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1909

A RESTATEMENT  
OF  
BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

PHILIP L. JONES



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**A Restatement  
of  
Baptist Principles**



# A Restatement of Baptist Principles

By  
Philip L. Jones

Author of  
"The Divine Fatherhood"



American Baptist Publication Society

Philadelphia

Boston

Chicago

Atlanta

New York

St. Louis

Dallas

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1909

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Published March, 1909



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## Special Note

IN accordance with the vote of the Publication Committee, Dr. Wayland Hoyt prepared the following special note: The Rev. Philip L. Jones, D. D., has been connected with the Book Department of the American Baptist Publication Society for twenty years, and Book Editor for sixteen. No man ever did duty more lovingly, thoroughly, admirably. How natural is it that also authorship should bloom out of such service. And here is the flower—this book. It is a clear, concise, every way fine statement of the structural Baptist principles. It is a book, just now in these everywhere questioning times, much needed. I heartily advise both its reading and the widespreading of the book by those who read. No wonder that the Publication Committee of the Society, in accepting the MS of this book, tendered its special congratulations to Doctor Jones, both for his long-standing industry as Book Editor, and for such fair issue, as is this book, from his own heart and brain.

WAYLAND HOYT,

PHILADELPHIA, February 19, 1909.



## Foreword

IN denominating the principles of the following discussion as those of Baptists, it is not intended to intimate that they are now held exclusively by them. It is still true of some, as for example, the ordinances and their symbolism, and the supreme headship of Jesus Christ. And even where the holding of these principles, on the part of Baptists, is in common with that of other denominations, the loyalty of the former is a little closer and more consistent than that of the latter. It is sufficient to instance the authority of Scripture and the separation of Church and State. Because of this then, as well as because of their early and sole espousal of them, we are justified in calling them principles of Baptists; indeed, we should not be far wrong if we called them distinctively such.

But why restate them? Are there not already statements of them sufficient in number? Perhaps. But it is sometimes necessary to restate an axiom. There are always some whom current statements do not reach and whose attention a

new voice may arrest. Moreover, fresh constituencies are constantly arising with the advent of new masses of young people; while changing conceptions of the old thought demand new forms in which it shall be embodied. For these reasons, therefore, this little brochure is sent forth, and it is fervently hoped that the cause of truth and the interests of the Lord's kingdom may be furthered thereby.

PHILADELPHIA, February 1, 1909.

P. L. J.

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# **I**

## **The Soul's Direct Relation to God**

*When I consider Thy heavens, the works of thy fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;  
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?  
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?  
For thou hast made him but little lower than God,  
And crownest him with glory and honor.  
Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy  
hands;  
Thou hast put all things under his feet.*

—*Psalm 8 : 3-6.*



# I



AT the basis of all being lies the individual. In matter we come in the final analysis to the atom or more recently to the electron. In natural history back through genera and species we go until we find the primitive parent. In human history, whatever line we traverse, we cannot stop before we reach the individual. The unit everywhere begins the arithmetic of God's universe.

In the spiritual realm this is no less true than elsewhere. It is the man, and not the nation, or tribe, or family with whom, in the closest scrutiny, God has to do. The question that came to Adam in that first inquest into moral action, Where art thou? is the question that in some form has been propounded throughout the ages. It is the human soul that must stand face to face with God. That human method at times has seemed to act otherwise does not set aside this supreme principle. Israelitish polity might include Achan's family in his punishment, but it was Achan alone who

was guilty of the sin. The burden of the stolen wedge of gold and the goodly garment was his and only his. The stones of the executioners might fall upon all alike, but God saw in him alone the culprit. Down through human history the student may discover many similar instances, but always and everywhere God has separated the mass and caused each to stand alone. Ezekiel was right for the whole sweep of human history, "the soul that sinneth *it* shall die." Not the nation, the tribe, the family, but the soul, *it* shall die. These are involved with it, but the divine tribunal does not rest until it, and it, and it are reached and the whole mass is judged.

In the bestowment of blessing, as in the distribution of blame, the same analysis is employed and the same result is reached. The exigencies of theological mechanics may at times have demanded the substitution of the household for the units of the same, and the federal covenant may have been thrust in to diminish the necessity or importance of the individual response, but the principle has only been vitiated; it has not been repealed. Well does Dr. E. Y. Mullins say: "Primarily the religious relation is a relation between God and the individual man. Religious

privilege and religious duty subsist between men and God, in the first instance, in their capacity as individuals, and only secondarily in their social relations. On the social side of their religious life there is nothing which can properly destroy the freedom of access which all men have to God, or in any way mar that fellowship.”<sup>1</sup> The definition of “social relations” may be of the widest character, taking in those that are ecclesiastical or otherwise, and the truth of the affirmation remains the same. No human device, however skilfully formed, can destroy the bond God has established, nor bind together that which he has determined to stand alone.

All through the Bible, in its deeper spiritual meaning, this fact of individuality stands forth with a clearness no sophistry can dim. It is Moses the man God calls from his herds, and David from his flocks, and Isaiah amid the glories of the temple vision. It was Peter and Matthew and John Jesus summoned from publican’s stand and fisherman’s boat, and later Saul, alone, amid the blinding light of the heavenly vision, to whom he showed how hard it was to kick against the pricks. Everywhere it is to *him* who believeth, and not to

<sup>1</sup> “Axioms of Religion,” p. 93.

