded.

But I do not wish to be misunderstood. What I have said refers to the corporate Christian testimony. It must not be forgotten that there is the need of bodily development, and recreation, such as may be afforded by athletic exercise, and various other lines of occupation which may be useful to cultivate both mind and body. These things are of an individual nature, and are largely for the individual to decide; but ever keeping in mind that all must be governed by the truth of Christian unity,—the link with Christ as Head, and with one another as members of one body. The place of separation from the world and its way of doing things is ever to be maintained, or else the individual testimony as well as the corporate testimony will be seriously lowered, its spiritual power ultimately lost. "Friendship of the world is enmity with God" (Jas. 4; 4), no matter what the line of activity. Never is there to be any compromise, for this is the only way in which to keep unsoiled the place and testimony of the Church.

The Christian's obligation to governments, and his political relations.

The general thought among men is that the world is as God made it, and all continues as at the beginning, only man has made great advances in civilization and prosperity. The manifold comforts of the present age are too evident to need comment; but are men really happier? Have they satisfied him, or not rather the more awakened the passions? We do not observe that family life is more highly developed, the home more truly prized, and family unity the characteristic of the day. The opposite of these things is rather found to be true. The employee is not found more trustworthy, nor are the servants of the people models of honesty and righteousness. The world has grown up to its present status in separation from God, man having rebelled against His authority. God made paradise; but Cain, the murderer of his brother, laid the foundation of the world-system. It is recorded of him that he went out from the presence of God, and built a city. This has been its character from the beginning and no fuller manifestation of this could have been given than the Cross of Christ, God manifest in flesh despised and crucified. God has made use of this world-system to try man in every possible way to manifest whether there is any good in him. As tried without law, such depths of evil developed that God destroyed the world by a flood. Under law, idolatry developed to the full. Under grace since Christ came, while the light of Christianity has made a change, nevertheless, the seeds of evil spring up to fruition on every side. Do we find the principles and motives which are at work in some far off commercial centre

of Asia any different from what we find in the "Christian" metropolis of the West? If the so-called heathen to whom one of our missionaries had brought the gospel should come to one of our supposed "Christian" centres to observe, as he might expect to do, the wonderful difference to be found there as compared with his own country, resulting from the heavenly message which presumably came from it to him, would be be gratified and satisfied with his experience, morally and spiritually speaking, and be able to witness to the practical blessedness of the power of the gospel over men? Think you not that he would be sadly disappointed, and would be likely to discount the message entirely? The eager pursuit of gain is rampant, and there is evidently less scruple as to the way of obtaining the desired result than ever before. Pride, ambition, pleasure, avarice, still rule men's lives. War still rages, the tyrant still oppresses, and the cry of the poor is heard on every side. The world is not one whit better than a millennium ago. Only now, it is spread over a wider range with consequent increase in every way while the nominal power of Christianity has receeded, for it once ruled over known Africa, was known throughout Asia, and was almost the established religion of China. These vast fields have fallen back into heathendom, Europe into infidelity, and the Americas are fast following in the same path. This after 2000 years of gospel testimony, and yet we are told the triumph of the gospel will be universal. It is a figment of the imagination without any scriptural warrant.

The world-system, then, is evil to its core. Idolatry still abounds. Christianity has become corrupted in



the hands of men. The enterprise of the world is moved by the lowest motives, being largely indifferent to truth and moral right. The vast increase in educational systems has not ameliorated any of these conditions. Everywhere it is manifest that the world does not know God, nor indeed has it any inclination to know Him, and by its wisdom it cannot find Him out. It is married to its pursuit for all that will exalt man and add to his pleasure, power, and gain, while God and Christ are forgotten, nay purposely excluded. Such, then, is the world, in the government of which we hear it loudly proclaimed that Christians everywhere should take an active part for the bettering of conditions and the righting of injustice. I ask is this a line of "good works" in which I am to be engaged? If it is, the Word of God will furnish me for it.

But when I examine this all-sufficient guide for directions as to how I am to take part in world-government, I fail to find any. My manner of life as a husband, a father, a child, a master, a servant, and a subject under governments is discussed; but political activity is not given a place in Scripture. In fact a character entirely opposed to any such activity is mentioned in relation to Christians and the worldscene through which they are passing: they are spoken of as "strangers and pilgrims." (I Pet. 2:11.) strangers meddle in the governmental affairs of the country in which they sojourn; or do pilgrims become political reformers or engage in the political activities of the country through which they may be journeying? The incongruity of such conduct is manifest, and it is not practiced by any who are really either strangers or pilgrims. To be in the world is one thing, to be of it quite another. Our citizenship is heaven, and the saints, our fellow-believers, are our fellow-citizens. (Phil. 3; 20 R. V.; Eph. 2; 19.) It is noteworthy that such terms are used of our spiritual relationships and calling, but never once referred to in connection with our place in the world.

Are Christians then to disregard established governments? No! the very opposite. Scripture is most explicit as to the conduct of Christians as subjects under the rule of existing powers whether they are good or bad. No more striking example of this is given than in Paul's instructions in the Epistle to the Romans; for he wrote them when the reigning emperor was one of the vilest and most cruel men that ever occupied the throne of the Caesars. "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear

to whom fear; honor to whom honor." (Rom. 13:1-7. R.V.) Beautiful it is to see how the Spirit in such instruction leads the Christian to look beyond the civil power, and see that it is God who is supreme, and we owe obedience to Him, hence to those powers which He has ordained. Peter also says, "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God that by well doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your freedom for a cloke of wickedness, but as bondservants of God." (I Peter 2:13-16 R.V.) The praise here spoken of is for good and well-doing as subjects obedient to laws, but not as law-makers. The Christian is always characterized as one who is to obey and be submissive under God to the powers that be; but never as one who is to frame the laws and exercise the power needed to enforce submission. Christians are enjoined to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that they may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. (I Tim. 2:1-3.) Thus, we are not to be of those who despise dominion and speak evil of dignitaries. (II Pet. 2:10; Jude 8.) If the Christian is to "speak evil of no man; to be no brawler, but gentle," this would hardly make him a man of suited qualifications to be a politician, or actively engage in political affairs. From this arena of conflict for the emulations of office, favoritism of those in power, or the assailing of those who occupy official places, the Christian is to be entirely separate, if scrip-



tural injunction is to be obeyed. There is, then, in a very real way, to be no entangling of ourselves as Christians with the affairs of this life, or else we will fail to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. (II Tim. 2:3-4.) However, if the ordinance of man contravene obedience to God, this at once sets the limit of obedience to such powers. Christians are to obey God rather than man, and we have His fully revealed will.

It may be argued that Christians are especially suited to enter the field of political activity, and to occupy positions of governmental power because of the high motives and principles which the truth gives to those who believe it. But much of what I have already said negatives this supposition, for the fact is that a Christian in politics belies his testimony, and ruins it, departing from the distinctive place he should occupy in relation to the whole world-system. Thus the power of the truth over him is weakened, if not entirely lost, so that his motives and principles become debased. There is One who walked here, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps" (I Pet, 2:21), who in all that He did perfectly pleased God and in whom absolute moral perfection is found,—the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask, then, is there any incident in His life which marks Him as a politician, or as even interested in things of a political nature? Not one, in fact a careful study fails to find not only such an incident, but will show that where such political activity might have been expected or rightly looked for by men, there is absolute silence. His voice is not heard. Of Him it had been truly said, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street." Shall ours? as servants shall we be greater than our Lord?

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Let the Christian voice be used alone after the pattern He has given to us.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: WHY IT SHOULD BE REALIZED

I am disposed to ask first of all, How can it be realized to-day? With the accumulated debris of the past centuries not only covering the truth of what unity is, but stifling all real activity along such lines, what is needed is well nigh revolutionary in character,—a second reformation would alone avail to hurl off the incubus.

I hope that the preceeding chapters have, in some measure, given good reason why it should be realized; and yet it may be well now to crystalize the why into definite propositions.

It should be realized because it is God's order and purpose as revealed in Holy Scripture.

It should be realized because it is the great desire and prayer of the Lord Jesus for all those who believe on His Name, and accept His word.

It should be realized because all its elements and features alone form and provide for true and holy fellowship among God's people in the power and blessing of spiritual ministry according to God's mind.

It should be realized because alone by the active operation of Christian unity can the true testimony of God be manifested before the world, and His great message of reconciling love be delivered to it. Owing to the fact that this unity has not been in active operation among God's people as a whole, the real power of the testimony God purposed the Church should give has been nullified, and His message falsi-

fied, so that it is largely a bastard gospel which is heralded in the ears of men today until, sickened and disgusted with "the churches," plain men and women are turning away, for they receive no soul and heart-filling message, indeed, more often it is a disquisition upon some scientific question, or upon the latest political event, or upon some social problem or line of work, or upon some question of local con-There is a famine of the Word of God, and men will not feed upon the husks of a world-loving and spiritually debased Church. The dogma of reason and the pleasures of sin prove more to them, while the soul-stirring, heart-gladding, and mind-filling gospel of the glory is never told them; and they never know the great power and blessing they can have through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It may not be out of place in this connection to quote the plain words in a current religious periodical (the New York Watchman-Examiner. Bapt.): "The heart of the message that the Church is to deliver to the world is John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But the work of evangelism in the present day is not so simple as it appears upon the surface, for false notions have arisen as to the meaning of Christianity and as to the method by which men become Christians. Sacramentarianism teaches that men become Christians by submitting themselves to external ordinances. Ecclesiasticism says that the way to salvation is through the portals of the Church. There are others who believe that Christianity is a matter of intellect. and that men become Christians as they become evolu-



system of truth, of philosophy. There are still others who believe that men become Christians by an earnest effort to follow in the footsteps of Christ, forgetful of the fact that it is the assimilation of Christ rather than the imitation of Christ that makes a man a Christian. The work of evangelism is therefore complicated, and much rubbish must be cleared away if men are to be brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ; but this is the very task to which the Church should give itself with boundless enthusiasm."

And yet another says (the New York Christian Intelligencer. Ref.): "The Church will not come into its own until the spiritual authority of the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed as it should be. Men have recklessly defied the laws of health and are now reaping the penalty in scourges that defy medical skill. Young people have defied the authority of parents, and on every hand we can see the effects of the 'far country' on our young life. Men have defied the authority of law, of the Bible, of the Church, and of God, and we see everywhere religious uncertainty, social unrest, and world-weariness. The time seems ripe for a renewed and unflinching proclamation of the Lordship of Christ. True emancipation of life comes from the soul's bondage to Christ. Spiritual freedom is an achievement which is attained by subjection to Him who is the rightful King of every life. It is not sufficient to regard Christ as elder brother and leader. He is both Saviour and Lord. Human blessedness is based on the recognition of this truth and its acceptance in life."

It should be realized because it gives the Church



her true and distinctive place in the world; but as being not of the world. It is the man freed from the power of disease, and who knows how he has been treated and delivered from it, who, as keeping his place of separation so as to prevent contagion, can best treat those who are now diseased as he was. And so in the spiritual realm.

God's great message of reconciliation is not that of uniting together the world and the Church; but of bringing salvation to both Jew and Gentile, and uniting them into one body of which Christ is the Head. The world in fact is still composed of Jews and Gentiles, and in the midst this glorious unity of the Church composed of those taken from both classes should stand forth in its solitary, but divine glory, as the vessel of testimony, and the divinely intended channel of all true spiritual blessing to the world.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: THE WAY IN WHICH IT CAN BE PRACTICALLY REALIZED

In commencing the consideration of how Christian unity may be realized, I can only refer to begin with to the opening words of the previous chapter. In view of the ruin and debasement of the Church by human innovations, now hoary with age, it is no longer a simple matter to return and re-establish the blessed simplicity of divine order in the Church of God. No more a simple and easy thing than it was for an Ezra or a Nehemiah to return to the ruined and desolated city of Jehovah's choice, and the place of His name, and build again the centre of divine worship, encircling the sacred city with the walls of separation and pro-For them it meant conflict, the power of their enemies' intrigue, the wicked devices and opposition of those who despised the truth and testimony of God, yet insisted upon their right to share in the work.

The books of these two leaders of revival and recovery are full of varied and suited instruction for the very condition of things which exists in the Church today. The Church is in its Babylonish captivity, and has been for generations. Who will come out from its corruptions to the place of His name and truth, and stand for it, yea, make known the testimony everywhere for the honor and glory of Christ? Who? the time is ripe and the coming of the Lord has drawn nigh (Jas. 5:8)! The world was never in

greater spiritual need. Every other form of need and unrest is but the consequence of that deeper and fundamental need not being met and answered in the light of the truth of God.

In the midst of this condition there is one great principle which shines out as a beacon light across the rocky coast and the storm tossed sea. It is that separation from evil is God's principle of unity. runs throughout the whole of Scripture. Noah was separated from his generation, and made the channel of hope and testimony to a condemned world. So Abram at a later day from the world which had fallen into idolatry. From him sprang those who formed the nucleus of the separated nation. From their midst Joseph was the separated one through whom they were led into the place where they grew into a very numerous people, and in which was to shine out God's great testimony in delivering and separating them to Himself. This took place at the appointed time. Signal failure comes in, and Moses takes the separated place, removing the tabernacle in which God's voice was heard and His near presence realized outside the idolatrous camp; and all who sought the Lord went out to it without the camp. Whosoever was on the Lord's side went to that outside place, the centre of true fellowship and testimony. This furnishes us with one of the most striking examples in Scripture for the activity of faith, of loyalty to God and Christ in this our day, a day of idolatry no less than then. God, then, goes on with the failed and sinning people through Moses as the leader of separation from their evil, he is the salt which preserves in the midst of corruption.

Again, through the long period of Judgeships, it was men who were in separation from the general state of the people that God used to deliver and bless and unify the people. The period of the kingdoms is more largely a record of appalling departure from God with but a few bright examples of the same type as the judges, bringing partial recovery and blessing; but never full unity, and never, indeed, did God again allow it to be effected in the nation He had called into separation from all others, and whose sin He had thus visited with judgment by dividing the kingdom. And no more do I believe need the Church hope for, or expect, unity of a complete character here in the scene of her failure, no, not till unity in glory is consumated in God's eternal presence; and this will be the subject in the next chapter. Until that glorious consumation is effected, the great thing for those to do who prize the truth and blessing of God above all other things is to obey precept and example as given throughout Holy Writ. This means separation from the condition and state of things which is so thoroughly in contravention of true Christian unity, and let those who thus separate put into practise the scriptural principles which govern the formation and activity of that unity according to the mind of God as revealed in His Word. It is those who take this place who are entitled to consideration as representing and standing for Christian unity amid the ruins of present Church condition.

Christian unity does not consist in aggregation, in a confederacy of all the existing parties and denominations to be found in Christendom. Christian unity consists in the practise of the truth and principles set forth in the Word of God in connection with that unity therein revealed as being formed by the Holy Spirit. This can only be as carried on apart from man-made existing parties and denominations, all of which have their link with what virtually denies scriptural Christian practise in Church relations and position. Here the words of the Apostle Paul, the divinely commissioned teacher of these very principles, are of the greatest force; and demand our unequivocal obedience. "In a great house [this is what the Church has become] there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these [i.e., the vessels to dishonor], he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (II Tim. 2:20-22.) It is those who are thus purged, separated, and who follow together the path of righteousness, calling up the Lord, who if they do these things, must be led into the practise of and be the true exponents of Christian unity as, I trust, we have seen it to be taught in the Scriptures. This can be realized at any time, in any place, by any number be it small or great, in a rural community of a metropolis. By the various "churches" having "union" services or doing "union" work, while all the time they keep their individual peculiarities, or even give up some of them to effect a confederation, this will not establish Christian unity, in the blessed way in which Scripture teaches it and the Lord Jesus desires to see it. Among those who, in the boldness of



faith, but in humbleness of spirit, will stand out from amongst all and act alone on the teaching of God's Word and the truth of the unity of the Spirit, will Christian unity be realized; and in their midst will the testimony be rendered to it in a way pleasing to God, though it may not be to man. Who, then, in such a case will we please?

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: ITS CONSUMMATION IN GLORY

In the previous chapters, commencing with the fifth, we have had before us the development of the truth connected with the two aspects of unity first presented in the seventeenth of John and which were considered in the third and fourth chapters. I wish now to treat of the third and last aspect of unity spoken of by the Lord Jesus in His memorable prayer. It is, as I have suggested, unity in glory and for all eternity.

The Lord's words are: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one even as we [i.e., the Father and the Son] are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." This is to be realized in its fulness in the presence of the Father, in the Father's house, to which He is going to bring the whole company of believers, as He goes on to say: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." It is this glorious consummation of the Lord's desire and thought which should burn with greatest brightness in every Christian heart. The real blessing and power of this, the present hope of glory, will be best realized and enjoyed by those who apprehend the meaning of the previously considered aspects of unity, and act out the truth connected

with them in the place of separation from all that practically denies such truth. The anticipative joy of this hope being realized is the recompense of divine love given to those who prize the way of fellowship with the Father and the Son above the present advantage to be gained in the following of the way of the world, a way which lies in the Wicked One. This means rejection at the world's hands. It gave this portion to our Lord, and His servants can be no greater. The fact that Christians know so little of world-rejection proves what poor servants of His, and followers of Him, they are. But what should impel to an everincreasing measure of faithfulness to His name and truth is that the eternal weight of glory infinitely more than balances the greatest possible measure of rejection which could be received, for it is, "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." Heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, declares Paul at a later date. Thus Christians are a unity in glory with Christ their Head, and with one another, for the Lord goes on to say, "That they may be one,," even as the Father and the Son are one.

It is interesting to note, before passing on further, that this unity in glory is that the world may know that Christ was the Sent One of the Father. This unity of glory will be displayed, openly manifested, so that there will be no denying the truth of it. In connection with the second aspect of unity, as I have already remarked, the Lord said in connection with it, "That the world may believe," this being a matter of faith in the present, as the former will be a question of actual sight. So with the second aspect, it was a question of fellowship in the truth, and an

active display of its principles in service and ministry. All this I have already presented. But the distinction which the Lord makes as to the world is of great importance. The present is the time for believing and so receiving part in the blessing and glory; but the time is coming when both the blessing and the glory will be known, and that by the world. This, however, by no means involves that all who know will participate in them, but all who believe do and will.

But to take up now the Lord's words, what heights beyond the grasp of our finite minds are in them! For who is it that speaks them? And what has He done? And where is He now to be found that we may know the glory the Father gave Him and which He says He has given to those who believe? It is the Divine Son, of whom the Evangelist says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1:14, 18.) It is in the Son that God has spoken (Heb. 1:2), making known all His glory and blessing for man. Over Him God could open heaven and speak His pleasure, for on Him alone could God's mind rest in perfect delight. It is, then, God manifest in flesh who spoke these words about Christian unity in glory, and they could have no meaning if it were not so.

But what work has He done? He has made purication of sins by Himself. (Heb. 1:3.) He was made a sacrifice for sin, and accomplished eternal redemption. (Heb. 9:12.) The moral glory of His life, and

the mighty evidences of His power all pass into an awful eclipse; and the dread cloud of a preternatural night falls upon the Holy Sufferer upon the Cross of which Jew and Roman counted Him worthy. They gave Him the malefactor's place; and there is no manifestation of heaven on His behalf, nay, it appears that the very powers of the heavens are against Him at that hour. There is no response from the Majesty on High, from which He claimed He had come, to the cruel taunt and outrage of His enemies. Instead, out of the darkness which veiled Him, there comes that terrible cry of forsaken sorrow and yet of appeal, "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Forsaken! dread thought. Is this the best that God can do for One who served Him so? Who of all God's martyrs for the truth ever so cried out? Do not the records of their deaths tell us how near God drew to them in the hour of their greatest tribulation, how it seems heaven opened to receive them into its glory. But with this Man it is greatly different. He lets us know that heaven is shut to Him: and that a deeper darkness than that which clothed the midday sun has closed Him in, its bands are about Him while waves and billows of judgment pass over Him, for God is holv, and He is there made sin that the believer might be made the righteousness of God in Him. From this has come that blessed ministry of reconcilation in which God is not imputing to man his trespasses, but giving full and free forgiveness of all, and so reconciling unto Himself in Christ. Ah! HIS death was different, infinitely so, from all others. He was the unique Man. Unique in His way of entrance into this world; unique in His passage through the

world; unique in the closing scene of His life; unique in His passage out of this scene; and unique in the place of glory He now occupies at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, the Son of God, and the Son of Man. There He is the Forerunner and Representative before God of the New Creation which stands in Him, its glorious Head, made up, as it is, of redeemed sinners over whom He has thrown the mantel of His glory, as the victorious, exalted, and glorified Son of Man, that they all may be one even as the Father and Son are one.

His place, then, is that of being raised up "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:21-23.) And the expression of God's power as thus acting on His behalf, is the expression of how He will act on behalf of those who believe, for they, too, shall be raised up into His glory, the glory of Christ which He has given to them. We dare not speak of such things if He had not told us.

Let us consider the glory the Father has thus given, and which Christ says He has given to Christians that they may be one. This oneness in glory is again emphasized for us in the strongest way by Paul in the quotation just given from the Ephesian Epistle. He concludes the statement of the exaltation of Christ to supreme glory with the marvellous declaration of that vital and most intimate connection of Christ as Head and the Church, His body; yea, even saying that the

Church is the filling up of Him who fills all in all. This, I take it, is the expanding of the Lord's words under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit who came to lead into all truth. Christians are in glory, as well as life and communion, to come "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13.) When He who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him, revealed in the same glory and revealed as in it because bodily a part of Him who is the Head of all glory. All things, we read, are to be gathered together in Him, both which are on earth and in heaven; but He is not alone in this, for of the Church it is said: "In whom we have obtained an inheritance," and have been given the earnest of it in the present gift of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 1:10, 11, 14.) If He is to rule, the Christian body will rule with Him; if He is to reign until every enemy is put under Him, that body will reign with Him; if He is to judge the world and angels, that body will do so with Him; in whatever the Head is engaged, the body will be engaged also. There can be no separation, it is an absolute unity in glory. Of course, it is not to His essential and divine glory as God that this refers. The Christian body is never presented as participating in Divinity, as being put on an equality with God. But this unity in glory is connected with and given to Christians, as being vitally associated with the Man Christ Jesus, the exalted and glorified Saviour. It could not be said of Him as God, the second Person of the Godhead, that He was set far above all principality and power, for by His very being God such was His position. But it is as Man. which He became for our sakes, to bring in eternal

redemption, that He is raised up and set in the place of universal supremacy where His hands are filled with all power in heaven and on earth, for to Him has the Father committed all judgment because He is the Son of Man, as He himself affirms in John's Gospel. It is because of His manhood and all that is linked with it that saved sinners who compose the Christian body can be united to and with Him in community of life, fellowship, and glory. He is, therefore, the Firstborn among many brethren who are coheirs with him. (Rom. 8:17.)

There is still more for the Christian to anticipate in connection with the glory. For the Lord says, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." is His loving purpose to have all who believe in Him be with Him where He is, there to behold in all the wonder of its display His own peculiar glory in His eternal dwelling place. It is glory which the Father has given Him as the One who perfectly glorified the Father here on earth. He bears the Name which is above every name, receiving glory which is above every other glory save that of Him who gave it. It is all peculiar to His own blessed Person, and is connected with the Father's love. It will be one of the highest joys associated with unity in glory, this beholding of the Beloved of the Father fully displayed in the glory given to Him by the Father. The manifestation of Christian unity in glory, which will be the display of Christ as Head and the Church as His body in full and perfect unity with Him, the world will see and

by it know that He was the Sent One of the Father, who also has loved the Church as He loved the Son. But in the seeing and enjoying of this personal glory, of which the Lord speaks, the world has no part. It is reserved entirely for those who are His own. They shall see it and rejoice in it, thereby learning to know the Father's love for the Son, as in the former aspect of manifested glory the world would know how the Father loved those who were united in their own special way in glory with the Son. What unfathomable depths, and immeasurable heights are here suggested as the portion of eternal joy and blessing which shall belong to those who have in simple faith accepted the Lord Jesus as their own individual Saviour and Lord. Such are accepted, taken into favor, in the Beloved; and their place and portion is measured by His own as the exalted and glorified Saviour.

