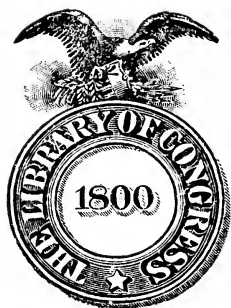
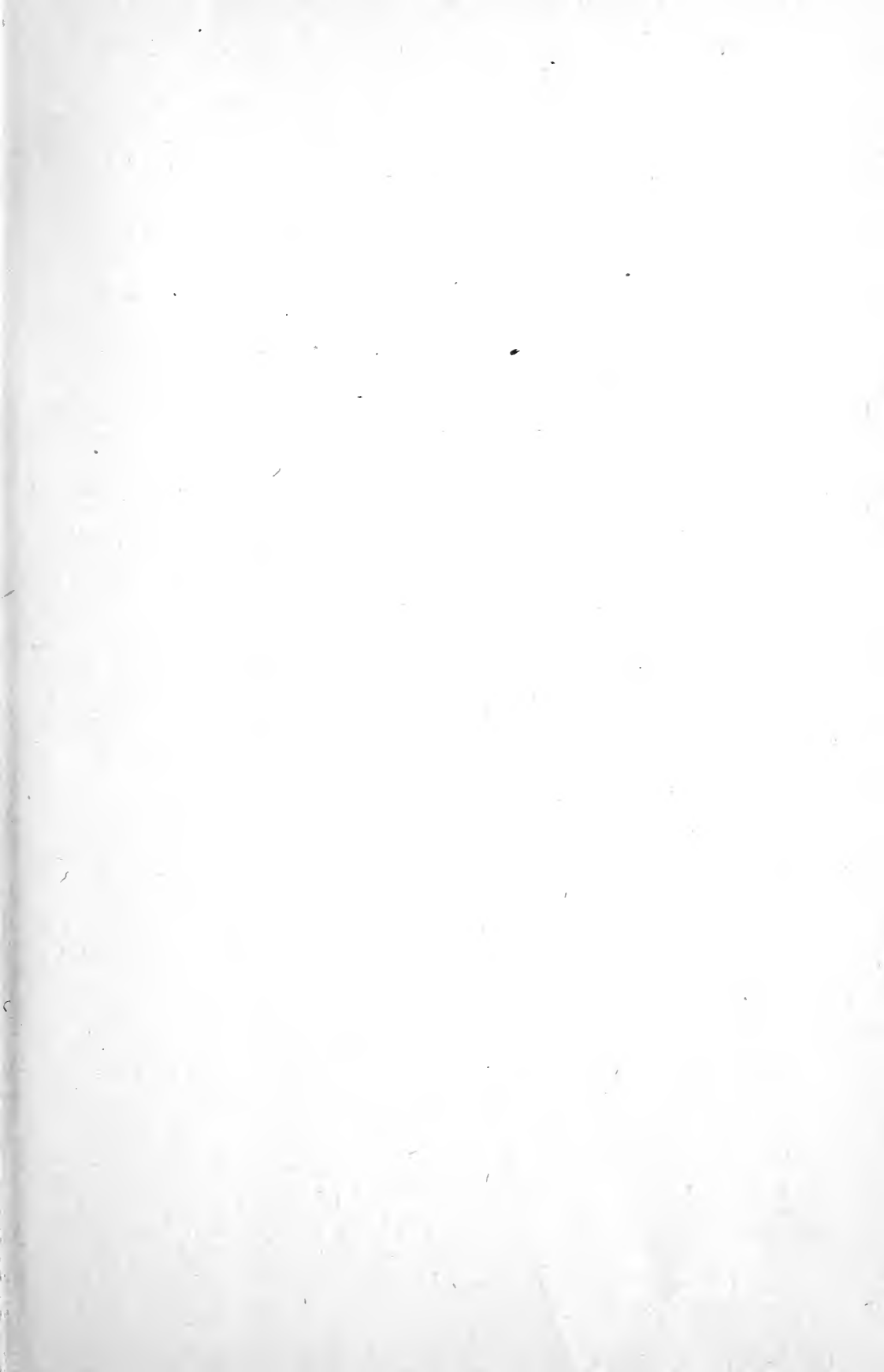


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02

# Does the Reformation Need Reforming ?



Or  
**What Church  
Shall I Join ?**

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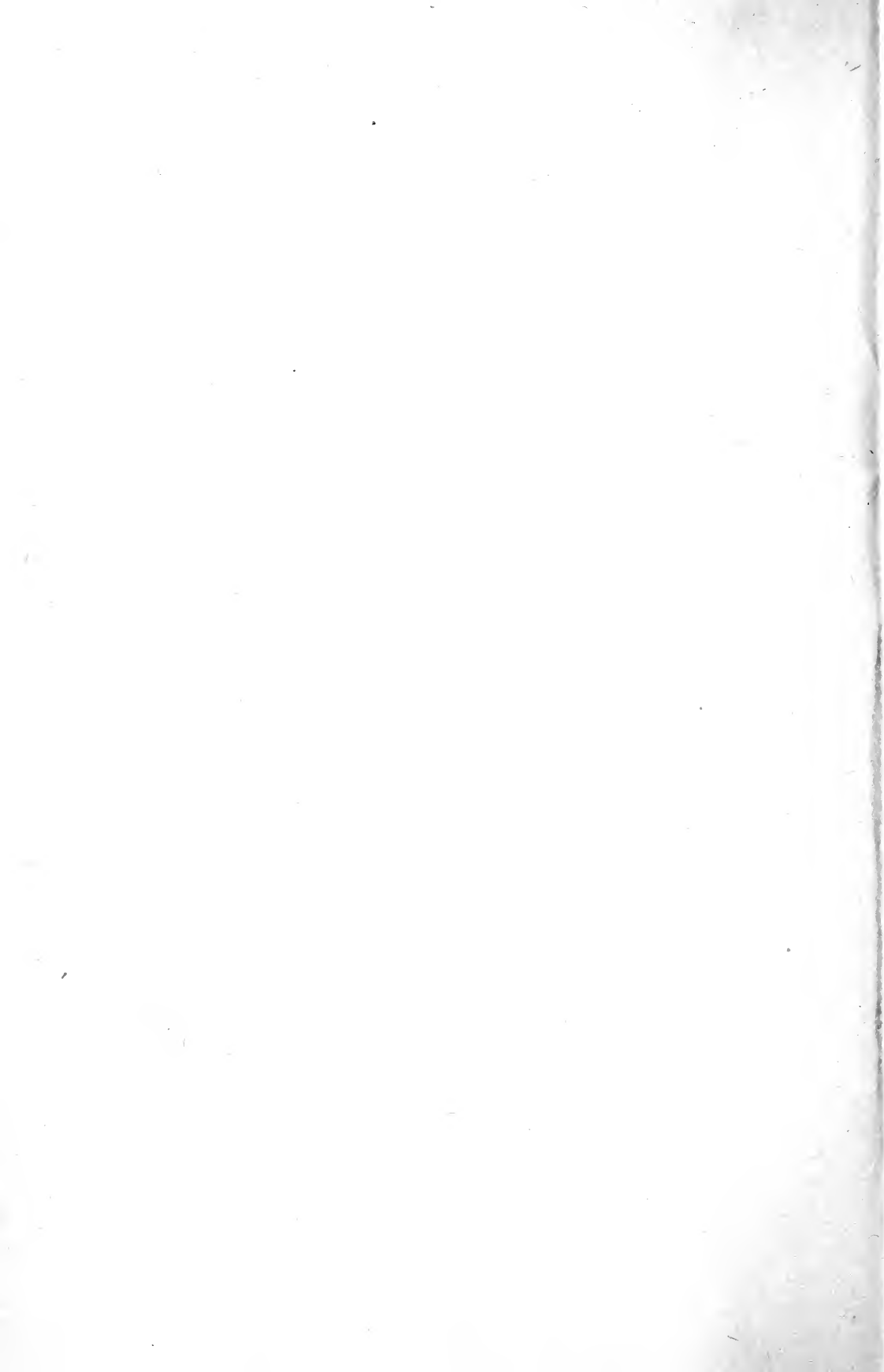
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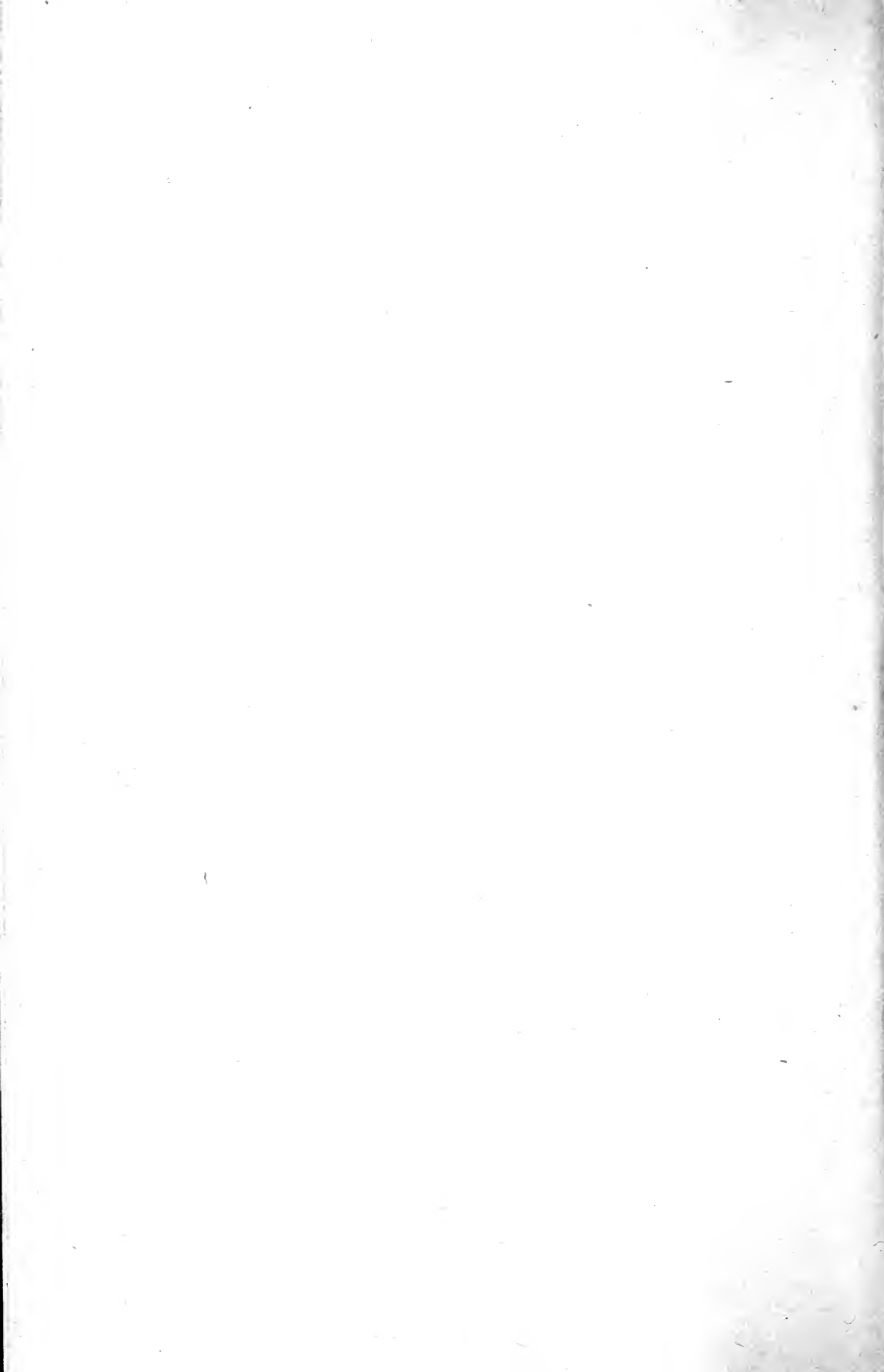


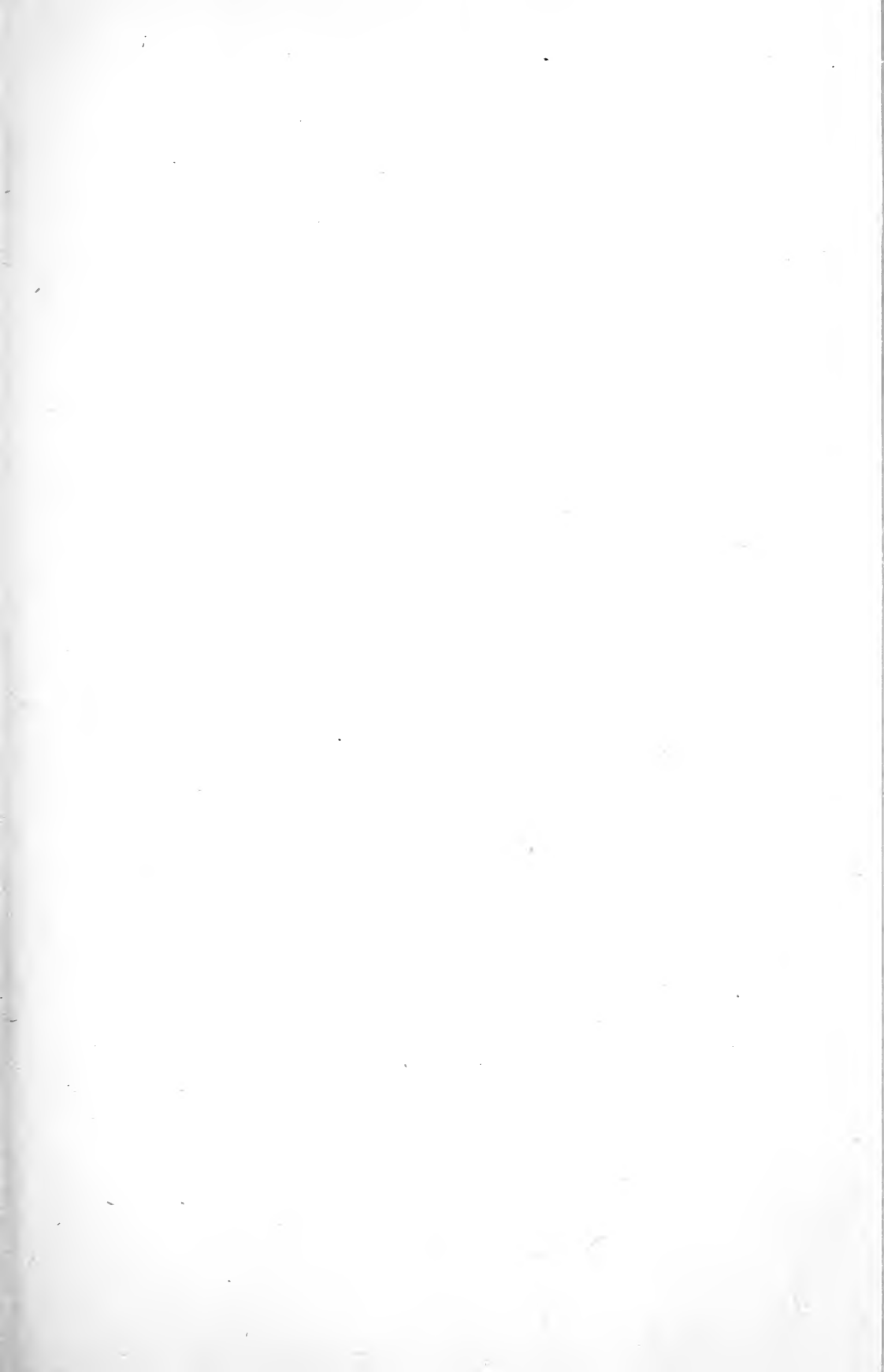


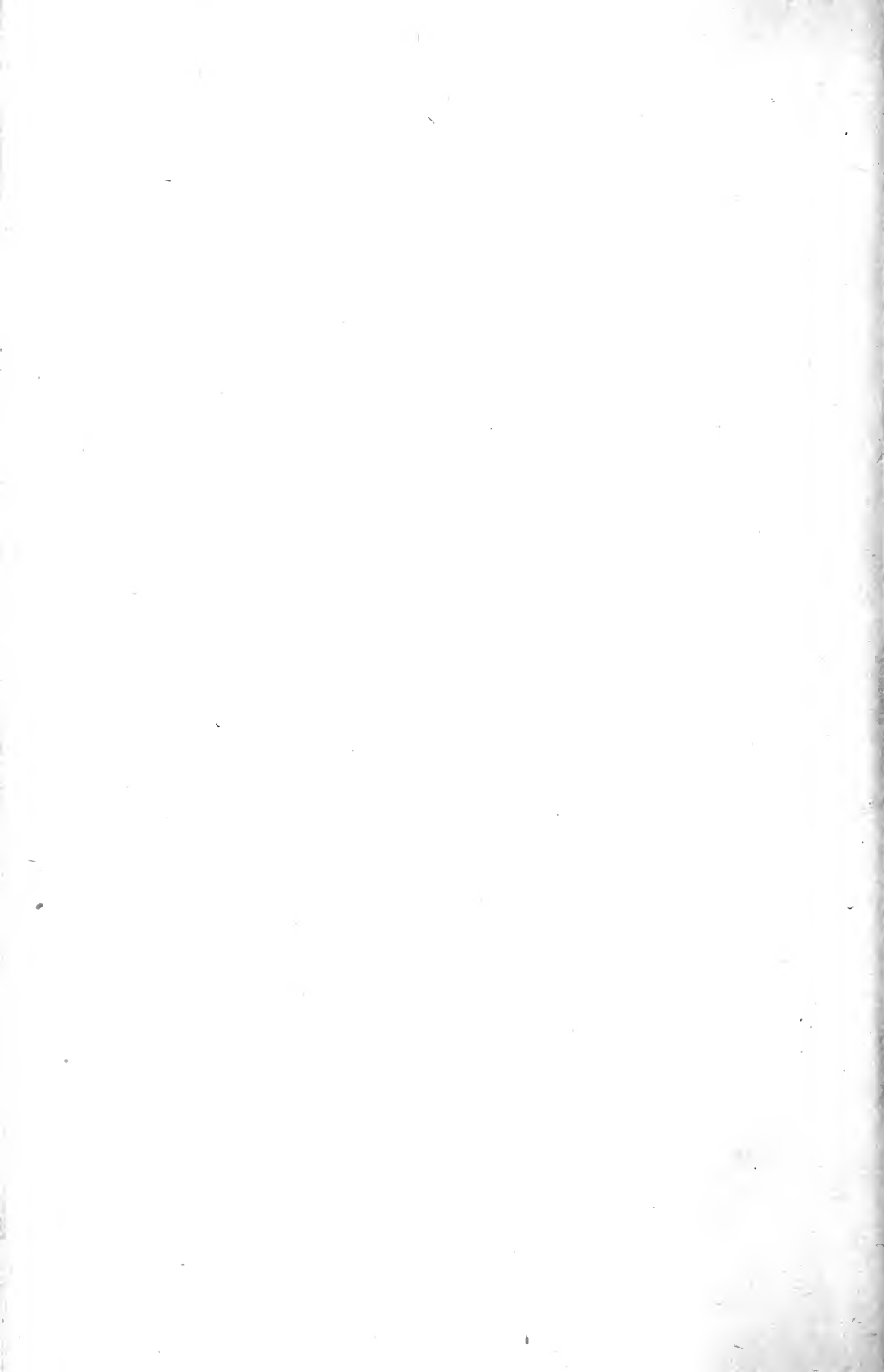












# Does the Reformation Need Reforming?

.. OR ..

## WHAT CHURCH SHALL I JOIN?



*Jewelry  
Jackson*  
By L. J. COPPAGE

FIRST EDITION.

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.,

1904.

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## APOLOGY.

It is probable that a generous and forbearing public will demand an apology for the appearance of a new treatise on this vexed subject,—a subject, whose separate parts have, in turn, been made to do service for the sects of all shades of orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

That this work is not sent out on a financial, a literary, or a proselyting mission, will, we sincerely believe, be conceded by every candid Bible student, after having carefully perused its pages.

The writer has no connection with, nor special interest in any of the religious parties or sects which are candidates for popular favor; he has neither the ambition nor the scholarship requisite to literary success; he promises to supply copies of the work to such as will carefully read and consider the suggestions therein contained, regardless of their ability to pay for the same, while the edition lasts, and he intends to devote all proceeds to the printing of subsequent editions during the continuance of a demand therefor.

From the foregoing the inference is well nigh conclusive that the writer contemplates neither the acquisition of wealth or fame from this source, and that he is comparatively an indifferent spectator of the strife among the religious sects for numerical, financial and ecclesiastical supremacy, and has, therefore, no motive for proselyting.

It has long been a well recognized principle of metaphysics that our personal interests are enormously potent in closing our minds to all opposing truth. The obstinacy with which religious parties cling to the "traditions of the fathers" is conclusive evidence that religious thinkers constitute no exception to the rule.

Does it not, therefore, follow, that a correct conclusion is more likely to be reached by one who has no interest in either tearing down or building up any party or theory,—one who can not possibly gratify his ambition, his avarice, his vanity, or his lust, by unduly emphasizing or ignoring any fact or truth connected therewith, than by one constantly impelled toward party lines by both interest and tradition?

If there be extant a work on the subject herein treated whose author was not bound "as by bands of steel" to some denominational creed formulated by man's wisdom, the writer hereof

has not been fortunate enough to secure it. It has been the aim of the writer to make ~~this little~~ work such. How well he has succeeded must be left to the candid reader.

The only special merit, therefore, claimed for this treatise is *the absence of any motive for perverting the truth*. It doubtless contains mistakes; perhaps errors. Should it prove free from either the writer will be greatly surprized. He cordially invites those who may detect them to call his attention thereto in a spirit of Christian brotherhood, and he will make a correction both public and emphatic.

It might appear superfluous to even suggest that it has not been intended to make this little work exhaustive. The subject herein treated could not possibly be more than fairly outlined in the space which has been herein appropriated. It has been our policy to suggest lines of thought which have been neglected by religious teachers generally, yet which are calculated to enable the diligent student to reach important conclusions by more thorough investigation of the questions involved. It is, therefore, intended as suggestive, rather than exhaustive.

Nothing was further from the intent of the writer than to send out a work capable of being comprehended by none save the scholarly; hence we regret that circumstances have appeared to require a recurrence to the Greek in a few instances. We have found it difficult, however, to get the basic principles underlying our suggestions clearly before the mind without classic elucidation where the translators either distorted or evaded their work. The points, however, which have been made to depend upon Greek exegesis are so well recognized by scholars generally that they will not be seriously questioned; and, besides, we have endeavored to give such authority from approved lexicons that the earnest Bible student will have little difficulty in verifying our classical propositions even if ignorant of the language from which our common English version was taken.

We earnestly recommend that the reader keep at hand a copy of the Scriptures, and that he turn to, and verify each passage herein quoted, as well as fully weigh and consider its bearing on the question treated. To have inserted all the Bible quotations in full would have required labor and space which can be otherwise utilized.

We send this work out with the hope that it may prove one of the humble instruments in God's economy for the accomplishment of good. Yet if no such merit be earned or ascribed to it, and no more than a single edition be issued from the press, the writer has this conscience, that in sending it out he has discharged a personal obligation to the Master; and that in writing it he has borne his witness, not out of season, to the people. If his witness be not believed,—nor even heard,—the judgment will declare, as will likewise his book, that he has not written in craftiness, nor handled the word of God deceitfully; but has sought only by manifestation of the truth to commend it to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

CRAWFORDSVILLE, Ind.

THE AUTHOR.



# WHAT CHURCH SHALL I JOIN?

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There are at least three classes of persons who will probably not regard the above question as being of sufficient importance to require of them a careful consideration, viz:

1. Those who do not deem denominational differences to be important.

2. Those who do not appreciate the value of any truth which does not come through their own approved denominational channels.

3. Those not sufficiently interested to devote the time and energy requisite for such an investigation as will form the basis for a satisfactory conclusion.

To such we do not recommend this humble contribution to the current religious literature of the times with confident expectation of their deriving substantial benefit therefrom.

To such, however, as seriously contemplate joining *some church*, with a view to placing themselves in harmony with God's revealed will, and the development of such character as will be approved by him in the day of final reckoning, I humbly ask a careful consideration of the suggestions herein contained with as complete freedom from denominational traditions and sectarian partisanship as is reasonably attainable.

It may not be deemed inappropriate at this point to emphasize the importance of having a definite purpose in *joining a church*. That people are influenced in their

denominational affiliations by considerations of ambition, pride, social position, local convenience, commercial and political interest, public sentiment, and even rivalry, as well as religious conviction, will probably not be denied. The writer hereof has seen and heard all these motives appealed to by religious teachers and leaders of conceded reputation and ability. The claim that men should not be actuated by motives of this kind is wanting in neither force nor truth, but if we make our appeal to such motives, we are estopped from condemning those who yield to them. Whether our motive be high or low, both the act induced by it and the manner of its performance should be such as are calculated to attain the object sought.

Men are not always clearly conscious of the motives by which they are actuated; hence, in joining a church we may be benefitted by subjecting to a critical analysis our motives, as well as the object sought to be attained. We can not deceive God. It will do no good to deceive ourselves. If we contemplate deriving benefit from any deception practiced on our friends and the religious world, let us go about it advisedly, and hence, intelligently. If our object in joining a church be to minister to our pride and love of pleasure, and we are willing and able to incur the requisite expense, we should choose one with an expensive meeting-house, finished and furnished in the most elaborate style, the members of which are inclined by culture, temper and circumstances, to a liberal indulgence and luxurious display of their sumptuary tastes. If indulgence in literary and scientific company and pursuits be your aim, join a church situated in a classical locality, having a studious and scholarly membership, and a *pastor* with unusual literary and elocutionary power. If you are seeking a social atmosphere, join a church whose

members meet on a plane congenial to your taste; or if financial advantage be your object, let it be one whose members are not only prosperous and generous in their expenditures, but also zealous in restricting their patronage to those who are of the "household of [their particular] faith." Gal.6 : 10. If political ambition be your motive, join a church having a considerable membership who affiliate with "the opposite party," but with whom the denominational tie is stronger than the political. If constrained to unite with a church by an admixture of the foregoing motives, let it be one which seeks to impress as much truth on its members as does not seriously interfere with their ambition, lust, and cupidity. But if moved by a sincere desire for the association of those who are simply *Bible Christians*,—that you may be stimulated and encouraged by their sympathy and companionship,—that by mutual instruction and admonition, uncontaminated by human tradition, you may be mutually edified,—that progress may be made in the development of that perfection of Christian character prescribed in the New Testament teaching,—if, I say, these be your motives, then, I entreat you, cast your lot with some religious body the *existence* of which is shown to be in harmony with the will of God.