*them* to whom is shown the salvation of God. Moreover, it is to *him* and not to *them* the varied rewards will be given contained in the promises of the angel of the seven churches. We do not walk in serried ranks when we come before God, whether for condemnation or acquittal. Each for himself and herself must come to the fountain of grace and dip and drink and live. And each for himself must feel the parched lips and impoverished soul inevitably resulting from the refusal of the refreshing draught. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel . . . saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts and in their hearts will I write it. . . And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest."<sup>1</sup> It is not upon the heart of the mass that the divine stylus does its work, but upon the heart of the man.

This doctrine of the individual relationship of the soul to God has always and everywhere been insisted upon by Baptists. Indeed, no doctrine has been, nor is, more Baptist than this. No edict of the State, no ordinance of the Church, no

<sup>1</sup> Jer. 31 : 33, 34.

act of the ecclesiastic, no function of the priest, will the one imbued with Baptist doctrine permit to come between himself and his Maker. He says, with no one and no thing to intervene, "my Father," and with filial affection in his heart he enters his presence. He sings,

I know his courts; I'll enter in  
Whatever may oppose.

He never has surrendered, he never will surrender this priceless gift of the soul's competency in its dealings with God. Each man is a priest in his own inherent right; each woman is a priestess and can gain access to Him who has said "all souls are mine." No intercession of saints is needed; no pleading of Mary, whom Rome has elevated to a position no scripture warrants; no placating ministry of the divine Lord himself is demanded. The man, the individual, goes for himself. True, our Lord ever liveth to make intercession for us. But it is not the intercession of one who must appease, but that of the one who ever stands ready to help. It is the intercession of the trellis for the vine which it lifts into the fructifying sunlight; it is the intercession of the parent and instructor for the child leading it

ever onward to the larger, fuller life lying beyond the attained horizon.

At a great cost too, Baptists have held and advocated this doctrine. Question history and it will tell us most eloquently of this. It was because of their adherence to this principle that many of the so-called Anabaptists suffered in Germany. For this Felix Mantz and Conrad Griebel yielded up their lives in Switzerland, and Balthasar Hübmaier, clear-visioned far beyond his age, in Bohemia. It was because of this that persecution in its cruellest form visited many a saint in England, and for this that Roger Williams was banished from Massachusetts, and Obadiah Holmes whipped, and men, of whom their day was not worthy, fined and imprisoned in Virginia. The world has been slow in learning the essentialness and worth of this individual soul-responsibility to God alone, and Baptists have been its teachers. Were they to become extinct, and had they left nothing else as their share in writing the world's history, for this their being would have been worth while.

That this doctrine finds support in modern philosophy is not without moment. According to that, God is not outside of his works ruling the

world from some far-off throne, but in them filling them with his life. Hence, it is not Christian alone, but scientific as well, when Paul speaks of "Christ formed in you the hope of glory."

Tennyson<sup>1</sup> has expressed the thought no less than Paul:

Speak to Him thou, for he hears, and  
Spirit with spirit can meet;  
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer  
Than hands and feet.

And it is the man who is the recipient thus of the divine touch and the vehicle of the divine thought.

It is corroborative of the essential and structural nature of this doctrine that men, whose lives in the main have been radically divergent therefrom, have been compelled to bear testimony to its truth. No man left a deeper impress on the ecclesiastical history of the nineteenth century than did Cardinal Newman. No man during that period, either, influenced men more profoundly than he in the direction of yielding up their spiritual destiny to the control of an extra-individual authority; for none more than he swung the English Church toward Rome. And yet, even he, in view of the imperial demands of his soul in its

<sup>1</sup> "The Higher Pantheism."

relations to God could say: "I rested in the thought of two, and two only, absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator!"<sup>1</sup> On this his most recent biographer, Professor Sarolea comments: "It is the soul which must decide in the last resort. It does not behove the priest to obtrude his part in the mystical drama in which have been only two *dramatis personae*—God and Conscience."<sup>2</sup>

It is something to be prized then, this doctrine of the soul's individual relation to God. It is something for which to thank profoundly our Baptist progenitors, and something to cherish tenaciously and sacredly for those who are to come after us.

<sup>1</sup> "Apologia," p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Cardinal Newman," p. 147.



**II**

**Faith the Key to the Kingdom**

*And this is the victory that hath overcome the world,  
even our faith.*

—I John 5 : 4.

*And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if  
I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and  
Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued king-  
doms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped  
the mouths of lions . . . waxed mighty in war, turned to  
flight armies of aliens.*

—Hebrews 11 : 32-34.

## II



IT were well to spend a few moments in definition as a preparation for the discussion of this chapter. What is this kingdom of which we think, and what is the faith which forms the roadway thereto? It has been said in some quarters, and still is, that the kingdom of our Lord has not yet been established. He came proclaiming its nearness and proffering it to the Jews, and they rejected it. It was therefore withdrawn and the church was instituted to take its place. This substitution will continue until with it he shall have accomplished his purpose, and then by his personal presence he will supersede it by his kingdom as, because of the Jews' rejection, the church has superseded it.