We pass now to the concluding words of this most wonderful prayer. They are, first of all, an indictment of the world. He says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." The world in its present condition cannot know God, for as I have previously remarked it is a system which has grown up outside of relationship with Him, alien to His thoughts and purposes. With it He goes on in longsuffering patience and unfailing mercy, gathering out of it those who are to share in all the glory spoken of by the Lord, yet ever making it known that the door is open to whosoever will come and take of the water of life freely. The world, then, has not the knowledge of the Father, and has no participation in the glory of Him who it rejected and crucified. But he says, "I have known Thee"; and it was His mission

to make the Father known. This He did perfectly so that He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Of the disciples He says, "These have known that Thou hast sent Me"; and through "their word," as the Lord speaks, we know too, and are one in fellowship with them. He had made known the Father's name, and would continue to unfold its full blessing. All this they have in turn communicated so that it constitutes the common heritage of all Christians. It is, however, in very small measure actually possessed by them. One blessed end is in view all through: it is "that the love wherewith Thou has loved Me may be in them, and I in them." The joy, power, blessing, and glory of this no human words can adequately describe. It is rather a subject for our prayerful contemplation that in some measure the Holy Spirit, who alone can search the deep things of God, may minister of its fulness to the heart and soul. He has been sent and given to us for this distinct purpose.



CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Christian unity! it is most desirable from every point of view. That it will ever be attained among Christians in this world in any universal sense is but a dream impossible of realization. It being essentially a unity of and in the truth, characterized by love in the truth and for its sake, precludes it as the remotest possibility in present conditions. Departure from the truth began in the apostle's day, and it has not lessened since then; but it has gradually and steadily increased. With this came the disunity of the Church and its unity has never been restored. But the deeply sorrowful fact of this condition does not for one moment militate against a testimony being given to what Christian unity is. Nor should it prevent an acting upon those principles which the Word of God clearly enunciates as lying at the foundation of the practical manifestation of that unity. It is action in work and testimony along these lines which has proved and will, the greatest blessing to Christians, though it can never be expected that there will be a unity of all in one practical manifestation of the truth. For this we must now await that consummation in glory of which I have spoken.

A federation of all churches, so called, upon the basis of certain tenets mutually acceptable to all, with everything else kept strictly in abeyance, might be called by some "Christian Unity." It would be a parody, an empty form of religious activity, ritualistic and entirely worldly, pleasing to the natural mind and

thought of men, but entirely destitute of true spiritual power and blessing.

The way is open for every Christian to practise the truth. What is needed in such a day as ours is the spirit of Philadelphia, as the Lord speaks of it in His address to that assembly in Revelation 3. Its great characteristic is that He himself has first place, His word kept, and His name not denied. Those who consider His commendation of greater value than the empty plaudits of the religious world, or any place that it can give, have the pledge of His all-sufficiency and power on their behalf. To them He opens a door that no man can shut, and further assures them of His love which He will make those who oppose them recognize and own. All is measured by the place Christ is given both individually and collectively.

If Christian unity is what I have endeavored to show it to be—a unity of the truth, in common life possessed and fellowship enjoyed, all in the power of the Holy Spirit as the One who indwells every Christian, and unites them in one, even that one body of which Christ is the Head, and that as filling the highest place of power and glory so that Christians individually and as a body are linked with Him in this supremacy, -then a "League of Churches" will not effect the realization of it. The fulness of it is unfolded in the first three chapters of the Ephesian Epistle, where we have the making known of that mystery hid in God from all other past ages but now revealed, which mystery is no other thing that the formation of that Christian body which is the Church in which both Jews and Gentiles are united in one by the Spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ for the enjoyment of the highest place of blessing and

privilege, according to the eternal purpose which centred entirely in Christ. We are united together so that there will be a unity of comprehension with ALL saints of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the wondrous wisdom, love, and power of God displayed in the administration of this holy mystery then it is, as being comprised of all we have mentioned, that vocation wherewith we are called (Eph. 4:1), and of which we are besought to walk worthy. How high, and holy, and blessed, and heavenly is this vocation! If by this we are to judge of practical Christian life and testimony what a great gulf exists between them. Yet it is of this vocation that Christians are exhorted to walk worthy. Judged by this standard what failure there is, what deplorable departure, what lack of even elementary appreciation characterizes the Christian body. To walk worthy of a thing we must in some measure apprehend what that thing is, its character and relations. The failure to apprehend the Christian vocation has necessarily resulted in a corresponding failure in all lines of true Christian activity. But however great may be the failure thus discerned, the exhortation to the worthy walk remains, for the vocation remains. Christian unity abides. It may appear smothered, but it has been well said, "All the religious relationships of the soul, all the points by which we are in contact with God, agree to form all believers into one in this world, in such a manner that no man can be a Christian without being one with all those who are so. We cannot exercise faith, nor enjoy hope, nor express Christian life in any form whatever without having the same faith and the same hope as the rest, without giving

expression to that which exists in the rest. Only we are called upon to maintain it practically." It is this last point which clearly involves separation from all that in principle or practise denies or vitiates the truth of Christian unity. Therefore, the thing to aim at can never be union according to man's thoughts such as federation or confederacy may suggest; but rather that to which existing conditions impel, as well as the explicit command of God: that is separation from vessels to dishonor, that in separation those may be found who are fit for the Master's use. (II Tim. 2:20-22.) This walk, then, to which Christians are called is to be marked by well defined characters as specified by the apostle,—"lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This walk is to be in unity of sentiment, desire, and love, with hearts united in peace. But this is with the distinct purpose in view of keeping the unity of the Spirit, that is to maintain practically and publicly in manifestation in the world that unity formed and energized by the Holy Spirit; in other words the living spiritual activities carried on in His power and under His leadership, which activities characterize the one body of many members which He has constituted. Furthermore, this unity of the Spirit which we are not called to form, for we could not, it is God the Spirit's work, but we are called to keep, is surely a holy unity; hence, the keeping of it must be with holi-This at once brings in the sorrowful need of separation, a principle which may seem so utterly opposed to the truth of one body, but which is highly essential in conditions such as Christians now find all around them, for how many things are to be found not only in the world, but among the professed people of God, that do not square with the truth of God's Word, and which if allowed a place must of necessity seriously interfere with the keeping of what is essentially a holy unity. To follow such a path is not easy. It is one of continual, but needful and fruitful exercise of heart, mind, and conscience. Such, indeed, as God would have His children experience that they may be followers of Him as dear children, and walk in love. (Eph. 5:1-2.)

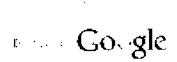
But despite all how wonderful are the aspects of unity, sevenfold in character, which constitute the bonds uniting in one all the children of God, whoever, whatever, wherever they may be. "There is one body and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. 4:4-6.) Here the whole Trinity is concerned in the uniting together of all Christians. Three spheres of unity, too, I judge are set before us, each widening in extent until, I doubt not, the last encompasses what the apostle had already referred to in the previous chapter when he says "I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." (Eph. 3:14, 15 R.V.) But, then, He who is thus over all and through all is in us all. There is one body, the Church. composed of all true believers who are united to Christ as His members by the one Spirit. There are not many bodies. Therefore, it is this one body and the truth connected with it which should find its practical expression among all the people of God in the power

alone of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them. With this unity there is the one hope. This hope is the glory of God, a hope which will not make ashamed because the Spirit is the minister of it to us, shedding abroad the love of God in the heart; and it all centres as to its accomplishment in Christ. Then there is one Lord, and He, too, is the Head of the body; One alone whose authority and supremacy is to be owned and submitted to in the fullest way. Associated with the profession of Him in this character there is one faith, that which has been once for all delivered to the saints, as Jude says. Its tenets are to be found alone in the Word of God, not in human formulas of belief. One baptism links with this, for it is in baptism that public confession and acknowledgement is made that Jesus is Lord, and so Christian baptism is always unto His name as the Lord. In this circle or sphere there may be those who profess and yet are not true, and evidently for this reason the circle here is wider than the first. For the one body is the essential and everabiding unity, and one is a member of that body or he is not. In that wider sphere in which are all those who profess to own Jesus as Lord there are the true and the false as the parables of the Kingdom recorded in the Gospels positively teach us. But it is in the midst of this that the truth of the one body and its practical manifestation is to find expression so that the real blessedness of Christian unity may be witnessed to before all. In the third place we have a still wider sphere, even the universal presence of God, the Father, and as connected with this His corresponding claim upon all. For the Christian, however, the bond is very close, for He who is thus over all and



through all is in all Christians. Thus every possible aspect in which the Christian views his relationship to God constitutes a bond of unity with every other Christian.

In conclusion, I can only express the hope that both reader and writer shall more fully enter into the fulness and blessing of this great subject, the main features of which we have sought to bring together. The apprehension in ever-growing measure of the truth of Christian unity forms, I am sure, the only foundation upon which really intelligent Christian service and testimony can be built up, that kind of service and testimony which will abide the test in that day when the fire shall try every man's work. May, then, the people of God everywhere be stirred up to a fresh realization of this precious truth, and so to fresh energy and zeal in the power of the Holy Spirit to bear witness for our blessed Lord.







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CHRISTIAN UNITY

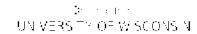
THE TRUTH OF IT AS PRESENTED IN THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES

An examination of its character, principles of action, and way of realization



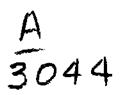
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PREFACE

The treatment of the subject of Christian unity may well begin, first of all, with a study of the teaching of the Lord Jesus, having in view the purpose of gathering together the ideas which He presented in His ministry concerning it. Then, to follow on with the consideration in as brief a way as possible of what necessarily flowed out of this, namely, the ministry of His apostles as led and directed by the Holy Spirit. This should result in obtaining the divine and scriptural point of view, from which alone we can get the proper conception of this great and vital subject, a subject which should be full of lively interest to every Christian.

Christian unity reaches into every department of life. The thought in many minds to-day seems to be that it consists in aggregation, and in a unity of effort along given lines of action, which are to be lines of least resistance. This involves compromise which more often than not brings in compromise of truth, which, scripturally considered, constitutes the foundation of right Christian unity. In present-day conditions there is real need of earnest contention for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude. 3). It seems as though the spirit of combination which so thoroughly dominates and animates both the business, social, and political spheres of the world must also now become active in the religious sphere, and effect a Christianized world trust of the "churches" which

may need, ere long, "federal supervision," or governmental regulation, as much as any other giant combination of these days. Who, I wonder, will be its head when this religious trust shall have been incorporated? I venture to remark that such things, and in as far as any such spirit animates the modern efforts at so-called Christian unity, that such efforts are far removed from the scriptural standard and teaching concerning the unity of Christians, both in its spiritual and practical aspects.

The inextricable confusion in which Christendom finds itself, its babel of voices, and the accompanying evils of the condition, are entirely due to wholesale departure from scriptural simplicity, the very first signs of which began to show themselves in the apostolic age; and, moreover, they stand out clearly to-day as the fulfilment of apostolic warning, and so tend to furnish a good proof of the foreknowledge of the Divine Spirit who spoke through the Apostles, and so also become a clarion call for return to the simplicity taught in the very Book which so positively foretold present-day evils and conditions. It is little wonder, since this is the testimony of the Book, that men are doing their best to get rid of it, or nullify its force and truth. The theological professor and the Christianized scholastic infidel of the university have all but claimed divine inspiration. Do they not presume to be able to sift out the words of God from the Book which lays claim to inspiration by the Holy Spirit of its very words? But they are very modest. these men of colossal and most laborious investigation. and their erudition is marvellous! Satan was the first "Higher Critic." He cast doubt upon the Word of

God, and by believing the doubt the creature fell from his place of privilege and blessing. It has ever been so. But the Word of God has remained, no jot or title of it has changed, nor will until all be fulfilled. "Scripture cannot be broken," are the words of Him who, if He be not an imposter, is the Eternal Son of God, the only Saviour and Lord. It is through what He has said with His own lips, or through those of His chosen servants, that the whole truth of Christian unity can alone be known, both as to doctrine and practise. My purpose, then, has been to make clear what Christ taught on this subject; suggest the practical and workable ways connected with the realizing of it, and the spiritual blessings alone to be found in this realization. I trust that through His help, which alone could suffice, I have been able in some measure to accomplish this purpose. May it avail to turn the hearts of God's people to consider what Chrisitian unity is and should be in the light of the Word of God.

JOHN BLOORE.

Plainfield, N. J.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The fundamental idea and governing principle of Christian unity has its roots in that sublime and allessential truth of the trinitarian unity of the Godhead.

No adequate or full revelation of this glorious truth could be made until, and indeed only in conjunction with, the advent of Christ. That which is unity, true and real, and which alone can be denominated Christian unity, was brought to light in all its distinctive beauty with His coming. The travail-pain of the ages then passed; the aimless groping in the dark, whether it be the darkness enshrouding the untutored, uncultivated of men, or that which marked the philosophy and wisdom of the cultured Greek, ended then, for the true Light had shone forth, and the birth of a new day, and a new hope, shed its lustre upon the world with the prophecy in it of a unity at once heavenly and divine, if men would receive it.

Perhaps some may trace in the beclouded reasonings of the human race, whether they be engaged with religious ideas or purely philosophical speculations, an underlying sentiment that there must be, and ultimately would be, a unity established between the Creator and the creature. This, some may even suppose brought about the association of Deity with humanistic forms in religious worship; but all sadly merged into the grossest forms of idolatry so that the creature was worshipped and served more than the Creator. With this there came in the most debasing practises of both a moral and physical nature. The Greek and

the barbarian peopled both mountain, valley, river and sea with multitudinous gods,—neither the culture of the one, nor the total lack of it in the other, delivered from this, and its resultant debasement. Moral and spiritual darkness enwrapped the whole world.

All this is traced back to its inception by the unerring pen of God. For speaking of the very unrighteousness of men to which I have referred, it is said, "What is known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested it to them,—for from the world's creation the invisible things of him are perceived, being apprehended by the mind through the things that are made, both his eternal power and divinity,—so as to render them inexcusable. Because, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but fell into folly in their thoughts, and their heart without understanding was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of corruptible man and of birds and quadrupeds and reptiles. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness, to dishonor their bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into falsehood, and honored and served the creature more than Him who had created it, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Rom. 1.19-25 New Tran.) Even with the Jews the inroads of idolatry had been very marked, and with this, the corresponding loss of the power of the truth committed to them by revelation which gave the knowledge of the one true God besides whom there was none else. He was set forth by law, and in prophetic utterance, as the only Lord, Creator and Sustainer of all things, holy and righteous in Himself, and in all His actions, infinitely above all creation, and the one Source of all blessing and ministry to it. But with the glory of even such a revelation, and the accompanying majesty of the Person it made known, there was no real presentation of the idea of unity, underlying which there must be community of life and nature between God and His creature. He is presented as the high and lofty One condescending in mercy to bless, or act on their behalf.

In the night that had thus fallen upon the world, a Star of peculiar glory arose and wended its way through the heavens above till it rested over a stable in a town called Bethlehem of Judea, wherein a newborn Babe lay in swaddling clothes. Concurrent with this, the night's darkness as it lay on the plain beyond, where humble shepherds guarded their flocks, was illumined with heavenly light, and the stillness broken by celestial voice announcing the birth of the Babe, forecasting the character of the glory of His advent, the very utterance of which constrained the heavenly choir to sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men." Wondrous anthem! for no word like that had sounded in the ages past. Like the star of the morning, it heralded the break of a new day, bright with the shining of new hope.

The voice of prophet and prophetess unite in acclaiming Him as the Coming One, the only Hope for all. Then all is silent. Is it possible that this has been a phantom, a mirage of the moral desert of the world? Suddenly, without public herald or heavenly

witness, a man appears on Jordan's banks. He stood in simple garb declaring an hour of judgment, the ax being laid at the root of the tree, and sending forth a clarion call to repentance. With him stood the poor, the sinners, the despised of the people, who were baptized in the "River of Death," acknowledging their sinnership, owning themselves worthy of judgment, and so becoming the suppliants of mercy. And another man comes among such as are gathered on the river bank. He, too, offers Himself for baptism, and as He comes up out of the water, lo! the heavens are opened over Him, and a mighty voice declares who He is,-the Son of God upon whom His Spirit can rest, and in whom His perfect pleasure can be found. A MAN! but God manifest in flesh; the Eternal Word tabernacling in human form among His creatures; mighty prophecy of a unity to be established of such fashion, and after such an order. as shall exhibit a blessed oneness between God and man,—Christian unity. Not a chimera, but a divine reality, instinct with life, possible of the most practical expression, exhibited in perfect unity, with harmony characterizing the whole of its varied activity.

I have said that every idea and principle of such a unity finds its primary expression in the truth of the unity subsisting between the three Persons of the Godhead. This finds its exhibition in the life, teaching, and sacrifical death of Him about whom I have been speaking. This concert of action has already been indicated in that the Father had opened heaven to speak His mind concerning the Son, and as expressing fellowship with Him as become man, while the Holy Spirit had manifested Himself as united with

Him in this, and in the place and service He had taken as the Son of Man, yet God's Son.

Amid the darkness, the gross darkness, of the world's thoughts, the light of the glory of this manifestation of Deity and manhood in perfect union shines in its lustre of moral perfection, exhibiting in its practical expression all the blessed depths of love and grace, tenderness and strength, weakness and suffering, truth and power, mercy and compassion, sorrow and joy, and in every conceivable form of work in love to meet the whole condition through which He moved. But the innate goodness which was displayed in His every act, word, and step did not draw forth the adoration and worship of men, but smote them in heart and conscience, bringing out their pentup hate to all that was of God. They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil,-the darkness with linked Deity with humanity in producing abhorrent sin, rather than the Light in which God and Man were displayed in union producing the most perfect good.

To Him, then, we turn to learn the primary character of Christian unity; to gather from His teaching, from the character of His life, and from the meaning of His death the whole foundation upon which it is built, the distinctive features of which give character to the whole superstructure, whether that be viewed from the inward spiritual side, or from the external display in the world, of what this unity essentually is.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRINITY ACTING IN UNITY.

When as yet only twelve years of age, we are called upon to notice Him in the Temple at Jerusalem where, in the midst of Jewish doctors, yet not in the forwardness of a precocious child. He was about "His Father's business." His Father! was He not the son of Joseph, the carpenter, what business could he have with the scribes and doctors of the law? It is the first intimation from His lips of that deep eternal purpose to which the prophetic Spirit had given anticipative utterance: "Lo in the volume of the book it is written of me, I am come to do Thy will, O God." Ah, HE was the manifestation of His Father, and the glory beheld in Him was that of an only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth; and, as we have before remarked, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit unite in owning Him as the Son in incarnation. There is essential oneness between the Divine Persons in the assumed creaturehood of the Son. This He enforces in the most absolute way. The works He does, the words He speaks, every act and thought of His are of the Father who gave them to Him, the Son, to do, the perfect Performer of all, the Holy Spirit in power and energy pervading the whole. "I and my Father are one." "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me. And the Father himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. . . Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. . . . I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him. . . . For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." (John 5:36-37; 14:10; 8:29-29; 3:34.)

But we turn instinctively to that sublime and most exquisite expression of this fundamental unity, John 17, where we find the expansion of its glory, so as to include those who had believed, and those who would believe in His name. Here we find, for the first time, the broadening of that blessed oneness between the Father and the Son so that it shall become inclusive of all who are linked with Him by faith. It means the forming of not simply a spiritual, invisible unity, but one producing the most practical results in manifestation before the world, that it might be clearly discerned by all. Let us ponder then in detail, the outpouring of the thought of Christ in this wondrous chapter.

He had just been in earnest converse with His disciples, speaking to them especially in these last conversations with them before He suffered, of the gift and coming of the Holy Spirit, of which we will speak more particularly when we consider the beautiful unfolding of the character and fulness of Christian unity, as expressed in the words of the Divine Son.

Often had His disciples heard His voice as in love

and tenderness He spoke revealing the Father and His word to them; but now they were to hear Him speaking to the Father, and that on behalf of themselves, unfolding in connection with them the wondrous unity—Christian unity—which filled His vision, reaching into the glory of the eternal ages in its full accomplishment and display. Yet He clearly emphasizes the practical side of life and testimony to be displayed before the world, the demonstration of the spiritual and inward union established through faith with the Father and the Son, the power of which in its every aspect is the Spirit of God.

He speaks to the Father, first of all, concerning His own unique position, character, and work with all of which we are to learn our link in that which He is going to make known. To apprehend the full meaning of what He says we must take our stand with Him as He turns His eyes heavenward, for in anticipation He is beyond the suffering; the glory of resurrection illumines His brow, and He is looking forward to the hour of His ascension. The Spirit could not come until the time of His glorification; and both are bound up in the most intimate manner with the formation of that blessed unity, tripartite in its essential features, which was filling His thoughts at the close of His path of toil and bitter travail. This indeed would be the breaking forth of the glorious first fruits of the corn of wheat which had fallen into the ground and died, that it might not abide alone —Himself.

His opening words accord with that principle of moral glory and beauty which ever animated His whole course,—the glory and the glorifying of the Father. His reason for requesting that the Father glorify Him—the Son—is solely that in the new place He would thus enter upon He might still further glorify the Father. He speaks of the work given Him to do as completed, the Father glorified; and now desires the bestowal upon Himself, as the perfect Man and Servant, of the glory proper to Him as the Divine Son. This meant His resumption as a man of that place and position of co-equality with God the Father; and His taking of this place is fundamental to the full and blessed character of the unity before His mind, since it is a unity to which the presence in this world of the Spirit is essential, who could not come until He (the Son) was in this place and position of glory.

Now He speaks especially of the disciples, they whom He looked upon as the Father's gift to Him. He marks them off in the most distinct and absolute manner. He says He is making request for them, not for the world. He looks upon them as not of the system and condition of things with which they are surrounded. They are the Father's, as well as His own, "for all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine." He had in reality introduced them, these poor despised disciples, into the meaning of His own unique and blessed place as the Sent One of the Father, fully knowing His perfect mind and purpose of love. He had manifested the Father's name to them, for of the Father He alone possessed full and perfect knowledge. And He had made them know all that the Father had given Him, for the very words the Father had given Him He had communicated to them; they had received them, and were in the full knowledge

of His coming from and being sent by the Father.

As we contemplate the blessed Speaker here summing up the wondrous object attained by His converse with these humble men, we may well marvel at the exceeding wonder of the Divine grace that stooped to bring such (men of like passions with ourselves) into this unity of knowledge, fellowship, and one-mindedness with the Father and the Son, all in the power of eternal life given to them, for being brought into the knowledge of the Father, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He sent, is eternal life. the word of these men is but the telling out to others of the same blessed testimony which He, the Son, communicated to them; and so those who believe through their word are introduced into the same blessed place as they occupied. For those who will thus believe on Him, He also prays, that they with his disciples may be made one. But of this we must speak in more detail as we go on.