At this stage of the investigation the following questions appear to be decidedly pertinent, viz:

1. How many churches did Christ authorize to be established under the New Testament or Christian Dispensation?

2. Which of the modern denominations ranging themselves under the name of Christian, may rightfully claim divine authority for existence and divine approval of procedure in the worshiping assemblies?

Are not all true believers in the Bible interested in

the foregoing questions? How many of us have determined them? Perhaps there are some who never thought of the matter in this light. Some, perhaps, have not the opportunity, the means, or the facilities to make an investigation. Others, possibly, may lack the mental training requisite, and still others may find it exceedingly difficult, by reason of their peculiar environment and sectarian traditions hallowed by life-time attachment. Surely, the religious world is entitled to clear, definite, and accurate answers to these questions if obtainable by reasonable research; yet how seldom do we hear them calmly and dispassionately discussed. The writer of these pages is willing to devote a part of his time, his ordinary ability and his very limited acquirements to assisting the diligent truth-seeker in a correct solution of the above questions, and such shall be his endeavor in this little work.

That a definite and conclusive answer to the first of the above questions may be readily deduced from the Bible itself, seems reasonably clear to the writer, provided sufficient time and energy be expended in collating the parts of the Scripture bearing thereon and drawing the logical inferences.

As to the second question, we venture no prediction; we promise, however, to consider matters which will not fail to be of interest to the unbiased Bible student, with the suggestion that he who shall succeed in describing the church which contains all the elements for which provision is made in the Scriptures and none others, will have indicated the organism, both the existence and procedure of which, certainly has the approval of heaven.

The word *church* is defined by Webster as,

3. "A body of Christian believers observing the same rites and acknowledging the same authority."

4. "A particular number of Christians, united under one form of ecclesiastical government, using the same rites and ceremonies."

The critical reader of the Bible will have observed that the word is not used therein in quite so liberal a sense. The apostles did not recognize as any part of the "church" those who professed a belief in Christ, but did not conform, at least substantially, to doctrines, practice, ordinances and modes of procedure authorized by the precept or example of inspired men. Acts 8: 14-23; Rom. 16: 17, 18; Gal. 1: 6-9; 5: 3, 4; 2 Tim. 3: 5; 2 John 10.

The Greek word which is translated "church" in the New Testament is *ekklesia*, defined by Bagster as "A popular assembly, the aggregate of the called out or selected." It is a noun, derived from its co-relative verb *ekkleo* (Gr. *ek*, out and *kleo*, I call), and means to summon, to call out, to select from, etc.

It is evident, therefore, that if at different times and for different purposes, God should select, call out, or separate different aggregations of people, they would constitute different churches. It is certain that in this sense, at least, the Israelites constituted God's church (called out or selected) in the wilderness in the time of Moses; likewise Noah and his family at the time of the flood. A different people, selected or called out for a different purpose, at a different time, organized in a different manner, on different basic principles, charged with different duties, invested with different prerogatives, bound by different ordinances in the performance of different rites and ceremonies, proceeding by different methods to the accomplishment of a different end, could not be or constitute the same *church*, even though created by the same authority.

It will not be our purpose to trace all the points

which distinguish the Jewish from the Christian dispensation. Suffice it if enough is shown to make it clear that they are not identical. One was to be only *age*-lasting, the other *ever*-lasting. One was the exponent of God's power and justice, the other of his love and mercy. The rewards and punishments of one were chiefly temporal, of the other eternal. Justification by the law of one was exceedingly difficult, by that of the other comparatively easy. One was entered by a physical, the other by a spiritual birth. The conditions and obligations of membership, the form of government, the rites and ceremonies, the sacrifices and ordinances, as well as the order of the priesthood of the two respectively, were and are all widely and essentially different. That the churches of the two dispensations were not identical is also indicated by the language of the Master, used near the close of his life (about A. D. 32),—"On this rock I will build [not have I built], my church," evidently indicating the prospective, rather than the then present existence of the institution of which he was to be the head. Matt. 16: 18. See also Heb. 7: 17-22; 8: 6-13; 9: 15-17; 10: 9, 10.

The Mosaic church was then nearing its end, and in a few years was a thing of the past, while from Acts 2: 47 we learn that the church which Christ promised to build was in existence (about A. D. 33), and from Acts 20: 28 we learn that it was still in being about A. D. 60.

The word *church* is used in the New Testament about seventy times in the singular, and near half that number in the plural [including the dual, which, in the Greek, means two and no more). It is never used by Christ in the plural (or dual) at all, nor by his apostles till congregations existed in different localities. The plural (or dual) was never used by any of the New Tes-

tament writers in designating the whole or any part of the aggregate membership of any single locality. Where the plural (or the dual) is used the context clearly indicates that congregations in different localities is meant. Hence, the distinction was on local—never denominational—lines. The singular number of the word was always used to designate, either the church universal,—that is, the whole body of obedient believers regardless of time or place,—or the entire membership of a given locality. It was never used to denote less than the whole number of Christians in a given locality; nor does it anywhere appear that there was more than one congregation in any one locality, although Rome, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, and Jerusalem were each more than sufficient both in territory and population to have sustained several congregations variant, slightly in taste and temper, and, hence, slightly divergent in doctrine and practice, together with all the appliances deemed so essential to success in modern times. Luke informs us that the congregation at Jerusalem had three thousand accessions on the day when the gospel was first preached by virtue of the great commission (Acts 2: 41), and that within a short time the number of adult males (Gr. Androon, not anthropoon) was about five thousand (Acts 4: 4), and that multitudes were being added to them. Acts 5: 14.

Profane history informs us that in the cities of Rome, Ephesus, Antioch and Corinth the number of believers extended into the thousands. Of them at Jerusalem many were possessed of property, and were willing that it should be devoted to the sustenance of the church. Acts 4: 32-37. Yet it does not appear that they divided themselves into separate bodies, promulgating essentially, or even slightly different doctrines, erected commodious meeting-houses, and provided lib-

erally for the salaries of brethren Paul, Barnabas, and others, as well as for the entertainment of such of the brethren and sisters as were not sufficiently in earnest to cling to the church and attend continually on her devotions without a generous admixture of provision for the gratification of the flesh. Why these things were not done, or if done, why they have not been "written for our instruction," I leave to the determination of such as are possessed of natural abilities and powers of discrimination superior to mine. Of one thing, however, we may be certain. If the early church was divided other than geographically; if there were numerous congregations in the same locality, differing from one another in doctrine, discipline, ordinances and structure; observing different ceremonies, promulgating different creeds, pursuing different methods and appealing to different motives, God has not seen fit to reveal it to us in his word. From this entire absence of affirmative evidence we might logically infer the non-existence of more than one church in the times or by the authority of Christ and his apostles. The New Testament, however contains much of an affirmative character which forbids the inference that Christ sanctioned a plurality of churches. Divisions were positively forbidden by the apostle of the Gentiles. Rom. 16: 17; 1 Cor. 1: 10. And Christ, himself, in the unutterable agony of that last night he spent on earth, prayed earnestly that his disciples and all who should believe on him through their word might be one, even as he and the Father were one; adding that their success in promulgating the gospel depended on such unity. John 17: 11-21.

Here, then, we find *one* church, certainly existing by and acting in harmony with the will of God. When, where and how did he ever authorize the establishment



of any other? When, where and how did he ever approve of the *one* church being rent into sections, subdivisions or denominations, wearing different names, formulating different creeds, promulgating different doctrines, proceeding by different methods, or enforcing variant articles of discipline? From the foregoing considerations the following propositions seem to be clearly deducible, viz:

1. God has authorized the establishment of but one universal church.

2. He has made no provision for sects, branches or denominations therein.

3. Nor for any rival institution, however similar thereto;

4. Nor consented that I assist in sustaining any other.

If these propositions be true, it becomes exceedingly important that some means be found by which the true church of God may be certainly identified, even by those lacking in scholarship; lest they expend their energy and exert their influence in promoting that which will eventually prove to be in opposition thereto. Matt. 7: 24; 24: 23-26. For this purpose it might be well to consider briefly some of the elements, attributes, and characteristics of the church of apostolic times.

## CHAPTER II.

### I. ORIGIN.

Perhaps it will not be necessary to present a formidable array of scripture texts in support of the proposition that *Christ* is the author of the church established by the apostles. In Matt. 16: 18 we find the language of the Master himself, "I will build *my* church," (*oikodomeso mou ten ekklesian*) not I *have* built, etc. In Heb. 12: 2 the apostle speaks of Jesus as "the author and finisher of our faith." Likewise, in his various letters

to the brethren, and Peter in both his general epistles, call themselves apostles (messengers) and servants of Christ; hence, he is the author of their messages and the teaching used in the establishment of the congregations resultant therefrom. Eph. 1: 20-22; 5: 23, 24; Col. 1: 17, 18; Heb. 1: 2, 3, 8.

## II. NAME.

The early church was called by several names, among which are *The Church*, Acts 2: 47; *The Church of God*, Gal. 1: 13; *The Churches of Christ*, Rom. 16: 16; *The Church of the Firstborn*, Heb. 12: 23; *The Body of Christ*, 1 Cor. 12: 27. Why all these different names were used to designate the one Church, I will not undertake to decide; nor yet why some earthly parents give their children only one pre-nomen or Christian name, while others are more liberal in their bestowal of nomenclature. Nor do we believe any conjectures of ours on these questions will be profitable or interesting. It is not difficult, however, for the diligent Bible student to see that while these names differ in form, they are very closely allied in meaning. Names were then supposed to indicate some attribute, quality, or characteristic pertaining to the person or thing to which they were applied. When the term "*the Church*" was used, the idea intended to be conveyed was not *any church*, indefinitely, as the definite article is used to denote some *particular* thing or things. The context clearly shows what church was meant, viz: either the entire *church universal*, or the whole number of believers in a given locality adhering to the faith, promulgating the doctrine, administering the discipline, preserving the structure and conforming to the authority prescribed by Christ and his apostles. There was no exception to the rule that in so far as either an individual or an assembly diverged from these principles and procedure

they were regarded as on the road to apostasy. 2 Thes. 3: 6; Rev. 2: 1-5.

*The Body of Christ* is clearly a figurative way of expressing the same as *Church of Christ*, impressing at the same time the close relationship which the members should bear to the church and to one another. Rom. 12: 4; Eph. 4: 16; 1 Cor. 6: 15-19. The phrase, *Church of God*, is not far different from *Church of Christ* if we consider the language of Christ as recorded in John 10: 30, "I and my Father are one." Nor is the expression, *Church of the Firstborn* materially variant from the others when we consider that Christ is the Firstborn or Firstbegotten of God. The same word (Gr. *prototokon*) is rendered *firstborn*, Rom. 8: 29 and Heb. 12: 23, and *firstbegotten* in Heb. 1: 6. Inspired men called the church by names which, though different in form, indicated the same attributes, and literally or figuratively conveyed the same idea. Does that fact justify us in the use of names indicative of doctrines diametrically opposed, or of attributes in irreconcilable conflict? Because some American of Revolutionary days, in the exuberance of his patriotic devotion called his son George Washington Lafayette Putnam Kosciusko, would his neighbors have been thereby justified in addressing him as Benedict Arnold? or even Burgoyne or Cornwallis? Surely not.

### III. BASIC OR FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE.

The scriptures which teach that the divine character and mission of the Christ constitute the basic or fundamental principle on which rests the whole church fabric under the Christian dispensation are both clear and numerous. Christ himself so declares in Matt. 16: 14-18, where we find that Peter had just declared the divine character, and Christ affirmed that on that fact or declaration his church would be built. John declares

the object in writing the history of which he is the author to have been the establishment of the same fact. John 20: 31. The burden of the issue made by the apostles in their preaching after the death of Christ was the proof of his resurrection. This being established, his divinity followed as a logical conclusion. Acts 3: 14, 15; 4: 10-12; 1 Cor. 15: 1-4, and many other scriptures which we forbear to cite at present as we shall recur to this question when we come to deal with the subject of *faith*.

#### IV. ORGANIC STRUCTURE.

It will be well to bear in mind, as has already been shown, that the word *church* is used in the New Testament to convey the idea of the Church Universal, as well as a local assembly. Matt. 16: 18; Acts 8: 1. Such is not an unusual way of speaking of that which may be indefinitely divided without any change of its properties. When we say that the atmosphere is composed of oxygen and nitrogen in the proportions of 20.01 to 79.99 we mean every particle of pure air which has ever existed. When we say "the air is cold," we mean that which is in our immediate locality. If we speak of the air as being foul or damp, we do not mean all the air, or the air in general, but that portion occupying the particular locality in question, whether small or large. Such remarks as these last are never regarded as calling in question the constituent elements of our common atmosphere. When divested of all foreign elements, its component matter is the same in every locality. It is just so with the church. The church at Ephesus was composed of all the obedient believers in that locality, and so with the church at Jerusalem. The Church Universal was and is composed of all the obedient believers *everywhere*.

If they differ in faith, doctrine, ordinances, disci-

pline or methods of procedure, it is because of a divergence from the standard authorized. When Paul spoke of "the church at Corinth" he undoubtedly meant *all* the members of the Church Universal who resided at Corinth. If by the "Church at Rome" he meant less than all of the believers who dwelt there, such meaning does not appear. At the first "the Church" consisted of a single congregation, which was located at Jerusalem; but this did not continue, and it was not long till congregations were established at other places.

Yet God provided no cohesive appliances for the purpose of combining them all into one consolidated ecclesiasticism. Hence the only bond of cohesion by which their essential oneness was to be maintained was their unity of faith and its resultant uniformity of doctrine, discipline, ordinances and practice. In the Common or King James version of the New Testament we find a number of official names, among which are apostle, bishop, deacon, elder, evangelist, minister, pastor, preacher, presbyter, prophet, servant, shepherd, teacher, etc. It does not follow, however, that there were as many different functionaries in the primitive congregations, having as many different duties to perform, nor does it appear to warrant the co-ordinating of the numerous congregations into an ecclesiastical union, nor *sub-ordinating* them to an ecclesiastical hierarchy, with its various tribunals original and appellate, from the stewards of a single congregation to the Pope or Ecumenical Council.

In ancient times names were applied to people or things as indicative of, or to render emphatic real or supposed attributes or qualities. Hence, the followers of Christ were first called *converts*, as indicating their recent change from Judaism or Paganism to Chris-

tianity. They were called *discipulos* (Gr. *mathetes*, from *manthano*, to learn), with reference to their diligence in learning from Christ or his apostles; *believers*, with reference to their convictions; *brethren*, as indicating the close and affectionate relationship which their attachment to a common Master rendered appropriate, and *saints*, in view of that degree of holiness to which it was their privilege and duty to endeavor to attain. There appears to be no ground for the inference that a saint was not also a *convert*, a *believer*, and, likewise, a *brother*.

So also with the official terms. They do not each imply a different functionary, nor, necessarily, a different function. The twelve were first called *disciples* (Gr. *mathetes*). Matt. 10:1. It is probable that at that time they were *peculiarly the learners*, possibly the *only* ones seriously devoting their time and energies to the study of the new theology. Luke, in his account of this same matter (Luke 6: 13), informs us that they were also "named apostles." Luke states the *fact*, and Matthew gives the *reason* why they were called apostles, viz: they were "sent forth." Luke says they were named apostles (Gr. *apostolos*, from *apo*, out or from, and *stello*, I send), and Matthew tells how they became apostles, i. e., by being sent. Matt. 10: 5. We see that the twelve were both apostles and disciples, *messengers* and *learners*, according to the special function peculiar to the occasion. They were much more, as we shall see. Peter and Paul were both elders, (Gr. *presbuteros*, senior, older, adjective, comp., deg.). 1 Peter 5: 1; Philemon 9. All the apostles, together with Stephen, Barnabas, Philip and many others were evangelists (Gr. *evangelidzo*, to publish or proclaim good news). The elders were overseers (Gr. *episkopos*, from *epi*, over or upon, and *skopeo*, to look or

see) Acts 20: 17-28. This word is translated *overseer* in Acts 20: 28, and *bishop* in Titus 1: 7 and 1 Peter 2: 25. The masculine present participle of the same verb is rendered *oversight* in 1 Peter 5: 2, while *episkopen* (ac. sing.) in Acts 1: 20, and *episkopes* (gen. sing.) in 1 Tim. 3: 1 are rendered *bishoprick*, and *office of a bishop*, respectively. In Rom. 2: 20 the word *didaskalos* (from the Gr. *didasko*, to teach, to instruct), is rendered *teacher*; in 2 Tim. 1: 11 it is rendered *preacher*, and in Matt. 10: 25, Mark 5: 35, it is rendered *Master*. *Diakonos*, the Greek word for *servant*, is so translated in Matt. 22: 13 and John 2: 5, 9; and Rom. 16: 1, but in Rom. 13: 4, 6, and 1 Cor. 3: 5 it is rendered *minister*, while in 1 Tim. 3: 8, and Phil. 1: 1 it is rendered *deacon*. In this latter verse, the phrase (*episkopois kai diakonois*) rendered "bishops and deacons" in the King James version, the Arthur Hinds literal translation gives "overseers and those who serve." So we see how by giving to a single word a number of different renderings, the translators have made the text *appear* to give sanction to a multiplicity of church officials never contemplated by the writers of the New Testament.

When we come to consider who were preachers or evangelists, we learn from Acts 8: 4 that "they who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Who went everywhere? They who were scattered abroad. Who were "scattered abroad"? They of the church at Jerusalem "were all scattered abroad except the apostles." Acts 8: 1. So we see that in the primitive church the believers were *all* disciples, brethren (or sisters), servants, evangelists, teachers, and preachers. John 13: 14-16. Paul was an apostle (Col. 1: 1), a worker of miracles (Acts 20: 9-17), an elder (Phil. 9), an overseer, having the oversight of the churches (2 Cor. 11: 28), a pastor (Acts 20: 11-22), an

evangelist (Acts 17: 22-33), a deacon (Acts 11: 29, 30; 2 Cor. 11: 28), servant of Christ (Rom. 1: 1), and of the church (2 Cor. 4: 5) and a speaker of divers tongues (1 Cor. 14: 17). Peter was all these, and in addition had the keys of the kingdom (symbols of authority) committed to him in a special manner; yet he was not infallible, for he thrice denied his Master (Matt. 26: 69-75) and likewise, when he trusted his own wisdom instead of following God's word he was guilty of dissimulation, and carried away as judicious a man as Barnabas with his erroneous doctrine. Gal. 2: 11-14. Not having within himself the attribute of infallibility, it was not possible for him to transmit it to a successor. We might follow this line almost indefinitely, showing that the other apostles were measurably endowed with the same powers and charged with the same duties as Paul and Peter, but enough has been given to indicate how little authority is to be found in the New Testament for the multitude of official functionaries and their privileges and prerogatives with which the theological jargon of modern Babylon is replete.

We have as parts of the ecclesiastical machinery of modern times, the steward, class leader, chorister, organist, deacon, archdeacon, clerk, secretary, superintendent, teacher, minister, pastor, evangelist, elder, ruling elder, presiding elder, missionary, home and foreign, overseer, bishop, archbishop, licentiate, curate, vicar, priest, reverend, diocesan, metropolitan, primate, cardinal, apostolic delegate, Pope, etc., etc. Just how many of these are claimed by their friends to have been authorized by the New Testament, I do not undertake to say. It is certain, however, that many of them were not even dreamed of by those who read the New Testament in the Greek only. Is it not probable that the eminent scholars selected by King James to



make what is known as the "common version" carried into the text some of those traditional shades of meaning which had gained a lodgment in their minds through the denominational influence of a lifetime? It appears that they strained the meaning of the Greek text in order to make it cover the ecclesiastical orders then existing in the Church of England, of which they were zealous and devout members, and that all the subsequent subdivisions now constituting the Protestant sects have strained the King James version enough to justify the official distinctions and prerogatives of their respective denominations.

Let us briefly examine a few cases in which the Greek text was clearly wrested from its obvious and ordinary sense. In 1 Tim. 5:1 we read: "Rebuke not an elder (Gr. *presbutero*) but entreat him as a father; and the younger men (*neoterous*) as brothers: likewise the elder women (*presbuteras*) as mothers, and the younger (*neoteras*) as sisters," etc. The revised version and the Arthur Hinds popular literal translation give substantially the same. The Campbell and McKnight (Presbyterian) gives "Do not severely rebuke an *aged man*, but beseech him as a father," etc. The Conybeare & Howson free version (Episcopalian), "Rebuke not an *aged man*, but exhort him as thou wouldst a father," etc. Now, what is the difference in the word *presbutero*, translated *an elder*, and *presbuteras*, translated *older women*? Both these words are adjectives in the comparative degree. They are conceded by all to mean *senior*, *older*. The only difference is that one is the masculine singular and the other feminine plural, the noun to which the adjective belongs being understood in each case. Let those not acquainted with the Greek be reminded that in that language the adjectives have gender and number as well as the

nouns. The idea sought to be conveyed by the word *elder* was not that of an official personage. It is set, practically (though perhaps not gramatically) in apposition to *presbuteras*, meaning the older women; not, however, as signifying the same thing, but a like thing so far as the analogy is concerned, and in respect to the duty enjoined. This view is confirmed by the antithetic as well as the apposite bearing of the sentence and the words used. *Presbutero*, an aged man, is set in antithesis to *neoterous*, the younger men; and *presbuteras*, the older or more mature women, is set in antithesis to *neoterias*, the younger women. If, then, *presbutero* meant a male officer, *presbuteras* meant female officers. From these considerations it clearly appears that in this place, at least, the word *elder* meant a man of mature age, in years or experience, or both,—a senior—rather than an officer or one in authority. In 1 Peter 5: 5, “Likewise ye younger (*neoteroi*) submit yourselves to the elder,” (*presbuterois*). Here the same word in the plural is used, not in the sense of contrasting one office with another, nor with the lay or unofficial members, but the aged with the young and inexperienced.

It is, however, rendered *elder*, (singular) without any indication that it is different in meaning from the other places in which it is made to convey the idea of an office, as in the first verse of the same chapter. In Titus 2: 2 *presbutas*, the noun corresponding to the adjective used in the passage above cited, is rendered *aged men*, in correspondence with *presbutidas*, rendered *aged women* in the succeeding verse. Thus we see how these words, which have never been regarded as carrying the idea of official preferment in their vernacular, have been made to serve the purpose of sustaining a distinction between the clergy and laity which is entirely

unknown in the sacred writings. Titus 2: 2 is almost the exact equivalent of 1 Tim. 5: 1 in its antithetic bearing, i. e., the aged men are set in opposition to the young men, and the old women are set in opposition to the young women. Here, however, the noun is rendered *aged men*. Why should a noun meaning *an old man* and an adjective in the positive degree meaning *old* be made to convey the idea of seniority, and the same adjective in the comparative degree carry the idea of an official personage or one in authority? Why should the feminine adjective not have that meaning as well as the masculine? Let those answer who can.

Keeping in mind the foregoing considerations, turn to the 17th verse of this same chapter (1 Tim. 5), "Let the elders (*presbuterois*) that rule (*proestotes*) well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor (*kopioontes*) in word and doctrine." The revised version follows the K. J. except that "teaching" is substituted for "doctrine." The Conybeare & Howson (Epis.) gives, "Let the presbyters who perform their office well," etc., and the McKnight & Doddridge (Pres.), "Let the seniors who preside well," etc.

The word rendered *rule* (*proestotes*) in the above verse is the perfect participle, middle voice, of the verb *prohistemi*, to undertake, to practice, to maintain with diligence and energy, to stand up or forward in support of, etc. It does not carry the idea of ruling in the sense of one in authority. In Titus 3: 8-14 it is rendered "maintain good works," and the context shows diligence and energy in their maintenance. In Rom. 16: 2 the noun form of the same word is rendered "succorer," i. e., helper. To have translated it ruler in this case would have made Sister Phebe the master or ruler over Paul and many others. The word translated *labor* in the verse under consideration is

the present participle of the verb *koparōo*, to be weary, to be faint from intense and prolonged effort, etc., (Bagster). It is so rendered in John 4: 6, where Jesus is represented as "being wearied from the journey" (*kekopiakos ek tes hoidopodias*). In other places where this word is rendered *labor* the context shows it to have been such as tends to faintness or exhaustion. Bagster defines the noun formed from this same root to mean "one who stands in front, a leader, a protector, a champion," etc. The evident meaning of the sentence in question is "Bestow abundant honor on the brethren who notwithstanding their advanced age, stand well forward in maintenance of the cause; more especially them who have pursued their duty, of instruction and exhortation to the point of exhaustion." By translating the word indicating maturity as denoting official character, and the word indicating energetic perseverance as *rule*, and then construing "*double honor*" to mean *salary* and "*word and doctrine*" as the equivalent of elocutionary homiletics, we have an injunction well suited to the taste and conception of many of the religious leaders of the present time, viz: "Let the *official clergy* (even though lacking in age and experience) be counted worthy of a *liberal salary* who succeed in building up *our party*; more especially they who entertain the spiritually weak with *elegant discourse*." There are many more scriptures which have suffered like distortion under the cunning hand of the scholarly translators, but time and space forbid their being considered at length in so small a volume as this is intended to be. Enough has been quoted and commented on to indicate how persistently the translators and interpreters of the New Testament have labored to sustain the unscriptural claim of modern religionists for the multitude of

ecclesiastical orders and clerical distinctions. The apostles are all dead. In the sense of being able to foretell events and of being in direct communication with God, there are probably no prophets now living. It has been shown that the elders (Gr. *presbuteros*) were the elderly or senior persons; that when charged with the function of overlooking the congregations they were called overseers (*episkopoi*) which is the same as bishop, and that figuratively they were also called pastors, which is the Latin for shepherds. Thus, bishop, presbyter, pastor and overseer are the same. They were chosen from among the elders or elderly brethren on account of their experience, knowledge and fixedness of character. It is obvious that there is no more sense in calling an overseer literally a pastor than there is in calling a congregation literally a flock of sheep. As has been shown, all the brethren were *disciples* (learners), preachers, evangelists (proclaimers of good news), teachers (doctors), and ministers (servants). Those who served the congregations in a special sense were called *deacons* by way of emphasis, but not as indicating exclusive service. Acts 6: 1-7.