Manifestly to most this is wrong. It would seem to be a supposition made to support a theory. Though good men have held and hold it, it is difficult to see how a careful student of the situation can come to any such conclusion. Careful scrutiny of the New Testament must decide

against it. Continually our Lord proclaimed its imminence. Continually he spoke in terms of the kingdom. Unmistakably he declared to those who listened on one occasion "the kingdom of heaven is within you," or among you. He never withdrew it. Of the church, as it exists, he said little; of the kingdom he knew everything. To Nicodemus he said, "Except ye be born from above ye cannot see the kingdom of God." The converse of the statement is "If ye be born from above ye shall both see and enter the kingdom." Nicodemus was born from above, and did see and did enter, as did all who heard the voice of Jesus and followed him, as men and women have been doing throughout the centuries, as they are doing to-day.

For, consider what this kingdom is. The apostle has defined it: "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup> These are the spiritual heritage of all who may rightly count themselves Christ's disciples. It is not then—this kingdom—an institution or an organization. It is a condition, an attitude, a state, a mental and ethical and spiritual atmosphere of which all who

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 14 : 17.

are truly Christ's must breathe. It is biological, not theological. The church is not the kingdom though, as it is true, it is a part of the kingdom. It is of it but not it. Some are in the one who have not yet, with the spiritual vision, seen the other. To none in the kingdom will Jesus ever say, "I never knew you"; to some in the church it is quite conceivable that he may. In this kingdom the individuality of the soul's relationship to God manifests itself, and its competency is assured.

The key now to this kingdom we have said is faith. What is it? How shall we take its measure? How shall we define it? It differs from belief. It includes that but it is more than that. The demons may believe but they have not faith. Evil men may subscribe to the creed that underlies belief, but be total strangers to the principle that vitalizes faith. It is assent but it is consent likewise. Dr. E. G. Robinson used to say, it is the assent of the will and the consent of the heart. It is willingness to let Jesus Christ save. It is the appropriation on the part of the individual soul of all the privileges and bestowments flowing from the treasury of divine grace. It is the soul's response to the beckoning that comes from above. Dr. E. Y. Mullins puts it in this

way: "It is the response of the entire spiritual nature of man aroused in all its parts to the approach of God the Father through the revealing Christ, constituting men members of his kingdom through his word." <sup>1</sup>

Nor is this faith, at least not primarily and wholly, under the soul's control. One cannot will to have faith, as he can will to perform any ordinary outward act. "By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." This has a wider meaning than that faith alone is the gift of God, but it also means that. One can put himself in the attitude that shall be hospitable to the reception of this faith; he can use the means that are friendly thereto, but he cannot generate it. Wrong, therefore, is it to say, "Faith is an act of volition," <sup>2</sup> as the most recent biographer of Cardinal Newman does. Will is not quiescent, but no man can will himself into the possession of that faith which is the key to the kingdom of God. He cannot act as though he had it, and have it. Faith which leads to union with God cannot be gotten in this way. A man may have its countersign, he may be

<sup>1</sup> "Axioms of Religion," p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> "Cardinal Newman," p. 102.

able to pronounce its shibboleths; but if he *is* not he *has* not. He might as well declare himself one of the fellowship of music or art while ignorant of their basic principles. Faith as thus conceived is a spiritual condition, and a condition arising from the divine down-reaching to the individual soul.

Now, as we have said, this is the key to the kingdom. Everywhere in the New Testament the petitioner for entrance thereto is met with a demand for its existence. Wouldest thou become a citizen therein? Well, then believe, have faith and thou mayest. There is no other way. Nothing can take its place. Birth, position—as the rabbi found in his conversation with Jesus—cannot set aside its necessity. No ordinance, no priestly thaumaturgy can be permitted for a single moment to set its imperial claims at naught.

He who would the Father seek,  
Must seek him, Lord, through thee.

And the only all-sufficient guarantee of finding is faith. As the wicket gate in Bunyan's dream was the only means of reaching the interpreter's house, so faith alone gives ingress to the kingdom of God.

This Baptists have so insistently and so consistently held that it might legitimately be called one of their distinctive doctrines. Others claim to be advocates of its essentialness, but none so emphatically and exclusively as they. They have therefore inexorably opposed infant baptism, which those others have adopted. The infant cannot have faith they have said. He cannot therefore enter the kingdom as the Founder of that kingdom has prescribed. An ordinance, a rite, administered with never so much ceremony and backed by never so much ecclesiastical authority, cannot be permitted to take the place of the soul's individual act before God. At the cost of incalculable suffering, Baptists have maintained this position. They must maintain it or surrender the charter of their existence.

Men are fond sometimes of conjecturing what would have been in the history of the world if other principles had prevailed than those which obtained, and another course had been followed than that which has been pursued. Had Eastern influences, rather than Western, been regarded in the formation of the New Testament canon, and in the construction of the Nicene Creed and its attendant legislation, the history of the church



would have been different, these are sometimes fond of saying. If Martin Luther had been logical and followed the principles of his spiritual revolt to their legitimate conclusion, as his contemporaries the Swiss Baptists sought to do, the complexion of the great Reformation would have been vastly other than it was, and the subsequent history of Europe would have been utterly changed. Well, suppose this Baptist principle of faith the key to the kingdom had everywhere been regnant; how different, we may feel, the career of the church would have been. Formal Christianity, as an institution, would have been unknown. The travesty—and the term is not too severe—of infant baptism would have been unheard of. The evils of Church and State in their illicit union could not have existed. The fires of persecution would have remained unlighted, and many a chapter of human history, inflicting untold wounds on the cause of religion, and bringing the blush of shame to the cheek of every lover of his kind, would have remained unwritten. This, in the unfolding of the divine purposes, seemingly could not be. But to the honor of the Baptists it must be recorded that they did what they could to have it so. They failed in that, but they have

succeeded in preserving intact one of the fundamental principles of the kingdom of God—that faith is the key, and the only key thereto. Others may attempt the task of effecting an entrance, but the wards of the lock will move and the door will open only in response to it.