He speaks now of not being in the world, and is plainly thinking of the time when He will be in the glory of the Father into which, at the hour of His ascension, He would enter. He invokes the Holy Father to keep these men who were given to Him through His own name, "that they may be one as we are." This blessed Man, though in the place of highest glory and power, will not say, "I will keep them;" but commits all into the Father's hand, significant evidence that the Father and He were absolutely one; so that, what had been committed to Him, He could as absent give all into the Father's keeping. And as the Father and the Son were indissolubly united in one, so were those to be who were His. While

here, He had kept them banded in one with Himself through the revelation of the Father's name; and they had known that He came from the Father and went to Him. But now they are to know the keeping power of the Father Himself, and so to have the ineffable joy of the Son fulfilled in them,—the joy of His perfect fellowship and oneness with the Father. This He ever enjoyed, never more than when glorifying the Father as man. That which He enjoyed He communicated to His own in as far as they were able to receive it. But now they are to be in the place in which He was when here, and that joy which He had is to be fulfilled in them, and they are to be one in this blessed place as He and the Father are one. They had the revelation of the Father's name, the possession of His words, all as imparted by the Son; and they now were to have the Son's joy as their own.

As possessors of all this there was another side to their position. It separated them from the world, the world which hated Him and gave Him the gibbet of shame. If they are introduced to His place, its hatred will be equally toward them, for they are not of it, He says, "even as I am not of the world." But out of it they are not to be taken. They are left in it for a very distinct and definite purpose; but His prayer for them is that they should be kept from the evil, and that which will keep them is the sanctifying power of the truth, its power to set apart for holy purposes. The Father's word is truth—the very word He says He had given them, and which the Holy Spirit, when come, would effectually bring to their remembrance and unfold in fresh power. Then as equipped in this way they are sent into the world after the same character as His own coming into it from the Father. Now He links Himself with them in this place, for on their behalf He sanctifies Himself in the new place of glory and power, which in anticipation He already occupies, that their sanctification through the truth might be accomplished.

In His closing words we come to that unity of which we have spoken, and indeed to which all has been leading up. In considering it many of the things previously mentioned will need detailed examination, and thus will it be seen how all perfectly fits together.

CHAPTER III.

"NEITHER PRAY I FOR THESE ALONE, BUT FOR THEM
ALSO WHICH SHALL BELIEVE ON ME THROUGH
THEIR WORD; THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE;
AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND
I IN THEE."

This is the first aspect of Christian unity of which our blessed Lord speaks. Summarized, it is the unity of the whole body of believers after the pattern of the unity subsisting between the Father and the Son. This is the first grand principle underlying the unity of God's people. I am not concerned at present with the question of how far or how little this unity has been realized by Christians in inward or outward pracpresentation of the truth as given to us by Christ, the tical character. But I am deeply concerned with the knowledge of which alone can be the foundation upon which the superstructure of Christian unity can be erected, so that the practical expression of it may attain its full moral character. This unity is to find its example, may I say, reverently, its model, in that which is expressed in the Lord's words, "as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee." Now we have the full revelation of this in the life of the Son as recorded for us in the Gospels. We discern therein the character and principles which the Lord requests shall be made operative in His people, effecting oneness-a divine unity of them after the wondrous example thus displayed.

He possessed full knowledge of the Father.

He perfectly revealed the Father.

He was the depository of the Father's words, and made them known.

He was the true and perfect heavenly witness sent from the Father in grace and truth.

The Spirit of God displayed His full power through Him.

The Trinity acting in unity is the glory of the life and work of the Son.

This first aspect of unity is one of testimony, fellowship, and resultant blessing in which all share. That which the disciples, who are here first spoken about as we have remarked, communicated in "their word" was the same as that which Christ had communicated to them, which was the same as the Father had communicated to Him; and those who believed through the word of the disciples were brought into the same blessed place as they occupied with the Son, and which in turn He occupied in relation to the Father. It will be essential, therefore, as we pursue our subject, to consider "their word" as given to us in the Epistles which they wrote, and which embody the full development of the Father's word which the Son had given to them,—a development under the infallible guidance of the Spirit of Truth who, according to the Son's own word, would lead into all truth. There were things which He himself said they could not bear now, and things concerning which they needed their understanding opened, and which not having apprehended when He spoke to them would need to be brought to their remembrance. All this the Spirit would do as coming after Jesus was glorified.

Let us weigh well the Lord's words, "as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." This is more, by far, than the thought of association. It is oneness in life, nature, affections and activity in all the fullness of absolute moral perfection in righteousness, holiness and love. And all this not only in an inward spiritual union, but in a manifest display before all. For it is the Eternal Life that was manifested. Here we cannot do better than revert to the words of that one who leaned upon the Master's breast. which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." (I John 1:1-4.)

It is evident that John has in his thought that unity for which the Lord is here praying. It was the revelation, the words of life and truth, which they had seen and heard from the Word, which he and his fellow disciples declare to us, that we may have fellowship with them; and their fellowship, indeed, was with the Father and His Son. Furthermore, he assures us that they wrote these precious things that our joy might be full. This echoes the Lord's own blessed words in the prayer we are considering when He says, concerning His disciples, that He spoke as

He did that "they may have My joy fulfilled in them; and then there is the evident corollary of this that through their words it is to have its accomplishment in us.

Here, then, we have epitomized the blessed oneness to which the Lord refers, the absolute oneness of all His own in a divine fellowship with the Father and the Son after the same order and character of that subsisting between these divine persons themselves. They are bound in one as being called to participate in one fellowship in which all are equally privileged to partake of that which has been made known. And so John again speaks, saying, that as walking in the light of the glory of this revelation of the Eternal Life "we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

First, then, Christian unity is that of one fellowship into which all are introduced by the truth, and in which all are called upon to fully participate apart from all distinction of class, caste, or title. This was the Lord's request, granted in its fulness by the Father in that the men He gave the Son were made the ministers of the Father's word, first of all given to them by the Son,-ministers of it to those who believe, that they all may be one, having thus one revelation, one word in which all are to participate. This has been provided for in the most complete manner by "their word" of which the Lord Himself speaks. The New Testament is this: the ministry of the Holy Spirit through these men whom he thus led into all truth, as the Lord announced. This has been so perfectly and completely done that Christians can be one, even

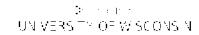
as the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. Nothing has been left undone by the Father. or the Son, or the Holy Spirit to accomplish this perfect unity in the truth. The actual accomplishment inwardly, or in the inner man, and outwardly, or in practical testimony, either individual or corporate, is to be attained only by strict conformity to the truth which has been revealed in all its heavenly purity and divine simplicity without adding the complexity of our own reasoning to it; but abiding without qualification by the written Word, not privately interpreting it, that is taking texts apart from their context or apart from the light which other parts of Scripture may afford, for we must ever remember that Scripture is not the words of men, but is God's revealed mind uttered as holy men were moved by the Holy Spirit to utter it. They spoke of the things of God "not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means." (I Cor. 2:13.) "Their word," then, is a divinely inspired unity of revelation and expression; and must be so since it is the reporting, as John says, of that which they heard and saw, the words and works of the Son which are the words and works of the Father, the evidence of the Father in Him and of His being in the Father. With this perfect provision, and adherence to it, Christian unity is an assured reality, no matter what phase of it we may consider.

As to how much or how little the Church of Christ has entered into this one divine fellowship to which Christians are called I do not now enter, except to remark that the babel of voices which characterizes the multitudinous divisions of God's people constitutes a sad and appalling witness to evident failure to rightly apprehend and participate in that one fellowship which, from its nature, could never produce such devious results.

The idea of Christ is evident. The utter failure of those who are His, at least by profession, to realize it is equally evident. The cause for this must also be abundantly plain, for it cannot be that the revelation of the truth is full of discordant voices which have confused and misled the people. Was there any discordant note in the fellowship together of the Father and the Son? Anything to mar the unity subsisting between these divine Persons? Can, then, the making known of that which subsisted between them be productive of every possible form of discordance? If such has resulted, must it not be as a consequence of those to whom this has been made known having wrested out of form and place all the precious truth revealed through His and "their word" to the destruction of the unity which this truth would have otherwise established? Has not the effort been to make the truth square with our thoughts instead of making our thoughts square with the truth? Let the clarion note of recall be sounded! The battle-cry of Christian unity be heralded the wide world over. standard lifted high with hearts beating true to our blessed Lord and Leader, with hands eager to plant it upon every opposing battlement. Back "to the teaching and the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no light for them," (Isa. 8:20.)

If this is to be our watchword, it is evident that





the fundamental necessity for us is to take up in a fresh and non-partisan spirit of earnest inquiry the study of the word of truth which has been once for all delivered unto us. This calls for a patient taking up of "their word," and the permitting of it to speak to us with its own force, and then be obedient to it. There must be, as John would say, a return to "that which was from the beginning."

We may do well at this juncture to consider together the words of the Lord and those of the chief of the apostles, who received his commission to carry forth the revelation and word of truth to its completion (Col. 1:25) from Christ in glory, making him one in place and authority with those who companied with the Lord when on earth.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:16-17.)

"The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.)

"If I depart I will send Him unto you"; and "when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear He will speak and the coming things He will announce to you. He will glorify me, for of mine will He receive and will announce to you. All things whatsoever the Father has are mine; because of this I said, that of mine He

will receive, and will announce unto you." (John 16: 7-14.)

These words make manifest the Trinity acting in unity in this revelation of the truth, this to the disciples and through "their word" to us. In the power and blessing of this we are to be one, as in it God is One. The Lord's prayer has been answered in this full and complete provision that we might be ONE as the Father was in Him and He in the Father.

Of one weaving with these words of the Lord are the words of the Spirit by Paul to which I have already referred, but here will quote in full: "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory; which none of the rulers of this world hath known; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but as it is written, things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; communicating spiritual things by spiritual means. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolish-

ness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:7-14.) apostle clearly affirms the revelation of the truth by the Spirit, the reception of the Spirit by us that we might search and know the truth, and the all-essential truth (for "we speak," he says) that "their word" is that taught of the Holy Spirit, and not of human wisdom; it being the absolute expression of the Spirit of God through them. They were divinely inspired to communicate by these spiritual means the spiritual things of divine truth. And, furthermore, with the Lord he affirms that the world, "the natural man," does not receive the things of God's Spirit. It is the spiritual who do, those who have received the truth of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," the power and the wisdom of God.

One fellowship by and in one Spirit, in and of one revelation of the truth, that this has been given makes possible "that they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in Thee." Has this aspect of Christian unity been realized and accomplished? That there is one Spirit and one revelation cannot be denied, if we are Christians, but is there one Fellow-SHIP, speaking practically? What means sectarian name and position? What means adherence to this tenet of belief and to that? What means this camp and that camp of opposing factions? What means it that you are called by that name, and we by this? That we hear on every side, "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Has Christ been divided?" Has the unity of the Father and the Son been broken? God has called, he had just said, "Into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER IV.

"THAT ALSO THEY IN US ONE MAY BE, THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU DIDST SEND ME."

The first aspect of Christian unity upon which I have been dwelling pertains exclusively to the unity of Christians in the fellowship of the truth, and also what is involved in this, but which I have not particularly touched upon, that is, the manifest and practical activity of the truth among them as one producing works of love and grace in accordance with the fellowship and truth into which all are called.

The second aspect which we are about to consider goes beyond this in its depth of meaning; and leads into not only the practical manifestation of the truth among Christians as a unity, but also the display of it in practical manifestation before the world which, as we have been assured by the Lord, cannot receive the Spirit and His things, hence, needs this manifestation that it may know that the Father sent the Son "to be the Saviour of the world," with all that this implies.

It is not now that all may be one simply as exemplified in the oneness of the Father and the Son, but that all may be "ONE IN US,"—one in the Father and the Son. A wonderful expression! This is not unity according to comparison as in the first aspect, but unity in relation through community of life and nature. For if Christians are one in these Divine Persons, it means that that which makes them one also operates to make Christians one, not only with

Furthermore, since it can only be the same power which makes Christians one with the Divine Persons as also makes them one in themselves, they are one in Them. It is not the thought of position, but of relation of the most intimate nature. It is not position because that would mean equality with God which no one could rightly think of as being implied. But having faith in Christ as our Saviour we are given eternal life, the life of God, so that this one life abides in all who believe, like the root-sap of the vine in the branches. Thus the Eternal Life in its infinite vastness which can alone be received through faith enwraps us, so that the Lord can say in effect, "Ye are one with us."

This is made of the fullest possible character by reason that those who now possess eternal life are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, for "He abides with you and shall be in you," is the Lord's own assurance. The Spirit of the Father and the Son dwells in the Christian, in all such, unites them into one, and makes them one in the Divine Persons. As, then, it was the revelation of the truth and its perfect communication to us which linked with the first aspect of Christian unity, so in this it is the grand and wonderful fact of the third person of the Trinity having taken possession of the Christian, of all such, making them one in the Father and the Son, and one with each other by reason of the fact that all have the same Spirit indwelling them. This is the force of the Lord's own words, and it is made doubly sure by "their word" in which the truth is expanded for us, as the Lord also announced that it would be.



"He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Gost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

"Living water" is the figure the Lord uses in speaking of the Spirit, and He first mentions it to the poor Samaritan woman.

Since it is this gift and its great blessing for us which characterizes this second aspect of Christian unity it may be well to consider the Lord's teaching, and that of His apostles concerning it. This will also make clear the link between these two aspects of unity. For if the first is a unity established through the fellowship of the truth, it is the truth we must consider in speaking of the teaching to which we have referred. All depends upon believing, upon having faith in the revelation made. The disciples believed the word of Christ, the Father's word declared and made known by Him. And we believe through "their word," and so come into their blessing as our own.

This teaching of our Lord as to the work, presence and power of the Spirit of God, both as to its individual application and that which more particularly concerns us at this time, its corporate application, its application therefore to Christian unity, is especially set forth in John's Gospel. Before passing, however, to that which is our immediate concern it may be well to consider the individual application in its three broad features as He sets them before us in John's gospel, chapters three, four and seven; and then consider more particularly the personal coming of the Holy

Spirit and its consequences as set forth in the latter part of the gospel.

New Birth and Eternal Life.

Јони 3.

This subject which I propose to briefly consider lies at the threshold of all spiritual relationship and blessing. It is the fundamental necessity, and involves by its very nature a complete change of position and condition.

Man by wisdom, by his reasoning, has never and will never, find out God. Communion and fellowship between God and His creature can alone be in a natural life of unfallen character and condition, or else in the power of spiritual life which results from being "born from above." The former, man has lost through disobedience, sin; the latter, he has not; nor can attain by or through himself; it ever has been and only can be through a distinct operation of God himself who alone can quicken, impart life, for man has become morally and spiritually dead toward God. It has been immutably decreed by the lips of divine Truth, "Ye must be born from above."

That spiritual life has been imparted, bringing the creature into fellowship with God, from the very beginning, Scripture clearly witnesses to us. Abel obtained witness that he was righteous; his offering, clear evidence of his faith, was accepted; and John assures us that he who practises righteousness is begotten of God. (I John 2:29; 3:12.) To this early case we may add the long list of worthies mentioned in Hebrew XI, and so through all the ages past, and through time which is yet to come this great blessing has been and

will be bestowed. The reason for it is evident: there is a God of goodness and mercy on the one hand, and man, His creature, ruined by sin and alienated from Him, on the other, whom nevertheless He desires to have in living fellowship with Himself. And so the Son, come in grace to bring to full fruition these desires, can say, "My Father worketh hither," and now He, the Son, was working also. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will"; and further He can say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." I have associated these thoughts because it must be evident that new birth, if it be that which the words imply, is the impartation of life,—a new life. This then is the fundamental necessity for seeing or entering the kingdom of God,—the sphere of His rule and blessing in contrast to that kingdom of darkness and evil ruled by Satan in which man in his natural state now finds himself. Thus comes about that translation spoken of by the apostle Paul. (Col. 1:13.)

The Lord amplifies His statement as to this birth of which He speaks by saying, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." In the terms He here employs we have expressed the manner of accomplishment, and an expression of the character belonging to this new birth,—this being born from above,—while also its absolute distinction from all else is clearly emphasized. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." There is no change in either, and no intermingling. The former cannot in-

herit the kingdom (I Cor. 15:20); the latter ever abides in its full divine character.

But let us consider the terms,—"of water and the Spirit." Now the meaning of water as a figure is plainly attested by Scripture. It is employed as a figure of the Word of God. The cleansing effect of the Word is spoken of, thus the idea of water is associated with it. (John 13:10; 15:3; Eph. 5:26; Psalm 119:9.) It is a beautiful type of the Word of God as it deals with man, effecting first of all conviction of his uncleanness. For as the face is mirrored in the clear pool of water (Proverbs 27:19) so the heart of man in its uncleanness and evil is fully manifested in the Word, while it also, like the water, becomes the means of cleansing and practical separation from evil. This, however, is not apart from the Spirit of God. He it is who brings the Word home in all its power to the soul, effecting both conviction and cleansing. Faith lays hold of this. The soul accepts the testimony as to its utter sinfulness, and avails itself of the God-given way of cleansing as declared by the Word, the sacrificial work of Christ which puts away all sin. In this way we are begotten of God "by the word of truth" (James 1:18); and purify our souls "in obeying the truth through the Spirit . . . being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever . . . and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (I Peter 1:22-25.) The nature thus received is so characteristically God's work and absolutely conformable to His own nature that John can say, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (I John 3:9.) "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." (I John 5:1.)

We have, then, in this a distinctively spiritual work wrought in the soul so that one who is a subject of it is said to be, "born of the Spirit." (John 3:8.) Moreover, it is that in which the whole Godhead is engaged as other scriptures testify. It is attributed to God (John 1:13; I John 3:9; 5:18; I Peter 1:23); to Christ (I John 2:29); to the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, 6, 8; Titus 3:5). The whole Godhead is concerned, and connection with each is for the purpose of unfolding specific relations between those new-born and the Godhead.

It may not be out of place to briefly consider the character belonging to new birth, and the results derived from it. The life and nature communicated to us by the Spirit through the Word is devoid of all taint of sin,—"doth not commit sin," "cannot sin" (I John 3:9), "sinneth not" (I John 5:18). The believer is, therefore, a partaker "of the divine nature." (II Peter 1:4.) Characteristic of such is "walk in newness of life"; that is, a new kind of life. (Rom. 6:4). And connected with this we get the thought of resurrection. The sentence of death has been passed upon all that is of the flesh at the cross, so that now as a believer I live unto God "in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:25; John 3:3, 6, with Romans 8:5, 6.) And the law of the Spirit is life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1-4), which life we possess as "born again" or from above. Its manifestation in practice is another matter. What we are to understand is that our whole link as

born again is with Christ in resurrection. This is the character belonging to it. (Rom. 6:4-11; Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 2:12; 3:1.) It is life perfectly beyond the touch of death. Blessed and wondrous possession entered upon through obeying the truth! Another character belonging to it is "New Creation" (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). As our old birth brought us into this old creation, so the new birth brings us into New Creation, old things have passed, and all has become new. There is new birth with its new life by the Word, and of the Spirit, producing now practically "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4) as to kind, in "newness of Spirit" (Rom. 7:6) as to motive and desire. Thus we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:10.) Now the results derived from this are also very important for the believer. Such are "children of God." (John 1:12, 13, R. V.) What a blessed place to be given, and with it abundant riches and glory, for "if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:17; I John 2:29; 3:1-2.) Our link now is with God as our Father. As born again, we are insured as to final results of full conformation to the image and likeness of Christ; to this end we are begotten of Him. (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:20, 21.) Another result of being born of God is that we are possessed of power to keep ourselves (I John 5:18; James 1:27; Jude. 21), and so be preserved from the touch of the Wicked one, who, resisted by this power, flees away (James 4:7). Again, what is begotten of God overcomes the world, all of which is not of the Father, but lies in the Wicked one. (I John 5:4; 2:16; 5:19) As born of God, we love Him that begat, and love all those begotten of Him. (I John 5:1.) Thus, in

New Birth, we receive a life and nature like unto God, given by the Spirit through the word.

Here, then, the Lord has emphatically announced the necessity for new birth and given clear intimation as to its character, all of which as we have seen is strongly enforced by "their word," the word of His apostles which has been put in our hands. He now rebukes Nicodemus for his ignorance, especially when the Old Testament prophets had testified to the need of just such a change, though not in the clear and positive manner conveyed in the Lord's words. It was eminently suitable that when He spoke there should be a fulness of revelation surpassing all that had gone before. Yet associating Himself with the prophets of old, though the Peer of them all and the consummation of their testimony, He says, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." That to which they bore witness was "earthly things," the establishment of the kingdom on earth in outward display of power and blessing, for entrance into which, however, new birth was necessary. But, though He witnessed to earthly things, He had come to tell of "heavenly things." To such things there could only be one Witness, even the Son of Man who came down from heaven, yet who, though on earth, was in heaven (John 3:12-13),—the Divine Son. He it is who speaks here, the Eternal Life who was with the Father, and has been manifested unto us.

This being so, how marvelous is the next statement. Nicodemus had questioned, how can these things be? The Lord is now going to open out how they can be accomplished. The great basis of all is His work

upon the cross. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." He, the great antitypical sacrifice, displaces all the shadowy forms of the past ages. In it God is fully glorified, the whole question of sin fully dealt with, and all His claims of holiness and righteousness fully answered. God's response to the simple faith which believes in Him is deliverance from all condemnation, and the great gift of eternal life. Blessed and marvelous grace!

Since birth and life are concomitants, so here the Lord links new birth, the birth from above, with the heavenly gift, eternal life, imparted to him that believeth. This is the life given at the moment of being born of God. It is the giving of life and nature in community with Himself so that it can be said we are the children of God, and that by the most intimate and unchangeable tie.

The absolute identity of this new nature and life with that of God Himself is very clearly enforced in Scripture, especially in John's writings, as a consideration of the passages already mentioned will fully show. There also must be the manifestation of this new life. Thus only can it be known to others, for the internal operation of being born again is not visible. And so the Lord speaks to Nicodemus. (John 3:8.) The practise of righteousness is characteristic of such. (I John 2:29.) This implies the following of God as dear children. (Eph. 5:1.) As being already partakers of the divine nature, we are possessed of like desires, affections, and character to God Himself, and these are exhibited in us and witness to the accom-

plishment of new birth. To walk in fellowship with God means to be those in whom fruit is produced. The fruit of the Spirit in us witnesses to the truth of our being born of God. (Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 5:9.) Brotherly love is an evident token of the reality of the work (I John 3:18, 19; 5:1-3), because it is love of that one family to which, as born of God and loving Him, the believer now belongs. And this love is love that flows in service after the pattern of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, in the knowing of whom alone have we learnt what love is, and its true character, what therefore God is Himself. (I John 3:16, 17; 4:8-13.)

This then is the great fundamental accomplishment in the grand work of bringing about Christian unity. True, this is of individual character. But there could be nothing of a corporate character had not this individual work first place. For that which links the individual soul in common life and nature with God is that which underlies the broader and larger sphere, the unity of all in one, though it must not be forgotten that there is much, very much more in every way, brought in as part of the corporate truth.

The Holy Spirit as the power of fellowship with the Source of all blessing and favor—the Father and the Son.

TOHN 4.