Hence the Organic Structure of the scriptural congregation is:

1. Christ, the Head, with absolute and infinite authority.

2. Overseers. Brethren who by reason of mature age, experience, discretion, integrity, intensity of courage and conviction, and proficiency in scripture knowledge, are recognized as safe and competent leaders and instructors, both in precept and example.

3. Deacons. Those peculiarly qualified and set apart by the congregation for some special service pertaining to the welfare of the assembly or its members in their temporal aspect.

4. Brethren. Those charged with no special function or prerogative separate from the membership in general.

Let it be remembered that these last are not excused from the performance of any duty of which they are capable, that may be assigned to them by the assembly, or that may otherwise devolve upon them. A man is called a merchant or a farmer according as he makes a specialty of the one or the other; not because he follows it exclusively. A soldier is called a *private* because he *usually* serves in that capacity. Should he be capable of services of a higher order, and should they be required of him by a superior officer it would certainly be his duty to perform them cheerfully and to the best of his ability. So with the unofficial member. It was so in apostolic times.

### CHAPTER III.

#### V. THE POWER OR AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

All authority is either infinite or limited. The authority of the Church is limited in character and extent; that is, only authority of certain character has been committed to the church, and even this has not been extended to all times, places and objects. It has been already shown that under the present or New Testament dispensation, all authority was committed to Christ. It logically follows that the assembly of his people have only such power or authority as he has delegated to them. As to the scope of her authority, we have been unable to find any grant of secular authority to the Church or any number of her members. Though the Master had the undoubted right to have assumed temporal power, he steadfastly refused to do so. John 6: 15; 18: 36. The charge committed to the church by her Lord and King is a moral and spiritual one, and her energies should not be dissipated and wasted on considerations purely and exclusively secu-

lar. The church and all her functionaries, as such, would do well to preserve a respectful and dignified silence concerning the particular business in which a man may engage, what he shall eat, drink and wear, how he shall dispose of his surplus earnings and dispense his bounty, and what shall be the character of his diversions and recreations, so long as they involve no neglect of duty, wrong to a fellow man, or degrading indulgence. The Master has nowhere in the sacred writings delegated to the church or any number of her members the right to require of me that which he has not required nor to deny me that which he has not denied. A wisdom sufficiently profound to determine a course of conduct to be adhered to by each individual, and suited to all the conceivable exigencies of life, is probably possessed by no man or number of men. God has not seen fit to prescribe such a course, nor has he authorized his church to do so. Not only is it true that the church has no secular authority conferred upon her, but it is also true that her power in spiritual matters is limited. Nowhere do we find legislative authority conferred on her, nor the right to make change or modify the law of her being or procedure. It is true that Christ said to the apostles, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matt. 16: 19; 18: 18. This was spoken to the apostles personally; certainly not of or to the church, for the church was not yet in existence. Matt. 16: 18. We concede that whatsoever *the apostles* have loosed or bound, either by their words under inspiration or by their example under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is approved in heaven. But if this language is to be applied to the church in post-apostolic times, and receive a literal construction, and all the modern orthodox de-

nominations are parts of the church, it would follow that all their conflicting and mutually contradictory creeds, confessions, edicts, anathemas, and canonizations must be true because promulgated by the church. This would pass every persecutor, infidel, murderer, and debauchee into heaven on a plane of equality with the most devout martyr of the dark and cruel Inquisition, provided some corrupt or misguided priest could be induced to utter over his remains a flattering absolution. Moreover, if Christ invested the church with absolute authority, including power to legislate, then every vestige of excuse for the existence of Protestantism is at once swept away. If the true Church, being vested with plenary authority during the first sixteen centuries of the Christian era gradually evolved through the legitimate powers committed to her, what was at the time of the reformation *The Universal Church*, Luther and his co-adjutors had no right to oppose her. No reformation was necessary. So we see that Protestantism is driven to deny either her own right to exist or the absolute and unlimited authority of the church, even in spiritual matters.

By reference to the 25th, 26th and 27th chapters of Exodus it will be seen that God gave Moses specific directions for the construction of the tabernacle and for each and every piece of furniture to be placed therein. Moses seems to have construed the command, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shown thee in the mount," as meaning that a full and minute compliance with every detail of the order exhausted his authority in the premises; and God seems to have acquiesced in that construction. Looking back through the intervening centuries, who will say that Moses would have been justifiable in adding a single article or feature to the prescribed complement of fix-



tures and arrangements because it seemed judicious or appropriate to him or to the wisest or most devout of the worthies of his day?

The tabernacle "pitched by Moses" in the wilderness was a type of the church to be thereafter established by Christ under the New Covenant. Heb. 8: 5; 9: 1-11; 10: 1. The "house of Christ," over which he is Master consists not of temples made with hands, furniture burnished with gold, nor altars crimson with the blood of animal sacrifices. Wherein, then, consists the analogy which the type bears to the antitype in the authority and manner of construction, if it be not that such authority is exhausted in supplying each and every item designated in the command? To say that Moses designed and located the tabernacle and each article therein contained, scrupulously according to divine directions, reverently abstaining from making any contribution from human wisdom thereto, either in form or arrangement; and then to infer therefrom that we are authorized to alter, change, vary, or modify the elements contained in the pattern furnished us by God for the construction of the spiritual building and the selection and arrangement of its furniture, is to ignore the essential elements of analogical apposition.

We are not left, however, to the inferences of typical analogy for this important conclusion. Moses, in one of the most direct and pertinent prophecies concerning the advent and character of the New Testament dispensation, says: "But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded, . . . shall die." Deut. 18: 20. Christ enjoined on the apostles the "teaching them [believers] to observe all things which I have commanded." Paul said that this had been done, i. e., that the "whole counsel of God" had been declared unto them. Matt.

28: 20; Acts 20: 27. And that in giving the Scriptures it was God's purpose to thoroughly furnish the man of God to every good work. 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17. Peter informs us that in this God did not fail of his purpose, but that in his revelation he had given us "all things which pertain to life and godliness." If all things commanded by Christ were to be taught believers—and he said that they were—if his whole counsel has been declared—and Paul says that it has—if the Scriptures were designed to thoroughly furnish us to every good work—and Paul says they were—if we have been furnished with "all things which pertain to life and godliness"—and Peter says we have—if God has forbidden us to "speak a word in his name [by his authority] which he has not commanded"—and Moses said he did—does it not follow with all the certainty of a logical conclusion that the authority of the church is limited to the doing of such things as God has enjoined?

But there is another scripture which fixes the limit of the authority of the individual (and hence, the church) so clearly and definitely that were it possible to destroy every other word bearing on the question, the limitation would remain sufficiently apparent to sustain the position herein asserted. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine [teaching] of Christ hath [Gr. *ekei* holds] not God: whosoever abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath [holds] both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 9, 10, 11. The word *transgress* means to go or proceed beyond; it is from the Latin preposition *trans*, beyond, and *gressus*, the participle of *gredior* the verb, meaning to go, to proceed, to move forward, etc. To abide in a

house or town is not to go beyond its limits or boundaries. To abide in the doctrine of Christ is to keep within the scope of his teachings: to transgress his doctrine is to proceed or go beyond, or outside of that which he has enjoined. If each individual member abides within the limit of what Christ has enjoined, and none go beyond or outside of it, so must the church remain within that limit, since the church is but the aggregate of its individual members, and hence can promulgate no doctrine nor set any example except through them. But this is not all. The importance of unity in the body is so emphatic that no place was left to construe away the evident bearing of this scripture. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine," etc. What doctrine? Evidently that contained in the preceding verse. How do we know? Because all of this short chapter which precedes the 9th verse consists of fraternal greeting, and sentences historical, explanatory and admonitory in their character, rather than didactic or doctrinal. In fact, in this entire book, which consists of a single chapter of thirteen verses, the 9th, 10th and 11th verses contain all which can reasonably be classed as doctrinal. So we see, we cannot accord fellowship to, or affiliate in Christian communion with those who do not accept and adhere to the doctrine that works of supererogation are sinful. If we do we become partakers of their evil deeds, and thus forfeit our religious character. Let us illustrate this principle by a concrete case or two. Suppose an agent should dispose of the property of his principal in a manner or to an extent not justified by his instructions, he *transgresses, goes beyond,* and does not *abide in* (within) his authority. If a judge attempts to hold court outside of his jurisdiction, or if he condemns a man to be burned instead of hanged, or if he sends one

to the state's prison for a misdemeanor, he *transgresses*, and does not *abide in* the authority vested in him by the law. He would certainly be liable to punishment, not on account of doing that which the law *forbade*, but because he had done that which the law did not *authorize*.

So, if a man, an assembly, or a society seek to introduce into, or commit the church to a doctrine, policy, method or line of conduct neither taught nor practiced by Christ or his apostles, it would constitute a *transgression*, a *going beyond*, and not *abiding in* the doctrine of Christ. It is also clearly indicated that he who does this "hath (holds) not God," but to the extent, at least, that he does not abide in, but goes beyond the teaching of Christ, he holds to, or depends on his own wisdom or the traditions of men for guidance in his religious conduct. How unreliable these are will appear from Matt. 15: 3-9; Mark 7: 7-13; 1 Cor. 1: 19, 20, 25, 27, 28, 29; 2: 4, 5, 13, and 3: 18, 19. So we see that the authority of the church under the New Testament dispensation is limited both in its extent and character, to such things as her Supreme Head has enjoined by the precept or example of himself or his inspired apostles. Let us not be misunderstood on this point. It is *the church itself*, or the congregation *as such* and the individual members in their relation thereto which are so limited. We are not now dealing with *individuals* in their character as such concerning their secular matters.

There are many things which it is the privilege—perhaps the duty—of a Christian to do in his individual capacity, wholly unconnected with his attitude toward any ecclesiastical question, principle, or institution, but in which any co-operation or participation by the church as such would be not only inappropri-

ate, but ridiculous. In the vast equation of human life are many factors whose connection, if any, with the church in the aggregate or with spiritual matters at all, is exceedingly remote. Within this extensive domain the limitations which God has seen fit to impose upon ecclesiastical authority do not apply. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," probably constitute the correct basis of the restriction which God has been pleased to impose on us concerning acts which are exclusively fellow-man ward in their bearing. Matt. 7: 12; Rom. 13: 9. For a wrong done our fellow the forgiveness of both him and God may be obtained by repentance, reformation and restitution. Matt. 18: 9; Rom. 14: 18. Even if reparation is never made, a personal injustice cannot affect the recipient beyond the period of this life; but the wrong done to the church by teaching her to exceed or fall short of the duties and prerogatives prescribed by her Lord and King may extend down to the "last syllable of recorded time." Who can estimate the effect on posterity?

Notwithstanding no such authority has been committed to the church nor any number of her members, in many instances those claiming to be the church assume the prerogative of denouncing all nerve palliatives in the way of facetious exchange of wit, illustrative anecdotes, humorous plays upon words, etc., and of determining for their brethren matters political, social, scientific, esthetic and sumptuary, the propriety of which depend on time, place, circumstances, habit, temperament, environment, health, disposition, and perhaps other conditions of those directly concerned. These things and the opinions appurtenant thereto and the consequences re-

sultant therefrom are almost always more definitely within the knowledge and discretion of the individuals directly concerned in each particular case than that of any board, tribunal or committee, since the latter must necessarily get the facts from second or third hand, and hence often ignore or mistake the motives and inducements of their brethren. Thus they transgress or exceed the authority which has been committed to the church in denying to the people privileges and enjoyments which God has not forbidden. Feeling that perhaps in this way the rights of the individual members have been infringed, an attempt is often made to compensate for the deprivation. In order, therefore, to balance the equation, they further transgress or exceed the authority with which the church has been invested by introducing into the worshipping assemblies attractions which belong exclusively to the world, and have no place in, or connection with spiritual matters, though perhaps all right in their place, even for Christians as purely secular diversions. Instead of fully recognizing this distinction between things which pertain to our spiritual, and such as concern exclusively our temporal being, and keeping the authority for each where it naturally and scripturally belongs, the difference has been practically ignored in many of the relations of life, if not entirely obliterated by popular traditions. How often do we hear a purely secular enterprise condemned for the sole reason that "it is not approved by the example of Christ or his apostles," as if the objector did not habitually do numerous things which Christ never did, nor his apostles ever even thought of. Yet these same people accept as conclusive the harmlessness of unscriptural things done by and in the worshipping assemblies, because "They are nowhere forbidden in the Bible," as if there were

not numbers of things well calculated to corrupt any religious assembly which could not have been forbidden by the apostles because they were entirely unknown in their day.

This is a complete reversal of the process for determining the propriety of things secular and spiritual, respectively. The absence of precept, example or rational inference in favor of a thing should be sufficient to exclude it from forming any part of the service of the assemblies when met for work and worship; while the absence of precept, example or rational inference against a thing should admit it into secular affairs under appropriate restrictions; at least, this should suffice to preclude us from forbidding its use by others on pain of non-fellowship. If this construction were universally placed on the sacred writings and sincerely applied, little room would be found for the multiplicity of sectarian divisions so prevalent in Christendom, and few things would be left to the field of contention even in the domain of secular affairs. A well nigh universal disregard of this wholesome principle of construction has contributed to the destruction of all logical distinctions based on whether an act has a temporal or a spiritual bearing. As a result, the unlearned in Bible history and doctrine are left in absolute confusion, till denominational prejudice and tradition become so fortified in their minds as to exclude all truth not in harmony therewith.

I shall probably never forget a colloquy between one of the overseers of a western congregation of disciples and one of the sisters, a devoutly sincere woman, intensely German in blood and brogue. She was complaining to the overseer that a young man, not a professed believer, had been chosen to conduct the music, and had entertained the congregation with an attractive

solo with instrumental accompaniment while the elements representing the Lord's body and blood were being partaken of. The elder said, "You have a like instrument in your residence, and your children play it." "Yes," she answered. "And you receive that young man into your home." "Yes," responded the sister, "and I keep him in de right place ven he is dere. You have a cow in de barn but we don't bring him to de meeting-house. We haff some pigs in de fielt by de grave yart; but if we open de fence and let 'em into de place w'ere de graves are, and they root up de grass, und bite down de flowers, und soil the w'ite stone over de grave of your wife and little baby boy, you don't love me and my husbant any more." The old man's face fell forward into his hands; silence reigned for a few moments, and when he raised his head his eyes were red and his cheeks were wet with the mist of a tender and compassionate sorrow. *He had seen the point.*

Sincere and consistent reader, is the "little green mound" and the "marble shaft" more sacred than the memorial institution which the Master has requested us to observe "till he come?" Is the memory of loved ones gone before more precious than that of him who did more for the amelioration of human suffering, and at far greater cost than any human friend or kinsman has, will, or can? Would we in the presence of the bodies of our beloved dead, do that which would have a tendency to embitter their children toward each other? In paying a last tribute of respect and affection to their memory, would we make it an occasion for doing things which simply minister to our pleasure? Would we have those take the lead in protestations of devotion who knew little and cared less for them? Would we make the services so distasteful to some of their breth-



ren, and so offensive to their sense of propriety, and of their respect to the memory of the deceased as to preclude their being present? So we see that when things pertaining to the secular or temporal side of our being are brought into the worshiping assemblies, there must be some limit set to them; but who shall set the limit? What tribunal shall allow me the unauthorized thing which *I* desire to bring into the worshiping assemblies and deny *you* that which *you* desire? The Church of Christ has neither the time nor the energy to waste, nor the authority to justify her in assuming to adjudicate matters of this kind, which pertain to our temporal well being. Nor has she the requisite machinery for the manipulation of the numerous schemes for amusement and entertainment with that degree of efficiency which will satisfy the popular demand.

Since it clearly appears that the Kingdom or Government of Christ is neither a pure nor a representative democracy, and aristocracy nor an oligarchy, but an absolute monarchy, Christ himself being the sole Supreme Ruler, it will be well for the church to disclaim all legislative power, since it has nowhere been delegated to her; and likewise all executive and judicial power which pertains exclusively to secular affairs. The principle of individual liberty in temporal matters is set forth very clearly and forcibly in the Scriptures, especially in the 14th of Romans and 8th of 1st Corinthians, and these chapters may be read entire with profit to such as are disposed to condemn all action except that which they deem appropriate. These scriptures plainly deny us the right either individually or collectively, to condemn or disfellowship a brother for an act or an attitude on the ground that it does not meet our approval or correspond with some construction we have seen fit to place on the Scriptures. The fact that

our intelligence or judgment is superior to his—and it usually is;—that our conclusions from given premises are logical,—and they generally are;—or that time vindicates our decision,—for it almost invariably does;—these do not give us the right to condemn him or refuse him our confidence if it is concerning a matter pertaining to temporal affairs, involving no moral principle, and he does not seek to bind his fellow man to a similar line of action. It is true that these chapters contain much advice and admonition to the critic and likewise to the victim thereof. That we are enjoined to forego many of our secular rights and privileges in order to satisfy the weak conscience of our *uninformed* or *misinformed* brother, is entirely clear. But it is to be voluntarily done. Neither the church nor any number of her members can assume to decide for me when, where, and under what circumstances I must relinquish my temporal rights in order to promote the moral or spiritual welfare of my brother. This is a matter which each must determine for himself, in view of his responsibility to God. Let each one make the sacrifice accordingly.

Along this line, therefore, let us not “judge one another any more;” for “to his own Master he standeth or falleth; yea he shall be upheld” if he sincerely seek to exercise a truly Christlike discrimination and forbearance, for “God is able to make him stand.” even though he fails to secure our approval.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CONVERSION, FAITH.

More space has already been devoted to the negative side of this branch of our subject than was originally contemplated. The affirmative side shall now be con-

sidered.

What, then, is the extent and character of the authority delegated to the church by her Head, as shown in the Scriptures? What is her peculiar mission as therein indicated? What are the ends toward the accomplishment of which her energies are clearly authorized to be directed?

The answers to these questions seem to be so universally agreed on by religious scholars and teachers that we deem an extended consideration thereof unnecessary. The prominent duties enjoined on the early church, and in the performance of which her chief energies were to be expended, were:

1. The conversion of the sinner, or unbeliever, and
2. The development toward ultimate perfection of the Christian character of the believer. Of these in their order.

Much confusion has been wrought by the mystery with which it has been sought to invest what is commonly called *conversion*; and, unfortunately, we rarely hear one attempt to divest it of this mystery on purely Bible grounds.

Lack of precision or clearness on this point has given rise to many curious and abstruse questions concerning the process. What constitutes *conversion*, when, how, and where, it is accomplished, whether the process is gradual or instantaneous, and whether the subjects are active or passive, are all questions which spring from a lack of clearness in considering the thing itself. Webster defines *conversion* to be "1. The act of turning or changing from one state or condition to another." If, therefore a man turn or change from the disbelief of a proposition to the belief of it, he is converted, *as to that proposition*. If the new truth has been pressed upon him earnestly and successfully by

one of its advocates, he who did so may aptly be said to have done the *converting*, or, at least, to have contributed thereto. But if the change has been due solely to his own efforts and investigations, he may as truthfully be said to have converted himself, or to have contributed largely thereto. If the investigation or instruction has been step by step, extending over a long period of time, his conversion may be said to have been gradual; but if the fact or truth requisite to produce the change was discovered or thrust upon him suddenly, his conversion might be said to have been instantaneous, or practically so.

For illustration we will suppose the subject of *conversion* to be a disbeliever in the spherical form of the earth. He is in attendance on one of the scientific schools which has a competent corps of teachers, an extensive library containing the works of Galileo, Copernicus, Newton, Kepler, DesCartes and others, by the help of which he is eventually convinced that the earth is a spherical body. Who converted the man? Did not the old scientists contribute thereto by the discovery and elaboration of those truths into a comprehensive system? Did not the founder of the school, by providing the means, contribute thereto? the teacher, by applying them? and the student, by devoting his energies to the study of them? The change or conversion of a bad boy into a good one may be effected by a judicious system of rewards and punishments under the supervision of discreet parents. In such case, the parents may truthfully be said to have converted him. By meditating on the direct and remote consequences of evil doing, he may have been constrained to forsake evil without the intervention of any other agency. If this be of his own volition, he certainly contributes materially to his own conversion. Why, then, this

quibbling about who converts a man, more than about who makes a crop? Does God make the crop because he gives the soil, the sunshine and the rain? Does man make the crop because he selects suitable seeds, the proper time, brings the two into contact, and tills and fertilizes the soil? Which is the most indiscreet and unreasonable, the man who has so much confidence in his own ability to make a crop that he refuses to take advantage of purely providential matters and coincidences, or he who takes the other extreme of attributing the entire work to God, and therefore puts forth no effort at all? The sensible, as well as the successful manner of dealing with matters of this kind is to avail oneself of all the provisions which God has made for facilitating our work, supplementing them, at the same time, with our own energies where they are calculated to contribute to the end sought. Why not do the same in the matter of conversion? Why speculate about such matters, instead of reverently proceeding to perform that part of the work which God has seen fit to assign to us?

God undoubtedly *converts* men to the extent of having provided ample means, reveals them to us in his word and reveals himself to us in nature as possessing all those admirable and lovable attributes which should constrain us to cheerful and reverential obedience. John 3: 16. The Bible converts men to the extent that it is the sole source of infallible information to that end. John 17: 17; Heb. 4: 12. The preacher or instructor, likewise, contributes, by appealing to the emotions and reasoning powers. 1 Cor. 1: 21; Rom. 10: 15. We can contribute thereto by a careful and diligent search of the Holy Scriptures and a constant attendance on the things therein required. Matt. 7: 21; Acts 17: 11; Rom. 2: 7. Some confusion has doubtless

arisen from the fact that the scripture idea of *conversion* as found in the Greek New Testament has not been brought into the common or King James version of the Sacred Volume. For some reason which the writer can only conjecture, the word rendered *be converted* (*epistrepsosin*, 3rd person, plu., fut., active, from *epistrepheo*, to turn, to return, etc.), is not only translated from the Greek into the English, but also from the active to the passive voice. In Acts 3: 19 the 2nd per., active, imperative (*epistrepesate*), of the same verb is likewise rendered passive (*be converted*), while in James 5: 19, 20 the same verb in the subjunctive (*epistrepse*) and the active participle (*epistrepas*) are rendered active. The striking features of these verses is that *idosin*, should see, *akousosin*, should hear, and *synosin*, should understand, all contained therein are all rendered active though in the same mode, tense, and voice, and are in direct apposition to *epistrepesin*, rendered passive (*be converted*). The same liberty was taken by the King James translators in Acts 3: 19. The verb, *metanoesate* (from *metanoeo*, to repent) is rendered active, while *epistrepesate*, though in the same mode, tense, number, person, and voice, is rendered passive, though the two are in direct apposition, being directed to the same subject. Now, there is as much difference in *converting* and *being converted*, *turning* and *being turned* as there is in *striking* and *being struck*. Suppose a foreigner, unacquainted with our language, testifies through an interpreter that the defendant in a criminal proceeding is the person who did the striking, shooting, or stabbing, as the case may be, but the interpreter renders the language to the jury that he was the person struck, stabbed or shot. Would we not regard him as a willful perverter of the truth? We are pleased to note that the translators of what is

called the Revised Version have to some extent avoided this mistake. In a translation made by George Campbell, James Macknight, and Philip Doddridge, three eminent Presbyterian clergymen in the first half of the 18th century, Matt. 13: 15 and corresponding or parallel passages were rendered, "Lest they reform and I should reclaim them," etc., and Acts 3: 19, "Reform, therefore, and return to God," etc. We are unable to see any good reason for thus wresting these well known and well defined words from their ordinary signification unless it is, in what is called *conversion*, to give greater emphasis to that part of the work which God has seen fit to do, and less to that which he has seen fit to assign to man than is justified by the text in its integrity. Would it not be well for us to leave these matters just where God has deemed it best to place them? If, in the economy of redemption God has been pleased to assign to man never so humble a part, would it not be well for us to recognize that fact and encourage him to perform that part well, regardless of any degree of weakness or inefficiency which our wisdom may attribute to the best that man can do?

It is no part of our purpose to discuss the relative merits of Calvinism and Arminianism. To even speculate on the ratio of importance which man's duty bears to God's provision for his salvation, would be to tread on the bounds of the unknown, if not the unknowable. Such promises as God has designed to be relied on, he has given us in his word with sufficient clearness for all practical purposes. Where conditions have been super-imposed they appear sufficiently definite and specific for our guidance. He has promised that reward *shall* follow obedience. If the reward be *dependent* on obedience, let us obey *in order to obtain the reward*. If not dependent, but the reward

has been pre-determined *regardless* of obedience, let us obey as a matter of gratitude to One who has pre-arranged such blessings for such unworthy creatures. At all events, *let us obey*.

But what things are we required to do, and what commands are we to obey in order to become Christians? Would it not be well for us to turn to the word of God, and ascertain therefrom if possible just what was done in the days of the apostles in order to convert a man from Paganism, or Judaism, or any other *ism* to Christianity? The book called "Acts of Apostles" is the only one of the entire New Testament in which a case of conversion under the gospel dispensation is to be found recorded. Is not that the place to go in order to find out how people were converted, or became Christians in the days of the early church? Will not the same means which made a disciple or convert *then*, make one *now*? If not, why not? We find by reference to the example of the apostles as shown in Acts, as well as precept contained in other parts of the New Testament, that when one had honestly and sincerely complied with four requirements he was accepted as a disciple, viz:

1. Believed. John 3: 15; Acts 8: 12-37; 16: 31; Rom. 10: 9.

2. Repented. Luke 13: 3; Acts 2: 38; 3: 19; 17: 30; 26: 20.

3. Professed (or *confessed*). Matt. 10: 32; Rom. 10: 9; 14: 11.

4. Been baptized. Acts 2: 38; 8: 12; 10: 47; 22: 16; Jno. 3: 3; Gal. 3: 27.

It is no part of our purpose to enter into an extended discussion of the fine spun theories formulated by men, however great, wise, or good, concerning God's reasons for prescribing these four things as pre-requi-



site to acceptance, or any, all, or either of them. God has nowhere made acceptable obedience to depend on a correct understanding of his purposes or reasons for giving or requiring obedience to certain commands. Neither the Old or the New Testament records a single instance in which God withheld his approval from one who had done the thing, and in the manner commanded, because of a misunderstanding of the purpose in giving the command. Numerous instances are to be found in both in which a mistake or departure from the right line, in either act, manner, or motive, has been fraught with disastrous consequences.