III

**Jesus Christ's Supreme Headship**

*Strong Son of God, immortal love,  
Whom we that have not seen thy face  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove.*

. . . . .

*Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood thou;  
Our wills are ours, we know not how,  
Our wills are ours to make them thine.*

*Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be;  
They are but broken lights of thee;  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.*

—Tennyson, "In Memoriam," Prologue.

### III

**W**E have spoken in the preceding chapters of the soul's individuality in its relation to God, and of the kingdom into which faith qualifies it to effect an entrance. In this we want to consider Jesus Christ's supreme headship in this kingdom of his grace. Every kingdom implies a king. Every government must have a ruler who represents its authority and executes its laws. Every realm has some one who embodies its supremacy. In art, in literature, in life, the principle is unyielding. In the spiritual arena we call the kingdom, it is no less so. Nay, it is much more so. In these lower realms we may demur and question the supremacy. In the kingdom of God we may not, if we would be citizens therein.

This supremacy now is vested in Jesus Christ. It is not in king or priest or bishop. It is in him. Other thrones have attempted to take the place of his, and other scepters have sought substitution for his. But these have been usurpers, by what-

ever name called. They have no more inherent right than has ambition or selfish greed to take the place of love in the hearts of those who would be loyal subjects of his sway. "Art thou a king then?" said Pilate to the marred prisoner of his judgment hall, "Art thou a king?" "Thou sayest that I am a king,"<sup>1</sup> was the firm and startling reply. "All power," said this King a little later when he had earned the right to say it, "All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth; go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."<sup>2</sup> It was an imperial mandate uttered by an imperial Prince. "Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill," says Jehovah in the Second Psalm. It was not spoken primarily of Jesus, but it represents the fact concerning him. "Christ alone is king in Zion,"<sup>3</sup> Doctor Mullins says. And again, "Christ is Lord. The believer in Christ belongs to an absolute monarchy, the most absolute indeed the world ever knew."<sup>4</sup>

It were well to dwell upon this a little from a scriptural viewpoint. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"<sup>5</sup> "If

<sup>1</sup> John 18 : 37.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 28 : 18, 19.

<sup>3</sup> "Axioms of Religion," p. 272.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 6 : 46.

any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." <sup>1</sup> "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me," <sup>2</sup> he declares shall be the verdict on that august day when the nations shall be gathered before his throne.

The Epistles and the Apocalypse catch the thought and echo it in many an eloquent passage. Paul represents Him as humbling himself, becoming of no reputation, and taking the form of a servant, and becoming "obedient unto the death of the cross," and so "*wherefore* also God highly exalted him and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess." <sup>3</sup> Can, could, sovereignty be more supreme than that? In the same attitude the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews beholds him. To him he is on the throne at the right hand of God, "from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet." <sup>4</sup> In the Spirit on the Lord's day the author of Revelation saw him, and his eyes were like flame, and his feet like burnished brass. And in his hand was the sword

<sup>1</sup> Mark 8 : 34.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 25 : 40.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. 2 : 9, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 10 : 13.

of authority and power, and he moved among the candlesticks in all the majesty of his kingliness.<sup>1</sup>

And this kingship is based on the surest foundation. Napoleon in that oft-cited scene on St. Helena is reputed to have said: "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires, but on what did we found them? Upon the sword. Jesus Christ founded his kingdom on love, and to this day millions would die for him."<sup>2</sup> Yes, it is upon love, and therefore it will endure. Yes, it is upon love, and therefore sometimes the name of Jesus is applauded while the mention of the church is hissed. Yes, it is upon love, and hence ever and anon in the history of mankind comes the cry, Back to Christ! Break through creeds, overleap edicts, disregard ecclesiastical authority; for he alone is king, since he alone is supreme lover. In the "Mill on the Floss," in her suggestive fashion, George Eliot tells the legend of St. Oggs. It runs something like this: A storm was resting on the river. In the midst of it a woman, withered and worn and in rags, with a child in her arms, asked of the group of boatmen to be rowed across. They demurred and bade her wait till the morning. "But Ogg, son of

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 1 : 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, "Person of Christ," p. 244.



Beorl, came up and said, ' I will ferry thee across. It is enough that thy heart needs it.' And he ferried her across. And when she was over, her rags turned to garments shining white, and a glory was about her, and she shed a light on the water like the moon in its brightness. And she said, ' Ogg, son of Beorl, thou art blessed in that thou didst not question and wrangle with the heart's need.' " <sup>1</sup> And so Jesus did not question and wrangle with the heart's need, but gave himself—gives himself—in love for it and therefore he shall reign supreme.