This chapter presents a scene of great blessing. From Him, the great Source of all blessing, there is flowing the stream of immeasurable grace to fill and satisfy a poor outcast, ruined soul. The munificence of the grace which has come out with the coming

of the Divine Son is given a fresh and further manifestation here. We have not simply new birth, the giving of life—eternal life; but something that is more than the life as given to be in us, for it must ever be as in us dependent life; the possession of it does not make us independent of Him who only hath immortality. (I Tim. 6:16.) What is spoken of here is "living water," drinking of which the thirst is forever satisfied. But even more than this, "the water that I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." If we have the fact of eternal life given to us in the previous chapter, here we have the power of it, and that as a well in the person who has believed in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

What we have presented to us here is a divine source of joy and blessing, "the gift of God," constantly springing up, as the figure of the well aptly conveys; and its bubbling water in constant flow was after oriental simile as "living water." It is not the nature of life to be its own source of supply, and the same is true of the eternal life in us. Here we have the Source, a Spring of unfailing blessing, even the Spirit of God. However, let it be noted that we have not the distinctiveness of His personality set before us; that will be presented in its own place; we have, though, His power, and that as an inward source of all joy and fellowship with the Father and the Son, both in worship and service. This is so absolute in its character that the Lord can say, he who drinks "of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." The thirst which the soul knows as having drank at this cistern, or at that, the thirst of being unsatisfied after perchance having well drunk, is never known

by that one who has this well within, ever upspringing in its soul-satisfying draught; and never does it fall short of the life, for it springs up "unto eternal life." But of what does this well of blessing consist? It is Christ! Christ in whom all the fulness of God is revealed to me; and having Him I have all. Shall I then ever thirst again? I shall drink, and drink, and drink again; but ever to know only the greatest possible satisfaction. There are many wells in this world, and one may drink from them all and thirst again and seek yet another to try. There is only one well for eternal life, it is God's gift, it is the Holy Spirit. If the infinitude of God can be exhausted then shall I "thirst again," never otherwise.

But there are two thoughts, most important in their bearing for us, which are directly linked with this precious subject. I have already mentioned them. The first is worship. What the Lord has to say about it in answer to the woman's question is of the deepest import. She is a Samaritan, and to her Samaria's mount is the true centre of worship; yet she is not ignorant of the Jewish claim. The Lord is the faithful witness. He declares that they of Samaria know not what they worship; but the Jew does, for "salvation is of the Jews." I desire for a moment to note the precious grace here exhibited by our blessed Lord. He sits at Sychar's well as the rejected Messiah. The leaders of the nation will have none of this lowly Man, so full of grace and truth with His power, the power they would be glad of could they use it in their own way; but the grace and truth their hardened evil hearts cannot bear. Yet with all this weighing upon His spirit, when He is in the presence of

the enemies of Israel and of their privileges, He insists upon their special place, and utters no word of judgment against them; but when in their presence he faithfully exposes in burning words their true condition. "Salvation is of the Jews." Yes! And here He is "the Salvation" for which they had waited, but now rejected. However, He would not press His own claims. They will be pressed in due time; and the stone which the builders rejected shall become head of the corner. He came to do the Father's will, and so it is the Father's will He now makes known. In brief words He sweeps away the boast of Samaria, and the vaunted principle of tradition upon which it built its claim to recognition. Jerusalem, too, with all its ordinance of law and sacrificial service, though ordered and established by God for a season, but only partial in character as a revelation of Himself, He declares is to pass away. In neither of these systems is worship to be given to the Father. "But the hour cometh, and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Here is the kernel of the matter. He presses it to the then present moment—"now is"—and why? Why at that very moment must Jerusalem herself be no longer the designated place for worship? Surely, because He, the true Shekinah of divine glory, the Revealer of God, who alone could have filled the then empty temple (for the glory had departed long before) with the fullorbed glory of God, was rejected, despised, and hated. This being so, it shall be no longer a temple made with hands; no edifice, be it ever so grand, shall be the centre of worship; no material structure shall con-



stitute the gathering point for those who worship the Father. In the presence of the Divine Son all must pass that HE may be the centre. In His presence false systems, and partial revelations, must go and give place to Him who could say "Destroy this temple [the temple of His body] and I will raise it up in three days." In the glory of this accomplishment we see the prophecy of that marvelous fabric, that temple as being raised, expanding and growing into a wondrous building of divine unity and construction, composed of new-born creatures built around Him, "in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple IN THE LORD," (Eph. 2:21),—a building composed of the "living stones," those who have tasted through salvation that the Lord is gracious, built up around Him as "a spiritual house, a holy. priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (I Peter 2:1-10). "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of the lips confessing His name." (Heb. 13:15.) This is worship in spirit and in truth such as the Father seeks. This is a glorious spiritual temple instinct with life in every joint and band, every "stone" of it a vessel of worship; and thus in the midst of the praises of His redeemed children the Father dwells. This worship · is such as comes from that up-springing well of which the Lord has spoken, the Holy Spirit in power in the new-born soul possessing eternal life. What place is there in all this for tradition, or ordinance, or prescribed form? Such things can only contribute to prevent the upspringing of that blessed well. The Spirit of God is here, the Spirit of God is within,



dare we prescribe by form or regulation how HE shall lead the Father's children in worshiping Him? He is with us. Himself the divine spring of joy and power, and He is "the Spirit of truth," which in fulness He has communicated to us. Need we more for worship "in spirit and in truth"? Sights and sounds of worldly, earthly character have no place, and are a rude intrusion in the sanctuary of spiritual worship where it is to be only the music of the soul expressed by the lips, and not the music of a man made instrument; the architecture of God's temple in the Lord and not that of man's creation; a ritual of one rite, that of giving the Spirit of God His place as Leader and Governor, and in simple faith depending upon Him to lead and govern. There would be no confusion among the gathered worshipers because it is an invisible Leader upon whom they depend; could there be when it is God who is given the place? Here then, too, though we began with what is strictly individual we see the thought expanded to include what is essentially Christian unity as viewed from the standpoint of worship.

I pass now to the second thing I mentioned,—service. This poor woman herself knew more than many who profess to excell her. The Lord's answer awakes in her mind thoughts of the Messiah who, at His coming, she knew would declare all things. I feel assured that she felt that when He came neither Samaria nor Jerusalem would count for anything; the fulness of what He would reveal would necessarily displace all other systems. But do all who profess to worship the Father in this our day accord to the Son this place of supremacy as to all? With her every-

thing passed into oblivion when she heard those wondrous words, "I that speak unto thee am He." She now hastens to spread His fame. She is in His service. This teaches us that true service for Him can only flow from the knowledge of Himself as revealed to us by Himself. To her it was by His own word; to us now it is by the Spirit of truth sent forth by Him when glorified. Christian unity can alone be realized through worship and service patterned according to the Lord's thought here made known, but much more fully developed through "their word," of which I have so often spoken, and the consideration of which will come more largely before us in treating of the corporate features of the truth. That which we have considered is at least part of the things connected with that unity mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and by which the world is to believe that He was the Sent One of the Father.

The Holy Spirit, the link with Christ in glory, and and the power for all service to the widest extent.

JOHN 7.

In the foregoing remarks we have had before us the truth of the Holy Spirit as the divine well of power and fellowship put within the Christian to fill and satisfy him, also leading him out in worship apart from all of the old economy, and every form of willworship according to man. How this led out into service was also referred to, and it is the fulness of this which is connected with the new and special blessing here promised as consequent upon Jesus being glorified, just as with the former the true and proper character of worship is attained according to the

Father's mind. It is the fulness of service meeting the dire need found all around in the power of the the Holy Spirit which is involved in the words, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And undoubtedly it is by this mighty and wondrous outflow contemplated by our Lord,-meeting with its gushing freshness the souls of men, who in this arid wilderness-world are being consumed with their death-thirst, and thus bringing to them life and blessing of the highest heavenly character,—that the world is to be led to believe that He was the Sent One of the Father. I count it to be an expression of the preeminent character, though not apart from true worship, of that unity spoken about at the commencement of this chapter,-"That also they in us one may be, that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me." It is by such an outflow of blessing through those who are in the Father and the Son,—"in us,"—and are united in one by this, that the end here expressed and desired by the Lord in His prayer is to be attained. If Christian unity in its practical expression is our object and desire we do well to pay strict heed to the Lord's words.

It is interesting, first of all, to consider the whole setting which the Lord takes as His opportunity to utter this promise, and make known yet another advance in the widening stream of heavenly things and their blessing, which He came to bear witness of as He told Nicodemus. The occasion is that of the Jewish feast of tabernacles, the consummation of Jehovah's set times in the service and worship of Israel. This feast continued over the eighth day, as no other did, thus signifying the commencement of a new time after the full cycle of seven days had been

completed, a new time of glory and blessing when the wilderness journey from Egypt to the land is only a memory, fruitful, however, in the lessons it has taught. It was a festive season, and a time for the display of what God wrought. Jesus is urged to go up to the feast, and manifest Himself and His works. But those who so urged were not in tune with His perfect moral perception and judgment. He was the rejected One, rejected as the One who had come not to do His own will, but that of the Father who had sent Him. How could He, then, press any claim on His own behalf or show His power for His own advancement? He must be accepted as what He presented Himself to be, and if not He would have no place, could have none; and for Him to have sought it would have been the loss of all. And so He says, "My time is not yet come." He could not be king under such conditions; they might come by force to take Him and make Him one, but He would not submit Himself to any such action. He goes up to the feast in the character they have given to Him, rejected. He goes up privately. The world hated Him for His faithful testimony; glad to use His power for themselves if they could, they would none of His truth. Unheralded, and the object only of men's empty reasonings, not of their love, He suddenly appears about the middle of the feast. What for? To claim His place and kingly right? Nay, but to press His Father's claim, and the revelation He brought from Him. Precious, and full of blessed truth, are His ensuing words. I cannot now consider them in detail; but pass to the announcement with which He closes, "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him



that sent Me." He is going to leave them. who would give Him no place shall not be made to accord any to Him at this time. His Father will receive Him again, for still it remains true that His time has not yet full come. While the heavens retain Him, He is still the world-rejected and hated One. He is still saying, not less to-day than on the occasion here referred to, "My time is not yet come." A weighty word for all Christians, for if such are one in the Father and the Son it is true of them that their time is not yet come. Fellow Christian, will you seek the applause of men, and the glory the world can give while He is rejected? Can you have your time now while He has not His? Can this be compatible with our intimate association and link with Him in life, and nature, and glory? It is owing to the fact that such things have been so considered, that the truth and testimony of Christian unity are blasted and withered. The church has sought to reign in this world while her Head and Lord is still rejected, while He is still saying, "My time has not yet come," in testimony to which He went back to the Father, and has not as yet come back to take His great power and reign over the earth. But this going away, and this absence of His, is accompanied with the manifesting of the most wonderful purposes, and the outpouring of the greatest blessing.

In immediate connection with the announcement of His departure He unfolds the riches of grace and mercy. How marvellous that it should be so! Why not an unfolding of dire judgment upon His rejectors? Nay, but the deeper the sin and guilt of the world, the more rich the bounty of sovereign grace displayed.

The greater the evil, it only serves as the occasion for the greater display of the love and mercy of God. And His departure, though it be by way of the cross with its awful testimony to the attitude of the world toward the full revelation of God in the Son, even this is made to redound to its blessing; and His departure which meant His being glorified, became the occasion for the gift of the Spirit to the believer after such a manner of fulness as is implied in "rivers of living water" flowing out in a moral and spiritual wilderness, arid and barren,—this world which had rejected Him who alone could be life and light to it. notwithstanding all that the world proved itself to be in His rejection, He, as seated upon the throne of glory to which He departed after the accomplishment of the mighty work of atonement at the cross, poured out in the depth of His infinite compassion the Holy Spirit in such a way that He can flow out of those who are now linked with Him, one in the Father and the Son,-unity, the like of which cannot otherwise be found,-in "rivers of living water." Thus, through faith, is overcome the awful blighting power of sin which makes this world an arid, barren wilderness, for by such rivers the soul is brought into green pastures of heavenly blessing and ministry. The dreariness, the emptiness, the unslaked thirst, the burning heat, and the lack of all rest pass away before the outflowing flood of the Spirit. It is as the givers and ministers of such blessing in this world that Christians are to live, thereby making known the link of unity with the departed, but glorified Jesus. How inexpressibly precious are the thoughts of Christ about His own people! Would that they were entered into. Then



would Christian unity have its full expression. We have, then, not only new life through birth by the Spirit, but the Spirit also as the well of divine blessing within springing up ever to satisfy and fill the believer, leading out as well into true worship according to the mind of the Father; and also the Spirit in such fulness as to flow out of the believer in abundance of refreshment and ministry in service to the whole need of the scene around. These are ways in which Christian unity properly manifests itself in those who constitute that unity, and are one with the Father and the Son.

The personal presence of the Holy Spirit, and its consequences.

John 14, 15, 16.

"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

This "Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."

"It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comorter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and

of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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 shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

This is the teaching of the Lord concerning the Holy Spirit in these chapters, and a distinct advance beyond what He has given before is readily perceived. It is not now simply a divine source of blessing, or a divine power for ministry and service, but a Divine Person to whom we are here introduced. This, the Lord's language, distinctly brings before us. A truth wonderfully grand and full of blessing,—the truth of the personal presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer individually, and also the whole body of believers corporately. He is the only divinely appointed Leader for the people of God who, if given His rightful place, is the One who will and indeed is alone able to rightly lead into exercise every spiritual gift; to lead individually and collectively in all worship, ministry, and service apart from all human regulations and man-made systems which can only hinder instead of help. It is "the unity of the Spirit" we are to keep, and not a unity according to man's wisdom and organization.

But we cannot consider our Lord's words apart from giving some attention to the context, without examining a little the setting in which He frames His teaching. We find at once that one fact of great prominence which is connected with the personal coming and presence of the Holy Spirit in the world is that of the Lord's departure from this world. This was both expedient for Him, and for His own. This was His return to His proper glory, His exaltation as Man to the right hand of the Majesty on high; at once God's answer to Him because of the perfectness of His work below, and God's condemnation of the world who rejected and crucified Him. This departure of His meant for His own their being brought into the place of fullest blessing and power. He is going to prepare the place above for His own, and He is coming again to receive them, that they may abide with Him forever. Bright and blessed hope!

He tells His disciples that they know the way He goes. He had told them often, but their hearts were The cross was the only way for Him. dull. when Thomas expresses their ignorance, evidently having in mind their going, not His, His simple and beautiful answer is, "I am the Way." He must pass through the unutterable sorrow that lav across His path, the baptism with which He was to be baptized. But as for themselves they were to find, just because of the cross, that He himself was "the Way" for them. Yea more, in Him all truth and life were centered so that He was absolutely both these, and could rightly take them as His titles. To know Him, then, was to know the Father; and His words and works were the perfect manifestation of the Father.

He goes on now to the immediate point with which the coming of the Spirit was connected. "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." And He gives the assurance that whatever is asked in His name (which of necessity means what could be rightly linked with that name) He will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. With this there must be connected the love which prompts the keeping of His commandments. He speaks now of the Spirit who will be sent by the Father to dwell with the believer forever. In the truth of this personal presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit lies the possibility of accomplishing those greater works of which the Lord has spoken, and of asking in His name what would be in accord with His mind, and which He would do for the believer. We may marvel that He should say "greater works" than His own. It does not mean we will possess a greater power than He had, but in a certain place He says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened till it be accomplished." The full outflow of His love in activity was under restraint until the accomplishment of the mighty work of atonement in which He was baptized with fire, the fire of God's holiness dealing with the whole question of sin in unmitigated wrath so that God was fully glorified about this whole question, and the dishonor and disaster it had brought upon the whole creation. With this great work fully wrought out in perfection by the Perfect One, purification of sins having been made, He could sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Now there can be the unhind-



ered outflow of His mighty power in love's activity, not by His being present on earth, but now through those who believe on Him, the Holy Spirit being personally present in the world with believers and indwelling them. He emphasizes the identity of character between Himself ("I am . . . the truth") and the Spirit by calling Him, "the Spirit of truth"; and then states the very solemn fact that the world cannot receive the Spirit "because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." He assails the gross materialism of the world in these simple, but powerful, words. It will only believe what it can see. But had they not seen HIM, and had they believed? Had they not looked upon God manifest in flesh? Had they not heard a human voice speak to them the wonderful words and works of God, and give the most wonderful commands, and all be fulfilled? Had they not seem human hands perform the most wonderful miracles ever known? And had the world believed? Nav! It had rejected. The world, then, as such is given up to its unbelief. The testimony to His glory and power, and the doing of those works which accompany this testimony, will be under the direction of an invisible Person whose power, nevertheless, shall be mightily felt in the world. During this time the world will not see Jesus, but the believer does, not materially, but by faith, the lack of which is the reason of the world's blindness. And the assurance linked with the realization of that life possessed through Him, eternal life. and, too, through the coming and ministry of the Spirit, is the knowing the blessedness of that unity here expressed. There flows from this the precious promise of His manifestation to the individual who,

as controlled by the Holy Spirit, keeps His commandments and loves accordingly, so that the blessed oneness of which He has just spoken is to be realized in the mutual love of the Father and the Son. Manifestation after the order He here indicates was a new thought to the Jewish mind. Judas (not Iscariot) had heard Him announce that the world would not see Him, but that they would see Him; and this He further enforces by telling them of His purpose to manifest Himself to them individually, founded upon the keeping of His commandments and loving Him. This, I repeat, was new to the Jewish mind. Hence the question, "Lord, how is it Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The prevalent idea of the manifestation of the Christ was that of His presentation before the whole world in resplendant glory and irresistible power. But this is not to be as yet. His time had not yet fully come. Meanwhile there is to be the abiding of the Father and the Son with the man who "loves Me," says the Lord, "and keeps My word" (lit. singular). And "the word which ye hear," He further says, "is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." But if the blessing of this manifestation depends upon this keeping of His word by me, and I am a weak and failing creature liable to assault by every form of evil which would operate to prevent the keeping of this holy trust, what assurance can I have that I shall enjoy the blessing of which He has spoken? As though He was answering the unspoken questionings of the heart, He says, "But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, . . . He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said

unto you." Herein lies the answer to every question, and the banishing of every fear, for "Peace," He says, "I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Blessed, loving, tender Lord!

In the fifteenth chapter a somewhat different connection introduces what is said about the Spirit. In the beginning of the chapter the Lord presents the absolute necessity of abiding in Him, and that thus only could there be fruitfulness, for the life-sap is in Him and the branch must be in vital connection with the stock, or barrenness will result. To abide in Him is to depend entirely upon Him, to know no source of strength and vital energy except Himself, as He says, "without Me ye can do nothing." But there is another great principle besides dependence which is essential to spiritual fruitfulness. It is obedience. The Lord connects it with love. His love for the disciples is the same as the Father's love of Him; and to abide in this love He has for them, that is to find it their portion and joy, they are to be obedient according to the pattern of His own blessed obedience (ver. 10). And the joy He had in this path of obedience He desired to abide in them, so that their own joy might be full. To this end had He spoken of these things.

He speaks now of what His commands are, of the intimacy established between those who do them and Himself; and then goes on to speak of the world's hatred and persecution owing to His own faithful and true witness of the Truth and to the Father, warning His own that they too will be sharers in this, "for the servant is not greater than His Lord." But He

is going away, leaving behind the world in its hatred and rejection; and is going back to the Father. And they, His disciples, are to be left here to face the world with its hatred, rejection, persecution, and death. How can they meet this, even for His name's sake? How can they bear the brunt of such a battle? Ah! had He not said He would not leave them comfortless? Would the love in Him toward them, which was as the love wherewith the Father loved Him, permit them to be alone? Had the Father left Him alone? Nay! and He would not leave His own alone! "But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." Blessed Comfort! Infinite provision and sufficiency with which to confront the world, and all its opposing forces. We find then that the Holy Spirit dwells with believers, and is in them; and this Divine Person is to be the Teacher of all truth; and He is to be the great Witness with whom is associated the witness of those who believe. He had told them these things that they might not be offended. He thus forewarned and forearmed them. He now goes on to give much more detail as to the Holy Spirit. He outlines the great subject-matter of the Spirit's witness, first in relation to the world, and then to His own people.

He introduces His remarks by saying, "It is expedient for you that I go away;" and the reason for this is that only so could the Spirit come. He must depart, returning to the Father; and then He will send the Holy Spirit. Hence, His absence and His being glori-



fied are essential to the Spirit's presence in the world. The witness of the Spirit to the world shall be concerning sin, righteousness and judgment. He will convince the world of sin, of being in a state of sin, and in fact under its dominion. This is proven conclusively by the fact that the world does not believe on Him. He, as viewed in relation to the world, is the rejected Christ. His time has not yet come. Meanwhile. He is exalted to the right hand of power in heaven until all be made His footstool. The Spirit will deal with the world about righteousness, "because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." The world has no righteousness. It is to be found alone as inseparable from Christ, for God has displayed His righteousness in setting the world-rejected Christ on the throne where He is not seen by the world, but is proclaimed in it to be both Lord and Christ. Furthermore, the Spirit convinces the world of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged. At the cross this prince exercised all his power against Christ; but Christ rose again, and took His seat on the throne in heaven. This is the selfevident judgment of the prince and the world which joined hands with him against God and His Christ. Their victim is in the place of, and has been given, all power in heaven and earth. The cross is the consummating expression of the enmity and hatred of Satan and the world to God and His Son, to which only one response can be made by God, and that is judgment. The execution of it may linger, but its inevitableness is unquestioned; and to this the Spirit bears witness. The presence, then, of the Holy Spirit in the world is fraught with solemn consequences for

the world. His witness to it during the absence of Christ is of very serious import, both to it and for the individual who, believing and accepting Christ, really takes sides with Him against it and its rejection of Him. This only can mean moral and spiritual separation from it in every way, as witnesses against it in unity with the express witness of the Spirit of God.

The Lord now speaks concerning the relation of the Spirit to His disciples, and so to all who believe. He had many things to say to them. They were not as yet, however, ready for them. The Spirit would guide them into all truth. He would, therefore, communicate the "many things." What He hears that will He speak, making manifest things to come. That which He hears and receives are the things of Christ, and these are also the things which He communicates. His special purpose all through is to glorify Christ. Furthermore, the precious things the Spirit will thus communicate are the Father's also, for all that the Father has belongs to Christ; and if the Spirit took of His things and made them known, they were none the less the Father's things too. Thus we see a perfect and beautiful acting together of these Divine Persons in connection with the revelation of Christianity.

From what we have been considering, it is quite evident that the Lord's departure from the world, and His presence in glory, are intimately connected with the personal presence of the Holy Spirit in this world; and His indwelling of believers individually and corporately; and as being the distinctive witness for Christ in the scene of His rejection and death. These truths,

both of the Spirit's presence and the place of Christ in glory, are of preeminent importance to all Christians, and have the most important bearing upon all their relations together. It is clear that if the Spirit of God is present here, we must have in Him a divine and all-sufficient source of blessing and power for all ministry and service, the divine Leader of God's people. He, surely, is divinely able to order aright all activity in the body of Christians, and to cement together in perfect unity. But at this juncture I am constrained to say that a testimony to, and activity in accordance with this great truth is deplorably lacking among Christians in general. What is the meaning of all the elaborate systems of Church government and ritual, with the high offices and the weighty influence wielded in the affairs of the Church by those who hold them? Who fostered this incubus upon the people of God? Where in the things the Spirit of God has communicated do we find a hint, even, of these things? If men believed there was a Divine Person present to order and control the workings of the Church, and to use in the accomplishment of its service and ministry whomsoever He would according to His own perfect system of Church government and order, would the Church be so encumbered? could be more simple than that in faith the Lord's people should trust unreservedly to a Divine Person to direct ALL! The Holy Spirit is here, and is in each believer. Is He not capable of free and sovereign action? Should He not be accorded the place of acting in sovereignty? And if He has an order for all activity in service and worship, can He not make it operative? And if all depends upon Him, it matters



not whether there be few or many to gather together. His power and order is available for the two or three as for the two or three hundred. If He be given the sovereign place in the midst of the gathered company, there will be no more confusion because of a great number than there would be among a small number. If a company of Christians who have surrendered their own wills to walk in subjection to God, believed a Divine Person was present in their midst, would not everything be governed by this great fact? There is no fact so potent in the accomplishment of unity as that of there being one centre of authority, power and service. That Christian unity might be practically realized, the one potent factor was supplied in the personal presence of the Holy Spirit and His immediate indwelling of every believer. The loss of this truth, in its pristine blessedness and power, by the Church, lies as the root cause of its disunity. return to this truth, and the abandonment of all that conflicts with its absolute supremacy in the midst of Christians, is the first step back toward the unity of the broken and scattered sheep of Christ.