We cite a few. Cain was condemned for substituting the fruits of the ground for a sacrifice from the flocks, which latter God had indicated would be acceptable. Human reason suggests that such an offering as Cain made would have been singularly appropriate, as he was "a tiller of the ground," rather than a tender of flocks. But it was a departure from God's directions, and any honesty of purpose he may have had availed him nothing. Gen. 3: 3-6; Heb. 11: 4. Moses was excluded from the land of promise because of the *manner* in which he executed the command to "bring water out of the rock."

Uzzah lost his life because of the wrong *manner* of conveying the ark of the covenant from place to place. Ex. 25: 12-15. 2 Sam. 6: 3-7. The multitudes failed to receive a benefit from the personal ministry of Christ because they sought him from wrong motives. John 6: 26. Ananias and Sapphira lost their lives rather than gained a blessing from their liberality, on account of the mingling of impure motives prompting them to make the gift.

Hence, investigation of the character and effect of acts which God requires of us, should not be made for

the purpose of discovering God's reasons for them, so much as with a view to obtaining such information as will enable us to perform them with accuracy and completeness. Keeping these considerations in view, let us give brief attention to the foregoing requirements.

1. *Belief*, or, as it is generally translated, *faith*, is the foundation upon which all voluntary, intelligent action rests. No voluntary act is deliberately and considerably performed by a rational being except in the faith or belief, however feeble it may be, that it will contribute to the end sought to be attained. We regard it as unfortunate that the Greek word *pistis*, (from *pisteuo*, I believe) was rendered *faith* by the translators, rather than *belief*.

It has served as a basis for a distinction sought to be raised between the two words by some professed Christians, when, in fact no such difference exists. In support of the statement that there is no ground for such a distinction, we desire to call attention to the fact that the word *belief* occurs but a single time in the entire New Testament, unless we have overlooked its more frequent use. The *idea* of *belief* occurs with great frequency. Why, then does not the *word* appear more than a single time? There can be but one reason, viz: because some other word has been used to express the same idea, or has been substituted regardless of the fact of its difference in meaning.

The word *believe* is used frequently in the New Testament. Can you find any other writing in which the verb or action form of a word is so frequently used, while the substantive or name form of the same word is not used at all or but once? Almost every action word (verb) has its corresponding name word (noun). We have strike, stroke; weigh, weight; cleave, cleft; drive, drift; give, gift; join, joint; strive, strife; believe, be-

lief; etc., etc. Where can another book be found in which the verb is used with great frequency, but the noun not used at all? If you were to read a treatise on *giving* in which the word *gift* did not occur, you would, at least consider it as remarkable, and would doubtless account for the fact on the supposition that *gift* had been called by another name. This is just what the translators have done in regard to the word *belief*. They have simply substituted the word *faith*. As the verb *pistewo* is rendered *I believe* by the lexicons not specially prepared by theologians and for theological purposes, so the noun, *pistis* is translated *belief*. With the Greek negative prefix, "a," it is uniformly rendered *unbelief*, just as we render words with the English prefixes *un* or *in*. Moreover, it is set in opposition to *unbelief* in almost every case, just as the word *belief* should be. In Rom. 3: 3 Paul asks, "Shall their *unbelief* (*apistea*) make the *faith* (*pisten*) of God of none effect?" In Heb. 4: 2, 3 the Israelites' lack of *faith* (*pisten*) is set in direct opposition to our *believing* (*pisteusantes*). Here their failure to secure a blessing is attributed to their lack of *faith* (*pisten*) while in chap. 3: 19 it is attributed to their *unbelief* (*apistian*). In John 20: 27, *faithless* (*apistos*) is set in direct opposition to *believing* (*pistos*). Conybeare & Howson recognize the impropriety of thus setting in direct opposition things which do not stand opposed to one another, and render Heb. 4: 2, "But the report which they heard was profitless because it met no *belief* in the hearers." It will be well to remember that the word *but*, when used as a conjunction, denotes direct and strong opposition. It follows that in order for the word *faithless* to be the antithesis of *believing*, it must mean *unbelieving*. If *faithless* means *unbelieving*, *faith* means *belief*. In Heb. 11: 6 it is said "Without *faith* it is impossible to

please God: for (because) he that cometh to him must *believe*," etc. How can the impossibility to please God without *faith* be because of our obligation to *believe* unless *faith* and *belief* are the same?

Again, "without faith it is impossible to please God." But one can please God sufficiently to be saved and justified by believing. Acts 13: 39; and 16: 31. Hence *faith* and *belief* are the same. When we consider how well this artificial distinction between faith and belief has been made to serve the purpose of throwing around the subject an air of mystery which none save the clerical class can dispel, the reasons for its creation may appear.

We should be pleased to consider at some length what we will designate a twin theory with the above, consisting of a distinction sought to be drawn between "saving" and "non-saving" faith, but time and space forbid. That a difference exists between effective and ineffective faith, we have no doubt; but it is in degree, rather than in kind. Effective faith is that which is based on a practicable proposition and is sufficiently strong to stimulate its possessor to use the legitimate means requisite to the accomplishment of the end sought. Ineffective faith is that which is based on a false or impractical basis, or is too weak to set in motion the forces necessary for the consummation of the desired results. A saving faith, then, is a conviction that God will do all he has promised, and which is of sufficient strength to impel us to perform all the duties he has assigned to us. A non-saving faith is one not resting exclusively on divine testimony, or is lacking in the force necessary to induce us to conform our lives thereto.

## CHAPTER V.

Having shown faith to be one of the requisites to salvation, and that *faith* and *belief* are the same, the next logical step or inquiry would seem to be: What is the extent of the faith required, or what are we required to believe? Fortunately for the earnest enquirer, the answer to this question is likewise to be found in the language of Holy Writ. The apostle John, in the history bearing his name, informs us that the things contained therein were written "that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ [anointed], the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Jno. 20: 31. Philip accepted and baptized the Ethiopian on the profession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." These quotations show conclusively that a belief or faith in the divine character and mission of Christ was sufficient at that time to constitute a basis for Christian character. It is possible, however, that a belief in the divinity of Christ involves more than appears to the casual observer. To believe in his divinity is to believe that he possesses the attributes of divinity; viz., wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth and mercy, forever and unchangeable.

Conceding to him the wisdom to know what is best for us and the goodness to do and require only that which is best, we will cheerfully comply with each and every requirement. Such is the inevitable logic of the proposition, and we fear it is the desire to escape this conclusion which has led some to ascribe saving power to faith *alone*, or *in the abstract*. We regard this as a serious mistake. As much so as to attribute to the vitalizing influences of sun, light and moisture the power of producing large crops without seed and culture. If there be in either the physical, moral, in-

tellectual, or spiritual domain a process for developing character by means of a principle in the absence of action in accordance with that principle, it has escaped our observation. Truth in the abstract is of little value to society, even where it is recognized. It is only in its influence upon forces that a principle is potent for good or evil;—only as it impels or limits the operation of forces along or within lines in harmony with itself. "Faith" (belief) therefore, without works is dead." James 2: 14-23. What is a dead faith? James says it is one which does not manifest itself by works or action in harmony or correspondence therewith. The scriptures which appear to the casual observer to be in conflict with the above quotation, will, I have no doubt, be found on close scrutiny by the critical student, to be in entire harmony therewith. It will not be disputed by any metaphysician of repute that the object to be attained by right faith, belief or conviction is the determination of its possessor to right action. That such is the one direct and legitimate result of this proximate and efficient cause with rational and responsible beings in secular affairs, whether moral, physical, or intellectual, is a well established principle. Nought save lack of either courage or integrity should prevent our actions corresponding with our convictions. Hence, the scriptures, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," (Acts 16: 31) and "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," etc., are metonymic in their bearing, and no more mean that a man is saved by believing, regardless of consequent reformation, than that one is killed by falling from a lofty place, independent of the concussion received on striking the ground.

But, it is urged, "Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Rom. 4: 3. Yes,

and Abraham *obeyed* God at a time when appearances indicated that his obedience would be the cause of the failure of both God's promise and his own long cherished hope. Gen. 22: 1, 2. Doubtless Noah's faith counted to him for righteousness, because he obeyed God, notwithstanding the jeers and taunts of those who scouted the idea of a rainfall sufficient to bear up a vessel of so great a size that it would contain pairs of the principal animals of the earth and food for their sustenance for nearly a year. Yes, kind reader, if you have faith like these men,—faith productive of unquestioning obedience under like difficulties, God's word for it, it will be imputed to you for righteousness. The question of the Philippian jailer which brought from Paul the answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," is asked in slightly different language in four places in the New Testament. In Mark 10: 17 it is the young man desiring to know what he might do "to inherit eternal life." In Acts 2: 37 it is the Jews who had put the Savior to death, inquiring of Peter "what must we do?" and in Acts 9: 6 it is the now believing persecutor of the saints, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Now, if believing is all that is required of one in order to complete acceptance with God, why is not the same answer given as to the jailer in Acts 16: 30?

The reason is obvious to the careful student of the Bible. In Acts 2: 37 the Jews had already believed, as the context shows, else they would not have made such an inquiry. By asking this question and readily complying with the answer given, in so public a manner, they made profession, or as it is frequently called, *confession* of their new belief or conviction in regard to the matter of the divinity of Christ. Hence, they were told to do the two other things, viz: repent and be baptized,

(ver. 38). In the case of Paul (Acts 9: 6) we find that the question was not answered immediately, but he was left three days, during which he neither ate nor drank. The inference that he repented during this period seems clearly deducible from his conduct during the time and his uniform teaching on the subject ever afterwards. The 20th verse of this (9th) chapter shows that he made public profession of his conviction, and Acts 22: 16, that he was baptized in obedience to the command of Christ through Ananias.

Had faith (belief) been all which is required of man in order to his acceptance with God, the answer given by Christ to the young man as recorded in Mark 10: 17 would doubtless have been different; perhaps as follows: "By the form of your question it appears that you recognize my claim to be the Son of God: this is all that is needful to secure the eternal life about which you inquire. You have 'great possessions;' benevolence with them will be very commendable, but it cannot contribute to your eternal welfare, for that is secured by your faith." Instead of saying to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5), he would doubtless have said, "You say I am a teacher come from God: you thereby acknowledge my divine character and mission; this is all that is requisite to your salvation." To the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do," asked by the Jews on the day of Pentecost, Peter should have answered, "You have been cut to the heart by the awful conviction (belief) that what I say as to your having slain the Messiah is true; and this being so, you need do nothing more, as this belief in my statement of his divinity is all which God requires of you in order to salvation. When Paul was stricken down on his way to Damascus, and Christ



spoke to him personally in such a manner as to produce an immediate change in his belief as to the divine mission of the Master, and he asked, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"; the answer should not have been, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins," (Acts 22: 16) because if faith *alone* secures pardon, he had no sins to be washed away, they having been already purged by faith. No, my friends, you will search in vain for the doctrine of *faith alone* in the Bible. If there be a single case recorded in that book in which faith or belief in God or his revelation, coupled with a refusal or neglect to obey his commands has secured his approval, it has eluded the diligent search of the writer of these lines.

What object, then can our friends have in endeavoring to convince the people that they may be saved by *faith alone*? We can conceive of nothing to be accomplished by such teaching unless it be to cause people to neglect or repudiate all else; and surely no good purpose can be thereby subserved.

The New Testament scriptures ascribe salvation to *faith* or *belief*, (Acts 16: 31; John 3: 16), grace, (Rom. 3: 4), baptism (1 Pet. 3: 21), the blood of Christ (1 John 1: 7), works (James 2: 21; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11). How any one can say that we are saved by *faith alone* in view of these positive statements of the scriptures, we can understand upon but a single theory. That theory is that people become so attached to the doctrines of THEIR CHURCH, and so impressed with the idea that there is no important truth not therein contained that they unwittingly give undue emphasis to the scriptures which seem to sustain them, and, consequently do not diligently examine the texts which appear opposed thereto. We now pass to the next important step, viz:

REPENTANCE.

This is one of the things of which little need be *said*, provided much is *done*. We have seen many definitions of this word, all more or less artful, if not accurate. The Newspaper Syndicate Edition of the Encyclopedic Dictionary gives: "Such sorrow for the past as leads to amendment in life." We take this to be an approximately accurate definition of the word, but if we can ascertain the sense in which it is used in the Scriptures, and so use it in our dealings with scriptural matters, we shall make no mistake. In Matt. 3: 7, in the sentence, "Bring forth, therefore fruits *meet for repentance*," the words here given in italics have a marginal rendering, "*answerable for reformation in life*," while the Living Oracles gives "*proper for reformation*." In Heb. 12: 16, 17, it is said that Esau, having sold his birthright, afterwards "found no place [opportunity] for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

If repentance consists of sorrow or regret, regardless of reformation, then Esau had abundant place (opportunity) therefor. In fact, our place or opportunity for that kind of repentance will doubtless last as long as consciousness. Here, then, is a passage of scripture which cannot be reconciled with any definition of the word which does not involve reformation. But we have in the very words of the Master a sufficient statement to enable us to determine just what was meant. In Matt. 12: 41 he said that the men of Nineveh "repented at the preaching of Jonah." If we turn to the history of the matter about which he was speaking we will find just what they did, which he called *repentance*. In Jonah 3: 10 it is said, "And God saw their works, that they *turned from their evil way*." The remainder of the verse removes any doubt which might have been

left: "And God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them: *and he did it not.* What did God do? He repented; he changed his purpose; reversed his course. He did not sorrowfully or regretfully continue the same course. We have found no case where the context throws any light on the meaning of the word in which it does not appear that reformation of life was intended. If the Scriptures record a single case in which sorrow or regret, coupled with a persistent continuance in evil doing has been accepted by God as repentance, it has escaped our observation. We are convinced that no such case is recorded. To illustrate: I have pushed a man into the water. Whether it was by negligence, or sudden heat of passion, or by wilful and deliberate malice, is of secondary importance to the drowning man. What he needs is assistance. I stand on the bank of the stream in an attitude of superlative agony, protesting great distress at his condition, yet make no effort to save him, simply because it involves some discomfort; perhaps slight danger of injury. Would not such repentance be quite unsatisfactory to the drowning man? Again: I have obtained an unscrupulous advantage over a fellow-man in a financial transaction, against which the civil law furnishes no adequate redress. I profess great sorrow for having done so, yet retain the fruits of the fraud. What availeth such sorrow? Men act with a view to producing results. So universally is this true that it becomes almost impossible to dis-sociate an act from its legitimate consequences. To say that we are sorry for an act, but glad of the legitimate and inevitable consequences thereof,—consequences which could not possibly have been without the occurrence of the act itself,—is one of the grossest of solecisms. No such hiatus can exist between the efficient cause and

its direct and inevitable effect. If we imagine otherwise we deceive ourselves. Do we sincerely regret an act? If so we also regret the consequences if they are obvious and necessary. To regret an act is to wish that it had not occurred. To wish that it had not occurred is to wish that any one injured thereby were situated as if it had not occurred. The situation can be restored in no other wise than by restoring that of which the injured one has been deprived. We do not, therefore, truly repent as long as we voluntarily retain the fruits of a wrong to the injury or injustice of another. Moreover, a man may profess to believe that his former motives and methods have been wrong, and, being so convinced that he regrets, or has repented of them; yet, if he continues to pursue them, refusing to determine his life by, and in conformity to the new light he has received, we conclude that his convictions as to the impolicy of his former life are not very strong.

So we see how intimately, and yet how logically and philosophically faith and repentance are connected. Faith—recently acquired faith—being a change of our life principle,—a conviction that the former principles by which our life had been determined were erroneous and not conducive to our best interests. Repentance is that change of *conduct* which brings it into harmony with, and conformity to, the newly recognized principle.

Here, then, is the true function of conscience (Latin, *con*, together, and *scire*, to know), sometimes called “the inward monitor”; that is, requiring us to conform our practice or conduct to our faith, belief or conviction. It is the joint or co-recognition of both the fact and rectitude of our conduct.

A clear idea of what is right, coupled with a clear

knowledge of having so acted produces what is called a *clear* conscience. When our belief or conviction points to a certain way as being right, and our memory or consciousness informs us that we have not been pursuing that way,—in other words, when our faith or conviction does not conform to our practice, the consciousness thereof annoys us, and we say that we are reproved by *conscience*; i. e., the *consciousness* of the inconsistency. We are rebuked,—self rebuked by the knowledge that our faith and our practice do not coincide;—that our conduct is not determined by our conviction;—that we are violating the standard of rectitude which we recognize as being correct. Conscience, therefore, is an infallible guide only when controlled by right convictions.

Infallibly right convictions result from nothing less than infallibly reliable evidence. Infallibly reliable evidence concerning spiritual matters can be obtained from none but divine sources. The only divine source of religious information is the word of God as contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This is doubtless the meaning of the language used by the apostle in Rom. 10: 17, "So, then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The revised version gives *belief* instead of *faith*. When we consider that books were rare at the time of the writing of this epistle, and that the common people were not sufficiently educated to have read them, consequently instruction and admonition were chiefly oral, the meaning of this verse seems sufficiently clear. Slightly paraphrased: Faith (belief, conviction,) comes (is produced) by words addressed to the understanding (generally hearing or reading): and words competent to produce correct conviction in spiritual matters are the words of God. By thus excluding from re-

ligious faith or belief all alleged truth save that which rests on divine testimony, and from religious practices, rites and ceremonies, all matters not of religious faith, we acquiesce in God's having excluded from the divine plan of redemption all contributions of human wisdom or presumption. 1 Cor. 1: 19, 25, 27, 28; 2: 1-5; 3: 19. We thus bring our religious life into harmony with the scripture found in Rom. 14: 23, "Whatsoever [in spiritual matters] is not of faith is sin."

## CHAPTER VI.

### PROFESSION.

Or, as it is more frequently called, *confession*, though we regard it as somewhat unfortunate that the King James translators and modern clergymen have seen fit to render this word (Gr. *homologia*) so awkwardly. The verb form, *homologeō* (*homos*, alike, and *logos*, word, speech, language, reason, etc.), is rendered by Bagster: *to speak in accordance, to adopt the same terms, to avow frankly, to profess, to declare openly, etc.* It is rendered *profess* in Matt. 7: 23, "And then will I *profess* unto them, I never knew you." Likewise in 1 Tim. 6: 12, "and hast professed a good profession [*kai homologesas ten kalin homologian*] before many witnesses." A man is said to *confess* a fault or a crime, to *admit* a liability or an obligation, and to *profess* a belief or a conviction.

At the time of writing the words which now constitute the New Testament an acknowledgment of a belief in the divinity of Christ was considered little, if any short of a crime; hence the term *confess* was not so much of a misnomer as at the present. Be this as it may, *profession* or *confession* of the religion of Je-

sus Christ consists of a public assumption of the duties, obligations and responsibilities which an intelligent faith or belief in his divinity imposes. This accords with reason, and is in harmony with our observation and experience in secular affairs as well as religious. The patriot of 1776 who believed that the Colonies "ought to be free and independent states," yet never raised his voice in advocacy nor his hand in defense of his belief, resembles the political reformer who goes on acquiescing in the selection of wicked and corrupt men for national and municipal offices. They both deserve to be victims of the most abject and venal oppression. The conviction which is suppressed through fear or shame at a time when duty requires its assertion will never crystalize into reformation of life. In the light of the foregoing propositions the following scriptures seem reasonably clear, viz: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his glory." Luke 9: 26. "Nevertheless many of the chief rulers believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [*profess* to believe on] him lest they should be put out of the synagogue." John 12: 26. "Whosoever shall confess [*profess* to believe] me before men, him will I confess [*acknowledge*] before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10: 32. "If thou shalt confess [*profess* to believe] with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart [*mind*] that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For [*because*] with the heart [*mind*] man believeth unto [*Gr. eis, into*] righteousness, and with the mouth confession [*homologetai, profession*] is made unto salvation. These scriptures do not add emphasis to the proposition that profession is a non-essential, but associate it very intimately with faith or belief. But

it is said that "man believeth unto [into] righteousness," hence when he has believed he is righteous. Webster defines *righteousness* as "the quality of being righteous, exact rectitude, purity, uprightness of character, etc. How can a man *believe into exact rectitude* without putting his belief into practice?

But what, it may be asked, is it which we must profess? Undoubtedly that which we believe. One who professes more is a hypocrite, and the fate of all hypocrites is clearly revealed. Matt. 24: 51. But what are we required to believe? Here, again, the Sacred Text comes to our relief with a full and complete answer, thereby saving us the risk of depending on human wisdom. In Heb. 11: 6 we are informed that "he that cometh to God must believe that he *is* [exists] and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the anointed, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. John 20:31.

In Matt. 16: 16 Peter is represented as saying, "Thou art the Christ [anointed], the Son of the living God," and in verse 18 Christ declares that declaration to be the foundation truth on which the spiritual fabric of his future church is to rest. In Acts 8: 37 the Ethiopian requested baptism, and Philip informed him that it would be conditioned on his sincere belief (faith). He then declared or professed a belief in the divinity of Christ, and Philip accepted this as a compliance with the condition. So we see, we are to profess a belief in the divine character and mission of the Christ, as authenticated by God's having raised him from the dead. Rom. 1: 4; 10: 9. We deem it worthy of remark that not one word is said, nor one hint given in the entire sacred writings about the necessity of a belief in foreordination, total depravity, predestination, close com-



munion, final perseverance, trans-substantiation, con-substantiation, God's purpose in requiring baptism, or the different modes by which it may be administered. Not a word or a hint that a belief in any of the creeds, confessions, theological dogmas, or the variant *isms* or *ologies* which the skill of man has devised, and on which so much time and energy have been expended, is necessary, or even helpful to the honest seeker after truth, in his efforts to become a Christian.

Even such of the above propositions as are clearly taught in the scriptures were never laid down as prerequisite to becoming a Christian, however important they may have been regarded as elements in the development of Christian character. To say that one must have a clear understanding of the purposes and consequences of each act of obedience, before it can be acceptably rendered, is to debar all except thorough biblical scholars from important religious benefits and privileges, as well as to exempt all others from important duties and obligations. The apostles required no higher intelligence concerning an act than was requisite to its proper performance. Have we the right to demand more? If so, whence obtained we such right? Yet we see the various denominations, claiming to be invested with the authority of THE CHURCH requiring of infants and adult novices a profession of belief in propositions beyond the comprehension of any save those having superior intelligence and Bible scholarship. Even from the standpoint of human wisdom, how irrational does it appear to require of one the profession of a belief in that concerning which he does not even pretend to possess an elementary knowledge? Does it not look like demanding of a student at matriculation the accuracy and intelligence of the graduate? In the times of the early church it was not so. If one had

a rational understanding of the character and attributes of God, believed in the divine character and mission of Christ as taught in the New Testament, and signified a willingness to render sincere obedience to his commands, such a one was regarded as a fit subject for what is sometimes designated the initiatory ordinance, to wit: baptism, which will be considered after a few practical suggestions concerning what has been said of confession, or rather profession. Suppose Peter or the Ethiopian had made the profession which they did without actually believing it; or even without any definite belief or conviction on the subject, what would it have availed them? James 2: 14-26. Or, suppose they actually believed in the divine character and mission of Christ, but never took the trouble or time to ascertain what he taught or the kind of obedience he required, but remained in ignorance of the conditions requisite to obtaining his favor. Or suppose that they did believe and understand God's commands, but refused to obey them. What would it have availed them? Hence, we see that profession is like faith in one respect, viz: it amounts to little if not acted upon. Is this not universally true in moral and physical affairs? When, where and how did one ever receive a benefit from the profession or possession of a belief in secular enterprises while maintaining a careless inactivity in his attitude thereto? Is causation ignored and the law of sequence suspended as soon as we cross the threshold dividing the temporal from the spiritual realm of thought and action? To profess a belief in the divinity of Christ is to profess a belief in his possession of the attributes of divinity, viz: wisdom, goodness, etc. To refuse to be guided by his direction while professing to believe in the infinity of his wisdom and goodness is to nullify profession by practice. Wherein do we benefit

ourselves, or a cause, a principle or an institution by professing adherence thereto, while our acts sustain the opposition, or even favor neutrality? He who believes that which he dares not profess or practice is a coward. He who professes that which he neither believes nor practices is a hypocrite. He who professes and practices that which he does not believe is a perverter of truth. Is this the character of the people who are to constitute the kingdom of God? If so, no wonder that many good men hesitate to enter it. So we see clearly that the character which is acceptable to God is the one who has correct belief or convictions, has the courage to assert them, and the manhood to determine his life by them.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BAPTISM.

So much has been said and written on this subject by men of superior piety and scholarship that we approach it with much hesitation. About all we have ever heard or read on this much abused controversy bears evidence of having been inspired by mingled motives. Among those plainly apparent we have been able to discover ambition, personal and denominational pride, party spirit, obstinacy, financial and political influence, and we are pleased to say, *love of truth*. In some of the essays and treatises one or more of the above named motives seemed to predominate; in others all appeared to us as wielding approximately equal influence. It has been the earnest and prayerful endeavor of the writer hereof to eliminate from these incongruous considerations all except the last. How well he has succeeded, must be left to the honest

reader and the Great Judge of all. We do not conceive it probable that this work will ever contribute a dollar to the wealth or a syllable to the fame of the writer. Even should thousands read and act in accordance with the suggestions herein contained, they could not combine to swell the number or expand the influence of any party, sect or denomination which might contribute to the interest of the writer in the remotest degree.

The writer hereof doubtless differs, in this respect at least, from any and all the other writers and speakers whose treatment of this question he has been fortunate enough to secure and consider. What, then, save obstinacy could induce the writer to ignore or minimize the evidences which tend to militate against the positions herein assumed? If there be in existence a treatise on this vexed question the sole aim of which clearly appears to be a presentation of *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*, it has not been my good fortune to secure it.