Baptists have always held this doctrine of Christ's supreme headship as one of their most precious spiritual possessions. It lies at the basis of their polity, and furnishes the keynote to their history. Side by side with its correlative, the individual relationship of the soul to God, it constitutes the prime factor in their religious life. This, more than any other tenet, gives them their distinctive character. As the harvest is determined by the seed, as the oak is enfolded in the acorn, so what Baptists are depends on this that they believe. It is that which affixes to them their label in the ecclesiastical catalogue. It is not the form

<sup>1</sup> " Mill on the Floss," chap. xii, p. 107.

of an ordinance; it is not their view of the relation one ordinance bears to another which makes them what they are, but this recognition on their part of Christ as king. Grant this to them, and all else follows as the stream from the fountain in which it has its birth. So completely is it an integral part of their constitutional being that they alone, of all the Christian sects, may be said to hold it in its completeness. All claim to hold it, but by the direct and indirect authority they center elsewhere they so diminish and detract from it that their claim is not a valid one. The Romanist has his pope and his conclave; the Anglican his bishop and his convention; the Presbyterian his presbytery and his general assembly; and the Methodist his conference, and these in so many respects have so traversed the commands of Christ that they have rendered null his direct headship. This is said in no narrow spirit, but as an indisputable historic fact. The mutilation of the baptismal sign, the fabricating of oppression and complicated machinery, the transformation of what should be a spiritual body into a mixed multitude, and the blending of the two distinct spheres of Church and State, all have resulted directly or indirectly from the disregard of the instructions

Jesus gave. So tenacious are Baptists in their view that this is so that they would surrender the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ only with the surrender of their denominational life.

In two ways this lordship makes itself operative. One is by means of the written word. In the Gospels and Epistles Jesus has embodied his perpetual will. No sophistry as to the lack of an adequate interpreter has driven Baptists from this position. As the father speaks to the son in the will he leaves behind, so Jesus speaks to his people by his word. When he says "Do this," the command is taken at its face value. Modified views of verbal inspiration and as to absolute inerrancy have not materially diminished or weakened the authority vested therein. His word is still, as it has been, regarded as making wise unto salvation, and as laying down for those who will be teachable and obedient a sufficient guide in faith and practice.

But there is another way in which Baptists have always believed that this lordship, this leadership of Christ, will and does make itself known. It is by direct communication of his will to the soul. In the secret recesses of the spirit's life the divine speaks to it. "The secret

[or friendship] of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.”<sup>1</sup> Literally, he will “uncover the ear” and will whisper into it his thoughts. Call it what one may, the inner light, the mystical sense, the influence of the Spirit, it is a fact the true spiritual adherent of Jesus Christ will not surrender. Leading as it sometimes has to absurdities and excess, he will still cling to it. The soul’s individual relationship demands it, human experience has again and again confirmed it, and he can do no other than hold to it. In these days the mystery of it need not repel. Auto-suggestion, telepathic communication—shall these be and Jesus not speak to his own? He can, he will; and Baptists have always believed it and sanctioned it. So in a sense they have formed their own canon; so each has builded his own creed; so for every one may be marked out the way of life. But come to him thus, or in the more formal embodiment, or in any way it may, the true disciple sings, as Jesus intimates his will,

My gracious Lord, I own thy right  
To every service I can pay,  
And count it my supreme delight  
To hear thy dictates and obey.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 25 : 14.

10

**The Church a Spiritual Democracy**

*For mankind are one in spirit and an instinct bears along,  
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right  
and wrong;  
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet humanity's vast  
frame  
Through its ocean-sundered fibers feels the gush of joy and  
shame;  
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim.*

—Lowell, "The Present Crisis."

#### IV



IN the progress of our discussion we are now ready for a consideration of the church. We have seen that the kingdom and the church are different. The church is or may be of the kingdom. It is not that kingdom, neither in area nor in form. Being, as we have said, an attitude, a spiritual condition, rather than a concrete embodiment, the kingdom can be, as it is, much wider than the church. Narrower than the kingdom the church likewise is more formal, more palpable, more material. It has been compelled to organize, and it has organized. It has established its polity, it has formulated its creeds, it has ordained its officers, it has prescribed its worship, it has projected its ministries. And yet, different as the church is from the kingdom, when it has been true to the original and scriptural ideal, the key, "faith," which has admitted to the one, is the key that has unlocked the door of the other. To the questioner asking "May I become a member of the church?" the

true answer has ever been, "If thou believest, thou mayest."

What then is this church of which we speak, and with which the world has so much to do, and of which it really knows so little? It is a company of baptized believers, organized to proclaim Christ's truth, to administer his ordinances, and to perpetuate his ministry. Its organization is mutual association; its ordinances, baptism and the Supper; its officers, pastors and deacons; and its binding creed, love to God and love to men. These elements of church organization are found in the New Testament, and beyond them there is no warrant for the intricate and elaborate ecclesiastical machinery that has been devised, nor for the absolute human authority it has been sought to impose. The church to be true to its fundamental principles must be a democracy. The soul's individual relationship to God, the necessity of faith as a guide into the kingdom, and the priesthood and kingship of each believer, all demand the form of a democracy in which it shall stand before the world. There is no provision for bishop or pope to lord it over God's heritage. "One is your teacher," said Jesus, "and all ye are brethren."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 23 : 8.