I wish now to say a little about the office of the Spirit as thus come into the world, to be with and in God's people. This, for the present, I simply gather from the term used by the Lord in speaking about the Spirit; a term rendered in our Authorized Version "Comforter," but the thought conveyed to us by this, hardly, in any adequate way, sets forth the fulness of the name. While the thought of comfort and consolation is associated with the fact of the Spirit's presence here, the term implies much more. Indeed, it means one who takes up our case and, as fully enter-

ing into it, identifies himself with all our interests. How blessed to think of the Spirit of God in this way! What a wonderful display of divine grace and mercy toward us! What immense possibilities of blessing lie enwrapt in this mighty truth! May Christians everywhere awake to this, and throw off every influence which would restrain them from giving the Spirit of God His rightful place among them as collectively meeting together in this or that place, and so no longer do despite unto the Spirit of grace.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT, AND THE UNITY OF CHRISTIANS RESULTING AS BEING BAPTIZED BY HIM
INTO ONE BODY OF WHICH CHRIST IS THE

HEAD

Having traced the teaching of the Lord concerning the Holy Spirit, I wish now to examine the teaching of the apostles, that is "their word," as the Lord speaks, which is the communication of the Spirit to them, being in result the expanding of His own teaching and the making known of what He could not make known when here Himself. The Spirit of Truth had to come to lead into all truth. To the consideration of the fact of His coming let us first turn our attention.

I. The promise and its fulfilment.

In the Synoptic Gospels, with the exception of the testimony of John the Baptist, we have only three instances of the Lord Himself speaking about the Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:13; 12:12; 24:49.) In the first case He assures the disciples of the readiness of the Father to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. In the next instance He emphasizes dependence upon the Holy Spirit; and finally, He makes this announcement after resurrection, "I send the promise of my Father upon you," instructing them to remain in Jerusalem until clothed with power from on high. The teaching of the fourth Gospel we have noticed; there remains only the last mention of the Holy Spirit by the Lord in that Gospel (20:22) where He says to

the disciples, "Peace be to you; as the Father sent me forth, I also send you. And having said this, He breathed into them, and says to them "Receive the Holy Spirit." This act of breathing into them undoubtedly signified that they were participators with Him in resurrection-life, in the glory of which He was standing among them; and as in the place of supreme authority He assures them of being recipients of the Holy Spirit, of course at the time when He would come, which, as we have already seen, could not be until after the departure of Christ. What we may consider His concluding word is given us in Acts 1:5-8, which is "John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence"; finally, again assuring them that they "will receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Following this we have the well known accomplishment on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) of all the promises of the Lord. Peter fully affirms this in His address saying, "This Jesus has God raised up whereof all we are witnesses. Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which ve behold and hear." He then announces a little later how this gift is to be obtained. "Repent, and be baptized each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.." (Acts 2:38). And, furthermore, before the council in the temple Peter boldly declares "The God of our Fathers has raised up Jesus, whom ye have slain, hav-



ing hanged Him upon a cross. Him has God exalted by His right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things, and the Holy Spirit also, which God has given to those that obey Him." Obedience to Him would be shown in repentance as before commanded.

Thus far the bestowal of this gift had been restricted to Israel, but when we pass on to the tenth chapter of the Acts we find it recorded "that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost," and then in recounting the circumstances of this, Peter says, "Forasmuch then as God gave them (the Gentiles) the like gift as He did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ." In his first Epistle, too, Peter speaks of "those who have declared to you the glad tidings by the Holy Ghost sent heaven" (1:12). We thus have clearly set before us not only the promise, but also its fulfilment, and the condition of its reception, that of repentance and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ; we have also the complete breaking down of the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile, for both are seen to be equally made recipients of the same gift on the same condition. The exceptional cases of receiving the Spirit which are mentioned in the Acts do not militate against these essential fundamental facts; and these cases need not detain us now.

II. The evidence of the Holy Spirit acting in and through individuals, and also acting in and through the Lord's people as a company.

These two main facts which give evidence of the

truth that the Holy Spirit is present in power with, and as acting through, those who believe is clearly brought out in the history of the Acts. One after another is spoken of as being "filled with" or "full of" the Holy Spirit,—Peter, Stephen, Philip, Paul, and disciples. Several instances are given of the Spirit's action through the assembly of believers as such.

In the closing chapters of the Acts we find Paul has become the prominent figure among the assemblies; and so from the history recorded in this book we naturally pass on to his epistles and their teaching in which the full truth concerning the Holy Spirit is developed for us. I have already made reference to some of Paul's teaching, but it is very necessary that it be examined in detail. He was the one privileged to complete the Word of God, not to write the last book of Scripture, but to give the full measure of revelation, to complete the making known of what God had in His purpose and counsel to reveal. is, therefore, very largely the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to make known the full truth as promised by the Lord Himself, which we have been considering in John's Gospel.

Paul fully confirms the testimony of Peter as to the coming and gift of the Holy Spirit. In I Thess. 4:8, the earliest of his writings, he speaks of God, "who has given also His Holy Spirit to you." And in the last of His writings we have his word to Timothy, "Have an outline of sound words, which words thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Keep, by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us, the good deposit entrusted." (II Tim. 1:13-14.)

And so he can speak of believers being sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13; 4:30); of the reception of the Spirit by the Galatians, and of the Spirit being sent into their hearts so that they cry "Abba, Father." When we turn to His epistle to the Romans we find the relation of the Spirit to us individually very fully dealt with. He speaks of the Holy Spirit which is given unto us (5:5), and says with assurance "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (8:9). Accordingly he speaks of "the Spirit that dwelleth in you," of them being led of the Spirit of God, and again of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits, while He joins His help to our weakness, taking up our cause, and making intercession for us. In this Paul fully confirms the thought given by the Lord in calling the Spirit the Comforter or rather Paraclete, to which we have previously referred in a brief way. In the early chapters of I Cor. he speaks of the Spirit revealing the deep things of God; and this fulfils the Lord's promise that the Spirit, when come, would lead into all truth. Paul affirms again the fact of the Spirit's indwelling, and that the body of the believer is His temple. (I Cor. 2:10-12; 3:16; 6:10.) This brings me to the twelfth chapter of this epistle which I wish to consider in detail, as it presents truth of the most important nature, and which has a most essential bearing upon the subject of the Spirit and the unity of Christians.

A unity in blessing and spiritual manifestation is evidenced in the history of the Acts, marked by very great simplicity,—breaking of bread, ministry of the Word, praise, and prayer are the exercises participated in, evidently all as led and directed by the Holy Spirit. The salient features of this testimony were the declaration of the crucifixion, resurrection and glorification of Jesus, and His being made both Lord and Christ. And then more particularly with the advent of Paul. the preaching of Him as the Son of God in connection with which there was the making known of a very intimate link existing between the glorified Man and those on earth who were called by His name, for the Lord had said to Paul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Saul had been hounding to death in every quarter the despised sect of the Nazarenes, and lo, the Lord of glory says to him in the midst of his frenzied execution of the mission of persecuting these despised people, "Thou art persecuting Me." A very wonderful revelation, indicative of that future unfolding of the oneness subsisting between Christ and those who are His, especially brought out in Paul's Epistles.

It is well to note that in this present time, the Christian age, it is not simply in the manifestation of power and testimony that the Spirit's presence is known and realized. There was both the Spirit's power and testimony before Christ came, before Pentecost. To this the Old Testament fully witnesses. For Christians, that which is so distinctly new and of the highest possible importance, and which involves the unity of all such in the most positive and practical manner is the personal presence of the Spirit and His indwelling of every believer; it is what constitutes the gift of the Spirit. There are also the gifts of the Spirit, but to consider them opens up quite another line of truth, which, however, is brought before us in this twelfth chapter of I Cor. By the wondrous fact

of this indwelling all are united in one, for there is only "one Spirit," and furthermore He makes the Assembly of Christians His temple. (I Cor. 3:16, 17.) But for geographical considerations there would be only one assembly in all the world; of necessity, as occasioned by those geographical circumstances, there are assemblies. Thus this term, assembly, is used in several ways: first, of the whole body of Christians (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; 9:4-5, with I Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 29, 32; Col. 1:18, 24; I Tim. 3:5, 15; Heb. 12:23); then, of individuals of the whole gathered as a company in this or that place or locality (Acts 8:1 13:1; 20:17; Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 1:2; Col. 4:15-16; I Thess. 1:1); also in the plural, of such companies in any given country (Acts 9:31; I Cor. 16:1, 19; Gal. 1:2; II Cor. 8:1); and finally, of all such companies (II Cor. 11:8, 28; II Thess. 1:4). The apostle, however, affirms of each that they are, as being an assembly or church in this or that place, the temple of the Holy Spirit. In their midst He will manifest Himself in power, ministry, and testimony, just as He would do if there was only one gathering together of all who composed the Assembly or Church of Christ. Thus we are introduced to the spiritual temple which replaces the material structure of the Jewish order.

III. The spiritual manifestation of the unity of the Holy Spirit.

This twelfth chapter, of which we have spoken, deals with spiritual manifestations concerning which the apostle does not desire the Corinthians to be ignorant, and of course none of us, for the Epistle is

addressed not only to the Assembly at Corinth but also to all those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus,the whole company of believers throughout the world. From a consideration of the first three verses it seems that the apostle intended, first of all, to show the difference between the manifestation of evil spirits, of which there were many, as there were idols many (I Cor. 10:19-21), and the manifestation of the one Spirit of God. He suggests at least the multiplicity of agencies for evil manifestations in contrast to the one all-sufficient and divine agency for the manifestation of good,--the Spirit of God. Hence, the keynote of the whole chapter is Divine unity, the unity of every agency for spiritual good under the one Spirit who directs and leads in the diversity of manifestation. The development of this is presented in a seven-fold way which reaches into the most intimate operations and relations together of God's people. Here we find the basic principles of our unity as Christians,—of Christian unity.—which, if allowed to operate in their normal Spirit-led and ordered way would cement God's people together in the bonds of love and fellowship by which the world would know the true power and blessing of Christianity. That this result is sadly lacking is plain to all; and this becomes the evidence that these principles have not been allowed to govern; hence, a divided Church, to the shame of Christians, and the mockery of the world. Consideration must then be given to these principles before it can be stated what is the practical way of accomplishing in this present time the desired and longed-for Christian unity.

We have the working together, in difference of rela-



tion, of the three Divine Persons, so that it is made clear that each has direct connection with the manifestation of the unity of Christians, which is so largely dwelt upon in this chapter.

"There are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit."

"There are distinctions of services, and the same Lord."

"There are distinctions of operations, but the same God who operates all things in all."

Notice, first of all, it is not now the gift of the Spirit we are to consider, but His gifts, those things which manifest His presence among and in the Lord's people. Furthermore, whatever difference may be found to exist between the gifts, this does not mean a multiplicity of spirits; but all are given and used by the "one and selfsame Spirit." All this is accomplished as service to one Lord, the Spirit is not independent of Him, nor is there any separation between these Divine Persons. Christians are not spoken of as servants of the Holy Spirit, but of the Lord Jesus; and all service is looked at as under His authority, and as being done for Him. Then the operations, or effects,-as being what is wrought in the service resulting from the exercise of the gift, whichever of the particular gifts it may be,—are of the one God, not the Father simply, but Father, Son, and Holy Spirit acting together, for observe that while in this verse God is mentioned, in another place (ver. 11) it is said, "All these things operates the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each in particular according as He pleases." What is attributed to God in the previous verse, is here also attributed to the Spirit, who acts as to distribution according to the sovereignty

of His will. It is evident that they are co-equal in activity and power. This essential unity of the Godhead is the solid foundation underlying all that is now developed for us in the seven aspects of unity presented in this chapter.

First, we have unity in the diversity of workings because of the one Spirit (verses 7-11). The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each for profit. Thus care has been taken that the blessing of all might be attained. Somewhat of the diversity is shown in the gifts which are mentioned. There are nine in all which may be divided into three groups. The first gives us the gifts which especially deal with the need of the Lord's people themselves,--the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and faith, doubtless faith of that order which manifests itself in special ways. In the second group we have those gifts used as a special testimony to, and as a divine seal upon, the truth proclaimed, accrediting it as being from God who, it is said, bore witness with His people "both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Spirit, according to His will." (Heb. 2:4.) These were needed during the time in which Christianity was being established, but when that was accomplished the need for this display of supernatural power ceased; and especially so when the Word of God was completed, the whole revelation of His mind being in the hands of men. Still, I would not say that these manifestations of the Spirit might not be found even today, but, I should judge, only where it was a question of accrediting the truth as of God to those who may never have heard or known of it before. In the last group the gifts are such as

have to do with the overcoming of the results of the enemy's power. The discerning of spirits was the pointing out in a positive way the workings of those evil spirits who might seek to invade the assembly of God's people and bring about its degradation by their activity. Now, with the completed Word of God in our hands, such a gift is not needed, as the test of all spiritual activity is by IT, and should be by it alone. The gift of tongues was the supernatural work of the Spirit in overcoming the results of that judgment which befell mankind in that day of impious pride when Babel was built,-mark, not a removal of the judgment, but a very gracious overcoming of it that the wonderful grace of God in salvation might Then, there was the necessary be known by all. accompaniment of this, the gift of interpretation by which those who might be present, but did not know the tongue spoken, would receive the blessing of what was ministered. How evident in this is the gracious care of God for the blessing of all! These gifts also, I doubt not, are no longer in exercise among God's people, as the special need for them has long since passed away.

But we must pass on from these things, which might be enlarged upon with much profit, to the second aspect of unity here presented,—the unity divinely formed by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit (verses 12-13). This is of great importance, and I will quote the verses in full. "For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ. For by one Spirit we have all been baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free,

and have all been given to drink of one Spirit." The human body is taken as a figure. Its oneness and innate unity none can deny. Its diversity in members and operations, yet essential unity, is equally evident. "So also is the Christ," and immediately we are assured that this is spoken, not simply of the glorious Person in the heavens, but of Him and all those who are called His members, for we have all been baptized into one body by the one Spirit, and thus we are joined to the Lord; so that this body of which He is Head has His name called upon it. In this divine unity and relationship all human distinctions pass away, they must be given no place. Any condition in which class distinctions are allowed, be they of a religious order as suggested in the comparison of Jew and Gentile, or of a social order as in bondmen and free, is a contradiction of the foundation principle of Christian unity. In it there is no provision made for human pretension, or self-exaltation. Whatever diversity of gifts there may be, and consequent diversity of operations, there must be accorded the fullest liberty for The segregation of ministry to one man or a set of men in any company, or companies, of the Lord's people is a denial of this unity; for there is a fundamental spiritual equality which gives to each what is needed to exercise their special function in the one body, we "have all been given to drink of one Spirit." This unifying of all and every believer into one body of which Christ is the Head, is the distinctive work of the Spirit of God. We read elsewhere that it is the Church which is His body, so that membership in the body gives me also membership in the Church, the Church of God, the only one

recognized in Scripture. It is the only one in which I can rightly speak of being a member, and it is not a question of my joining it, but of my being joined to it by the Holy Spirit, to Christ as revealed in the Word of God. There is another very precious truth which we may well bring in at this point, though not mentioned in the chapter before us; it is that of the Headship of Christ in relation to the body. This we find particularly spoken of in the Ephesian and Colossian Epistles. He is Head over all things to the Church, or Assembly, which is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. (Eph. 1:22, 23.) "And He is the Head of the body, the Church" (Col. 1:18); and we are to "grow up into Him in all things, who 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. 4:15, 16). How beautiful is the thought presented to us by the Holy Spirit in these words! There is the unity of One Head; there is unity in structure; unity in supply and mutual work; unity of increase; unity in edification and love; a working together of every part, not any one part having given to it, or taking to itself, the exercise which belongs to any one or many of the other parts. Such an absurdity is absolutely foreign to the human structure, which is used as a type of the spiritual, and therefore such a condition should be as foreign to the spiritual as to the natural. If the contrary be found, it is not of God. wonderful organism of spiritual activity and blessing here spoken of is entirely dependent upon the Head.



From Him comes all that which furnishes true nourishment and causes the increase through each joint and band of the body. And so when the apostle refers to those things which in result displace Christ, and which are the product of man's fleshly mind (Col. 2:16-18), he says of those occupied with such things that they do not hold the Head (Col. 2:19); there is a loss of vital connection with Him, and His direction, and ministry. In effect, congestion has come in, so that one of the channels of supply has become clogged, and a consequent abnormal condition ensues; for it is only from the Head, as the apostle here affirms again, that "all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. 2:17-19.)

I have mentioned the impossibility in the human structure of any one part, or member of it, assuming to exercise the functions of another, or of several other parts or members, but that every part has its proper activity, its distinctive use, and must have liberty to exercise it. It is this which is emphasized in one way in the next aspect of unity (verses 14-20). is unity in the distinctive use, or office, of the many members, for there is "but one body." This at once disposes of the spectre of independency, of usurpation, and the superiority of one above another in any way. There is unity, a unity in which every member is needed in the particular place and relation in which God has been pleased to set it, and because of this. equally important with every other, although the diversity of spiritual manifestation being very different. there may seem to be greater importance in some than in others; but it is even so in our human bodies, yet there is no schism; and there should be none, therefore, on such an account in the spiritual body. There are the many members, the body is not one member. If this is so, it means that each member has its own part to play in the activity of the whole, whether foot or hand, ear or eye. Thus there must not be independence or separation because of diversity, but unity in it and that according to the pleasure of God (verse 18). Indeed, we could not speak of a body if all were one member. The very idea of a body suggests many parts, but unity among them, and each performing its own part without interfering with any other. The foot cannot say, it is not of the body because it is not the hand. Moreover, if it foolishly does take such a position, this does not separate it from the body, it still remains part of it. Its foolishness, spiritually speaking, may impair its usefulness, but the unity cannot be broken.

There are, then, many members but one body—unity in organism—in which every part needs every other part; and, hence, we get the next expression of Christian unity,—unity in the mutual dependence of all the members. Not only can no member say, he is not of the body because he is not this or that; but no member can say to another, "I have no need of thee." The less honorable are as much needed as any other, and must be given their place, yea, sought out in the love by which all must work together that they may not be thought of as of no account. "God has tempered the body together." Can human wisdom, then, arrange its parts and order its activities according to its own dictates? Can it apportion the work to be done to each of the several members? It

can observe and recognize the work done by each, but can have nothing to say, or do, with the ordering or control of the work or activity engaged in. This is evident as to our human bodies. It should not be one whit less so as to the spiritual body. The power that orders and controls the normal activity of the natural body is unseen, but man does not, therefore, presume to interfere with the working of the body, or seek to change them; if he does it results disastrously. The power that orders and controls the spiritual body is also unseen, being the Spirit of God. Man in human wisdom has presumed to interfere with His working and to change His order, and the results have been disastrous to the Church of God, the spiritual body. A usurping of the functions of the many by the one is characteristic of present Church order, a practical denial of the truth of God's word; and a gross dishonor to the Spirit of God. It is a serious interference with God's order, of His way of tempering the body together, giving to each and every member its function to perform in the liberty and power of the One Spirit. Man's interference has resulted in mutilation. There should be no schism in the body, no class distinction, no sacerdotal or secular divisions, n) ministering body and non-ministering body, but in every way that form of unity we shall next consider, unity in mutual care (verse 25). This is not one caring for the many, but each caring for the other according to the individual place and relation in the body exercised in that blessed and holy bond of Christian love which, as the next chapter (I Cor. 13) shows us, is the great animating principle of all spiritual activity.

Now, we have what very properly flows out of this,



and which it is very precious to have stated in this connection. That is unity in community of interests (verse 26). "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." It is a unity in which all are bound together and are affected by whatever is the need or prosperity, suffering or honor, sorrow or joy, good or evil pertaining to each and every member. There is truth in this as to the natural body, how much more so should it be as to the spiritual body.

Finally, we have the seventh aspect, that of unity in membership. The apostle says to the Corinthian Assembly, "Ye are the body of Christ." (Verse 27.) It is to be noted that the article is omitted in the Greek. making the statement a characteristic one. It is not that the Corinthian Assembly was the body, but they were part of it; not only that, but in measure there was to be exhibited among them the characteristic marks of that body. Every aspect of unity here mentioned was to find its expression in their midst, so that it would be clearly seen and known that they were of the body, and representative of it. And so with every Christian Assembly wherever found, and among the aggregate of such assemblies, the same aspects of unity should find expression as would be found among the individual members of each assembly. Thus would the oneness of the spiritual body be known and seen in the world.

This truth has been almost entirely lost to the Church of God, and as I have already intimated it is not given any place in the constitution of church order and government. According to what we have been considering, there should be the fullest freedom for

the exercise of gifts, yea, "diversity of gifts," in the same congregation. If the exercise of this diversity is put into the hands of one or more individuals, no matter how gifted, it is contrary to the Word of God. The language of Scripture is that there is one Spirit, not one minister. It is clear, if we maintain the authority of the Word, that whatever by declaration of principle, or practise denies this liberty of spiritual activity to the people of God who constitute the Church, the one body, it is not of God; and none who acknowledge such an order can lay claim to recognition as being a company or congregation expressive of, and properly representative of, Christian unity. Such becomes only a human association governed by man-made order and arrangement. I do not say that those who constitute it are not individually Christians; but I speak of their collective character and testimony, this is opposed to the Word of God and the order established by the Holy Spirit.

The Church as to its constitutents, formation, activity, present place, and future destiny was a mystery hid in God to other ages (Ephesians 3), but it is now revealed. Christ built it (Matt. 16:18), and the Holy Spirit is the Person and Power indwelling it, so that in every way it is a divine institution, "the Church of the living God"; not "our Church," or "your Church." What presumption, then, for man to form his own rules and establish his own forms for the uniting together, and working together, of Christians who constitute this Church concerning which God, whose it is, has been so careful and particular to make known His mind as to its whole order, action, and relation together of its every member. The failure to

heed God's order has wrought the disunity of the Church, the return to it, and establishment of it among Christians, is the only way to produce true unity which can be rightly called Christian unity.

The deplorable confusion which has resulted from man's pride and self-assertion in the things of God's Church has not prevented the Holy Spirit from acting for blessing through individual members of the one body; but it has destroyed the whole glory of that blessed testimony which should have been rendered in the world to the essential oneness of the body of Christ,—in other words destroyed Christian unity. But let it be remembered that whatever the wreck and confusion, the responsibility remains; and as individual Christians we are responsible to judge of all by the unerring Word of God, to give our sanction to, and our presence be found alone with, what will abide the test of that blessed and all-sufficient guide,—the Christian's compass. In the present distracted, dislocated, and consequently weakened condition of the Church, especially as to its manifestation before the world, the only hope lies in a return to its pristine simplicity by all who will acknowledge it. This will give the Holy Spirit His appointed place and the order of God in ministry, service, and government among His people will be recognized and acted upon, so that thus a testimony may be given to the scriptural thought of Christian unity. Man may, but God does not look at numbers. With Him the great question is that of faithfulness to His revealed will. The question is, who are on the Lord's side?