We put forward for ourselves no claim for superior honesty or wisdom; nor do we charge other writers on this much controverted question with willful perversion. We do believe, however, that it is possible for men of good intentions, benevolent impulses and superior intelligence to follow the traditions of the fathers and yield to the pressure of party zeal till any truth which does not come to them through approved denominational channels, or appears out of harmony with their party doctrines will have little probability of impressing them. Under such circumstances, the average man is as unfit to deal fairly and truly with these controverted questions as he would be to act as judge or juror in the trial of a case involving the highest interest of himself or his dearest friends. Unfortu-

nately, the controversy over the mode of baptism has been waged almost exclusively by men who were violent religious partisans, and possessed of intense denominational zeal. If there be noted exceptions to this rule they have eluded my vigilance.

What is commonly known as the "Authorized Version" of the Bible is a translation from the Greek, made in the early part of the Seventeenth century by eminent scholars of the Church of England under the direction of King James the First of Great Britain. According to the structural organism of that church (Episcopal) the king was its supreme head, *ex officio*. It was soon after the Protestant Reformation. The Church of England had but recently sprung into existence, being composed of the English members of the Roman or Catholic Church, who had withdrawn from the Mother Church almost in a body.

Many of the doctrines, rites, ceremonies, ordinances and traditions of the Mother Institution had been transferred, or as it is expressed in the Confession of Faith, *retained*, into the new hierarchy on the strength of their traditional sanctity without any very close or critical consideration. Among these were the assumption of legislative authority by the church and baptism by aspersion and affusion. When the translation was made the controversy over the mode was on. The act was expressed in the Greek by the words *bapto* and *baptidzo*, with their variations and inflections. These two words, in their different modes, tenses, etc., occur numerous times and in various places in both the Old and New Testaments where they have no reference to the ordinance commanded by the Savior. In such cases they were translated into elegant English by some word supposed to be a fair equivalent for the idea conveyed by the Greek text. In the Old Testa-

ment there is no place where the words or either of them is used in reference to the ordinance which we call *baptism*, as that rite is not named at all therein. In the places in the New Testament where the ordinance is intended, the words are not translated at all; but are simply given an ending to correspond with English words, and otherwise literally transferred from the Greek into the English *without any rendering* or translation whatever. The words *baptize* and *baptism* as they appear in the English Bible are not English words at all, but simply Greek words left in the English Bible. Why was not this done in the Old Testament as well as the New? The words *bapto* and *baptidzo* are found scores of times in the Greek Old Testament, but the words *baptize* and *baptism* are neither found at all in the English Old Testament; they are there translated in every case. They are also translated in the New Testament in cases where the ordinance is not alluded to except in a few instances. This fact alone should awaken a spirit of investigation, if not suspicion in the mind of every honest seeker after religious truth. Let us illustrate the point by a concrete example. A wealthy relative dies at Athens, Greece, leaving you by his will a large amount of valuable property contingent on a few simple conditions. A copy of the will is sent you, duly authenticated, but it is in the Greek language with which you are not familiar. You procure an able classic to translate the document into ordinary English, and on examination find that one of the words descriptive of an important condition on which your legacy depends has not been translated at all, but simply given an English termination and thus literally *transferred* into the English copy with which you were furnished. On inquiry you find that this was done at the suggestion of some of the other claimants under the will who

were interested in giving it a particular meaning. Would you not be indignant, if not suspicious? Would you not insist on a translation of the word in question into intelligible English, in order that you might be enabled to comply with the conditions of the will *certainly* and *accurately*? If counsel and parties differed as to the meaning of the word, you would look at other places where the same word had been used to ascertain if there translated, and by what English word. If still in doubt, you would consult lexicons and any other sources of information accessible which would enable you to ascertain the exact idea intended to be conveyed by the testator, in order that the bequest might be assured beyond a shadow of doubt.

May we change the figure? You are in prison in the city of Athens under sentence of death for a crime of which you have been duly adjudged guilty. The Executive offers you a full pardon on terms which you deem exceedingly generous. The document is, of course, in the Greek language, which you are unable to read. You engage a linguist, who renders it into lucid English, except a single word, and that only in places where it is descriptive of one of the conditions of your pardon. You ask him why he does this, and he informs you that there is no word in the English which is a sufficient equivalent. You find, however that in every other case this word has been translated without apparent difficulty and with marked uniformity. Upon further inquiry you find that this same linguist has made numerous translations of the records of the court by which you were tried, and of the officer by whom you were pardoned; that this same word had been frequently used, and was always and uniformly translated without apparent question or difficulty. Would you not suspect that some motive other than your own welfare had

prompted your learned translator to such a course? Honest and consistent reader, this is just what the translators of the Scriptures have done. These words (*bapto* and *baptidzo*) occur in the Greek Old Testament numbers of times, and are *always* and uniformly translated. They are also found in the Greek New Testament and where the ordinance called *baptism* is not meant, they are likewise uniformly translated, except in a few instances where their use is figurative. However, in all cases where the ordinance is referred to, the words are not translated at all, but transferred into the English copy.

Furthermore, there is not a passage in either the Old or the New Testament in which the words *bapto* or *baptidzo*, or either of them is rendered *sprinkle* or *pour*. If these words mean to *sprinkle* or to *pour*, is it not strange that as many times as they are used in both the Old Testament and New Testament, and as often as sprinkling and pouring is spoken of in the Bible, that neither of them is ever once so rendered? King James' translators, though affusionists, throughout the entire Old Testament, and in nearly all the places in the New Testament where the church ordinance is not in view rendered these words into some English word which denoted a complete submergence of the subject in the element.

It is our firm conviction that our immersionist friends are in error in their claim that these words always imply an application of the subject to the element. In the recorded cases of baptism of (or by) the Spirit, the element (the Spirit) was applied to the subject or person. (Acts, chapters 2, 10, 19.) Likewise, the baptism of suffering which the Master underwent: the suffering was applied to him, rather than he to it. Matt. 20: 22; 26, 39; 27: 30-35. Slight suffering, how-



ever, was never called a baptism, even metonymically. Nor was a slight application of water or any other element so denominated. In all cases where the words were used in a literal sense they carried the idea of a complete submergence; when by metonymy, a complete overwhelming.

Dr. George Campbell, the eminent linguist and theologian, late president of Mareschal College, Aberdeen, Scotland, (Presbyterian) was so sensibly impressed with the force of this application that in his interesting, and in many respects accurate, translation of Matt. 20: 22 the text is rendered, "Can ye drink of the cup such as I must drink, or undergo an *immersion* like that which I must undergo?" Even in the figurative or metonymic use of this word, this celebrated classic recognized no such diminution of force as is claimed by those who are disposed to trim or pare down its signification.

It is not the purpose of the writer hereof to enter into the details of a discussion of the mode of baptism. Arguments on that part alone of the subject herein treated might readily be adduced to fill a volume much larger than it is the intention to make this one. As stated in our apology, it has not been the aim of the writer so much to make this work exhaustive as suggestive of such matters as will enable the reader to reach a conclusion by his own research. If any reader of these pages shall find a single lexicon of recognized authority, or a single scholar of international note that gives either *sprinkle* or *pour* as a definition of *bapto* or *baptidzo*, the writer will regard it as a favor to be furnished with a reference thereto.

Messrs Liddell & Scott, in a single edition of their Greek lexicon, gave these as remote meanings of said words, in deference to the wishes of some of their

affusionist friends; but the scholarship of the world compelled them to recede from that position in the next and each succeeding edition of their valuable work. One more suggestion, and we leave with the reader that part of our investigation pertaining to the mode of baptism. Take your complete concordance; find every sentence in the entire Bible containing the word baptize in any of its modes or tenses. Write each of the sentences in full, except the word *baptize*, for which leave a blank space. First fill all the blank spaces with the word *sprinkle*. Analyze and parse all the sentences. Note the difficulties and incongruities if any. Do the same with the word *pour*, and finally, with the word *immerse*. Now determine which of the three sets of sentences will all constitute intelligible and harmonious English.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WHO ARE PROPER SUBJECTS FOR BAPTISM?

This is a question on which there appears to be much controversy in the religious world; yet the clearness of the teachings of the Scriptures on this matter will doubtless surprise any one who has not taken the pains to make a complete and systematic investigation thereof. We believe it will be entirely safe to assert that the New Testament contains not a single hint of any person under the age of understanding having been baptized or commanded to be baptized by either Christ or any of his apostles. The inference is very strong that faith (belief), with some kind of a profession or acknowledgment thereof, and repentance, preceded baptism in every recorded case. An infant void of understanding is incapable of either. The prophet

Jeremiah, near six hundred years before the Christian era, gave a very suggestive description of the character of the citizenship under the new dispensation or better covenant, saying, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and . . . his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord, for they shall know him from the least to the greatest," etc. Jer. 31: 33, 34. Can the child without understanding comprehend (know) God? Paul in his letter to the Hebrews twice quotes this prophecy and explains that it was fulfilled and in force at the time of the writing of that document. Heb. 8: 11, and 10: 16. The New Testament scriptures which are sometimes quoted to prove that infants were baptized are those in which "household baptisms" and "household salvation" are spoken of. Our pædo-baptist friends are, however, compelled to resort to what is called, "single premise logic" in order to draw their conclusions from these passages. A correct syllogism might be framed after the following style, to wit:

1. Households or families were baptized in apostolic times.
2. These households contained children under the age of understanding.
3. Therefore such children were baptized.

That the major premise of the above syllogism is a correct statement of a fact we will readily concede. How about the minor? We shall see. The first case of household salvation, and baptism to which we invite attention is found in the 10th and 11th chapters of Acts. In chapter 11: 13, 14 we find these words; "Send men to Joppa, and call one Simon whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and *thy house* shall be saved. But who constituted his *house*? In chapter 10: 24 it is said that "Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen

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and near friends." If he had children they certainly were his "kinsmen." In verse 33 of this chapter he is represented as saying, "we are all (including kinsmen) here present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." In verse 44 we are informed that "while Peter yet spake the Holy Ghost fell on *all* them that *heard* the word." Verse 46 says that "they spake with tongues and magnified God," and verse 48 records that "they prayed him to tarry with them certain days." If therefore, Cornelius had children still members of his household, they all heard the word, the Holy Ghost fell on them in the gift of miraculous speaking, and they joined in the invitation extended to Peter to tarry with them certain days. They were old enough to reason intelligently, and to be entrusted with miraculous power.

The next case of household salvation is found in Acts 16, and is all recorded in two short verses, 15 and 16. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened that she attended to the things spoken of Paul: And when she was baptized, and her *household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us." Here we find not the slightest hint as to the number or character of the members of the *household* of this most excellent woman. It nowhere appears that she even had a husband, much less children; or if both, the record is silent as to their ages.

That there were children in the *household* of Lydia under the age of understanding, rests on nought but the baldest assertion. It is supported by no evidence whatever.

The next case of household salvation we find recorded

in the same chapter, Acts 16: 25 to 34. This case has often been cited as evidence that baptism could not have been by immersion, because the jails were not fitted for its administration by this mode. From what source this information was obtained we do not know, nor do we deem it important to inquire, because it is entirely clear that they were not baptized *in the jail*. Verses 29, 30 inform us that the jailor called for a light and went in "and brought them out" of the jail. Then follow the instruction, the bathing of their lacerated bodies and the *baptizing*, after which they were brought "into *his house*."

Where they were, and what conveniences were available for the washing of their bleeding backs and baptizing them from the time they were taken out of the prison till they were brought "into his house" does not appear. Certainly, it requires no great stretch of the imagination to assume that adequate means were found to do that which the record positively informs us was done.

But how about there being children under the age of understanding? It is said that "he and all his" were baptized. We readily concede that this meant his family, yea, and children, if he had them though but a day old. Verse 34 informs us that after the baptism the jailor, having brought them into his house," "set meat (food) before them, and rejoiced in God believing *with all his house*."

Here we have in the space of three short verses, 63 words:

They all heard the word, verse 32; they all believed the word, verse 34; they all obeyed in baptism, verse 33; and they all rejoiced in hope, verse 34.

This conclusively shows that the members of the household of the jailor were of sufficient age to render

intelligent obedience.

One or two more things connected with this part of the subject and we leave it. We not unfrequently hear it said that if we are baptized by the Holy Ghost, it matters little about water baptism. Much might be said of interest by way of distinction between the two. One is a *gift*, conferred directly by God, the other a *command* which it is in our power to obey. When we are commanded to do a thing it is presumed that it is one toward the performance of which we can at least contribute. If God ever commanded any one to attempt or procure his own *Holy Spirit* baptism we are not aware of it.

How God's doing for us something which we cannot do, can serve as a reason for our neglect or refusal to do that which we are commanded, and are able to do, does not appear, nor do our friends undertake to inform us. The three prominent Holy Ghost baptisms recorded in the New Testament are found in Acts chapters 2, 10, and 19 respectively. In all the cases the recipients were enabled to speak languages other than their vernacular, and which they had not learned. Acts 2: 7-13; 10: 56, and 19: 6. Peter evidently deemed it appropriate to baptize in water those who had already been baptized by the Holy Spirit. Acts 10: 44-48. We shall do well to follow his example, even should there be well authenticated cases at the present time, accompanied by the same signs. This, however, we believe it would be difficult to demonstrate.

Another question much discussed by the religious world is whether or not baptism is essential to salvation. We regard this as a very unprofitable question, and we advert to it for the purpose of suggesting it to be so, rather than of determining the question itself. It has been shown under head of *faith* that a conviction is

a mere barren ideality except as it may serve to determine action. If we pursue the inquiry as to the essentiality of baptism with the intention of neglecting or refusing obedience in case we conclude it to be non-essential, such a course amounts to setting up our judgment, rather than God's commands, as the criterion of our action. Is God to be pleased by our attempts to bring his commands to the standard of our wisdom, rather than our conduct to the standard of his authority? If we intend to obey in any event, why expend our time and energy in endeavors to ascertain its necessity? If we are simply seeking for an apparently plausible excuse for our neglect or refusal to comply with his commands, we will do well to subject our position to close scrutiny. The entire Bible does not record a single instance of God's blessing or approval having been secured under the promptings of such motives. Then, our logic may lead us to erroneous conclusions, the consequences of which no man can determine.

The whole duty of man is to "Fear God and keep his commandments." Eccl. 12: 13. It is no part of man's duty to determine which of the commands deserves obedience. There are many scriptures which indicate that God regards a wilful rejection of one of his commands or institutions, as an abandonment of his authority as a life-guiding principle. 1 Sam. 8: 7; Luke 7: 30. From the first of the above passages it appears that God regarded the setting up of a king over Israel contrary to his wishes as a rejection of himself as their ruler, and from the second it appears that the refusal of the Pharisees and lawyers to submit to the baptism of John was taken as a rejection of "the counsel of God against themselves." In John 3: 5 we find the language of Christ to Nicodemus, "Except a

man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." In Acts 2: 38 the words of Peter are "Repent and be baptized,—for the remission of sins." Here both repentance and baptism are named as contributing to the remission of sins, and in Acts 22: 16 it is given as a means of "washing away sins." In what way baptism can wash away sins, or even contribute to that effect, it is not my purpose to determine, nor is it necessary for me to know. Even if the expression be figurative it must represent some principle, and hence, have been intended to impress us with the importance of obedience to this command. To our mind, there can be no higher or more satisfactory evidence of loyalty than a cheerful and accurate obedience to each command, and sacrifice of every desire, without knowing or asking for a reason. Nor can there be any better evidence of a lack of devout faith than the refusal to obey the commands of a superior unless first satisfied of their importance and expediency. At any rate, it does not seem to us to indicate a high degree of devotion nor an attitude of safety for us to conclude that baptism is unnecessary, and to refuse or neglect a compliance therewith, in view of the testimony above quoted. Obedience is certainly safe: refusal or neglect may not be. In refusing compliance with this command we voluntarily assume a risk for which there is not the slightest inducement. We do not act thus in our temporal affairs.

In dealing with our earthly interests our rule is: "In matters involving large interests and grave consequences, if there be a safe side, take it and run no risk."

We opine that some one is now ready to ask if this is all that is necessary for one to do in order to become a Christian. We answer that this is all which is required



by the Holy Scriptures. If they be God's word, and his word be true, these four steps, sincerely, intelligently, and courageously taken will make one a Christian, viz:

1. Faith, or a change of conviction.
2. Repentance, or a change of conduct.
3. Profession, or public change of attitude.
4. Baptism, or the consummating act in the change of relation.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

"But," it is objected, "if faith, repentance, profession and baptism will make one a Christian, four things are ignored which have long been regarded by theologians as important, if not essential in the process of conversion, viz: *prayer*, the *new heart*, the *new birth* and the *work of the Spirit*."

We should, by all means, avoid under-rating the importance of prayer. It is well said in the Scriptures that men should "pray everywhere." 1 Tim. 2: 8. But why *pray* God to forgive us, while refusing to perform the conditions on which he has *promised* to forgive us? The Scriptures are full of the promises of God to the obedient; yet we plead with him for pardon for us and our friends, meanwhile neglecting, yea, refusing to comply with the conditions he has provided for this very purpose. Is this reasonable? Suppose a man to have been in open rebellion against the sovereign of a state, and under sentence of death therefor. The merciful ruler visits him in the prison, and offers him a full, free, and immediate pardon on condition that he has changed his mind, openly renounces his opposition,

submits to some formal requirement, and ever after lives a good and loyal citizen. What would we think of this man, if, instead of complying with the easy conditions, he should prostrate himself and implore mercy? Have we not all seen and heard inquirers advised to just such a course by those who ought to have known better? With all the importance of prayer, it has its purposes, and, doubtless its limitations. We have no satisfactory evidence that one of its virtues consists of its efficacy in inducing God to do for us that which he has commanded us, and given us the power to do for ourselves. The use of prayer in raising a crop of corn was very suggestively explained by the old farmer:

“It’s right to pray both night and morn,  
As every farmer knows  
And the *place* to pray for thrifty corn  
Is right between the rows.

So, while I pray I use my hoe,  
And do my level best  
To kill the weeds in every row,  
And God, he does the rest.”

The Scriptures inform us that “God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.” Acts 10: 34, 35; Rom. 2: 11. Likewise, “He that turneth away his ear from hearing (heeding) the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination.” Prov. 28: 9. “For not the hearers, . . . but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Rom. 2: 13. Let our prayers be accompanied by an intelligent faith, active energies, and an obedient disposition, and God will do for us all that our spiritual welfare demands.

In order to determine whether or not we have ignored the new heart, regeneration or the new birth and

the work of the Spirit it will be necessary to define just what is meant by these terms. It will be well to remember that the word *heart* is used in the Scriptures, not only in the sense of the vascular organ or muscle, but also in the sense of both the seat of the affections and of the intellect. In other words, the words heart and mind are used interchangeably. Jer. 7: 31; 19: 5 and 32: 35. Therefore, from a New Testament standpoint a change of mind (conviction) would constitute a "change of heart" as well as a change of affections. With these facts before us the solution is not difficult. That a literal change was made in the physical organ, is not pretended. In the case of Paul it is equally obvious that his affections were not changed from hatred to love before his mind was changed from unbelief to belief in the divinity of Christ. If by a "change of heart" is meant that change of emotion from opposition to affection which is consequent on a change of conviction and purpose, and which eventually culminates in a change of conduct, it is certainly involved in the course which we have indicated. If by "change of heart" is meant a change from that aversion which has prompted us to neglect or disregard his commands to that affection which impels us to a cheerful, accurate and ready obedience thereto, it is surely included in the outline we have given, for "This is (constitutes) the love of God, that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5: 3.

*Regeneration* and *new birth* are the same. One is the pure English, and the other the anglicised Latin term to express the identical idea. The Greeks used the same word to express a begetting and a parturition or bringing forth. When this word (*gennao*) in any of its inflections was used by them with reference to a male it conveyed the idea of a begetting; if of a female, that of a parturition or birth. The word of God is the seed,

the seminal or life giving principle. Mark 4: 14, 15; Matt. 13: 19-23. With this the good and honest heart (mind) is impregnated. John 6: 63. In James 1: 18 this is explained to constitute the begetting. See also Luke 8: 11; 1 Peter 1: 23. Being of an obedient disposition, and believing the gospel testimony, we are thereby constrained to enter the water in obedience to the command, and from which we emerge in the likeness of a birth. John 3: 5; 1 Peter 3: 21; 1 Cor. 12: 13; Gal. 3: 27. Is not the *new birth* as thus described comprehended in faith, repentance, profession and baptism? and do you know of any other process which will more completely harmonize with all that the Scriptures teach on the subject? But one is heard to object, "this makes *baptism* save a man." By no means. It rather shows that baptism is one of the conditions on which God proposes to save one. But that by a compliance with this and the other conditions, viz: faith, repentance and profession, in their order and in the spirit of obedient sincerity will place one in the proper attitude to be the recipient of God's pardoning favor, is as true as that his word is true.

But another objector insists that we entirely ignore the *work of the Spirit*. Let us see, but first let us define our terms, as much confusion has been wrought by religious teachers having used the word *spirit* in a careless or indefinite way. In John 14: 16 and 16: 7, 8, 13 the word *Spirit* is used in the sense of a person. "Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, *he* will guide you into all truth." In John 6: 63 the word is used in the sense of a revelation. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit," etc. In Rom. 8: 9 it is used in the sense of a controlling principle. "If any man have not the *Spirit* of Christ he is none of his." In Rev. 1: 10 it is used in the sense of a mental condi-

tion. "I was in the *Spirit* on the Lord's day." When we speak of "the Spirit," it should be made to appear by the context or by qualifying words which one of these ideas we intend to convey. In a correct syllogism a pivotal word must carry the same meaning in each of the premises as is given to it in the conclusion. There is scarcely a proposition so inconsistent with logic that it may not be made to appear proven by a violation of this elementary rule. If by the "work of the Spirit" is meant that the *Spirit* as a person, has given us through inspired men the *Spirit* as a revelation, which, being duly considered and believed, wrought in us the *spirit* as a controlling principle;—and if this intelligent consciousness of God's approval produced in us that mental condition sometimes called "the *spirit* of peace";—if, I say this is what is meant by "the work of the Spirit," it clearly constitutes a part of what we have suggested in the foregoing pages.

If by the term is meant an *ecstatic emotion*, and that it is to be regarded as conclusive evidence of God's approval or forgiveness of sins, then it is not to be found in the teachings of the Scriptures, and hence can be no part of our duty, nor an essential element in the work or worship of the Christian.

Unfortunately for the average hearer, our clergymen, as they are wont to be called, do not appear to appreciate the necessity of explaining these things as fully as we believe their importance demands. Whether this is because these distinctions are deemed unimportant, or too well understood to require elaboration, or from some less cogent reason, we leave to be answered by such of them as may see fit to peruse these pages.

## CHAPTER X.

### SCRIPTURAL MEANS AND METHODS.

We have already endeavored to show that the special mission which has been committed to the church is twofold, viz:

1. The presentation of the gospel to the sinner or unbeliever, with a view to his conversion; that is, his acceptance of its facts, and obedience to its commands; and,

2. Such instruction, admonition and encouragement to the believer as will contribute to his development toward ultimate perfection in Christian character.

But what are the means, the methods, the true character of the machinery by which these objects are to be accomplished? Here again we are constrained to appeal to the inspired word. "To the law and to the testimony." If there be any way of ascertaining the will of God in this matter except through the revelation he has given us by inspired men, I have no knowledge of it. "The secret things belong to God; but those things which are revealed belong to us and our children." Deut. 29: 29. We have often heard it urged that, as God has committed to his church the work of accomplishing the two above objects, he will approve any means which will contribute to that end. This is the same old and much abused proposition that "the end justifies the means," and will not bear the scrutiny of a critical analysis. It would justify the commission of perjury to secure the acquittal of one we believed to be innocent, or of murder to prevent the spread of that which we regard heresy. It furnished the justification for all the cruel murders, tortures and persecutions of the dark ages. In the absence of designated

means, God's command to accomplish a given object would authorize the *best* means only.

Therefore, where adequate means have been designated, and have been universally successful, we are justified in concluding that they are the best. Religious sectarians say, 'Let each one adopt such means and methods, and employ such machinery as to him seems appropriate.' They illustrate the proposition by a number of highways leading in different directions at the outset, but eventually converging at the gate of the Celestial City. Unfortunately, the sacred writings furnish no basis for such a figure. They speak of but a single road, and describe it as being narrow and difficult, exhorting seekers to strive to the point of agony (Gr. *agonidzesthe*) to enter therein. Luke 13: 24. The fallacy of this broad, and, as it is sometimes termed, liberal view, becomes plainly apparent when considered from the standpoint of God's word or of our own observation. We will briefly consider these in their inverse order, both as to their importance and precedence of statement. From the standpoint of close and accurate observation, the different sects are seen to have been operating along this line for many centuries, with the result that the honest seeker after truth is bewildered by the many currents and counter-currents which make up the conflicting and confusing didactics of pen and pulpit. Among the many *union efforts* made by what are called the evangelical denominations for the conversion of sinners, the writer of these pages has never once heard the directions given to inquirers which Peter gave on the day of Pentecost, those of Philip to the Ethiopian, or those of Ananias to Paul. On the few occasions when the instructions of Paul and Silas to the Philippian jailer were given, the fact that the other members of the family or house-

hold believed, submitted to baptism, and rejoiced in obedience, were entirely omitted. We have abundant reason for believing that in none of these union meetings would one be encouraged,—perhaps not even permitted—to quote the exact language of Peter or Ananias in answer to questions contained in Acts 2: 37, 38; 22: 10, 16, or to similar ones. Not many years ago the writer was in one of the cities of the middle west noted for its learning and refinement, during one of these protracted efforts, in which most, if not all the Protestant churches joined. The services were conducted by a corps of the most noted musical and elocutionary evangelists known to the profession. Every available foot of space in the commodious meeting-house was occupied by attentive listeners. For two consecutive evenings the subjects as announced in the daily press, were, “The New Heart,” and “The New Birth.” A Bible student, much interested in these subjects, attended these meetings and gave close attention to all that was said, but was unable to determine therefrom what was requisite to constitute the *new birth* or obtain the *new heart*. He so stated in a courteous, reverent, and respectful letter printed in one of the daily papers, and asked that the matter be fully explained, pointing out, at the same time, the conclusions he had formed from a personal examination of the scriptures bearing on the question, with such help as he had been able to obtain. Although he mailed a copy of the paper to each of the participating ministers, and stated that the inquiry was made in good faith, no answer was ever made to his inquiry. At the end of two weeks he wrote again through the newspaper insisting on an answer, and promising to respond promptly and cheerfully if his duty should be made clear from the Bible. That man’s inquiry remains unanswered to-



day. If theologians who have given years of study to the Bible are unable to agree or unwilling to state publicly what God requires of a seeker after truth in order to salvation from his past sins, how can they expect a novice in Bible knowledge to act with a clear head and steady nerve amid the confusion wrought by the neutralizing influences of conflicting voices and interests?