There can be within its confines no oppressive conclave to force adherence to its despotic behests. "There is no conceivable justification," says Doctor Mullins, "for lodging ecclesiastical authority in the hands of an infallible pope or a bench of bishops. Democracy in church government is an inevitable corollary of the general doctrine of the soul's competency in religion."<sup>1</sup>

There is an organization, but it has no authority save for its own preservation. It may exclude from its body, but it has no power beyond. No rack or prison or any form of compulsion belongs to it, as has been so often claimed to the infinite sorrow of myriads of human lives. There are officers, to be sure, but they are *primi inter pares*. They are elevated because of service. There is no promotion for them but through ministry. They have authority, but only that which all have who possess that which shall benefit others. It has a creed, as all associations must have in some form that would hold together, but one may differ therefrom without forfeiting his membership or justly incurring the censure of his brethren. There is no supremacy that does not embrace the equality of all, and there is no authority that

<sup>1</sup> "Axioms of Religion," p. 55.

does not scrupulously conserve the rights of each.

Baptists have always tenaciously and consistently held to the views thus briefly set forth. They have held to them too, when to hold thus has meant the whip or the prison or even the stake. The church to them has always been a spiritual body. No rite or external act or sacerdotal incantation has with them been permitted to take the place of personal faith in Jesus Christ. "Dost thou believe?" has ever been their question to those seeking admission to the church. If the answer has been in the affirmative, then the door has opened. If the reply has been No, then despite position and influence or what not, if the right has been maintained, the way has been barred.

As to the Baptists the church has been ever spiritual, so has it always been a democracy. No ecclesiastic, whether high or low, whether Anglican or Roman; no organized body, whether called presbytery, or assembly, or conference, or council has ever been permitted by Baptists to usurp authority over them. Says Dr. A. H. Strong on this point: "While Christ is sole King, the government of the church so far as regards the interpretation and execution of his will, is an absolute democracy in which the whole body of

members is entrusted with the duty and responsibility of carrying out the laws of Christ as expressed in his word.”<sup>1</sup>

There is therefore no idea among them of a “world Church,” governed by one central head, such as is held at Rome. There is no thought of a national Church as exists in England, with the primate and the sovereign in control. There is among them nothing approaching the associated body affiliated for legislation as well as for counsel, as among the Presbyterians and Methodists. There is not among them even the authoritative council as among the Congregationalists, the Christian body of all their brethren most nearly akin to them in polity. Among Baptists the local church is the final court of appeal. That organizes, that ordains, that institutes. It is correct therefore to say Baptist churches and not the Baptist Church. There are thousands of these, but all together they do not constitute that. And yet there is no lack of associated effort. There are the Association, the Convention, the Society. And now for more complete unity of action for Baptists in this country at the North, for more concentrated aggressiveness in redemptive effort,

<sup>1</sup> “Outlines of Theology,” p. 238.

there has been organized the Northern Baptist Convention, corresponding to the Southern. But no one of these Associations or Conventions, whether State or national, is legislative. That would destroy the essential democracy of the church and kingdom of Christ, of which Baptists have been the persistent advocates and exponents.

But with it all Baptists have been held together. Perhaps there is no ecclesiastical unity more regnant than theirs. Without any tribunal of last resort, they have been remarkably free from any serious ecclesiastical cleavage. Without any one save their Lord to bid them go, they have not been disobedient to the Great Commission. Without any conclave to formulate their creeds or institute trials for heresy, they have held together in the essentials of doctrine. Without any rod of any sort over them to compel them to do, they have not been unmindful of the claims of those who have needed help. Moreover, their unity has been not so much that of the grains in a pile of sand, as that of the leaf and twig and branch of the living tree, animated by a common life and a common love. And so held together by no external bond, but by the force of a common internal spirit, Baptists are as the world sees them at this day.

U

**The Ordinances of the Church  
and Their Symbolism**

*In a symbol there is concealment and yet revelation: here, therefore, by Silence and by Speech acting together, comes a double significance. And if both the speech be itself high and the silence fit and noble, how expressive will their union be! Thus in many a painted Device or simple Seal-emblem, the commonest truth stands out to us proclaimed with quite new emphasis.*

. . . . .

*It is in and through Symbols that man, consciously or unconsciously, lives, works, and has his being: those ages moreover are accounted the noblest which can the best recognize symbolical worth and prize it highest. For is not a Symbol to him who has eyes for it, some dimmer or clearer revelation of the godlike?*

—Carlyle, “Sartor Resartus,” pp. 151, 153.



AS is well known, there are certain ordinances in the church of Jesus Christ, whose organization in the preceding chapter we have been considering. It may be well at the outset to define an ordinance. If we turn to the "Century Dictionary" we find it given as follows: "A religious ceremony, rite, or practice established by authority." In the Roman Catholic Church there are held to be seven ordinances. Baptists regard the ordinances as being two only, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The place of these ordinances is fixed in the organization of the church by Him whose authority gave them. Baptism is at the beginning of the Christian profession; the Lord's Supper at its conclusion, and to be perpetuated throughout the entire life of the disciple. The one is initiatory, the other commemorative. The one is intended to express allegiance to Jesus Christ, and the other is designed continually to show a participation in him. Both are intended to set forth thus

the soul's individual relationship to Jesus Christ. When, for any reason, they fail in this they fail in their mission and hinder rather than help. When from undue emphasis, when from ecclesiastical pageantry, when from unwholesome church discipline they are made to obscure or belittle or mutilate the Christ, they pervert their mission and were better dismissed than retained. They are to disclose Christ, not to hide him.