Now, before closing this chapter, I wish to consider the last few verses of I Corinthians XII, and also to



link with them the teaching of Ephesian IV. We are informed that God has set some in the Church or Assembly, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings. helps, governments, diversities of tongues. enforcing the point of diversity in the gifts, the apostle asks, Are all apostles? are all prophets? and so on. Certainly not. Moreover, it is evident that it is of the whole Church he is speaking, and not of any particular local assembly, or congregation. In Ephesians IV we get an enumeration of similar gifts; but it is to be noted that miracles, gifts of healings, and tongues are omitted. I doubt not that the reason for this is that consideration was being given only to those gifts which are distinctively for the nourishment of the body itself, apart entirely from the question of those gifts which were given to the early Church as an accrediting of the truth, a matter which would not be in harmony with the subject of the Ephesian Epistle. more, the continuance of such gifts is not promised to the church in any part of the Word, but those mentioned in Ephesians IV are to continue in activity "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And then it is so beautifully stated that they are "for the perfecting of the saints for (i.e. in order to) the work of the ministry [the saints are to be perfected for this, not a select few], or the edifying of the body of Christ." The thought here, as I have already mentioned, is that of ministry from the Head through these chief channels, and in turn through every joint and band, each part active in its own divinely appointed measure to the edifying and building up of the whole body in love. And the realization of such a unity in mutual service and labor is evidently the safeguard against being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (verse 14). This blessed unity has not been, and is not, realized. The consequence is that we find Christians subject to all of the grievous evils mentioned in this verse.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy [which is speaking unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort, by no means simply, or even largely, the foretelling of future events. I Cor. 14:3], let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." (Romans 12:1-9.)

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

In the light of what we have been considering there is a very evident difference between the simplicity of the scriptural order governing the practical working together of Christians, and the order generally maintained among them, as we see it to-day. Throughout the whole of the New Testament there is no provision made for ritualistic forms in Christian worship or service; there is no provision made for Church dignitaries of various grades of distinction to whom are given the right to officiate in this and that way to the exclusion of all others in the Christian body; there is no provision for the multifarious systems of Church government, and activity, which are found existing today, and which hang like a burdensome stone about the neck of the Church, the carrying out of which entails so much that makes the heart sick if things are judged by the standard of God's Word,-a standard well nigh antiquated in the minds of many. Indeed, how much of all this has resulted in the commingling of the world and the Church to such an extent that it is hard, if not impossible, to distinguish the one from the other. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.) "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." And the world lieth in the wicked one. "What

concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (II Cor. 6:15; 7:1.) God's temple during the present time is His people, the Church, which is the body of Christ, the Church of the living God, "which is builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:22.) The world-system is the temple of Satan, for he is "the god of this world." (II Cor. 4:4.) The two cannot be built together in practical relations without the most disasterous consequences; and these very consequences are not dimly foreshadowed in the New Testament itself. In the midst of such a condition the apostle's instruction is, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (II Tim. 2:19-21.) This introduces a principle of the weightiest importance, and which has been disregarded by the Church in a degree equal to the disregard of the scriptural idea of Christian unity. What I mean is that separation from evil is ever the accompaniment of this unity, and must be an essential characteristic of the Christian body, if it's distinctive place of testimony is to be maintained.

Separation from evil has been, and is still, God's principle of unity. "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Did the Lord mean it? Did He not mean that this should be practically true of His people? Is the Church of God to be a beggar at the feet of the world? Must it have the money of the world to support its enterprises, and provide for its material support? Is it to court the favor of a pleasure and sin-loving world, or is it rather to be the reprover of the unfruitful works of darkness? And how can it seek its favor and monetary support while also testifying against its evil course? If the Church had, and would to-day, hold to the narrow path of obedience which God counts better than sacrifice (I Sam. 15:22-23), it would, indeed, be a poorer Church materially speaking, a despised Church, and not a social organization, or the show place of fashion, but a spiritually powerful Church, the beacon light of salvation and hope in a world of lust and sin, a unity characterised with spiritual love and ministry potent for blessing and service to all the abounding need of this sin-cursed world. But it is not so. The Church has been made a system in which personal ambition is exploited, individual aggrandizement sought and struggled for, wealth wielded so as to obtain the dominant place of influence, it has become to how large an extent a system developed and governed after the pattern of an earthly kingdom. I speak not of individuals whose names spell the deepest devotion to Christ and truest loyalty to the truth, whose lives have been laid down upon the altar of their faith, the record of how many such adorn the annals of the Church's history, and make its pages lustrous with heavenly



light. I repeat, it is not of individuals I speak, but of the system so contrary to the order of God's word. What would Church unity be today, could it be accomplished? I make bold to say it would not be Christian UNITY! Rather would it be like one of our great industrial trusts, and methinks I am not far wrong when I say, it is but a seeking to apply the principle of industrial combination to religion. Why not have a religious trust to keep company with the multiform trusts of the day? It, I refer to the Church, has become a world-system as much as anything else which belongs to the world. Oh, the burning shame of it all! The truth, the holy truth of God, bartered at the mart of this world with its own goods, yea indeed, for their possession.

How absolutely contrary all this condition of things to the simple and beautiful thoughts of Christ which we have been considering, and with which the teaching of the Epistles fully agrees. They cannot be spiritualized away as though they were impracticable of fulfilment, as though there could not be a practical expression of the unity unfolded to us in these precious teachings. The order is so simple, humble, and unpretentious, so like the One who is the chief cornerstone, in whom and, indeed, by whom the whole spiritual fabric is built up. It does not provide for an hierarchy. There is no House of Bishops with its gorgeous setting, nor House of Deputies, nor Presbytery, nor priestly theocracy even hinted at in the New Testament. If a kingly, or royal, priesthood is spoken of, it is what belongs to all, and not a select or separated class. How far removed is all that I have mentioned from the spirit of the Master, so glorious in humility. When there arose a strife among His own as to who should be greatest, He said to them, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42-45.) How like the Gentiles the Church of God has become! But it would seem as though it was intended to be very distinct; for whereas before Pentecost there was simply Jew and Gentile, afterwards the apostle can speak of Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God.—three classes now instead of two. Is it an easy matter, practically speaking, to find the three in this our day?

But I wish, in a sort of preliminary way, to sketch a picture of what would be a practical expression of Christian unity, both as to its form outwardly; and as to how activity in worship and service would develop. It is not a matter for the imagination, but a question of the sober teaching of God's Word which is as plain in this respect as in any other.

The spirit which is to animate and move in every act of worship or service is given to us in Chapter 13 of I Corinthians. It is LOVE. The language is so simple and beautiful that I feel there is not need of comment, but rather the need to let each statement of this chapter sink into the heart and rule it, therefore I can do nothing better than quote it in full.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of



angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail (or, be done away); whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether ther be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

We are, then, to "follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts (or, manifestations), but rather that ye may prophesy"; and this latter not because it is a display of the individual and his spiritual power as the speaking in unknown tongues, but because it is a speaking "unto men to edification, and exhortation,

and comfort." In this love shines out for the blessing of all, even the unbeliever. (I Cor. 14:24). It seems quite clear that the Corinthian assembly had many who possessed the gift of tongues, and, indeed, the apostle can say of them "ye come behind in no gift." (I Cor. 1:7.) But the trouble was that in their carnal condition, for which he reproves them, they were making use of these gifts for personal gain and self-exaltation. The spirit of love which sought the mutual edifying of all did not animate their activities. It seems they especially liked to display the gift of tongues, and that in the Church or assembly where it really had no place, unless what was spoken could be interpreted. To this, however, in their carnal ways they were quite indifferent. This speaking with tongues was distinctively "a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" (verse 22). The proper display and use of this gift is illustrated for us on the day of Pentecost. It would be the way of love to "rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue (verse 19). And so it is said to them since "ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excell to the edifying of the Church" (verse 12).

A very serious lesson is pressed upon us by the apostle's corrective ministry in this fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians. It is that where carnality of thought and ways intrude themselves into the Church of God, and there is the following of the way of worldly wisdom rather than that which is spiritual, then there is a complete displacement of God's order for His gathered people. This has proved true, not one whit less

in the whole Church as it is to-day, than it was of this one assembly in Paul's day.

It is then evident that the form of ministry which would best promote the spirit of love, since it verily flowed from that spirit itself, is prophecy. This is not the mere foretelling of events, though that in its season God gave by the Spirit before the Word of God was completed, but it is that form of ministry which edified, exhorted, and comforted (verse 3), serving especially for them that believe (verse 22), but blessedly availing for the unlearned or unbeliever (verse 24); so that there is conviction, judgment, and manifestation of the heart before God, and worship to Him results (verse 25). What a precious and blessed issue! The character of prophecy, then, is to unfold the truth, to minister its blessings to others, to bring them to God Himself. And what is this but God manifesting Himself in His habitation, or present temple, which the Church is, the whole body of Christians. Now it is very clear from verses 26 and 30 that such ministry is not by any means restricted to one, but ALL come with something, or may have something given to them at and during the time of being gathered together. Would not this be a fruitful cause of utter confusion? must there not be some presiding officer to keep the congregation out of choas? We do not read of any. There is the simple direction that all is to be done unto edifying. It is the love that seeks the good of all which is to control. The prophets, then, are to speak one by one that all may learn, and all be encouraged (verse 31). Order of this kind is the work of God, by the Spirit through the various members of the body; and He is not a God of dis-

order, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints (verse 33). Hence, there is no need of a human director of these spiritual manifestations. The Spirit of God must be given His place, and then there will be no confusion. The lack of faith on the part of God's people to trust all to the Spirit's divine leadership has resulted in putting man in His place. Consequent upon this grave evil, confusion and every kind of distortion has come into the Church, destroying the beauty and blessing of all as ordered by God. Liberty for the Spirit and of the Spirit with an entire absence of all officialism in form, position, or personality, is what should characterize a true expression of Christian unity in the meeting together of those individuals who form part of that unity, the one body. It is such features which are conspiciously absent from the Church to-day. This has resulted in a condition which effectually destroys all true expression of Christian unity among the people of God. Yet Paul demands recognition of what he has written as being the commandment of the Lord from any man claiming to be a prophet, or spiritual, which really means that if such do not acknowledge it they are neither the one or the other.

A fellowship together in mutual ministry exercised in the power of love as being of one body, of which all who believe are members, is what the thoughts which have been before us most plainly teach. Now an integral part of such true Christian fellowship is the breaking of bread, that blessed and holy feast instituted by the Lord in remembrance of His death. It is that for which Christians should gather together regularly and constantly. It is our open confession

of our fellowship with the blood of Christ, and the body of Christ, while the united keeping of this memorial is a witness that we are "one bread, one body." (I Cor. 10:16-17.) Nowhere in Scripture is it presented to us as a means of grace, or as an action bringing some special form of blessing to us; or as saving us. It is distinctly a remembrance of the Lord in His atoning death by His people, by believers in Him, such as are already saved through having faith in Him as their Saviour and Lord. In connection with it there is to be the discerning of the Lord's body, that is the recognition of its absolute holiness and sanctity, and that, as being in communion with it in this memorial feast, there is to be holiness of character and association. Hence, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and dring of that cup." There must be self-judgment. Evil is not to be connected with this holy remembrance of the Holy One, for where two or three are gathered unto My name, He says, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). The Christian gathering is the place of the Lord's presence, and from it evil is to be excluded. He is present when there is the gathering together to remember Him in the breaking of bread, He is present when, and wherever, two or three gather unto His name, be it for prayer or whatever spiritual exercise. But be it noted that it is unto HIS NAME. This is the fundamental feature of any gathering which is to be rightly an expression of Christian unity. For has not His name been named upon the Christian body? To this I have already called attention. Christians constitute "the body of Christ." When speaking of the body and its many members

as a type of the Christian body, the apostle says, "So also is Christ," thus the body is called by His name. To what other name, then, are Christians to gather? Dare it be to any other? Will it do to own and gather to the name of this or that party? To this or that man, no matter how worthy and distinctive such may be? Sectarianism has been the bane of the Church since the days of the apostle. It showed itself in Corinth, and received its well-merited rebuke from him,—a rebuke which it would do well for the people of God to take heed to in this day. Has Christ become divided? Is a Paul, or an Apollos, or a Cephas to be the centre of gathering for God's people? CHRIST ALONE IS TO BE THAT CENTRE! Christians must be gathered unto His name. All else is but human form, wisdom, and expediency; an association of fleshly, not spiritual, character. It is because the blessedness and peculiar glory of that Name was soon lost that men became the centre of attraction instead of that One of whom it is said. He is the Head of the body, the Church, and who Himself said, "where two or three are gathered together unto My name there am I in the midst of them." Where is the faith that counts this true, and acts upon it? It is only in this same way, that is by faith, that salvation through the work of Christ is realized and possessed. By faith alone is all blessing from God realized, and it is alone by faith, which is believing and acting upon the truth, that God is pleased (Heb. 11:6.)



CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES: MEETINGS, DIFFERENT LINES OF WORK, WOMAN'S PLACE, THE MONEY QUESTION, AMUSEMENTS, THE CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATION TO GOVERNMENTS, AND HIS POLITICAL RELATIONS.

Meetings.

If, as Christians, we discountenance human order and form in Christian service and activity, the Word of God must become the recognized standard from which to gather knowledge and wisdom concerning the Godly order and form of all Christian work. His Word must be sufficient for this, as for all else. "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. (II Tim. 3:16, 17.) In Scripture, then, we have a perfectly complete guide for every form of Christian activity.

Mention has been made of the great characteristic gathering of Christians. I mean that gathering together which is for the remembrance of the Lord, in accordance with His request on the night of His betrayal, "This do in remembrance of Me." (Luke 22:19.) Later, by special revelation, this request is again communicated to the Church by the apostle Paul. "For," he says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus

the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (I Cor. 11: 23-26.) The character and meaning of this blessed institution of the Lord I have briefly spoken of in the preceding chapter. It figures our communion with the holy body and infinitely precious and efficacious blood of the Lord (I Cor. 10:16), and also signifies the oneness of all believers in that one body which is the Church. It has, thus, both an individual and corporate character. For, it is as individual believers we have fellowship with the body and blood of Christ, who is "our Passover, sacrificed for us." (I Cor. 5:7.) Hence, this remembrance of Him as God's Lamb sacrificed for us is a holy "feast," to be kept "not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (I Cor. 5:8.) Thus, it has connected with it the requirement of holiness according to the Lord, a distinct separation from evil; and also, as the apostle just previously remarked, a purging out of evil (I Cor. 5:7), not only separation from evil, but non-allowance of it within that company gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 5:4, Matt. 18: 15-20.)

The foregoing furnishes us with the precept as to this matter. As to example: first, at the beginning

of the Church, it is recorded that the three thousand who were added to the nucleus who were gathered together on the day of Pentecost, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and prayers." (Acts 2:41, 42); secondly, "upon the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread Paul discoursed with them" (Acts 20:7); and thirdly, we have Paul's instructions in the Corinthian Epistle to which we have already referred. Again in Hebrews the assembling together is spoken of, and the not forsaking it is strictly enjoined. (Heb. 10:25). We have, then, in these brief notices definite forms of activity,-teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. This is very comprehensive. "Teaching" certainly includes all manner of instruction in the truth as given to us in the inspired Word of God; and it may well be thought of as including evangelization in the world at large for that, too, is teaching,—first of all the imparting of the true knowledge of the existing need, and then presenting what alone can meet it. The thought of "fellowship," embraces every possible expression of true Christian love in service and labor, for and with all who believe. "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (John 1:7.) This, however, is fellowship in the light which God is, in whom there is no darkness at all; therefore, our fellowship together is to have the same character of holiness which belongs to God.

In the gathering together to break bread, we have the chief and all important meeting of the Church. It also is the only one distinctly specified; and it evidently occurred once a week, on "the first day." It is clear, too, from the way in which the historian records this occasion, that not only was it a regular custom, but that the breaking of bread was the distinctive feature, or object, for which they came together. The presence of an apostle did not change this. He was there and could make it the occasion for a discourse; but they were "gathered together to break bread." From I Cor. 14 we learn that when the Church thus came "together into one place" (verses 23, 26) that it could be and was made an occasion for teaching, or prophecy, for prayer, for singing (verses 15, 19, 24). But whatever spiritual activity was engaged in by the assembled congregation, the breaking of bread was the primary object, the motive for this gathering together. "Prayer" is the blessed privilege we have as children of God. We thus approach and address Him as our Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This, of course, is individual, but is also connected with "fellowship," as the Lord says, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask." (Matt. 18:19.) And needless it is to remark that prayer can be either in private or in public.

The four main features of which I have spoken might be developed in greater detail, but the foregoing must suffice for the present. However, it may be well to clearly state that while there is only this one chief Church meeting specifically mentioned, this is not a bar to having other meetings as the spiritual need of the Church may require; but this meeting for the breaking of bread must ever be kept as the prominent and distinctively necessary one, never permitting

any meeting to assume a character contrary to the order given in the Word of God. Nothing but good can come from weekly meetings for prayer and the reading and study of the Scriptures, and for conferences of Christians. All, however, must be carried out in accord with the truth, and as recognizing the Spirit of God as supreme and all sufficient to lead in ministry of whatsoever kind among the gathered people of God. Dependence upon God in simple faith can never result in confusion and evil work, just because He is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (I Cor. 14:33.) Only let it be tried in faith, and the blessed results will be manifest of the Spirit having liberty to use whomsoever He will. Then, too, it cannot be out of place to have meetings at which some special servant of the Lord, a teacher or an evangelist, may give addresses on the Scriptures; but such meetings depend entirely upon the responsibility of the individual taking charge of them, and necessarily therefore are not properly assembly gatherings. There are, also, those solemn occasions when the Church gathers together to consider or act in matters of discipline and government for maintaining the holiness of the house of God. The Lord, Himself, speaks of such an occasion in Matt. 18:17-18; the Apostle Paul in I Cor. 5; and such action may well be suggested in the address to the Assembly at Ephesus (Rev. 2:2), when it is said. "Thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." A marked example of an assembly gathered to consider a matter of Church government is given in Acts 15. It may be



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well to call attention to its general characteristics. Paul and Barnabas, returning from their work among the Gentiles, are deputed with certain others to take up at Jerusalem the question of circumcision as being applicable to Gentile believers. Upon their arrival at Jerusalem they are "received of the Church," this has first place, then the apostles and elders. The matter is considered, and the decision reached is said to be according to the pleasure, not only of the apostles and elders, but of "the whole Church" so that it is evident that the whole assembly at Jerusalem were considered, and concerned in this matter. In writing the letters to the other assemblies concerned note carefully how the supreme place of control and direction is given to the Holy Spirit. "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us." If it be said that James takes the place of control in voicing his sentence, and which evidently is accepted by all, I reply, No, it is not James in control, but James being controlled, so that it can be said "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit,"a distinct example of what I have spoken about in considering I Cor. 12, in a previous chapter. This last point, and the fact of the Lord's presence in fulfilment of His promise, are the things of major importance in relation to all assembly meetings. It is not human presidency we require, but that of the Spirit. This alone can suit the place of the Lord's presence.

Different lines of work.

Many suggestions as to Christian work are given to us in the Word of God. We cannot do much more than call attention to them. It is not a question of our own plans or expedients. These have resulted in much work that is entirely contrary to God's thought, and whatever the show may be, the results are not abiding; but all such is like the "wood, hay, stubble," which will be burnt up, while the doer of these kinds of work will "be saved; yet so as by fire." (I Cor. 3:12-15.) It is only what the Word of God sets us to do, the good works for which it furnishes us, and which like the gold, silver and precious stones, abide the test, and are found unto the praise of God, which receive due reward from Him.

The subject of "good works" is very generally referred to throughout the New Testament. Their character is, perhaps, nowhere more conprehensively stated than in these words, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Col. 3:17.) This manifestly sets both a very high standard for, and also imposes a divine limitation to, our words and deeds. It certainly means that what the name of Christ stands for is to be the guide. Can we do what we contemplate in His name? Can we rightly, with good conscience, associate His name with our plans and purposes? Are they such that we feel assured our thanks for them will be acceptable to God the Father? For we are to walk "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." If our lines of work, then, are to be associated with a walk pleasing to the Lord, and accompanied with a growing knowledge of God, it is not hard to realize that our work must be governed and guided by the revelation of God's mind. This is to be found in the Word of God; nowhere else. "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." (II Tim. 3:16-17.) We are to be prepared for (II Tim. 2:21), furnished unto, zealous of (Tit. 2:14), and ready to every good work (Tit. 3:1), and further, to learn to maintain such. (Tit. 3:8, 14.)

These good works are spoken of under the figure of "fruit,"—the fruit of the vine, or of trees, or the seed sown is used to illustrate the spiritual. gives the idea that as the natural fruit partakes of the character and nature of the tree that bears it, so "good works," or Christian fruitfulness, are to be the fruit of that new spiritual nature about which the Lord has taught us in John's Gospel. Hence, this Christian fruitfulness is called the, "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 5:9), all the features of which mark it as being diametrically opposed to the works of the flesh, or natural man. Moreover, such fruit is alone produced through the hearing and believing of the Gospel (Col. 1:5, 6), in which the wisdom and power of God is found. Good fruits can only proceed from what comes from above, the characteristics of which will necessarily be given to them. God is, then, the One who supplies the grace and sufficiency for every good work, and enables for the increase of the fruits of righteousness with which we are to be filled. (II Cor. 9:8-10; Phil. 1:11.)

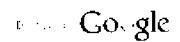
The truth is we have a double standard for Christian work; first, the name of the Lord Jesus in which all is to be done; and, secondly, all is to be of such a character as the Holy Spirit would produce who alone

can furnish us through the Word with that heavenly wisdom, as James speaks, which is needed for the performing of all that is fruit unto God, good works pleasing to Him.

While we may think of the foregoing remarks as applying more especially to what is individual, they, nevertheless, have a large measure of application to the more public work of those who follow specific lines of Christian service, and also to that which may be done by the Christian body. All surely must conform to the standard I have spoken of, and this is again further enforced by the truth that the Christian gathering is to be unto the name of Christ.

But now as to the very distinctive lines of work and ministry which are to be carried on in connection with the Church. While this is of necessity done by the individual members, it all is, as I believe I have clearly shown from Scripture, not confined to any specific class; but all is under the direct gudiance and ordering of the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that we have the various lines of work specified; but not a class of men to perform them, a specifically designated class to whom work or ministry belongs. As to this point all is left in the most general way. There is no defining of who should do this or that, it is rather, "If any man desire." The character, associations and manner of life of those who engage in any form of public service is very clearly defined; and we, therefore, could not say that the Spirit of God was leading in this or that line of work anyone who did not conform to these requirements which He, the Spirit of God, has given.