Prof. Iokiki Iyenaga, Japanese Commissioner to Turkey, China, Persia, and India, a graduate of Oberlin College, Ohio, and John Hopkins University, Baltimore, who was born in China of Japanese parents, delivered an address at Indianapolis, Indiana, May 23, 1902, in which he used the following language:

While I do not accuse the missionaries of being the cause of the internal strife and disruption, I am not prejudiced when I say that they are often the cause of unrest and violent complications. Their methods of campaign are not always creditable to the warriors of the cross. The very fact of dissention and diversities of creed among Protestant missionaries is a source of doubt and disquietude to the Chinaman, who is at a loss to know which is the true and which is the false.—*Indianapolis Sentinel, May 24, 1902.*

Candid reader, is the intelligent heathen very much to blame? What would you do amidst such confusion if you were in his place?

A careful study of the history and teaching of the Bible will discover no more basis for this "free for all," "go as you please" system of religion than is disclosed to the devout observer of its practical results. The proposition that all the churches are right,—that all the conflicting and mutually neutralizing energies and influences will eventually culminate in contributing to a single and beneficent common end,—though pleasing to contemplate, and consoling to the indolent and half-

hearted Christian, finds no support whatever in the language of inspiration. The Israelites, on leaving Egypt, did not divide themselves into numerous companies, each taking that route for the land of promise which appeared the most delightful and the least difficult, with the assurance of their respective head tribesmen that they would all converge at the Jordan, Gilgal, Bethel, or even at Jerusalem. They all followed the "fiery, cloudy pillar" in the simple and single route designated, moving only *when and as* directed, and woe be to the company, great or small, which turned aside into the by-paths of pleasure, folly, indolence or ease. Nor was Moses commanded to construct different tabernacles for the accommodation of the variant tastes which were not congenial to the peculiar structure and arrangement of the one designed by Jehovah. Under the New Testament dispensation "God is not the author of confusion," as he certainly would be had he sent forth various ambassadors among the people prescribing different terms of salvation, and contradictory means and methods of performing the work which he has commanded his children to do. Paul wrote to the Roman brethren to "mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned of me, and avoid them." Rom. 16: 17. Are the many conflicting and contradictory means and methods of carrying on religious work *according to*, and hence, *authorized by* the teaching (doctrine) of the great apostle? If not, they are contrary thereto. Does it not constitute division to separate a part of the followers of Christ from the others in name, organization, doctrine, as well as modes, methods and places of worship, on account of different taste, desire or opinion, as to the propriety of the various enterprises for carrying on the church work, and the different character or

kinds of machinery deemed suitable and pleasing for its accomplishment? No divisions can be *according to* the doctrine of Paul except such as are based on distinctions which he has recognized in his teaching. If not *according to* his teaching, it must be *contrary* to it. Paul wrote to the brethren at Corinth, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name (authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment." 1 Cor. 1:10. It does not meet the case to say that our divisions are not concerning essentials. There is no word in the text nor ground for inference in the context which limits the proscribed divisions to such as are essential. The sentence is intensely emphatic. "Speak the same thing." Not *essentially* the same, but *the same*. Be *perfectly* joined together in the same *mind* and the same *judgment*. Converse of the same facts; contemplate the same truths; from them draw the same conclusions.

In the realm of spirit,—for it was not concerning temporal things he wrote,—let there be *no* divisions (Gr. *schismata*) among you. This principle is fully elaborated and beautifully illustrated in 1 Cor. 12: 14-27 in the close harmony which should exist among the different parts of the human body. In a sound body having a sane mind, no action is taken, no movement made except by the direction of the head. Such a body acts as a unit. In the directions of the head all the members cheerfully and promptly acquiesce. The other members do not command, they obey; they do not devise or contrive, they execute. Should the other members of the body assume to decide which of the commands of the head ought to be obeyed, and to devise independent schemes in accordance with their de-

sires for nourishment and sensation, the unity of the body would be destroyed. Hence God hath "set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him." 1 Cor. 12: 18. He has assigned to each its sphere of action; to the head the function of designing and directing; to the other parts that of unquestioning obedience. Why? To the end "That there should be no schism (division) in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for the other." ver. 25. Of this body Christ is the head. Eph. 1: 22, 23; 4: 15; Col. 1: 18. If we are members other than the head we have no right to design and devise. Are we the feet? Then go where he commands. Are we the hands? Then do as he directs. Are we the mouth? Say that which he authorizes us to say. Thus avoid divisions.

If the foregoing considerations were not sufficient to settle the question, the character of the schisms against which the apostle expostulated with such vehemence, would seem to fix the matter beyond controversy. Were they the kind regarded as essential according to the standards of present reckoning? By no means. The schism of the Corinthian brethren, so severely reprov'd by Paul, consisted simply of dividing themselves into parties bearing the names of great and good men, presumably on account of some good work done or great truth proclaimed by them respectively. Wherein lies the essentiality of separating into parties denominated as Pauline, Petrine, Appolonian, or Johanian, more than Lutheran, Calvinist, Wesleyan, or Campbellite? 1 Cor. 1: 12; 3: 4, 5.

In one of the most earnest and pathetic prayers ever offered by the Savior, and in the very presence of impending death, he pleaded that they who should believe on him through the preaching of his apostles might be

united, even as he and the Father were united. He also very clearly indicated that their success in convincing the world of his divinity depended upon their maintenance of such unity. John 17: 11, 21. How admirably do the appropriate words of the eminent Japanese professor in his Indianapolis speech harmonize with these words of scripture! What but wilful blindness prevents religionists from seeing the point and making the application?

In view of what has just been said, we again quote Heb. 11: 6 with special reference to its bearing on the matter under immediate consideration. "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to him must believe that he is (exists) and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This scripture is deemed susceptible of two constructions. In order to make the distinction between them clearly apparent we will state the proposition conversely, viz: "With faith it is possible to please God," or "God is pleased with our faith." Now, does this mean that if we have faith, or believe in the existence of God and his disposition and ability to reward his diligent seekers, any act performed with a view of pleasing him will be acceptable, regardless of whether he has authorized it or not? Or does it mean that the act itself must have been produced by faith based on sufficient evidence (God's word) in order to be acceptable to him? If the former be the correct interpretation of the sentence it would follow that every act of every monotheistic Pagan, Mohammedan, Jew or Christian, whether Protestant or Catholic, performed in the belief of its correctness, was and is acceptable to God, and well pleasing in his sight, because done *through faith*. Such a construction would make God the approver of every act of religious oppression done by every fanatic or religious

enthusiast from the persecution of the primitive disciples by Saul of Tarsus to the massacre of St. Bartholomew. If the latter be the correct interpretation, the act must not only be the result of faith or belief that God so desires, but the faith or belief itself must have been authorized by the words of inspiration. Rom. 10: 17; 14: 23. Let us resort to a familiar hypothesis in order to illustrate: A man is suffering from a deadly malady. I entreat him to consult a certain physician in whom I have implicit confidence, assuring him that he can thus be cured. He hesitates. I say to him, "Without faith in this physician it is impossible for you to be cured." Do I mean that if he will simply acquiesce in my belief in the skill, integrity and benevolence of the physician he will be cured, independent of subjecting himself to the treatment which may be prescribed? Assuredly not. We all know that such would not be a fair or legitimate inference from my statement; but that in order to receive substantial benefit, his faith or confidence must be, both in kind and degree, such as would induce him to submit to the treatment prescribed, or he would receive no benefit therefrom.

In our prognosis and diagnosis of the sin-sick soul, however, we pursue an entirely different course. Having made a very superficial examination (or none at all) of the authorities, we join ourselves to one of the spiritual *isms* or *opathies* which profess to have the exact formula for counteracting of the malady called sin. Though claimed to be taken from the same infallible treatise, scarcely any two of them are alike. We swallow with avidity the prescription of our particular school, which consists of a mixture unknown to the unfallible treatise from which all the remedies are supposed to have been taken.

May we change the figure? We are living in a famine and plague stricken land, among others as destitute and helpless as ourselves. All receive an invitation from a benevolent resident of a distant city of plenty to come and subsist on his bounty. A full description of the place, its magnificent provision and apartments, and minute directions for the journey are gratuitously distributed, with the positive statement that but a single route is safe or practicable. We divide ourselves into parties contrary to the direction of our host; and our chosen leaders, through jealousy, ambition, ignorance or interest persuade their respective companies that it is not discreet to pursue the same route and keep the same company of those who differ from us in taste, temperament, habits, opinion, and social standing. The respective companies take different routes, sometimes diametrically opposite, each being assured by its leader that while some doubt may exist as to *the other roads*, *ours*, at least, will eventually end its tortuous course at the gate of the city of our common benefactor. Could such an episode become an actuality in our temporal experience, what would be the unanimous verdict of all to whose knowledge its history should come? Undoubtedly, rational people would say that those who refused to follow the plainly prescribed way deserved to be lost, and to perish in the confusion to which they had voluntarily and uselessly consigned themselves.

In the preceding pages of this treatise considerable space was devoted to an exposition of 2 John 9, 10, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God," etc. We now recur to it for the purpose of adding its emphasis to the peculiar phase of the subject under immediate consideration. If the standard of faith by which an act is to be measured cometh only "by the word of God;" (Rom. 10: 17)

and "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," how can one be abiding in (within), and not transgressing or going beyond the doctrine of Christ who induces a congregation of believers to adopt, in his name (by his authority), any scheme, method, or enterprise, concerning which his teaching is as silent as the grave? By this time it will doubtless have occurred to the diligent and unbiased reader how perfectly the doctrine of complete unity among disciples of Christ harmonizes with the principle of abiding within the limits of that which he has taught.

That this principle is identical with leaving out of the worshiping assemblies the things for which we find no authority in the revelation that God has given for our guidance, requires neither the skill of the sophist nor the accomplished logician to discover. It is sufficiently evident to be axiomatic that if each and every congregation of professed believers, and each member thereof should confine their religious work and worship to the things, the times, the places, the manner, the methods, and the motive to which God has given his sanction, no schism could exist among his disciples. It may be laid down as a religious maxim that "*Adherence to the word of God always tends to unity; yielding to the wisdom and traditions of men tends to division.*"

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE SUBJECTS OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES.

Over what are the religious controversies of the present time? Are they not concerning what has been suggested by the wisdom or passion of man, rather than that which God has ordained?



'Tis not what God has authorized,  
Or what his law requires,  
But what man's wisdom has devised,  
And his vain heart desires,

about which most of the schisms exist in the congregations of to-day. Why, then, mar the work and worship of the assembly of God by the enterprises, schemes, attractions, ceremonies, and embellishments, all the product of human wisdom or folly as the case may be, either of which is as diverse as the education, taste, temperament, culture, disposition and environment of the people to be entertained thereby, and as unreliable as criteria of religious propriety as their habits and standards of morals. Every novel enterprise, scheme, method or ceremony introduced into the worshiping assemblies of Christians which is not authorized by the scriptures, but is believed by any of the members to be out of harmony therewith must be productive of schism, (from the Greek, *schidzo*, to tear to rend, to split apart, etc.) Have we the right to rend, tear, or split into factions the body of Christ, which is the church? God forbid! Self preservation is the highest law of being, of aggregations as well as individuals. We have no more right to destroy one of God's institutions than to destroy one of his individual creatures. The church is one of God's aggregate creations. He has decreed that unity is one of the essentials to her vital and functional efficiency. Matt. 12: 25; John 17: 21. Division, therefore, is destructive of her vital and functionary energy. It therefore follows that no member of the body has a right to insist upon any ceremony, method, scheme or custom not authorized by the will of Christ.

#### WHAT IS GOD'S PLAN?

To a devout believer in the Bible as God's revelation to man, it would seem superfluous to state that God's

way of accomplishing a thing is superior to man's. Is. 55: 8, 9; 1 Cor. 1: 19, 20, 27, 28, and 2: 5, and 3: 19, 20. If then, God has given us a way, a plan, a method, it is infallibly safe to follow it.

No man can say with certainty,—hence with safety,—that any other way will accomplish the same purpose. The question, therefore arises, Has God given us a way, a system, a plan, a method of conducting the worshipful services and proclaiming the gospel? That this question must be answered in the affirmative seems clearly inferrable from the following considerations, viz:

1. God's innate perfection. In considering this division of the subject, we desire to call into requisition the following scriptures: "As for God, his ways are perfect." Psa. 18: 30. "Known to God are all his works from the beginning." Acts 15: 18. God has never been known to leave or abandon one of his undertakings unfinished or unperfected. When he undertakes a thing, he completes it. To say that he undertook to provide a way for the salvation of man and gave up the task before completing it would be to impeach his wisdom and power. To affirm that he inaugurated a reformation, to be carried forward by weak and fallible human beings, yet gave them no definite or comprehensible plan or method of procedure, would be to place himself on an equality with his creatures, and make the success of his decrees depend on the wisdom and discretion of frail humanity. To assume that he has left the methods of procedure to their variant tastes, yet required them to "speak the same things" and to be "perfectly joined in the same mind," etc.,—though knowing their tastes and trends are as unlike as the different circumstances on which they depend,—would be such folly as we cannot conceive as per-

taining to deity. To assert that he gave a general plan, but left the details to be worked out by as many confusing and conflicting methods, schemes, organizations and sects as there are differences in taste, talent, custom, and social conventionalities, is to make God the author of confusion, not order.

We know that God is not the author of confusion in the physical world, for the motion of the planets has been arranged with such absolute precision that their eclipses and transits can be calculated to a fraction of a second for centuries in advance. All is perfect harmony in the material universe, which is of so little importance in comparison to spiritual things that "they shall perish,—they shall wax old as doth a garment;—as a vesture shalt thou fold them up," etc. Heb. 1: 11, 12. As all "his works are known to him from the beginning," to assume that he foresaw the social, political, material, and scientific changes which would demand a modification of his methods, yet made no provision therefor, is to convict him of greater folly than a prudent human. It follows with all the force of a logical syllogism that as God has made no provision for any modification of the plan or method of procedure by which men were converted in apostolic times, that none is required by the exigencies of the times. Hence, the system or plan given by authority of inspired men needs no change or modification, but is as applicable to the present social, political, and other cosmic conditions as when practiced in its simplicity by the disciples in the primitive days of the apostolic church.

2. The symbolic teaching of the Old Testament. It will not be consistent with the plan of this work to enter into the details of the Old Testament Symbolism.

A few suggestions, however, which appear obvious in their bearing will not be out of place at this time.

The following propositions may be readily verified by any diligent Bible student, viz:

The symbols of the Old Testament which prefigure the new dispensation, not only give the *doctrines* to be disseminated among the people, but also the *manner* of their dissemination.

No trace of human device or suggestion appears in either the construction or manipulation of the Old Testament symbols.

There are symbols which appear to forbid human suggestion as to either the acts or methods. A few examples may be cited. God was to be their King.

It would seem to have been implied that they should have no other. At least that God was not thereby pleased. 1 Sam. 8: 1-20. He was to be their law-giver, and it seems to have been implied that they should have no laws save such as he gave. Deut. 4: 2 and 12: 32. They were to worship at Jerusalem. Deut. 12: 5, 6, 7. The implication is that it should be the exclusive place for national worship. 1 Kings 12: 26-33. God led them in the wilderness by the fiery, cloudy pillar. Ex. 13: 21, 22. It seems to have been regarded complete and exclusive, for they only moved when and as it indicated. Num. 9: 15-23.

It is highly probable that Uzzah recognized the mode of handling the ark which God had provided as being entirely appropriate. Ex. 25: 13, 14. If he had gone further and regarded it as *exclusive*, he would have made no mistake. Failing, however to do so, he lost his life. 2 Sam. 6: 6, 7. Let it be noticed that God smote him, "for his error," not for wilful disobedience. We have no evidence that Nadab or Abihu regarded God's direction to take coals off the burning altar for the burning of incense on their censers as being inappropriate. The inference is that they usually com-

plied with the directions so to do. Lev. 16: 12. The mistake which they seem to have made, was in supposing that God's way might, under certain contingencies, be varied, and that they were competent to determine when such contingencies arose. The result was that they lost their lives. Lev. 10: 1, 2. We might multiply examples; but sufficient has been given to show that where God has provided a way for doing a thing, it is safe to follow it: to assume that we have the wisdom to decide that it may be varied, and when, is dangerous.

Paul, writing to the Corinthian brethren concerning God's dealing with ancient Israel during the time when the Old Testament symbols were being introduced, informed them that "all these things happened to them for examples, and they were written for our admonition," or instruction. Of what were these things examples to them (ancient Israel) concerning the lessons to be learned from the Old Testament symbols? Evidently, that God would not be pleased with, but would resent as presumptuous and super-erogatory any suggestion or contribution human wisdom might make thereto. But of what was the tabernacle worship symbolic? Paul shows in the 8th, 9th and 10th chapters of the Hebrew letter that the Mosaic ceremonies symbolized or typified the worship of Christ under the New Covenant. But these things were "written for our admonition." To admonish us of what? Evidently, that the thing typified should correspond, in this respect, at least, to the type or symbol, viz: that God is pleased with our co-operation in the provision he has made for the salvation of mankind, by obedience to his commands, rather than by contributions to divine wisdom by devising new schemes and methods for carrying on his work.

Reader, examine the Old Testament ordinances and ceremonies, and God's dealing with those into whose care and keeping they were committed, and who were charged with their execution. Ascertain if you can, when, where, and under what circumstances he ever approved any addition to that which he had commanded or the introduction into his worship of things which he had not authorized.

Find how many times it is recorded that the doing of things which he had not authorized, nor specifically forbidden, met with terribly disastrous consequences, even where prompted by apparently good motives. Then answer the question, Is it safe? If we appeal to,

3. Unmistakable doctrinal and historical suggestions in the New Testament, we are led by their inerrant logic to the same conclusion. We have already quoted freely from the writings of both the Old and New Testaments to show that God's revelation to man is perfect or complete. We now add, Psa. 19: 7; 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17, and 2 Peter 1: 3. Also that Christ directed his disciples to teach believers to "observe *all things whatsoever*" he had commanded. Matt. 28: 20-27.

In view of these scriptures, what intelligent Bible student will risk his reputation on the assertion that we cannot learn *from the scriptures* just what God would have us do as a part of church work and worship, and in the proclamation of the gospel to the unconverted? God has told us WHAT he wishes us to do both individually and collectively in the work and worship which pertain to the assemblies and their members. The recorded history tells us just HOW these things were done in the early church under the guidance of divine inspiration. What more is required to constitute a plan or a method? If giving one directions WHAT to do, and then showing that one HOW to do

the things directed does not constitute a plan or *method*, we are at a loss to know what else is required. Of course, people contend that changes in times, conditions and circumstances justify changes from the plan and methods approved by God, and then assume that they have the wisdom requisite to determine the character of the changes and the exigencies which require them. These assumptions are not only absolutely unwarranted by any scripture which even *seems* to sustain them, but they have been the fruitful sources of every heresy, schism, and innovation which have corrupted God's people from the days of Cain down to the present confused and divided condition of Christendom. How often do we hear it urged that time has greatly changed the facilities for travel, communication and production; utilities and conveniences have vastly increased; long and rapid strides have been made in art, science, and the modes of living, and *the church must keep abreast of the times*. That these things afford special facilities for the dissemination of religious truth, and should be used for that purpose, we have no disposition to dispute. They enable us to reach places, at times and under circumstances which would be difficult if not impossible in their absence. But do increased facilities for doing that which *is authorized*, constitute a valid reason for doing that which is *not authorized*? All these modern conveniences affect the *where* and the *when*, rather than to the *what* and the *how*. The impossibility of giving specific directions to each individual in the universe as to the exact time and place for the performance of each act is too obvious to require explanation. The *where* and the *when*, therefore, has been left largely to our discretion. That all the modern advantages should be used in the line of things commanded,—thus doubling or tripling the result of a

given amount of energy may be readily conceded. To claim, however, that they justify us in assuming to do in the name of the Master, things which are not even named in his revealed will, requires a gross perversion of the essential principles of logic.

Christians are exhorted to "be always ready to give a reason for the hope that is within them." 1 Peter 3: 15; and as they "may have opportunity" to "do good unto all men, specially to them who are of the household of faith." Gal. 6: 10. Paul impressed Timothy with the importance of being "instant in season; out of season." These scriptures and many others justify us in the use of sound discretion in taking advantage of the varying circumstances in proclaiming the gospel and exhorting and instructing believers. They furnish no authority, however, for the slightest modification or change in the teaching or practice of the worshiping assemblies, nor for the precept or example of the individual in respect thereto. They authorize us to seize,—perhaps to make,—opportunities for doing good along the lines enjoined; but they do not make that good which was evil, nor give us liberty to inculcate by either precept or example, a faith or a practice not contained in the word of God. "As, therefore, ye have opportunity;"—*wherever* and *whenever*, not *whatever* and *however*. So, then it may be said that the *where* and the *when* are left largely to our discretion: the *what* and the *how* are given by divine direction. Even the command, "Go into all the world," etc., pertains rather to the *where* than the *what*. It relates to the time and place of doing gospel work, rather than to the *character* of the work or the *method* of doing it. It by no means follows that because we are allowed a discretion as to the time and manner of going to a given place, we are at liberty to do what and as we please after our arrival.



## CHAPTER XII.

### MODERN INNOVATIONS.

Time and space forbid our entering into the details of the doctrines and practices which serve to distinguish the respective denominations from one another, and many, if not all of them, in some respects at least, from the church of the New Testament. A few prominent examples, however, will serve to introduce the inquiry along this line, and the diligent and devout reader can readily amplify the list from his own observation, if not from his own experience.

The one great difference between the congregations under the guidance of inspired men and the popular churches of the present, consists of the fact that the apostolic assemblies made no provision for the gratification of the ambition, avarice and appetite of their members. The writer hereof is persuaded that the provision made for these, by and in the modern churches, has been the fruitful source of corruption from which has sprung, either directly or indirectly, most of the divergencies from the simplicity of the gospel, as well as the practical and doctrinal differences among the sects themselves. The apostolic congregations literally fulfilled the injunction of Paul to the Roman brethren, "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts (desires) thereof." Rom. 13: 14. How important these considerations may be in secular matters, and how far we may appeal to and gratify these passions in things and enterprises pertaining strictly to our temporal welfare, it is no part of this work to discuss. It is certain, however, that they had no place in the evangelistic, eucharistic, edificatory, or

admonitory work of the early church, nor in any of her worshiping assemblies. Their entire absence from the appeals made by Christ and his apostles to the people, and from their instructive and admonitory words to disciples, and from their praise and memorial services, can hardly have been accidental. How many of the schemes, doctrines, and traditions by which the people of God are rent into contending and opposing factions, and her energies wasted in mutually neutralizing enterprises, would survive for a decade if these demoralizing factors were all eliminated from the spiritual equation? If every assembly of those calling themselves Christians would exclude from their meetings for religious work, worship, and instruction the things suggested by ambition, avarice, and appetite, there would soon be nothing on which to base differences and contentions; a single church would inevitably result; all Christians would be its members, its creed would be the Bible, while hypocrites, schismatics, designing men, and all theological acrobats would desert her with all the avidity of frightened rodents from an impending holocaust. But to enumerate some prominent points of difference.

1. *The church of apostolic times was not divided into opposing and contending factions.* It is true that there were personal differences; but they never reached the organic stage. They were settled by the parties thereto, or by the congregations without causing schism in the body. Had appeals been made to the passions to induce people to unite with the church, and to do their duty and keep them content to remain so identified schism could not have been prevented. As long, however as all earthly considerations and desires of the flesh were excluded from her work and worship:—as long as it was God's will exclusively, not theirs,

which they sought to follow,—as long as they were united as the Master prayed, “even as thou, Father and I are one;”(John 17: 11) as long as they were “perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment,” (1 Cor. 1: 10) there was but one church. Why will not people do the same to-day? What but vanity, ambition, love of applause of money and of pleasure, keep the church divided? Is not this your observation? yea your experience, if you have any? “But,” it is urged, “people can’t all see alike.” We freely admit that they *don’t* all see alike. It is obvious that if a proposition is *clearly stated*, it will convey exactly the same ideas and meaning to all by whom it is *accurately comprehended*. To say that God has not stated his will to us with clearness, yet proposes to punish us eternally because we do not comprehend it, is to charge him with gross injustice. To say that his commands are lacking in clearness, yet he requires us to “speak the same things,” and “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment” in carrying them out, is to place him on an equality with a Nero or a Caligula. No, it is for no lack of clearness in God’s commands. The way he has marked out is so plain that even the foolish (unlearned) need not err therein. Then man’s failure to comprehend accurately must be attributed to either his lack of ability or his lack of *will*. But has God given us commands which, when clearly expressed, are beyond our ability to comprehend? Then he has mocked us and ensnared us, and is devoid of justice and benevolence as recognized and administered by the low standards of human reason. Not only so, but he has deceived us, and his promise to “put his law in our minds” and “write it on our hearts” (understanding), and that “all shall know (comprehend) him, from the least unto the greatest” is

a delusion and a falsehood. No, my friendly reader, it is our *obstinacy*, not our *inability* nor God's *lack of clearness*, which prevents our seeing these things alike. We will do well to follow the example of the early Christians in the perfect unity and freedom from sectarianism which they maintained.

2. *The church of apostolic times had no auxiliary societies, nor appendages to which she farmed out or sublet her privileges, nor by which she performed her devotions and offered her sacrifices by proxy.*

It had no special club, guild, or society peculiarly adapted to the needs, the whims, or the demands of the rich, the poor, the old, the young, the learned, ignorant, or any other class of the brotherhood. As the poor, weak, and unfortunate in body, mind, or purse needed the comfort, sustenance and encouragement of the strong, thrifty and prosperous; so these needed objects for their sympathy and bounty, as well as examples of patience, humility and devotion so often found among the destitute and afflicted. The spiritually illiterate needed the assistance of the wise; who, in turn, needed to extend, as well as tighten their grasp on truth as nought can, save the impartation of knowledge.