But what are these ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper? There are different forms in existence, and the inquirer may well ask what form is authoritative. By baptism the consistent Baptist understands immersion alone. The word in the original means immersion, and that only. For example, to give just one or two on a topic so familiar, Liddell and Scott give the following definition: "To dip in or under water"; and Thayer, in his Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, says, "An immersion in water performed as a sign of the removal of sin." Illustrations of this sort as to the meaning of the word might be indefinitely multiplied, but the ground has been so often and thoroughly covered that these are needless. Suffice it to say that the Greek scholarship of the day acknowledges immersion to be the



primitive meaning of the Greek term *βάπτισμα*. In so far, at least, Baptists have won their conflict.

The exegesis of the passages in which the word in the original Scriptures is found, likewise requires the meaning of immersion to be attached thereto. The symbolism of the term is no less exacting as to its significance. To mention one instance of this will be sufficient, namely, Rom. 6 : 4, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Nothing but immersion will satisfy the terms used by the apostle in this declaration. The example of the primitive church for more than three centuries emphasizes the meaning attached to the word by lexicography and exegesis. No other method was known for the time indicated, and it was more than twelve centuries before immersion was entirely abandoned by the Western ritualistic churches. Even now it is practised by the Greek Church.

In regard to the Lord's Supper, Baptists have always held it to be commemorative, and commemorative only. They repudiate with emphasis the thought of its being, as the Romanist thinks,

in any way a sacrifice. It is not a mass. It is a feast of remembrance. There is neither transubstantiation nor consubstantiation in the thought of Baptists with reference to the Lord's Supper. "This do in remembrance of me," Jesus said, and as a rite of remembrance they have always observed it.

The symbolism attaching itself to these forms renders absolutely necessary their preservation as originally given. The symbolism of baptism, for example, is the burial of the old and a resurrection to the new, as well as the setting forth of the burial of Christ and his arising. The symbolism of the Supper is that of partaking of Christ's life; the bread symbolizing his broken body, and the wine the flowing forth into the heart of Christ's own life. Change the form and the symbolism is lost. No burial can be indicated without an immersion. No participation in Christ's life can be fully set forth without full participation in the elements that represent him. Dr. W. C. Wilkinson in his "Baptist Principle" speaks of this as follows, with special reference to baptism: "In conclusion we may say that there is no symbolic import of baptism suggested in Scripture which does not require, in order to satisfy it, that baptism

should be immersion. Baptism symbolizes the Saviour's death and his resurrection; it symbolizes the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to righteousness; it apparently symbolizes the mystery of the new birth or regeneration; it symbolizes the fact of the believer's union and identification with Christ; it symbolizes the fact of the believer's incorporation into one body with his brethren; it symbolizes the idea of the believer's purification from sin."<sup>1</sup> It can be seen at once, therefore, that to change the form absolutely destroys the symbolism, as the breaking of a vessel will destroy the contents it holds. What is true of baptism is likewise true of the Supper. Both form and substance are needful for the complete manifestation of the teaching of Christ with respect thereto.

Constant in their adherence to the preservation of form in both baptism and the Supper, Baptists have been the same likewise with reference to the qualifications for these rites. Always and everywhere they have demanded that faith shall precede baptism. This consequently determines and always has determined the subjects of baptism. Infant baptism at once is barred, since in connec-

<sup>1</sup> "The Baptist Principle," pp. 164, 165.

tion with infant baptism there can be no faith on the part of the subject himself. The position thus assigned to baptism disproves at once the charge that is sometimes made against Baptists that they regard this rite as a saving ordinance. It is not in any wise saving, although obedience is always safe, but it is a sign. Persons are not saved by being baptized, but they are when obedient baptized, because they are saved. The order too, of these ordinances has always been clear in Baptist thought. Baptism precedes the Supper, as engagement precedes the marriage contract. Baptism is the sign of faith, and the Supper is its seal. There must be a preparation on the part of those who would be benefited in any school of life. To discern the lessons of nature, one must have a capacity within. The same is true of art or music. Unless there is some artistic or musical fitness in the subject, nothing will be carried away from art gallery or concert room. So in the participation in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, there must be this preparation of heart that faith alone can give. Otherwise eyes will be blind and the spirit will be inert. This faith as indicated has given sign of its existence in the baptism whereby its profession has been made; hence the order of the

two ordinances in Baptist polity has not been arbitrary. It is logical, and as necessary as that the oath of allegiance in army or navy should follow the act of enlistment.

Baptists have always been strenuous in regard to the preservation of these forms, as they believe them to be laid down in the Scriptures. Tenacity at this point is not really their most distinguishing feature, although it is from the preservation of the form of baptism that they derive their name. Other things in their distinguishing characteristics are more important than their stand as to baptism, perhaps. Certainly their practice of absolute obedience to Jesus Christ is more important, since from that comes their attitude with reference to the ordinances as given; but it is very much that it can be said of Baptists, they have preserved the forms of the New Testament as they are expressed therein. Had it not been for them, immersion would have disappeared from the usages of the church of Jesus Christ. Had it not been for them, the order in which the two ordinances were intended to be observed would likewise have been subverted. True, a change has come in the methods of Baptist administration. They no longer regard themselves as its custodians to drive

from the table any of the other Faiths. They regard it now more as a matter of individual conviction, and the determination of action is left to each one for himself and herself. And yet Baptists to-day, no less than in the olden time, as a whole, are concerned to preserve the ordinances of the church as Jesus Christ gave them.