Before detailing these lines of work, it may not be



amiss to consider, briefly, the only two offices seemingly mentioned in the New Testament which alone gives us the order of the Church. The office of a bishop, "If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1), and a little further on the apostle speaks of those who have "used the office of a deacon" (ver. 13). To attain the first there is quite evidently no such elaborate system of Church promotion as we now know. The character and qualifications of the man who is to fill this place are clearly set forth. Many such men are to be found in the Church who bear no title of dignity, but who fill the scriptural requirements and, if they have the desire, are entitled to do such work. The Greek word rendered "bishop," and "overseers" in Acts 20:28, gives us the whole meaning of the "office." It means "one who superintends or cares for the welfare of anyone,—overseeing or visitation." A passage from James (1:26, 27) may aptly describe a bishop's work, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Now, if we consider carefully Titus 1:5-7 it is plain that bishop and "elder" are identical, and that the latter term simply indicates the kind of person who is to do a bishop's work. It certainly would not be suitable for a young man to fill such a place. It is a question of advancement in spiritual understanding, and years of discretion. But then, plainly, it can be any elder in the Church who meets the requirements

laid down in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. Now, it is with such men that the work of rule in the Church is connected, as we read in I Tim. 3:4, 5, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God"; and I Tim, 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." And to such reference is made in Heb. 13:7, 17, 24, where we are directed to "remember," "obey," and "salute" those who thus take the lead among God's people. This work of rule is mentioned among the gifts according to grace in Rom. 12:8, while also a very similar thing, if not the same, is referred to in I Cor. 12:28 as "governments," a term primarily meaning "to steer," that is, "pilotage." The character of this ruling is indicated in the comparison made with the family relation. Thus, the injunctions given to fathers in the Word may well be used to help in guiding actions in that larger sphere of service here mentioned. The meekness and gentleness of Christ exercised in all love, truth, righteousness, and holiness is surely to mark this work.

The office of deacon, or minister, as the word properly means, and is so translated in nineteen cases, as servant in seven cases, and deacon in three, is simply that of an "attendant or a waiter at a table, or in other menial duties." An example of this is given to us in Acts 6, when seven men were appointed to attend to the daily ministration or serving of tables. The character of these men fully accords with the inspired instructions given as to those who should use this

office. (I Tim. 3:8-13.) But I wish to pointedly call attention to the fact that the words, "office of," have no authority from the text, and so the Revised gives "served well as deacons." Then, it is not a question of office, but purely of ministering; and this, I feel sure from the extended use of the word, to be in the widest sense. A consideration of the 29 cases in which the word is used will confirm this. I wish it also noted that there is not the slightest manuscript authority for the words, "office of," as connected with bishop. The words, "the office of a bishop," are used to express one Greek word which more strictly speaking should be rendered "overseership," as mentioned in the margin of the Revised Version in Acts 1:20. This really disposes of all reference to official place of any kind in the New Testament. It cannot be found in any part of it. There is no officialism in the Church of God.

Now the main lines of work which may be mentioned in relation to the Christian body are, Prophesying, Evangelizing or Preaching for kindred terms are used for both in the Greek, Teaching, Exhortation, and Prayer. Prophecy, as I have previously remarked, is far more, according to the scriptural definition, than foretelling events. That character of it has long since passed away because the Word of God has been completed. Then there is also the ministry of means to care for the poor, and the needed provision of supply for those servants of the Lord who especially devote all their time to the ministry of the Word. As to the general character of such ministry the word to Timothy may be suggestive, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (II Tim. 4:2-5.) As to activities which should go on among the individual members of the Church there is much instruction in Scripture, but it would go beyond our special purpose to consider these at this time. It is clear, too, that there are those who engage especially in one or another of these lines of work. For Christ "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." (Eph. 4:11.) Apostles we have not, nor could have now; but with the others it is different, they remain for the blessing and upbuilding of the Church. Plainly, it may be one man's distinctive ability as of the Spirit to prophesy unto edification, exhortation, or comfort, as it is another's place to evangelize, that is preach the gospel of Christ to win the souls of men for Him. Pastors and teachers are linked together as the other two are not, and so the shepherding of the Lord's people is closely linked with the work of instruction in the Word of God, unfolding its precious and wonderful teachings. Pastor and Shepherd are the same Greek word, and in the two cases where instructions are given to feed the Church or Flock of God (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4) it is correctly shepherd. This work is given to the overseers or bishops, those who are elders, as both of those passages intimate. Out

of seventeen occurrences of the word rendered "Pastor" in Eph. 4:11, that is the only instance of it being so rendered. In every other case it is "shepherd." Therefore, we might legitimately read, "some, shepherds and teachers." To be a "Pastor," then, is not to be given or assume an official place.

Without further developing these things we may look a little at the ways in which these various lines of work are to be pursued. Plainly, a teacher must have those he teaches gathered about him. Ordinarily speaking, the Sunday School affords excellent opportunities for such work; or a meeting for Bible reading, or the giving of a lecture, or an address to a conference of Christians. These are some of the more public ways of doing such work, while there is unlimited scope for it in private converse or visitation. Hence, it is required of an overseer or bishop that he be "apt to teach." The Pastor's work, that of feeding or shepherding the flock, is not so public an exercise as it is an intimate acquaintance with God's people so as to minister to them, not simply food, as the teacher may do, but lead and rule for the blessing of all; and so this, as I have remarked, is closely connected with overseership and those who are elders. evangelist, generally speaking, must gather a company to hear his message, though much can be done along this line by house to house visitation, the distribution of literature, while in this connection, too, the whole vast field of missionary work, both home and foreign, opens up to the laborer, for in it distinctly the evangelist finds his place, calling souls to the Saviour who in due course will need the work of both Pastor and Teacher. The Spirit of God and the Word of God

must be, and alone can be, the effectual factors in all such work, coupled with constant, fervent, and believing prayer, both collective and individual, as Scripture directs.

I have only touched the surface of this important subject in which, indeed, we are to trace the working out of real Christian unity in its practical expression before the world that it may know the oneness of all. It is needless for me to enlarge upon the fact that under present conditions this is effectively defeated, and so the purpose of Christ as expressed in John 17 is not being realized in any full measure by Christians at large.

Woman's place in Christian activities.

If in any measure we find in the Church that women have taken, or are seeking to take, a place not accorded them by the Word of God it is little wonder that this element of disorder should also come in when the Spirit of God is denied His supreme place of control among God's people. This initial departure from God's order has opened the door to all forms of disorder. The Word of God is the alone sure guide in all. Woman's place is not a public one. It is positively denied them in I Cor. 14; 34, 35. Hence, it is evident that their prayer and prophesy mentioned in I Cor. Cor. 11:5, is of a private nature, or among her own sex. (Titus 2:4, 5.) "I suffer not a woman to teach or usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (I Tim. 2:11-14.)

We have the record in the Word of how the Christian women served in a manner acceptable to God. Dorcas (Acts 9:36-39) is a beautiful example. She "was full of good works and alms deeds which she

did," and her labor of love indicates a sphere of service no less available to-day, than in her time. In another case we find a woman who opened her house as a place of gathering for prayer. (Acts 12; 12.) How seemly for a Christian woman's house to be used for such a purpose instead of entertainments of a worldly and solely pleasure-loving character! Then, there is Lydia, who opens her home to the Lord's servants that they may abide there during the time of their ministry in her neighborhood. A little later we read of Priscilla with her husband Aquila taking into their home another servant of the Lord to whom they proved a help by expounding the way of God more perfectly. Here we oberve a woman able to teach; but doing it in the privacy of her own home, not in a public manner, thus setting an example which is in accord with scriptural injunction elsewhere recorded. In Romans 16, several women are mentioned. First, Phebe who was a servant (same word as for deacon, or minister) of the Church at Cenchrea, and when we take into consideration the teaching of the Word concerning women in the Church we see from this how simple and unpretentious the place of deacon or minister must have been when she could fill it. Priscilla and Aquila are again mentioned, this time as Paul's "helpers in Christ Jesus." What a beautiful commendation! And may we not suitably recall in this connection the Apostle's word in I Cor. 12, where as I have endeavored to show he so fully treats of the manifestation of the Spirit through the various members of the body, when he says, "And God hath set some in the Church first apostles . . . then . . . helps" (v. 28)? Again, Mary is mentioned as one who

had bestowed much labor on the Lord's servants: and another is tenderly spoken of by the apostle as his mother, who was the mother of Rufus, one doubtless who had acted after the manner of a mother to him as the servant of the Lord. How all these instances show the simplicity and lovely homeliness of the woman's place and activity in the Church of God. A place which in its very quietness and private character can reach into those places which no man can effectually reach because his place is so distinctively of a public order. There is a beauty in womanliness after the scriptural order, which in its exercise among the Lord's people is of itself a distinct help in upbuilding and strengthening the body-spiritual, or in other words in exhibiting Christian unity according to the Word of God. The instances I have called attention to indicate large fields of service for the woman which are within the bounds of Godly order; and are of such a nature that the man cannot engage in them.

The money question.

The needs which have occasioned the expenditure of large sums of money are largely such as would not have arisen had Christian simplicity, along with the truth of Christian unity, been maintained by the Church. How came it to be counted necessary that the places of Christian gathering must rival in architectural magnificence the temples of heathendom? And though different forms and styles be used, and different symbolism, yet in result the effect is the same, and the purpose also, as that of the temples of mythology. The Lord said that Jerusalem with its gorgeous temple, and Samaria with her mount, would pass away; and

all be replaced by worship of the Father in Spirit and in truth. In the New Testament examples of Christian meeting places the utmost simplicity is manifest. Often they were in the house of some brother or sister, or in some upper room. In addition to this matter of Church buildings we have that of the minister and his salary: it must be a large one if he is to be an attractive and eloquent preacher. What a degradation of the most sacred service to a worldly commercial basis! This has made the so-called ministry little more than a professional enterprise like any other secular calling. It is an utter disregard of true scriptural order. Then there must be provision made for specially trained singers, and a musical program of good quality to please and attract the crowd and so help to fill the Church building, which will further ensure a full collection basket when it is passed. Why not charge for admission and be sure of the receipts? It comes down to a question of entertainment, not of scriptural ministry, though a little of what is spiritual may be mixed in to give the whole performance a religious color. That the unconverted contribute, that amusements and entertainments are given which will please such, and so their monetary support be secured, seems to be a matter of no account as long as the money is received. It is of little consequence that in all this the Holy Spirit is ignored, the Word of God disobeyed, and the whole order of Christian worship debased. It is no wonder that Christian unity, practically speaking, is not known or acted upon.

But there are legitimate needs among God's people. There is the need of the poor; the need of supporting those who serve in the missionary field; the need of providing and maintaining some suitable, but simple, place of meeting; the need of printing and circulating Christian literature; the need of supporting those who devote their time and labor to the ministry of the Word, of the Gospel. Who can doubt that to our God money is a matter of very small concern? To Him whose the earth is and the fulness thereof, to Him who takes account of the fall of a single sparrow; are not His children and their need much more than many sparrows to Him? Undoubtedly, He desires His people to display the power of that divine unity into which He has formed them, and make the world to see the beauty and spiritual blessing of it. Can He not supply the means needed to carry on its rightful activities? "My God shall supply all your need." The Word of God gives us instruction in this matter as in all else needful for the Christian course. I have no thought of community of goods. I believe such a plan foreign to Scripture, and a denial of the distinctions it fully recognizes. The rule is simple. "On the first day of the week [the day when Christians are to gather together to break bread] let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him" (I Cor. 16:2); and again, let "every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Cor. 9; 7.) This was specifically as to the poor (II Cor. 9; 1, 12); but who can doubt the validity of its application to all questions of need where money is involved. As to the Lord's servants, we are plainly told, "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things"



(Gal. 6:6); and "if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (I Cor. 9; 7-15; I Tim. 5; 8.) From the Philippian Epistle we gather that the assemblies were looked at as one of the channels of ministry in this way. (Phil. 4; 15-17.) Furthermore, be it noted that monetary support is not to be received from those who are not Christians. John in his third epistle speaks with commendation of those who had gone forth for His name's sake "taking nothing of the Gentiles." If it be objected that the Church is very largely composed of Gentiles, I reply that it must be remembered that now there are three classes, the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God.

In this matter all is left in such a way that Christian love of the character given in I Cor. 13, which we have already considered, may act out its part in meeting the need found to exist both in the Church and in the world. (Gal. 6:10.) Where love of such an order animates the heart there will be no lack: and if there is the lack because there is not the love the remedy is not to employ the way of the world to supply the deficiency. Such a course can only add to the difficulty, instead of removing the underlying cause. If the love of Christ is known and enjoyed, if it is shed abroad in the heart, there will be no money stringency, for the rich will give according to their abundance and the poor according to their ability. God judges according to the heart, not according to the amount given.

If the scriptural simplicity of Christian giving, and the blessedness of Christian unity were maintained, we would not have Gothic cathedrals or classic temples to house the gatherings of Christian congregations; we would not have highly paid choirs and other officers; and a more or less elaborate ritual; but we would have spiritual worship controlled and led by the Spirit of God, spiritual service and administration, all of which in unity of action would constitute the Church a living spiritual power in the world as God purposed it should be.

Amusements.

There were all manner of public and private amusements in the world at the time of the apostles, even as now. Where do we find one word giving instruction about the association of such things with Church work and testimony? Yet the Word of God declares it is able to furnish the man of God for every good work.

"Bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." (I Tim. 4:8.)

There is no instruction as to the use of such things to attract or draw people to Church meetings. The distinctive feature of Christian testimony is that it is apart from all such things. At least it is so, if it be modeled according to the scriptural standard. Anything contrary to this means the bringing of the world into the Church, whereas God's thought is that they should be most plainly separate, for only so can the true testimony of the latter be maintained. The meeting-place of Christians should be devoted to and kept for holy purposes, and not be given up to secular enterprise in any form. It is not the place for the sights and sounds that please a world away from God which by its wisdom, let alone any of its other multifarious activity, He has declared cannot know Him. (I Cor.

Christian to know God better? In the apostle's day, did not the world have its banquets, its festivals, its entertainments, its public games? Does he say, then, let us eat and drink and be merry? The whole tenor of the instruction given by the Spirit of God through the apostles is opposed to this kind of thing. And it is evident that in their day the Christian path was entirely apart from these worldly things. Then, remembering that the Spirit is to rule, lead, and order all in the Church it is not hard to realize how all of this would be seriously affected, if His mind as to the practical things of every day life is disregarded.

But I do not wish to be misunderstood. What I have said refers to the corporate Christian testimony. It must not be forgotten that there is the need of bodily development, and recreation, such as may be afforded by athletic exercise, and various other lines of occupation which may be useful to cultivate both mind and body. These things are of an individual nature, and are largely for the individual to decide; but ever keeping in mind that all must be governed by the truth of Christian unity,—the link with Christ as Head, and with one another as members of one body. The place of separation from the world and its way of doing things is ever to be maintained, or else the individual testimony as well as the corporate testimony will be seriously lowered, its spiritual power ultimately lost. "Friendship of the world is enmity with God" (Jas. 4; 4), no matter what the line of activity. Never is there to be any compromise, for this is the only way in which to keep unsoiled the place and testimony of the Church.

The Christian's obligation to governments, and his political relations.

The general thought among men is that the world is as God made it, and all continues as at the beginning, only man has made great advances in civilization and prosperity. The manifold comforts of the present age are too evident to need comment; but are men really happier? Have they satisfied him, or not rather the more awakened the passions? We do not observe that family life is more highly developed, the home more truly prized, and family unity the characteristic of the day. The opposite of these things is rather found to be true. The employee is not found more trustworthy, nor are the servants of the people models of honesty and righteousness. The world has grown up to its present status in separation from God, man having rebelled against His authority. God made paradise; but Cain, the murderer of his brother, laid the foundation of the world-system. It is recorded of him that he went out from the presence of God, and built a city. This has been its character from the beginning and no fuller manifestation of this could have been given than the Cross of Christ, God manifest in flesh despised and crucified. God has made use of this world-system to try man in every possible way to manifest whether there is any good in him. As tried without law, such depths of evil developed that God destroyed the world by a flood. Under law, idolatry developed to the full. Under grace since Christ came, while the light of Christianity has made a change, nevertheless, the seeds of evil spring up to fruition on every side. Do we find the principles and motives which are at work in some far off commercial centre

of Asia any different from what we find in the "Christian" metropolis of the West? If the so-called heathen to whom one of our missionaries had brought the gospel should come to one of our supposed "Christian" centres to observe, as he might expect to do, the wonderful difference to be found there as compared with his own country, resulting from the heavenly message which presumably came from it to him, would be be gratified and satisfied with his experience, morally and spiritually speaking, and be able to witness to the practical blessedness of the power of the gospel over men? Think you not that he would be sadly disappointed, and would be likely to discount the message entirely? The eager pursuit of gain is rampant, and there is evidently less scruple as to the way of obtaining the desired result than ever before. Pride, ambition, pleasure, avarice, still rule men's lives. War still rages, the tyrant still oppresses, and the cry of the poor is heard on every side. The world is not one whit better than a millennium ago. Only now, it is spread over a wider range with consequent increase in every way while the nominal power of Christianity has receeded, for it once ruled over known Africa, was known throughout Asia, and was almost the established religion of China. These vast fields have fallen back into heathendom, Europe into infidelity, and the Americas are fast following in the same path. This after 2000 years of gospel testimony, and yet we are told the triumph of the gospel will be universal. It is a figment of the imagination without any scriptural warrant.

The world-system, then, is evil to its core. Idolatry still abounds. Christianity has become corrupted in



the hands of men. The enterprise of the world is moved by the lowest motives, being largely indifferent to truth and moral right. The vast increase in educational systems has not ameliorated any of these conditions. Everywhere it is manifest that the world does not know God, nor indeed has it any inclination to know Him, and by its wisdom it cannot find Him out. It is married to its pursuit for all that will exalt man and add to his pleasure, power, and gain, while God and Christ are forgotten, nay purposely excluded. Such, then, is the world, in the government of which we hear it loudly proclaimed that Christians everywhere should take an active part for the bettering of conditions and the righting of injustice. I ask is this a line of "good works" in which I am to be engaged? If it is, the Word of God will furnish me for it.

But when I examine this all-sufficient guide for directions as to how I am to take part in world-government, I fail to find any. My manner of life as a husband, a father, a child, a master, a servant, and a subject under governments is discussed; but political activity is not given a place in Scripture. In fact a character entirely opposed to any such activity is mentioned in relation to Christians and the worldscene through which they are passing: they are spoken of as "strangers and pilgrims." (I Pet. 2:11.) strangers meddle in the governmental affairs of the country in which they sojourn; or do pilgrims become political reformers or engage in the political activities of the country through which they may be journeying? The incongruity of such conduct is manifest, and it is not practiced by any who are really either strangers or pilgrims. To be in the world is one thing, to be of it quite another. Our citizenship is heaven, and the saints, our fellow-believers, are our fellow-citizens. (Phil. 3; 20 R. V.; Eph. 2; 19.) It is noteworthy that such terms are used of our spiritual relationships and calling, but never once referred to in connection with our place in the world.

Are Christians then to disregard established governments? No! the very opposite. Scripture is most explicit as to the conduct of Christians as subjects under the rule of existing powers whether they are good or bad. No more striking example of this is given than in Paul's instructions in the Epistle to the Romans; for he wrote them when the reigning emperor was one of the vilest and most cruel men that ever occupied the throne of the Caesars. "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear

to whom fear; honor to whom honor." (Rom. 13:1-7. R.V.) Beautiful it is to see how the Spirit in such instruction leads the Christian to look beyond the civil power, and see that it is God who is supreme, and we owe obedience to Him, hence to those powers which He has ordained. Peter also says, "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God that by well doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your freedom for a cloke of wickedness, but as bondservants of God." (I Peter 2:13-16 R.V.) The praise here spoken of is for good and well-doing as subjects obedient to laws, but not as law-makers. The Christian is always characterized as one who is to obey and be submissive under God to the powers that be; but never as one who is to frame the laws and exercise the power needed to enforce submission. Christians are enjoined to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that they may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. (I Tim. 2:1-3.) Thus, we are not to be of those who despise dominion and speak evil of dignitaries. (II Pet. 2:10; Jude 8.) If the Christian is to "speak evil of no man; to be no brawler, but gentle," this would hardly make him a man of suited qualifications to be a politician, or actively engage in political affairs. From this arena of conflict for the emulations of office, favoritism of those in power, or the assailing of those who occupy official places, the Christian is to be entirely separate, if scriptural injunction is to be obeyed. There is, then, in a very real way, to be no entangling of ourselves as Christians with the affairs of this life, or else we will fail to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. (II Tim. 2:3-4.) However, if the ordinance of man contravene obedience to God, this at once sets the limit of obedience to such powers. Christians are to obey God rather than man, and we have His fully revealed will.

It may be argued that Christians are especially suited to enter the field of political activity, and to occupy positions of governmental power because of the high motives and principles which the truth gives to those who believe it. But much of what I have already said negatives this supposition, for the fact is that a Christian in politics belies his testimony, and ruins it, departing from the distinctive place he should occupy in relation to the whole world-system. Thus the power of the truth over him is weakened, if not entirely lost, so that his motives and principles become debased. There is One who walked here, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps" (I Pet, 2:21), who in all that He did perfectly pleased God and in whom absolute moral perfection is found,—the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask, then, is there any incident in His life which marks Him as a politician, or as even interested in things of a political nature? Not one, in fact a careful study fails to find not only such an incident, but will show that where such political activity might have been expected or rightly looked for by men, there is absolute silence. His voice is not heard. Of Him it had been truly said, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street." Shall ours? as servants shall we be greater than our Lord?

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Let the Christian voice be used alone after the pattern He has given to us.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: WHY IT SHOULD BE REALIZED

I am disposed to ask first of all, How can it be realized to-day? With the accumulated debris of the past centuries not only covering the truth of what unity is, but stifling all real activity along such lines, what is needed is well nigh revolutionary in character,—a second reformation would alone avail to hurl off the incubus.

I hope that the preceeding chapters have, in some measure, given good reason why it should be realized; and yet it may be well now to crystalize the why into definite propositions.

It should be realized because it is God's order and purpose as revealed in Holy Scripture.

It should be realized because it is the great desire and prayer of the Lord Jesus for all those who believe on His Name, and accept His word.

It should be realized because all its elements and features alone form and provide for true and holy fellowship among God's people in the power and blessing of spiritual ministry according to God's mind.

It should be realized because alone by the active operation of Christian unity can the true testimony of God be manifested before the world, and His great message of reconciling love be delivered to it. Owing to the fact that this unity has not been in active operation among God's people as a whole, the real power of the testimony God purposed the Church should give has been nullified, and His message falsi-

fied, so that it is largely a bastard gospel which is heralded in the ears of men today until, sickened and disgusted with "the churches," plain men and women are turning away, for they receive no soul and heart-filling message, indeed, more often it is a disquisition upon some scientific question, or upon the latest political event, or upon some social problem or line of work, or upon some question of local con-There is a famine of the Word of God, and men will not feed upon the husks of a world-loving and spiritually debased Church. The dogma of reason and the pleasures of sin prove more to them, while the soul-stirring, heart-gladding, and mind-filling gospel of the glory is never told them; and they never know the great power and blessing they can have through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It may not be out of place in this connection to quote the plain words in a current religious periodical (the New York Watchman-Examiner. Bapt.): "The heart of the message that the Church is to deliver to the world is John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But the work of evangelism in the present day is not so simple as it appears upon the surface, for false notions have arisen as to the meaning of Christianity and as to the method by which men become Christians. Sacramentarianism teaches that men become Christians by submitting themselves to external ordinances. Ecclesiasticism says that the way to salvation is through the portals of the Church. There are others who believe that Christianity is a matter of intellect. and that men become Christians as they become evolu-



system of truth, of philosophy. There are still others who believe that men become Christians by an earnest effort to follow in the footsteps of Christ, forgetful of the fact that it is the assimilation of Christ rather than the imitation of Christ that makes a man a Christian. The work of evangelism is therefore complicated, and much rubbish must be cleared away if men are to be brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ; but this is the very task to which the Church should give itself with boundless enthusiasm."