The young needed the wisdom, counsel and experience of the old; and they, the zeal, activity and enthusiasm of the young. Hence, in "their congregational capacity alone they moved." The devout and pious prosperous were examples of thrift and benevolence; the worthy and conscientious afflicted, of patience, humility and gratitude. The learned—especially in the scriptures—were accurate and exemplary guides; the ignorant but honest, were sincere and faithful followers. The elder brethren were exemplars in discretion, conservatism and forbearance; the younger in

zealous and enthusiastic obedience. *Now*, we have societies for the old, the young and the middle aged: there are committees for this, conventions for that, and unions for the other. There are Missionary Societies, Temperance Societies, Sewing Societies, Bible Societies, Dorcas Societies, Endeavor Societies both Junior and Senior, Christian Associations both male and female, Bible Unions, Young Peoples Unions, Epworth Leagues, Bands of Hope, King's Daughters, and so *ad infinitum*, with all their official distinctions, positions, salaries, perquisites, and special privileges, all under the auspices of the church. In some of these societies annual and life memberships and directorships may be purchased with money, regardless of the manner in which it is earned, and men and women are eligible thereto, regardless of their religious convictions or proclivities. The voice of the Pagan, Moham-  
medan, or infidel director is as potent in shaping the policy of the enterprise—directing this division of the King's army—as that of the most devout and consistent disciple.

Judas and Simon Magus would be eligible to membership in such a society by reason of their money. John 12: 6; Acts 8: 18. Peter and John, and even the Master himself would not be so. Matt. 17: 25-27; Acts 3: 6. What the exigencies are which the advocates of these auxiliaries claim to have rendered them appropriate, it is not our purpose to discuss. One thing is certain: they are no part of the church—the body of Christ—for “now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him,” (1 Cor. 12: 18), and he has not been pleased to set these in as any part thereof. It is also certain that the apostles, acting under the direct guidance of inspiration, did not regard auxiliary adjuncts and appen

dages to the church as either necessary or beneficial. In fact, if, as has been shown,—God's way "is perfect," there can be no real auxiliaries or helps to the divinely prescribed methods, because that which is perfect in all its elements cannot have anything either necessary or beneficial added thereto. So long as a thing is lacking in any necessary or beneficial element it is not perfect.

So then, if God's way is perfect—and the Bible says it is—and these things are no part of God's appointed way—and the Bible shows that they are not—it is not possible that they be either necessary or beneficial to the progress of the church. To the proposition that they have become expedient by reason of changed conditions, we answer at the risk of being charged with repetition, that it does not accord with an intelligent conception of infinite wisdom, power and goodness to approve a plan of carrying on an enterprise without making provision for such modifications as changing conditions render essential to success. There are other questionable features incident to, if not inseparably connected with the multiplication of these societies.

We will appropriate space to relate a single occurrence illustrative of their tendency. A few years ago the writer and his family were the guests of a non-religious friend and neighbor at dinner on a summer Lord's day. Our host, knowing that it was our invariable practice to attend religious services in the forenoon, and that I taught a Bible class in the afternoon, so arranged the dinner hour as not to interfere. At noon we went directly from the meeting house to the residence of our friend, where we found the other guests already assembled, and some of the young folks who were members of the congregation where we had

attended, were engaged in a social game of cards. I considered that courtesy forbade any suggestion from me as to the propriety of devoting the Lord's day to amusements; so after dinner I excused myself and met with the Bible class as usual, returning to the house of my host after the lesson, where these young members were still enjoying their game. About 6 o'clock p. m., at the sound of the city church bells, all these young people hastily bunched their cards without even waiting to play out the hand, and began preparation for an immediate departure. I considered this to be my opportunity, and, although I well knew the cause, I ventured to inquire the reason for thus abruptly abandoning so pleasant a pastime. "Oh!" said they, "this is the first bell for our Young People's Society meeting." "But," I interrupted, "is this particular meeting so important as to require such a sudden desertion of such congenial company and pleasing entertainment?" To this they answered, "We have given a solemn pledge to attend these meetings, and we could not think of disregarding our pledge." "But," I insisted, I did not see you at the meeting house this morning; did not your obligation to wait on the Lord in all his appointments require your presence there?" "You were not at the Bible class where you might have learned much from the men and women of age and experience," etc. We forbear to pursue the colloquy further. Here the young people and their parents, members of one of the *orthodox* (?) churches of the city, took their departure, doubtless innocent of any suspicion that they were giving a man-made institution precedence in their affections and obligations, over the

"Church our blest Redeemer saved,  
With his own precious blood."

Yet these people concede—in theory, at least—that God's way is superior to man's, and that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." Doubtless they would bitterly resent the charge of subordinating her claims to those of any humanly devised institution which dares not emphasize the importance of Christian unity on exclusively Bible grounds.

Reader, if you suspect that I have overstated the case, attend one of the union meetings of one of these societies. Without letting any one know your purpose, endeavor to get them to state, or to permit you to state on purely Bible authority just what God desires to be done by the sinner or unbeliever in order to his conversion, or by the believer in order to develop his Christian character. We confidently predict that you will conclude our statement to fall short of, rather than to go beyond the truth.

Alas! how utterly impossible it is for the recently recruited "soldier of the cross," of tender years and experience, to attain sufficient strength, individuality and endurance to effectually wield the "sword of the Spirit," "run with patience the race," or "fight the good fight," on the nourishment drawn from this pre-arranged, pre-diluted, pre-masticated, and pre-digested spiritual food. When we attend a general or national meeting of these confederated societies, see the display of parliamentary and oratorical talent, admire the costly apparel and personal charms of those conspicuous in the work, hear the liberal contributors praised to extravagance, and the ridicule of those who from inability or indisposition are not so liberal; when we are brought face to face with the strife for positions and perquisites, the small-talk, not to say frivolity, and coquetry—incident to the free commingling of the sexes—in view of all these can it be said that ambition, avarice and appe-



tite, vanity, carnality, and love of applause are not potent, if not controlling factors in this equation, from which they were entirely eliminated among the congregations of apostolic times?

3. *The congregations of apostolic times erected no massive or expensive cathedrals, nor adorned them with costly and elaborate furnishings.*

What is ever accomplished by the dedication of imposing and majestic piles of masonry to denominational worship save the gratification of human pride and the excitement of human envy? Are they not monuments of vanity? yea, and of cruelty, when the means for their construction are wrung from the poor and oppressed and the means for their maintenance extorted from the hovels of squalor by law, priestcraft, or a morbid public sentiment?

It is said that in a certain city there is a magnificent structure, erected at a cost of near half a million. The salary of the *Pastor* is up into the tens of thousands, and that of its chorister into the tens of hundreds. Everything connected therewith is so grand and gorgeous that a person in neat but plain apparel becomes painfully conspicuous. Within a few blocks, in a dilapidated building, is what is sometimes called a mission service, where the destitute and unfortunate are instructed, admonished and encouraged by an humble disciple without salary. The attire which would render one conspicuous by reason of its plainness in the costly building, would here be so on account of its superiority over the average attendant. On what common ground are these two congregations to meet? What is the practical basis for unity and community, co-operation and fellowship between them?

It is doubtless true that many of the poor and destitute are so of their own fault. Their condition being

due to their own thriftlessness, profligacy, and perhaps vice, it is possible that they have to some extent forfeited their claim on our sympathy. But there are surely some who are victims of circumstances beyond their control. They suffer the galling bonds of destitute affliction without murmuring or deviating from the path of rectitude to man or fidelity to God. Who dare raise the insurmountable barrier, or flood the impassable gulf of non-fellowship, non-co-operation, non-brother-hood between them and the most favored of God's creatures in body, brain or mammon? Brethren, beware!

4. *The church of apostolic times did not import clergymen to preside over them and monopolize the functions of instruction and admonition.*

They rather prepared men for the work of proclaiming the good news, and *sent* them to such as had never heard the gospel. By far the greater part of the financial energy of the average modern congregation is expended in procuring the services of the finished rhetorician who can prepare, not only the "sincere milk of the word," but the more substantial elements of spiritual nutrition in such a manner that they will be pleasing to the morbid palates of his dyspeptic flock, if not strengthening to their atrophied spirits; and through whom they can "offer their sacrifice of praise to God" by proxy.

The time of the average modern professor of religion is so occupied in the pursuit of honor, wealth and pleasure (ambition, avarice and appetite) that little is left for a close, patient and critical study of God's word. Hence, the imported clergyman to study, digest and interpret the Scriptures for him. The numerous and flourishing branches of this innovation upon the apostolic order of procedure may be traced almost *ad infinitum*.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### OPERATIC AND ELOCUTIONARY HIRELINGS.

5. *Those who served the apostolic congregations neither demanded nor received definite nor exorbitant salaries for their services in proclaiming the gospel or instructing the assemblies.*

That modern clerisy, with all its distinctions, appendages, privileges, perquisites and prerogatives, was contemplated by those who established the primitive order, probably no intelligent Bible student will venture to affirm.

That the scriptures furnish either precept or example for an agreement between pastor and flock for a given number of sermons, or a definite period of time devoted to teaching, in consideration of a certain sum of money, will hardly be asserted by the boldest advocate of modern methods for accumulating sustenance for this latter day priesthood. Paul, in his address to the overseers of the church at Ephesus, recorded in Acts 20: 33-35, uses the following language: "I have coveted no man's gold, silver or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered to the necessities of myself and them that are with me. I have showed you how that laboring you ought to support the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Let it be observed that the word rendered *covet* is not *pleonectien* or its co-relative noun, *pleonectes*, which carry the idea of a wrongful or over-reaching desire, as in 1 Cor. 5: 10, 11; 6: 10; 2 Cor. 2: 11; 7: 2; 12: 17; Eph. 5: 5. The word rendered *covet* in Paul's speech to the Ephesian brethren is *epethumesa* from *epethu-*

*meo*, to desire lawfully or appropriately. It is the same word used by the Master in Luke 22: 15 where he is represented as saying to his disciples, "With desire have I desired [*epethumia epethumesa*] to eat this pass-over with you before I suffer."

Thus it will be seen that the great apostle of the Gentiles was not only guiltless of an unlawful or wrongful desire for the substance of these Ephesian brethren, but he asserts that he had not even a rightful or commendable desire to obtain their goods or any part of them as compensation for the spiritual service he had rendered them. If we turn to the last chapter of the second Thessalonian letter, we find this view strongly corroborated. After earnestly admonishing the brethren against disorderly conduct, he continues, "For ye yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved ourselves not disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labor [to the point of weariness] night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not the power, [authority, Gr. *exousian*, not *dunamin*] but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us." By reference to the 10th verse of the same chapter it will be seen that he did not excuse the preachers from the obligation of laboring for their bread, as he seems to include himself in the class of those among whom "if any would not work, neither should he eat." Brethren will doubtless have noticed that while sermons are often preached from this 20th chapter of Acts, that part which we have quoted is rarely, if ever made the basis for a discourse. So also with the scripture cited from the Thessalonian letter: we have never heard it commented on, or even quoted in a public assembly, though in the 14th verse the apostle seems to have

made obedience to the things set forth in this chapter a test of fellowship: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him." If all should be withdrawn from at this day who do not obey these injunctions of the apostle, we fear the ranks of the Master's army would be materially decimated.

"But," it is urged, "times have changed, and it would be impossible for the gospel preacher to live in the style enabling him to exert a powerful influence on the community in which he labors if restricted to the methods and manner of living in apostolic times." Viewed from the standpoint of human wisdom and expediency, there appears to be much force in the objection. But in what consists the *change* which has rendered it necessary to make a commercial transaction out of the dissemination of Bible truth? It is self evident that if the members of the congregations contributed of their free will a sufficient amount of their substance to meet all the real wants of those who labor in word and doctrine, and those who serve thus ask no more, no reason would exist for resorting to questionable means or appeals to stimulate the liberality of the brethren. It is likewise evident that the change which has rendered necessary the hireling system in gospel teaching has been, either that the servants of the congregations demand *more* than is requisite for an appropriate sustenance, or the members contribute *less*, if left to their own volition, and without any impulsion save their devotion to the cause. These things are *within* the church, and it is clearly her duty to correct them, or the one of them to which this unscriptural condition is justly chargeable. A large number of the congregations are manifestly making no effort to correct this evil, but apparently do all in

their power to perpetuate it and facilitate its growth. And so, the hireling system, characterized by the Master as corrupting and detrimental to the interests of his church, exists in reality in a large number of orthodox (so called) congregations, and in appearance, at least, in nearly all, so far as our observation extends. John 10: 12, 13. This distressing condition is caused directly by the pride, lust and covetousness, (ambition, avarice and appetite) of those who should be either the donors or the beneficiaries of the bounty of the congregations. According to the injunction of the apostle contained in 1 Thes. 5: 22, this evil ought to be corrected, whether it exists in *fact*, or only in *appearance*.

But it is objected, Are we not taught that "they that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel?" 1 Cor. 9: 14. Undoubtedly we are; but in order to live *of* the gospel is it necessary to make the preacher a hireling? Your family live *of* your earnings, doubtless; but do you make a definite bargain with each one in which a certain amount of companionship is exchanged for a certain amount of the necessities of life? Do you assess the value of your fatherly care and oversight,—your parental solicitude, your anxious and sleepless nights spent at the bedside of each one, and render them all into separate and several accounts, and require payment or security in order to be assured of a continuance? Are all your tender ministrations of love to your family weighed in the hair-scales of human selfishness, in order that a rigid equivalent may be exacted in financial units? Our obligation to sustain those who are required to devote their entire time to laboring in word and doctrine by no means involves the apportionment to each act or period of time an appropriate monetary equivalent. Devoted and affectionate children have often taken care of their aged and

decrepit parents and been abundantly compensated therefor without having driven a hard or definite bargain, and without any hint or intimation of what would be given or expected. We would greatly prefer being cared for, a public expense at a common alms-house, than to be compelled to make a definite iron-clad bargain with our children for their assistance and companionship. Is the claim of the Master on your bounty less sacred or weighty than those of parents or children? If the brethren refuse to contribute a sufficiency to the support of such servants of the church as are required to devote their time to the ministry of the word without being impelled thereto by a definite bargain or contract which they have been flattered, cajoled, coaxed, threatened, or ridiculed into making, the church is sadly wrong; if the preacher will not proclaim the gospel to sinners nor give instruction and admonition to saints without a lawful contract first signed, sealed and delivered, to pay him so much money, he is woefully wrong, and the sooner they both return to Scripture methods and Scripture principles the better.

It is useless to attempt a justification of this system by saying that men will not be affected in their conduct by these lucrative considerations, but will subordinate the temporal to the spiritual motive. Why appeal to the financial motive if we do not expect it to be heeded? We must not be surprised if men acquiesce in a motive to which we constantly appeal with predominating emphasis. It is a fact universally recognized that financial interest is very potent in controlling our judgment; and where sustained by the traditions and prejudices of a lifetime, its conclusions become difficult, if not well nigh impossible to set aside. How readily we yield to the seductive influences of

that logic whose conclusions bring gratification to our ambition, avarice and appetite, infinite wisdom alone can answer.

Who can say how far heresies, false doctrines and unscriptural practices in modern congregations have been due to prejudices, traditions, vanity, cupidity and ambition of even honest religious teachers? A calm and impartial survey of the religious, political and commercial world will convince the candid observer of the potency of pecuniary interests in magnifying the virtues and minimizing the vices of popular enterprises. To separate a man from theories inherited from the fathers, endeared by years of loyal adhesion, and which enable him to obtain sumptuous living for himself and family at a very moderate expenditure of mental and physical energy, is an exceedingly difficult undertaking. Ambition, avarice and appetite all conspire to hide from even the most honest and upright religious teachers and leaders all truth which does not come to them through approved party channels, and which cannot be made to do service to us by the use of approved denominational machinery. We see this clearly in our opponents, and *they* see it very clearly in us; but few of us see it, or want to see it in *ourselves*, *our* party or *our* church. It was the treasurer of the little band of disciples,—he who carried the bag,—handled the money,—who betrayed the Master. The first “church scandal” on record was caused by the disciples undertaking to administer the bounty of those who “sold their possessions,” and devoted the proceeds to the struggling cause. Acts 5: 1-10. Had some one objected to the “community of goods” prior to the peculiar death of that avaricious disciple and his mendacious wife, it is quite probable that they would have been answered with the same excuse made by



modern innovators for their unscriptural schemes, viz: "we can see no harm in them."

Can the church safely enter into competition with the world in devising schemes for accumulating, disbursing and enjoying wealth? In the promiscuous commingling of motives and inducements is not the carnal liable to predominate over the moral and spiritual? Under the prevailing commercial system of employment may we not expect men to take clerical orders from other than the highest and purest considerations? and having done so will they not be controlled thereby? Will not such naturally seek for the positions yielding the best salaries, the most desirable locations, social privileges, and the highest honors? To enhance these, will they not resort to unscriptural, if not unfair, means in order to stimulate the zeal and liberality of their congregations? Zeal and liberality are both commendable, but the example of both the Master and his disciples might set some limit to that peculiar phase which manifests itself in wringing the pittance from the oppressed, and the pennies from the children, to create a fund from which to draw liberal salaries. That the modern clergy, composed of men who follow preaching as a profession, for the purpose of earning money with which to provide sumptuous living for themselves and families was ever contemplated in the New Testament economy, is unsupported by a single precept, example or inference to be found therein or deducted therefrom. But you say that the salary is but an incident, and not inducement for which this sacred calling is entered. Be it so; then it is a very potent *incident* for preventing the ranks of the clergy from becoming fearfully and rapidly decimated.

6. *The church of apostolic times employed neither select choirs, salaried singers nor instrumental music in the worshipping assemblies.*

It is not our purpose to discuss at length the various questions which might arise under this proposition. A few fundamental principles, however, underlying the subject, are deemed appropriate to be considered at this time and place because they seem to the writer so clear, and deviations therefrom appear to be so readily discerned. The Scriptures teach that singing is an act of worship. From a number of passages with which the Bible student is doubtless familiar, we learn that the disciples of the early church engaged in singing for the purpose of praise, thanksgiving, supplication, admonition and instruction. Acts 16: 25; Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16. That vocal music was ever used to attract a curious crowd, to entertain an audience, as a medium of displaying talent, or of earning money, or that instrumental music was ever used at all, neither appears by direction or inference in the entire New Testament.

Why, then, should the church of the present time introduce means, adopt methods, appeal to motives, ordain rites, institute ceremonies, and offer sacrifices which were not recognized as appropriate by the apostles under the guidance of divine inspiration? Are not these things addressed largely to the desire to excel and to gain money and applause, and to display the talents of the performers; and to please the ears and eyes of the people? Are they not thus appeals to the passions above named as having no place in the worshipping assemblies of the early church? We all know how difficult it is to control these passions, even when restricted to secular affairs; yet we bring them into the assemblies of worshipping Christians as attractions

and entertainments tending to increase the membership by appeals to the lust, rather than to the reason of the hearers. They unite with the congregations from prudential, rather than devotional considerations, and though ignorant of principles and innocent of convictions, their voice is as potent in shaping the policy of the church as that of the most devout and learned in the Bible. Even though they be innocent of wrong intent, their influence is as apt to be exerted to mis-shape and misdirect the policy and energies of the church as to give her the right trend. Those unacquainted with the teachings of the Bible will be apt to exert their influence in favor of what *they want*, rather than what *God has authorized*. We believe that no Bible scholar of reputation will affirm the necessity of either the hireling, the select choir or the musical instrument, for the attainment of any of the objects which the New Testament requires or authorizes to be accomplished by music. That the songs as well as the prayers should be rendered in such language as may be easily understood, even by those who do not participate therein, is clearly taught by the apostle Paul. 1 Cor. 14: 15, 16. That the elocutionary, the ostentatious, the operatic, and other sensational features of music were ever encouraged in the early church, appears neither from sacred nor profane history. *Now* they are emphasized in many of the fashionable churches at the expense, if not to the exclusion of the eucharistic, didactic, and admonitory effect of this very important branch of the worship. It is a fact too well known to be denied, and is not even apologized for, that between the skilful manipulation of the *basso profundo* of the grand organ, the bewitching tones of the orchestra. and the tremelo vibrations of the *soprano obbligato*, not one word of the sense or sentiment of the song itself can be heard.

Here then is one element of the worship, made prominent in the days of the early church, intended to be engaged in by all God's children, for their mutual edification, praise, thanksgiving, and supplication; but the purposes for which it was ordained have, in many instances been entirely subordinated to motives and desires wholly unknown to the N. T. Brethren, friends, devout men and women of the fashionable congregations,—you who doubtlessly, honestly, but unadvisedly worship “after the doctrines and traditions of men,”—have we overdrawn the picture? You well know we have not. You who advocate such innovations erect an insuperable barrier of non-co-operation, non-participation, and hence, non-fellowship against all who are opposed there-to from conviction, no matter how humble, devout or upright they may be, nor how loyal to him whom we all recognize as our common Master.

Some one is probably now ready with the old and threadbare excuse, “There can be no harm in making the music attractive to the ear,” etc. Then there can be no harm in making the place attractive to the eye: therefore arrange for fine paintings, sculpture, and panoramic views, on which we may look during the service. There can be no harm in making the sacramental elements attractive to the taste; and the Scriptures nowhere prescribe quantity nor quality: therefore let them be such as to fully satiate the appetite and tickle the palate of the most ardent epicure. There can be no harm in making the occasion attractive to the touch or feeling: therefore provide instruments of bodily pleasure, athletic appliances, baths, etc. What is more refreshing than a generous bath when the roads are dusty and the heat oppressive? and cleanliness is enjoined by the Scriptures. There can be no harm in making things pleasant to the smell; so let the

church provide incense to be burned for the delectation of all. David did so, and does not the Scriptures say that he "was a man after God's own heart"? In addition, let each member provide a special perfume for his own use, and suited to his or her individual taste, regardless of its being offensive to others; for thus it is with the instrumental music. Such as become nauseated may worship elsewhere.

There can be no more harm in making things pleasant for the mind than for the body; therefore provide games and amusements of different kinds as a recreation or relaxation for such as do not find it agreeable to concentrate their minds on the sermon and services during the time requisite for their rendition.

Now, brethren, what is the logical objection to procedure in the line suggested? Simply that it constitutes what the apostle calls WILL WORSHIP. Col. 2: 18-23. It is following *our own* wills instead of *God's*. It is substituting our own carnal desires for GOD'S REVELATION, as the standard of worshipping in the assemblies. As wills and tastes differ according to education, temperament, environment, mental activity, health, acquired preferences, and perhaps other considerations, so the standards of doctrine, discipline and practice must vary; and hence divisions and offenses "contrary to the doctrine of Christ."

But it is urged that David enjoined the praising of God "with the harp and with the organ." Yes, and he enjoined the praising of him with the timbrel and the dance. To be consistent in the use of this argument, introduce into the worshipping assemblies the "Old Virginia reel," the waltz and the two-step. They are sustained by the same argument, viz., making the services attractive, and are justified by the same authority, viz., the precept of David, contained in the same

chapter and verse. Ps. 150: 4. Is it contended that the dance is different from that used in the time of David? So is the harp and the organ. Even if they were both identical, however, that would constitute no justification, for we are not under the authority of David, but that of Christ, which differs therefrom in several important particulars.

Both the precept and example of David are directly opposed to the teachings of the New Testament in many respects. David had a plurality of wives, which is forbidden by Christ, he declaring that it was never approved, but rather permitted by God. David prayed for the utter destruction of his enemies, and a denial of any mercy, even to their children. Ps. 109: 5-20. This is violently opposed to both the teaching and example of Christ and his apostles. Matt. 5: 43, 44; Rom. 12: 19, 20. Even if it were shown that God ordained instrumental music as a part of the Old Testament ceremonies, it would not follow that it should be used under the New. Circumcision was an essential feature under the Old covenant, but to practice it under the New renders the atonement of "no effect" to us. Gal. 5: 2-4. What, then is the basis for the conclusion that God is pleased with the organ, fiddle, piano, horn, operatic salaried singer, select choir distinct from the rest of the congregation, etc., etc.? Such a conclusion rests on the baldest and barest presumption. How well God is pleased with our presuming to add some feature to the worship which he has not seen fit to prescribe, we may learn from Deut. 18: 20; Ps. 19: 13; Prov. 30: 6.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### WEEKLY ASSEMBLAGES AND MANNER OF CONTRIBUTING.

7. *The apostolic congregation gave no fairs, festivals, exhibitions or entertainments; nor flattered, coaxed, threatened or cajoled believers and unbelievers indiscriminately, in order to raise the means to defray the expenses incident to her work.*

The apostles acting under the direct inspiration of God, devised but one scheme for raising the means for the sustenance of its worthy beneficiaries, whether preaching brethren or indigent laymen. The cheerful and unconstrained free-will offering of the brethren and sisters was usually made on the first day of the week, on the occasion of the meeting for the breaking of the commemorative loaf; and, so far as we are informed, was never sought to be augmented by the persistent importunity of those who were to be the recipients thereof. The amount of each respective contribution was left solely to the generosity of the giver, to be determined by him from the success or prosperity of his efforts and undertakings preceding, the exigencies of the congregation and its members, and his own devotion to the cause. Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; 2 Cor. 9: 5-7. This approved scheme for supplying the Lord's treasury with funds seems to have fallen into what one of our prominent rulers was pleased to call "*innocuous desuetude*," and the name of its successors is *Legion*, for they are many. Mark 5: 9. Human ingenuity seems to have been taxed to its utmost in devising plans for purifying the pockets, if not the hearts, of both saint and sinner by extracting therefrom the "utmost farthing" of "filthy lucre" which they can be made to

yield by appealing to ambition, avarice and appetite,—the use of flattery, ridicule and persuasion. Is man's way superior to God's? If not why this radical departure from the method pursued by the apostles? Are the demands of the clergy greater than they ought to be, or the voluntary bounty of God's people less? So complete a change from the New Testament plan of securing means for carrying forward the gospel work must be due to some reason of which his people ought not to be ashamed. In the matter of alms-giving the injunction of the Master was, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," but that "thine alms may be in secret." Matt. 6: 1-4. Now, the injunction is "Let thine alms be public; proclaim them on the house-tops and publish them in the streets and assemblies, yea and in the newspapers, that others seeing your good works, may be constrained to "devote a large part of their substance to the sumptuous fare of the clergy." The apostle exhorted the Roman brethren, "Let him that giveth do so with simplicity." Rom. 12: 8. Now, the rule is not *simplicity*, but *complexity*; and the more complex the better. Divide the demands into many heads and sub-heads: ask a little under each and ask frequently and persistently. A small demand will not be so strenuously resisted, even if deemed unjust. The rich and vain are humored, flattered and feasted; the close-fisted nagged and coaxed; the poor cajoled and ridiculed. Those who contribute liberally to all church enterprises without asking any questions and regardless of their kind and character are rewarded by having their ambition gratified and receiving practical social absolution from their respectable vices. Such as refuse to donate to any except scriptural enterprises, or otherwise than in a scriptural manner are given to understand that they are regarded as narrow,



stoical and pessimistic, even though they be among the most devout and upright of the disciples. Why this unscriptural, or rather, *anti-scriptural* publicity in almsgiving, and complexity in the schemes for augmenting the contributions? It was not so in the early church, and was positively forbidden by the Master and the great apostle of the Gentiles. Is it not because man's wisdom has been substituted for God's, and it is now deemed necessary to appeal to the ambition, avarice and appetite of the members in order to succeed? Verily, the moneychangers and venders of merchandise have taken possession of the modern Temples of Worship.

8. *The congregations of the early church did not postpone, or "forsake the assembling of" themselves till the services of a clergyman could be procured for the purposes of instructing or entertaining them.*

From many scriptures which might be cited it is fairly inferrable that the primary purpose of the disciples in meeting together was not to hear an ornate homily from some eminent theologian. We learn from Acts 20:7 that on the "first day of the week" the "disciples came together to break bread" (the commemorative loaf). Though Paul, perhaps the most gifted speaker of his time, was present, there is no hint that the purpose of the meeting was to "hear him preach." Paul exhorted the Corinthian brethren to make their free-will offerings on the first day of the (probably each) week, giving as a reason "that there be no gatherings when I come." Nowadays, the plan would be to reverse this order. Wait the coming of the big preacher, get a great crowd together, provide means for displaying the vanity of all; give the vocal and instrumental musicians opportunity for showing their skill, the social butterflies for exhibiting their charms, the rich to display their

wealth, and the poor their self denial in giving; use every conceivable leverage to relax their purse-strings, and while intoxicated with the exuberance to their own vanity extract the last available penny. Then publish far and wide the praises of the manipulators of the scheme for their skill in raising so large a fund "for the Lord." By Paul's method, a scene of this kind is obviated. The liberality of the disciples being gathered unostentatiously in their quiet Lord's day meetings, no occasion is left for these public appeals to the lower motives of the members. In order to have made the collection on the first day of the week, it was necessary for them to have assembled on that day, but nothing is said about their being assembled to hear a sermon. 1 Cor. 16: 2. In Heb. 10: 25 the admonition is, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is," etc. The day of Pentecost, likewise, was the first day of the week, at which time it is said that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and in the fellowship (Gr. *koinonia*, contribution), and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." From these scriptures the inference is strong if not conclusive that the primary purpose of assembling on the first day of the week was not that of hearing an entertaining discourse. It appears to have been for prayer, praise, instruction, admonition, and contribution for benevolent purposes; but chiefly to commemorate the Lord's suffering and death. But some one may ask, "Did they do this *every* Lord's day? We believe there is no scripture which so states, *totidem verbis*. The fourth command of the decalogue does not specify *every* sabbath. The statute of the State of Indiana now before me is in the following language, to wit: "The following days, to wit: the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, the first day of Jan-

uary, commonly called New Years day, the fourth day of July," etc., "shall be holidays" for certain purposes therein set forth. It does not say *every* fourth of July or the fourth day of *every* July, yet who will say that the reason for observing one does not apply with equal force to the observance of each of the others?

Much more might be said from the standpoint of human inference and reason on this branch of the subject in hand. We are not however, attempting to settle these questions in the light of human discretion or expediency. If it can be ascertained what was the idea in the minds of inspired men, which they intended to convey, while speaking or writing as "the Spirit gave them utterance," it will be sufficient for us. From both the text and the context we are led to infer that the observance of one Lord's day is of as much importance as another. If the contrary can be shown, we shall be much pleased to consider which of these days should be set apart and observed in a special manner. Otherwise we deem it both safe and pleasant to observe each recurring Lord's day by commemorating his death, if practicable.

9. *The Apostolic Churches endowed no colleges, seminaries nor universities for the purpose of matriculating or graduating professional theologues.*

We have no doubt that much moral, religious and scientific truth is imparted and acquired in the theological schools of modern times. Doubtless the average mind is prepared by discipline and rational habits for the acquisition of much more. But can it be truthfully said that no moral or religious *error* is acquired in these institutions? Are they *all* right, notwithstanding the direct and irreconcilable conflict in the theories, doctrines and conclusions insisted on by the various professors? Do not the teachers in these institutions

seek to hide from their pupils all facts and truths which do not co-incide with the tenets of their respective sects? Where is the theological school conducted by and in the interest of immersionist denominations, in which the affusionist or paido-baptist can have a fair, respectful and attentive hearing? Where the institution conducted by affusionists where care is taken that the students are well informed as to the strong points on the opposite side of the question? Is it not true that convictions become so fixed by sectarian influences in these institutions during youth as to be almost beyond the reach of reason? Can the Christian world ever become united as the Master so earnestly prayed while these institutions are arrayed in diametric opposition to one another, and each laboring to so fix its peculiar sectarian doctrines in the minds of its students as to be beyond the power of logic to dislodge? Teachers of the Romish or Catholic church say that if they can have the religious care and training of the child up to its tenth or twelfth year, its denominational tendencies will have become so fixed that the probability of a change will be exceedingly remote. The tendency to make ruts or indentations along lines of frequent motion is, by no means, confined to things physical. That there is a kind of mental, moral, and spiritual erosion which causes us to settle deeper and deeper into channels of constant thought, will hardly be denied. "As a man thinketh,—so is he," expresses much truth. Thought is the precursor of all desire, and desire is the foundation of action. Continued thought and consequent action along a given line will ripen into habit; and what is a man but the sum of his habits? It is therefore, by a perfectly natural and causative process that the graduate of a denominational school becomes an obstinate sectarian. The institution starts

him moving in a sectarian rut or groove which he rarely leaves after graduating, but continues to move therein, continuing to deepen, but rarely to broaden the channel. The simple assumption that his party or sect possesses all the truth which is worth elaborating, prevents his looking beyond, hence he condemns, without examination all other moral and spiritual truth. His denominational school cannot afford to admit the existence of important truth not embraced in her curriculum, and to encourage investigation along other or opposing lines might suggest their importance and lead to their acceptance. We do not wish to be understood as underrating the value of education; too painfully are we aware of our deficiency in this direction.

We all need preparation for meeting the emergencies of life with clear heads, brave hearts, strong wills, ready hands and pure motives, and nought save a practical education can do this. But can the sincere disciple afford to wilfully close his eyes to any part of the truth—spiritual truth? If so what part? Can he afford to imbibe any religious error? If so how much?

Where is the theological school in which all the truth concerning man's duty to God is taught *unmixed with error*? It has been said that *all* teach *substantially* the truth. But might we not as well say that all astronomers teach *substantially* the truth in regard to eclipses, while no two assign the same time for their occurrence? Or that *all* the charts and maps of different authors were correct, though no two gave, even approximately, the same distance or direction between given points? The early Christians sought the truth, —perhaps *all* the truth pertaining to their duty to God and their fellow men, but they never subjected themselves to the control of any institution which suppressed such truth and advocated such error as appeared

conducive to its monetary interests, no matter how honest might have been its teachers in pursuing such a course.

Reader, does it occur to you that our strictures on these theological institutions are rather severe? If so we suggest three modes of testing the question, viz: 1. Attend a union meeting of all the orthodox denominations conducted by one or more of the noted evangelists of the day, assisted by the pastors of the different churches. Ask them to agree on a statement of what is required of an alien sinner in order to become a Christian. 2. Write a personal letter to the several professors of theology in the various denominational colleges, seeking the same information or, 3. Attend a general conference, convention or assembly of the different denominations, and consider their action in changing, repealing, substituting and modifying the various parts, phrases, and sections of their creeds, articles, and confessions. If these instruments contain all "that pertains to life and Godliness," and no more, why change or modify them at all? If not, our case against them is made out completely. Even while we write these lines, in one of the oldest, most intelligent, and most conservative of the denominations,—one for which from childhood I have cherished a profound regard;—yea, even at this day, is being contemplated a dis-avowal of one of its doctrines hallowed by time, thereby threatening to sweep this people astride the line which separates Calvinism from Arminianism.

So far as we are informed, the protestant sects all disclaim infallibility, and indignantly resent the claims of Mother Rome thereto; yet, with a zeal and obstinacy worthy of an absolutely infallible cause they persist in waging among themselves the warfare of proselytism, both offensive and defensive, wherever and whenever material can be found which is probably available.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONVENTIONS, CREEDS, ETC.

10. *The church of apostolic times convoked no Assemblies, by whatever name for the purpose of formulating creeds, making by-laws, nor for ordaining rituals and ceremonies for her observance, nor rules for her guidance and decorum.*

God's word given by inspiration through the apostles was all the law or creed they deemed necessary. From it they learned the lessons of purity of head, heart and body from idolatry, covetousness and licentiousness; and from envy, malice and strife. From it they learned justice and mercy to fellow-men in the commands, "love thy neighbor as thyself," and "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." From it they took their lessons concerning benevolence,—that therein no constraint should be used, but that each one should be his own judge of the extent and character of his liberality. From it they learned that when they had obeyed the commandments, kept the ordinances, offered the sacrifices, observed the ceremonies, and proclaimed the doctrines which God, through his apostles had authorized, they had the divine promise of approval. From it they learned that within itself it contained "all things which pertain to life and godliness," and was sufficient to thoroughly furnish the man of God unto every good work," and that "every plant [institution] which the heavenly Father hath not planted [authorized] shall be rooted up" [destroyed]. 2 Peter 1: 3; 2 Tim. 3: 17; Matt. 15: 13. Beyond this they had no assurance; nor have we at the present. No man can say with certainty, nor hence

with safety, that any service is acceptable to God which he has not authorized. That it has been ordained by assemblies, enacted by conventions, or approved by convocations of good men or eminent theologians, can afford nothing beyond conjecture that it will have God's approval. If the commandments, enactments and traditions of men of this generation afford no better or more reliable criteria of what will be pleasing in the sight of God than when the Master was on earth, they certainly constitute a very slender thread on which to hang our hopes of the approving smile or the welcome plaudit, "well done good and faithful servant." Matt. 15: 2-9.

The example of the disciples at Antioch, in sending to the "apostles and elders" at Jerusalem to settle a disputed question, is sometimes cited as authority for the convoking of assemblies and conventions for legislative purposes at the present time. Acts 15: 1-29. It should be remembered, however, that this was not a meeting of representatives chosen by popular vote in a number of different congregations. Nor were men and women induced to unite with the disciples except at the point of conviction. That there are prominent members of the various churches now who have no well defined convictions on religious matters, and who do not know enough about the scriptures to form such, is too well known to be denied by any well informed disciple. As representatives to conventions are now usually chosen, such members have as potent an influence in shaping the policy of the church as the most devout and learned saint. Will it be seriously contended that the present method of choosing representatives by majority of the congregations, irrespective of their piety or intelligence in scripture matters, to legislate for the church of God was contemplated by the writers of the New Testament? Whoever doubts the ignorance



concerning the scriptures which exists among otherwise intelligent people can easily be satisfied by sounding the average church member on the subject.

Oh no, the men at Jerusalem to whom the Antioch congregation appealed for instruction and advice were not representatives chosen by the popular vote of popular worldly congregations, and sent to Jerusalem for legislative purposes; hence they furnish no precedent for such at the present time. *They* were under the direct influence of inspiration, and, instead of promulgating their own opinions, they informed the brethren at Antioch that "it seemed good *to the Holy Ghost* and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these necessary things," etc. Acts 15: 28. From this scripture no authority can be legitimately drawn for uninspired men to meet as an ecclesiastical tribunal, either self constituted or by the authority of the promiscuous vote of the congregations which they profess to represent, and assume the prerogative of performing either judicial or legislative functions for the church of God.

We are now ready to hear some one ask the question, "Are you opposed to the Sunday School, the Y. P. S. C. E., the Y. W. C. A., the Y. M. C. A., the W. C. T. U., the C. W. B. M., the B. Y. P. U., and the many other means of teaching and disseminating moral and religious truth? Our answer is that we are in favor of each and every article, item, and element in any and all of these and other associations which is in harmony with the will of God. Should we favor others? If so why? If not, how are we to determine which are in harmony with his will except by that which has been revealed in his divine word given through inspired men? If God has ever spoken to me except through the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments I have no knowledge of it. Whether he has spoken to others

in a different manner, I do not undertake to decide. In view of the fact, however, that so many people are claiming to have received personal expressions of approval from God in respect to conclusions which stand in direct opposition to one another, I must be excused from adopting any of them unless supported by other evidence than self consciousness of their own correctness. If there be a single item in any of these institutions which is not in harmonj with God's will, I must withhold my co-operation to that extent at least, as being useless, supererogatory, and hence productive of schism. If the church may introduce one unauthorized item, ceremony or practice into the worshipping assemblies, why not two? If two, why not four? eight? twenty? fifty, or a hundred, and so *ad infinitum*? Where then, would be the logical stopping place? Where the line between a religious and secular meeting? Where, between a worshipping assemblage and one for entertainment and diversion? What the distinguishing elements between a meeting for worship, instruction, and admonition and one for pleasure, entertainment and ostentation? Individually, the writer of these pages favors all the institutions which are authorized by either the precept or example of the apostles. In these institutions he favors each item, element, article and ordinance which the Scriptures authorize, introduced from the *motives* they authorize, in the *manner* and by the *means* they authorize, and, in order to prevent confusion, that each act, item and functionary be called by the *name* they authorize. What true disciple can object to this on scriptural grounds? Can any one doubt that he who persists in doing this is "led by the Spirit," and will eventually receive the welcome plaudit, "Well done good and faithful servant?"

Reader, with what kind of a church or congregation should you and I be identified if not with one which does the *things*, in the *manner*, by the *means*, from the *motives*, and for the *reasons* sanctioned by the sacred writings; avoiding all uncertainty and confusion by calling them by the *names* used in the Scriptures to express the same ideas? Wherever there exists such a congregation, ought not disciples of the community to regard it a valuable privilege to be identified therewith? If there be none such, may we not well question whether the church established by Christ and his apostles exists there in its complete identity? May not each true disciple be instrumental in helping others by advocating a complete return to the simplicity of the early church? a restoration of apostolic religion, its doctrines, its methods, its ordinances, its fruits?

But, possibly the reader is now ready to ask, "Do you believe that success is attainable at the present time by the methods used by the apostles in their day?" We answer, that will depend largely upon what is to be regarded as constituting success. If by that term is meant numerical, financial, social and elocutionary supremacy, we would not venture to predict phenomenal progress. But if by *success* is meant the establishment of congregations of disciples on the "sure foundation" "built upon apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone";—if you mean the bringing of your local assembly to stand on purely scriptural grounds;—if you mean by success the elimination of every shadow of doubt from the spiritual equation,—the securing of God's approval for the congregation and every member thereof who acquiesces in its policy;—if, I say, this is what is meant by *success*, the following scriptures give a clearer and much more satisfactory answer than any I could make.

“As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither,—so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.” Isa. 55: 10, 11. “God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.” Acts 10: 34, 35. “Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” Eccl. 12: 13. “For this is [constitutes] the love of God, that we keep his commandments.” 1 John 5: 3. “For if ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1: 10, 11. “Oh yes,” says one, “we freely admit that they who do just what the Lord has commanded and go no further, will, *personally* and *individually* receive the promised reward; but how about converting the world?”

The Master has, likewise given us the answer to this question. In John 17: 11–21 he has clearly taught that the conversion of the world depends on the perfect unity of his people who preach the word. How can we be more surely and completely united than by all his people, in their aggregate capacity doing just what he has authorized, and leaving untouched that of which he has said nothing? If less attention were given to what *people think*, and more to what *God has said*, on a given subject, we would come much nearer being united. If we appeal to the history of the Church, we find that she adds her testimony to the words we have cited from divine revelation. The increase of the church in both numbers and spiritual grace, was certainly far greater in proportion to the number engaged in promulgating the gospel when “the multitude of them that believed

were of one heart and of one soul," (Acts 4: 32) than it is at the present, or has been at any other time since the body has been divided into opposing and discordant factions, each with its "Lo here! and its lo there!" If there be evidence of even a reasonably conclusive character to sustain the assumption that we cannot succeed in carrying out God's will and receiving his approval, either individually or collectively by doing *all* he has authorized, and limiting our religious work and worship to *what* he has authorized, the writer hereof will deem himself under lasting obligations to any one who will point out such evidence to him.

God gave assurance to his people in apostolic times that by being united, and not otherwise, could they succeed in convincing the world of the divine character of his son. Both sacred and profane history concur in confirming the divine prediction. Since God's people have been rent into opposing factions, no such success has attended the proclamation of the gospel as when the Church presented a united front to the world. Why, then, should we be so loth to accept a fact which prophecy, both sacred and profane history, and our own observation and experience all concur in asserting?

To say that the world cannot be reached and convinced by uniting on just what God has said, leaving out of our religious faith, doctrine and practice all those things for which we find no authority in the precept or example of the Master or his apostles, but depend entirely on the wisdom and opinions of uninspired men;—to do this, I say is to deny the statement of the Master himself as contained in John 17: 21, as well as its confirmation by both history and experience.

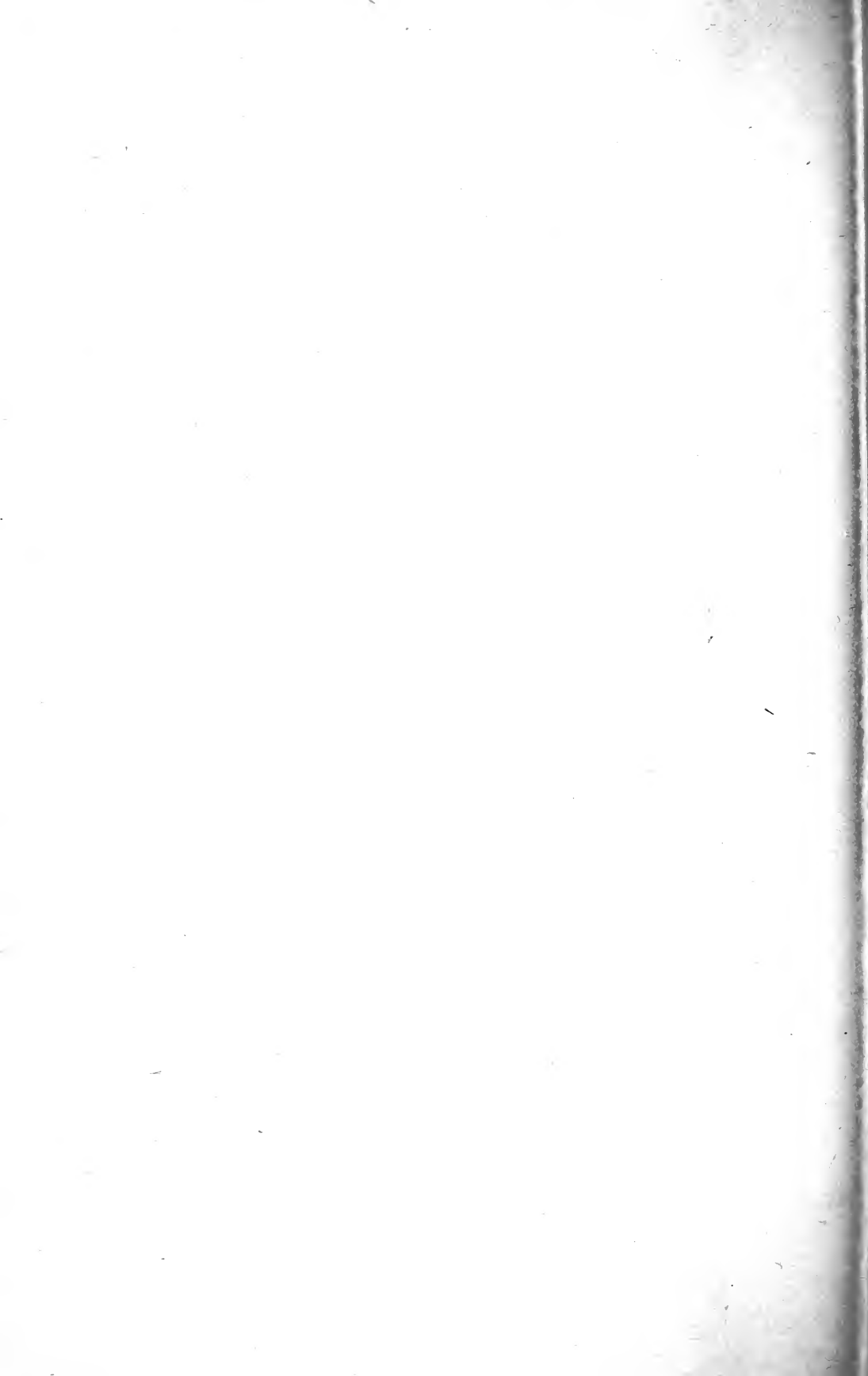
Reader, my task is done. If these pages shall be instrumental in even partially dispelling the fogs of de-

nominal confusion which so often obscure the beneficent rays of the Sun of Righteousness from the good and honest heart and the enquiring eye;—if they may but help to disclose the strait and narrow way to but a limited number of the devout few by whom it is destined to be trod,—a life desire of the writer will have been realized. But if not, he will have the consolation of having contributed his mite to the religious literature of the day, conscious of no motive save *the love of truth*.

If this humble contribution to the current literature of the times shall prove helpful, encouraging, practical, in separating the chaff of error from the grain of truth, help to circulate it: if visionary, impractical, erroneous, consign it to the tomb of oblivion.

THE END.



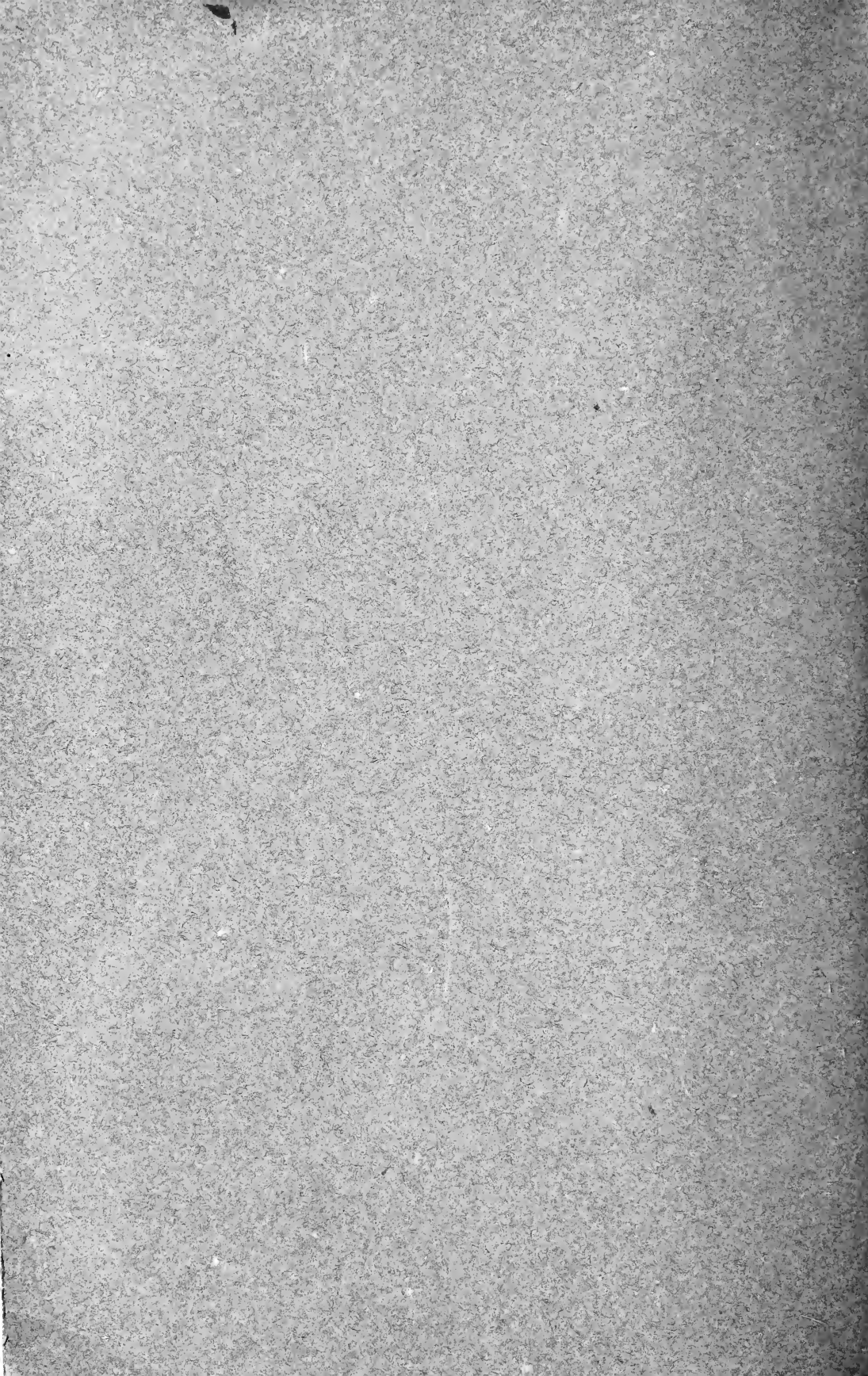






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Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: April 2005

**PreservationTechnologies**

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