And yet another says (the New York Christian Intelligencer. Ref.): "The Church will not come into its own until the spiritual authority of the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed as it should be. Men have recklessly defied the laws of health and are now reaping the penalty in scourges that defy medical skill. Young people have defied the authority of parents, and on every hand we can see the effects of the 'far country' on our young life. Men have defied the authority of law, of the Bible, of the Church, and of God, and we see everywhere religious uncertainty, social unrest, and world-weariness. The time seems ripe for a renewed and unflinching proclamation of the Lordship of Christ. True emancipation of life comes from the soul's bondage to Christ. Spiritual freedom is an achievement which is attained by subjection to Him who is the rightful King of every life. It is not sufficient to regard Christ as elder brother and leader. He is both Saviour and Lord. Human blessedness is based on the recognition of this truth and its acceptance in life."

It should be realized because it gives the Church



her true and distinctive place in the world; but as being not of the world. It is the man freed from the power of disease, and who knows how he has been treated and delivered from it, who, as keeping his place of separation so as to prevent contagion, can best treat those who are now diseased as he was. And so in the spiritual realm.

God's great message of reconciliation is not that of uniting together the world and the Church; but of bringing salvation to both Jew and Gentile, and uniting them into one body of which Christ is the Head. The world in fact is still composed of Jews and Gentiles, and in the midst this glorious unity of the Church composed of those taken from both classes should stand forth in its solitary, but divine glory, as the vessel of testimony, and the divinely intended channel of all true spiritual blessing to the world.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: THE WAY IN WHICH IT CAN BE PRACTICALLY REALIZED

In commencing the consideration of how Christian unity may be realized, I can only refer to begin with to the opening words of the previous chapter. In view of the ruin and debasement of the Church by human innovations, now hoary with age, it is no longer a simple matter to return and re-establish the blessed simplicity of divine order in the Church of God. No more a simple and easy thing than it was for an Ezra or a Nehemiah to return to the ruined and desolated city of Jehovah's choice, and the place of His name, and build again the centre of divine worship, encircling the sacred city with the walls of separation and pro-For them it meant conflict, the power of their enemies' intrigue, the wicked devices and opposition of those who despised the truth and testimony of God, yet insisted upon their right to share in the work.

The books of these two leaders of revival and recovery are full of varied and suited instruction for the very condition of things which exists in the Church today. The Church is in its Babylonish captivity, and has been for generations. Who will come out from its corruptions to the place of His name and truth, and stand for it, yea, make known the testimony everywhere for the honor and glory of Christ? Who? the time is ripe and the coming of the Lord has drawn nigh (Jas. 5:8)! The world was never in

greater spiritual need. Every other form of need and unrest is but the consequence of that deeper and fundamental need not being met and answered in the light of the truth of God.

In the midst of this condition there is one great principle which shines out as a beacon light across the rocky coast and the storm tossed sea. It is that separation from evil is God's principle of unity. runs throughout the whole of Scripture. Noah was separated from his generation, and made the channel of hope and testimony to a condemned world. So Abram at a later day from the world which had fallen into idolatry. From him sprang those who formed the nucleus of the separated nation. From their midst Joseph was the separated one through whom they were led into the place where they grew into a very numerous people, and in which was to shine out God's great testimony in delivering and separating them to Himself. This took place at the appointed time. Signal failure comes in, and Moses takes the separated place, removing the tabernacle in which God's voice was heard and His near presence realized outside the idolatrous camp; and all who sought the Lord went out to it without the camp. Whosoever was on the Lord's side went to that outside place, the centre of true fellowship and testimony. This furnishes us with one of the most striking examples in Scripture for the activity of faith, of loyalty to God and Christ in this our day, a day of idolatry no less than then. God, then, goes on with the failed and sinning people through Moses as the leader of separation from their evil, he is the salt which preserves in the midst of corruption.

Again, through the long period of Judgeships, it was men who were in separation from the general state of the people that God used to deliver and bless and unify the people. The period of the kingdoms is more largely a record of appalling departure from God with but a few bright examples of the same type as the judges, bringing partial recovery and blessing; but never full unity, and never, indeed, did God again allow it to be effected in the nation He had called into separation from all others, and whose sin He had thus visited with judgment by dividing the kingdom. And no more do I believe need the Church hope for, or expect, unity of a complete character here in the scene of her failure, no, not till unity in glory is consumated in God's eternal presence; and this will be the subject in the next chapter. Until that glorious consumation is effected, the great thing for those to do who prize the truth and blessing of God above all other things is to obey precept and example as given throughout Holy Writ. This means separation from the condition and state of things which is so thoroughly in contravention of true Christian unity, and let those who thus separate put into practise the scriptural principles which govern the formation and activity of that unity according to the mind of God as revealed in His Word. It is those who take this place who are entitled to consideration as representing and standing for Christian unity amid the ruins of present Church condition.

Christian unity does not consist in aggregation, in a confederacy of all the existing parties and denominations to be found in Christendom. Christian unity consists in the practise of the truth and principles set forth in the Word of God in connection with that unity therein revealed as being formed by the Holy Spirit. This can only be as carried on apart from man-made existing parties and denominations, all of which have their link with what virtually denies scriptural Christian practise in Church relations and position. Here the words of the Apostle Paul, the divinely commissioned teacher of these very principles, are of the greatest force; and demand our unequivocal obedience. "In a great house [this is what the Church has become] there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these [i.e., the vessels to dishonor], he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (II Tim. 2:20-22.) It is those who are thus purged, separated, and who follow together the path of righteousness, calling up the Lord, who if they do these things, must be led into the practise of and be the true exponents of Christian unity as, I trust, we have seen it to be taught in the Scriptures. This can be realized at any time, in any place, by any number be it small or great, in a rural community of a metropolis. By the various "churches" having "union" services or doing "union" work, while all the time they keep their individual peculiarities, or even give up some of them to effect a confederation, this will not establish Christian unity, in the blessed way in which Scripture teaches it and the Lord Jesus desires to see it. Among those who, in the boldness of



faith, but in humbleness of spirit, will stand out from amongst all and act alone on the teaching of God's Word and the truth of the unity of the Spirit, will Christian unity be realized; and in their midst will the testimony be rendered to it in a way pleasing to God, though it may not be to man. Who, then, in such a case will we please?

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: ITS CONSUMMATION IN GLORY

In the previous chapters, commencing with the fifth, we have had before us the development of the truth connected with the two aspects of unity first presented in the seventeenth of John and which were considered in the third and fourth chapters. I wish now to treat of the third and last aspect of unity spoken of by the Lord Jesus in His memorable prayer. It is, as I have suggested, unity in glory and for all eternity.

The Lord's words are: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one even as we [i.e., the Father and the Son] are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." This is to be realized in its fulness in the presence of the Father, in the Father's house, to which He is going to bring the whole company of believers, as He goes on to say: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." It is this glorious consummation of the Lord's desire and thought which should burn with greatest brightness in every Christian heart. The real blessing and power of this, the present hope of glory, will be best realized and enjoyed by those who apprehend the meaning of the previously considered aspects of unity, and act out the truth connected

with them in the place of separation from all that practically denies such truth. The anticipative joy of this hope being realized is the recompense of divine love given to those who prize the way of fellowship with the Father and the Son above the present advantage to be gained in the following of the way of the world, a way which lies in the Wicked One. This means rejection at the world's hands. It gave this portion to our Lord, and His servants can be no greater. The fact that Christians know so little of world-rejection proves what poor servants of His, and followers of Him, they are. But what should impel to an everincreasing measure of faithfulness to His name and truth is that the eternal weight of glory infinitely more than balances the greatest possible measure of rejection which could be received, for it is, "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." Heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, declares Paul at a later date. Thus Christians are a unity in glory with Christ their Head, and with one another, for the Lord goes on to say, "That they may be one,," even as the Father and the Son are one.

It is interesting to note, before passing on further, that this unity in glory is that the world may know that Christ was the Sent One of the Father. This unity of glory will be displayed, openly manifested, so that there will be no denying the truth of it. In connection with the second aspect of unity, as I have already remarked, the Lord said in connection with it, "That the world may believe," this being a matter of faith in the present, as the former will be a question of actual sight. So with the second aspect, it was a question of fellowship in the truth, and an

active display of its principles in service and ministry. All this I have already presented. But the distinction which the Lord makes as to the world is of great importance. The present is the time for believing and so receiving part in the blessing and glory; but the time is coming when both the blessing and the glory will be known, and that by the world. This, however, by no means involves that all who know will participate in them, but all who believe do and will.

But to take up now the Lord's words, what heights beyond the grasp of our finite minds are in them! For who is it that speaks them? And what has He done? And where is He now to be found that we may know the glory the Father gave Him and which He says He has given to those who believe? It is the Divine Son, of whom the Evangelist says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1:14, 18.) It is in the Son that God has spoken (Heb. 1:2), making known all His glory and blessing for man. Over Him God could open heaven and speak His pleasure, for on Him alone could God's mind rest in perfect delight. It is, then, God manifest in flesh who spoke these words about Christian unity in glory, and they could have no meaning if it were not so.

But what work has He done? He has made purication of sins by Himself. (Heb. 1:3.) He was made a sacrifice for sin, and accomplished eternal redemption. (Heb. 9:12.) The moral glory of His life, and

the mighty evidences of His power all pass into an awful eclipse; and the dread cloud of a preternatural night falls upon the Holy Sufferer upon the Cross of which Jew and Roman counted Him worthy. They gave Him the malefactor's place; and there is no manifestation of heaven on His behalf, nay, it appears that the very powers of the heavens are against Him at that hour. There is no response from the Majesty on High, from which He claimed He had come, to the cruel taunt and outrage of His enemies. Instead, out of the darkness which veiled Him, there comes that terrible cry of forsaken sorrow and yet of appeal, "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Forsaken! dread thought. Is this the best that God can do for One who served Him so? Who of all God's martyrs for the truth ever so cried out? Do not the records of their deaths tell us how near God drew to them in the hour of their greatest tribulation, how it seems heaven opened to receive them into its glory. But with this Man it is greatly different. He lets us know that heaven is shut to Him: and that a deeper darkness than that which clothed the midday sun has closed Him in, its bands are about Him while waves and billows of judgment pass over Him, for God is holv, and He is there made sin that the believer might be made the righteousness of God in Him. From this has come that blessed ministry of reconcilation in which God is not imputing to man his trespasses, but giving full and free forgiveness of all, and so reconciling unto Himself in Christ. Ah! HIS death was different, infinitely so, from all others. He was the unique Man. Unique in His way of entrance into this world; unique in His passage through the

world; unique in the closing scene of His life; unique in His passage out of this scene; and unique in the place of glory He now occupies at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, the Son of God, and the Son of Man. There He is the Forerunner and Representative before God of the New Creation which stands in Him, its glorious Head, made up, as it is, of redeemed sinners over whom He has thrown the mantel of His glory, as the victorious, exalted, and glorified Son of Man, that they all may be one even as the Father and Son are one.

His place, then, is that of being raised up "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:21-23.) And the expression of God's power as thus acting on His behalf, is the expression of how He will act on behalf of those who believe, for they, too, shall be raised up into His glory, the glory of Christ which He has given to them. We dare not speak of such things if He had not told us.

Let us consider the glory the Father has thus given, and which Christ says He has given to Christians that they may be one. This oneness in glory is again emphasized for us in the strongest way by Paul in the quotation just given from the Ephesian Epistle. He concludes the statement of the exaltation of Christ to supreme glory with the marvellous declaration of that vital and most intimate connection of Christ as Head and the Church, His body; yea, even saying that the

Church is the filling up of Him who fills all in all. This, I take it, is the expanding of the Lord's words under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit who came to lead into all truth. Christians are in glory, as well as life and communion, to come "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13.) When He who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him, revealed in the same glory and revealed as in it because bodily a part of Him who is the Head of all glory. All things, we read, are to be gathered together in Him, both which are on earth and in heaven; but He is not alone in this, for of the Church it is said: "In whom we have obtained an inheritance," and have been given the earnest of it in the present gift of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 1:10, 11, 14.) If He is to rule, the Christian body will rule with Him; if He is to reign until every enemy is put under Him, that body will reign with Him; if He is to judge the world and angels, that body will do so with Him; in whatever the Head is engaged, the body will be engaged also. There can be no separation, it is an absolute unity in glory. Of course, it is not to His essential and divine glory as God that this refers. The Christian body is never presented as participating in Divinity, as being put on an equality with God. But this unity in glory is connected with and given to Christians, as being vitally associated with the Man Christ Jesus, the exalted and glorified Saviour. It could not be said of Him as God, the second Person of the Godhead, that He was set far above all principality and power, for by His very being God such was His position. But it is as Man. which He became for our sakes, to bring in eternal

redemption, that He is raised up and set in the place of universal supremacy where His hands are filled with all power in heaven and on earth, for to Him has the Father committed all judgment because He is the Son of Man, as He himself affirms in John's Gospel. It is because of His manhood and all that is linked with it that saved sinners who compose the Christian body can be united to and with Him in community of life, fellowship, and glory. He is, therefore, the Firstborn among many brethren who are coheirs with him. (Rom. 8:17.)

There is still more for the Christian to anticipate in connection with the glory. For the Lord says, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." is His loving purpose to have all who believe in Him be with Him where He is, there to behold in all the wonder of its display His own peculiar glory in His eternal dwelling place. It is glory which the Father has given Him as the One who perfectly glorified the Father here on earth. He bears the Name which is above every name, receiving glory which is above every other glory save that of Him who gave it. It is all peculiar to His own blessed Person, and is connected with the Father's love. It will be one of the highest joys associated with unity in glory, this beholding of the Beloved of the Father fully displayed in the glory given to Him by the Father. The manifestation of Christian unity in glory, which will be the display of Christ as Head and the Church as His body in full and perfect unity with Him, the world will see and

by it know that He was the Sent One of the Father, who also has loved the Church as He loved the Son. But in the seeing and enjoying of this personal glory, of which the Lord speaks, the world has no part. It is reserved entirely for those who are His own. They shall see it and rejoice in it, thereby learning to know the Father's love for the Son, as in the former aspect of manifested glory the world would know how the Father loved those who were united in their own special way in glory with the Son. What unfathomable depths, and immeasurable heights are here suggested as the portion of eternal joy and blessing which shall belong to those who have in simple faith accepted the Lord Jesus as their own individual Saviour and Lord. Such are accepted, taken into favor, in the Beloved; and their place and portion is measured by His own as the exalted and glorified Saviour.

We pass now to the concluding words of this most wonderful prayer. They are, first of all, an indictment of the world. He says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." The world in its present condition cannot know God, for as I have previously remarked it is a system which has grown up outside of relationship with Him, alien to His thoughts and purposes. With it He goes on in longsuffering patience and unfailing mercy, gathering out of it those who are to share in all the glory spoken of by the Lord, yet ever making it known that the door is open to whosoever will come and take of the water of life freely. The world, then, has not the knowledge of the Father, and has no participation in the glory of Him who it rejected and crucified. But he says, "I have known Thee"; and it was His mission

to make the Father known. This He did perfectly so that He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Of the disciples He says, "These have known that Thou hast sent Me"; and through "their word," as the Lord speaks, we know too, and are one in fellowship with them. He had made known the Father's name, and would continue to unfold its full blessing. All this they have in turn communicated so that it constitutes the common heritage of all Christians. It is, however, in very small measure actually possessed by them. One blessed end is in view all through: it is "that the love wherewith Thou has loved Me may be in them, and I in them." The joy, power, blessing, and glory of this no human words can adequately describe. It is rather a subject for our prayerful contemplation that in some measure the Holy Spirit, who alone can search the deep things of God, may minister of its fulness to the heart and soul. He has been sent and given to us for this distinct purpose.



CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Christian unity! it is most desirable from every point of view. That it will ever be attained among Christians in this world in any universal sense is but a dream impossible of realization. It being essentially a unity of and in the truth, characterized by love in the truth and for its sake, precludes it as the remotest possibility in present conditions. Departure from the truth began in the apostle's day, and it has not lessened since then; but it has gradually and steadily increased. With this came the disunity of the Church and its unity has never been restored. But the deeply sorrowful fact of this condition does not for one moment militate against a testimony being given to what Christian unity is. Nor should it prevent an acting upon those principles which the Word of God clearly enunciates as lying at the foundation of the practical manifestation of that unity. It is action in work and testimony along these lines which has proved and will, the greatest blessing to Christians, though it can never be expected that there will be a unity of all in one practical manifestation of the truth. For this we must now await that consummation in glory of which I have spoken.

A federation of all churches, so called, upon the basis of certain tenets mutually acceptable to all, with everything else kept strictly in abeyance, might be called by some "Christian Unity." It would be a parody, an empty form of religious activity, ritualistic and entirely worldly, pleasing to the natural mind and

thought of men, but entirely destitute of true spiritual power and blessing.

The way is open for every Christian to practise the truth. What is needed in such a day as ours is the spirit of Philadelphia, as the Lord speaks of it in His address to that assembly in Revelation 3. Its great characteristic is that He himself has first place, His word kept, and His name not denied. Those who consider His commendation of greater value than the empty plaudits of the religious world, or any place that it can give, have the pledge of His all-sufficiency and power on their behalf. To them He opens a door that no man can shut, and further assures them of His love which He will make those who oppose them recognize and own. All is measured by the place Christ is given both individually and collectively.

If Christian unity is what I have endeavored to show it to be—a unity of the truth, in common life possessed and fellowship enjoyed, all in the power of the Holy Spirit as the One who indwells every Christian, and unites them in one, even that one body of which Christ is the Head, and that as filling the highest place of power and glory so that Christians individually and as a body are linked with Him in this supremacy, -then a "League of Churches" will not effect the realization of it. The fulness of it is unfolded in the first three chapters of the Ephesian Epistle, where we have the making known of that mystery hid in God from all other past ages but now revealed, which mystery is no other thing that the formation of that Christian body which is the Church in which both Jews and Gentiles are united in one by the Spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ for the enjoyment of the highest place of blessing and

privilege, according to the eternal purpose which centred entirely in Christ. We are united together so that there will be a unity of comprehension with ALL saints of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the wondrous wisdom, love, and power of God displayed in the administration of this holy mystery then it is, as being comprised of all we have mentioned, that vocation wherewith we are called (Eph. 4:1), and of which we are besought to walk worthy. How high, and holy, and blessed, and heavenly is this vocation! If by this we are to judge of practical Christian life and testimony what a great gulf exists between them. Yet it is of this vocation that Christians are exhorted to walk worthy. Judged by this standard what failure there is, what deplorable departure, what lack of even elementary appreciation characterizes the Christian body. To walk worthy of a thing we must in some measure apprehend what that thing is, its character and relations. The failure to apprehend the Christian vocation has necessarily resulted in a corresponding failure in all lines of true Christian activity. But however great may be the failure thus discerned, the exhortation to the worthy walk remains, for the vocation remains. Christian unity abides. It may appear smothered, but it has been well said, "All the religious relationships of the soul, all the points by which we are in contact with God, agree to form all believers into one in this world, in such a manner that no man can be a Christian without being one with all those who are so. We cannot exercise faith, nor enjoy hope, nor express Christian life in any form whatever without having the same faith and the same hope as the rest, without giving

expression to that which exists in the rest. Only we are called upon to maintain it practically." It is this last point which clearly involves separation from all that in principle or practise denies or vitiates the truth of Christian unity. Therefore, the thing to aim at can never be union according to man's thoughts such as federation or confederacy may suggest; but rather that to which existing conditions impel, as well as the explicit command of God: that is separation from vessels to dishonor, that in separation those may be found who are fit for the Master's use. (II Tim. 2:20-22.) This walk, then, to which Christians are called is to be marked by well defined characters as specified by the apostle,—"lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This walk is to be in unity of sentiment, desire, and love, with hearts united in peace. But this is with the distinct purpose in view of keeping the unity of the Spirit, that is to maintain practically and publicly in manifestation in the world that unity formed and energized by the Holy Spirit; in other words the living spiritual activities carried on in His power and under His leadership, which activities characterize the one body of many members which He has constituted. Furthermore, this unity of the Spirit which we are not called to form, for we could not, it is God the Spirit's work, but we are called to keep, is surely a holy unity; hence, the keeping of it must be with holi-This at once brings in the sorrowful need of separation, a principle which may seem so utterly opposed to the truth of one body, but which is highly essential in conditions such as Christians now find all around them, for how many things are to be found not only in the world, but among the professed people of God, that do not square with the truth of God's Word, and which if allowed a place must of necessity seriously interfere with the keeping of what is essentially a holy unity. To follow such a path is not easy. It is one of continual, but needful and fruitful exercise of heart, mind, and conscience. Such, indeed, as God would have His children experience that they may be followers of Him as dear children, and walk in love. (Eph. 5:1-2.)

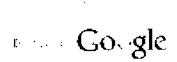
But despite all how wonderful are the aspects of unity, sevenfold in character, which constitute the bonds uniting in one all the children of God, whoever, whatever, wherever they may be. "There is one body and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. 4:4-6.) Here the whole Trinity is concerned in the uniting together of all Christians. Three spheres of unity, too, I judge are set before us, each widening in extent until, I doubt not, the last encompasses what the apostle had already referred to in the previous chapter when he says "I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." (Eph. 3:14, 15 R.V.) But, then, He who is thus over all and through all is in us all. There is one body, the Church. composed of all true believers who are united to Christ as His members by the one Spirit. There are not many bodies. Therefore, it is this one body and the truth connected with it which should find its practical expression among all the people of God in the power

alone of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them. With this unity there is the one hope. This hope is the glory of God, a hope which will not make ashamed because the Spirit is the minister of it to us, shedding abroad the love of God in the heart; and it all centres as to its accomplishment in Christ. Then there is one Lord, and He, too, is the Head of the body; One alone whose authority and supremacy is to be owned and submitted to in the fullest way. Associated with the profession of Him in this character there is one faith, that which has been once for all delivered to the saints. as Jude says. Its tenets are to be found alone in the Word of God, not in human formulas of belief. One baptism links with this, for it is in baptism that public confession and acknowledgement is made that Jesus is Lord, and so Christian baptism is always unto His name as the Lord. In this circle or sphere there may be those who profess and yet are not true, and evidently for this reason the circle here is wider than the first. For the one body is the essential and everabiding unity, and one is a member of that body or he is not. In that wider sphere in which are all those who profess to own Jesus as Lord there are the true and the false as the parables of the Kingdom recorded in the Gospels positively teach us. But it is in the midst of this that the truth of the one body and its practical manifestation is to find expression so that the real blessedness of Christian unity may be witnessed to before all. In the third place we have a still wider sphere, even the universal presence of God, the Father, and as connected with this His corresponding claim upon all. For the Christian, however, the bond is very close, for He who is thus over all and



through all is in all Christians. Thus every possible aspect in which the Christian views his relationship to God constitutes a bond of unity with every other Christian.

In conclusion, I can only express the hope that both reader and writer shall more fully enter into the fulness and blessing of this great subject, the main features of which we have sought to bring together. The apprehension in ever-growing measure of the truth of Christian unity forms, I am sure, the only foundation upon which really intelligent Christian service and testimony can be built up, that kind of service and testimony which will abide the test in that day when the fire shall try every man's work. May, then, the people of God everywhere be stirred up to a fresh realization of this precious truth, and so to fresh energy and zeal in the power of the Holy Spirit to bear witness for our blessed Lord.







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