VI

Obedience to Jesus Christ, the  
Test of Discipleship

*Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

—1 Samuel 15 : 22.

*Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

—Luke 6 : 46.



## VI



IN the development of our thought concerning the kingdom and the church of our Lord, we have seen that Baptists hold to the direct relationship of the individual believer to God, and to Jesus Christ as his representative. He is Head and Lord. The church is a democracy, and yet there is no monarchy so absolute as is it. The reason for this is that the members of this church have been drawn to him by the force of love, and hence if they are true, his slightest wish or most trivial command is imperative. Others profess this obedience, but they are not consistent therein. The Romanist, for example, may say that he obeys Christ, but he interposes the Church, the pope, between his Lord and himself. History discloses how the indirect authority diminishes and really destroys that which should be direct. We learn from it what sorrows have been occasioned, and what dimness of vision and loss of direction. In the recent "Life of Cardinal Newman," by Prof. Charles Sarolea,

these words are found respecting this great church leader: "Twenty years he had to submit to a policy which in his heart he disapproved of."<sup>1</sup> This man, deservedly called "great," professed allegiance to Jesus Christ, but he gave it to his system and its head, the pope. An ecclesiastical system came between him and his Lord, as it comes between Christ and all those who follow in the cardinal's footsteps. The Modernists, so called of the present day, are experiencing the same sort of interposition of an ecclesiastical for a divine authority. Chairs of theology are vacated, and pulpits are silenced, because their occupants dare to be obedient to the Head of the church rather than to the one who professes so to be.

Others than adherents of Rome fail in precisely the same way. They likewise profess absolute obedience to Jesus Christ, and yet their systems come between them and him. In all the heresy trials of the past few years, recourse for proof against the accused has been had to tradition rather than to Scripture; to the creeds of the church rather than to the teachings of Christ. Jesus Christ has not been to their authors as he

<sup>1</sup> "Cardinal Newman," p. 78.

should be to the church, their Head. These fail, although oftentimes unconscious of their failure, to meet the supreme test of discipleship, namely, obedience to Jesus.

Baptists, though at times inconsistent it may have been in conduct, have been true to this test in thought. From Jesus Christ have come to them the commands they have sought to obey. No other authority has been recognized; decrees from no other source have received approval from them. This is true to-day; this has been true, it may be said to their honor, from the beginning of their history. In the "Baptist Confession of the Seven Congregations," published in London in 1643, these words are found: "Concerning the worship of God there is but one Lawgiver which is able to save and destroy, which is Jesus Christ, who hath given laws and rules sufficient in his word for his worship; and for any one to make more were to charge Christ with want of wisdom or faithfulness or both in not making laws enough or not good enough for his house; surely it is our wisdom, duty, and privilege to observe Christ's laws only."<sup>1</sup> How much woe and shame, and even of crime, the world would have been saved had

<sup>1</sup> Moss, "What Baptists Stand For," p. 13.

the church as a whole been as true to the headship of Christ as these words from that ancient Article of Faith prescribe! These Baptists had recourse, even as Baptists to-day seek to have recourse, to Him. When he speaks, they listen. When others interpose between them and him, as a rule, when consistent, they have been deaf.

Obedience in this direction Baptists have felt to be, and feel to be, the supreme test of discipleship.

Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
Our wills are ours to make them thine,

they sing, and in accordance therewith they strive to act. They emphasize this obedience because it is one of the ways in which they may express their love. Can we love where we fail to render obedience? "If ye love me," Jesus said, "keep my commandments." The parent may well distrust the love of his child when he says, "Father, mother, I love you," and then the next moment deliberately disobeys a command that is given. The king could not well trust the expressed love of a subject if that subject immediately after professing it were found in rebellion against the king's will. Precisely as these could not trust the love of the ones thus declaring it, so Christ cannot.

“Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

Obedience is needed likewise to preserve the command that is given. It is sometimes said that it does not matter so much as to exact obedience, if obedience in the main is rendered. We wonder whether a homely illustration will make plain the absurdity of this. A man is sent into the woods to cut timber for rails, with a direction to make each length fourteen feet. In disobedience of the exact prescription he makes some twelve, some fourteen, some sixteen, etc. “It makes no difference,” he says, “I am obedient on the whole.” It may make no difference to him, but it will make a difference when the man comes to build his fence. Soldiers on a march are bidden not to talk, but some one, near the enemy’s camp, gives a shout. He obeys on the one hand, but disobeys on the other, and it will be found to have made a difference when the camp of the enemy is aroused to repel the attack. So, likewise, it makes a difference with reference to the commands of Christ, whether exact obedience—obedience as to details, is rendered.

But then, again, sometimes it is said if the essence is preserved, no matter about the form.

Here likewise is a fallacy that an illustration may at once disprove. Dr. George Dana Boardman, many years ago, in preaching a sermon on the symbolism of baptism<sup>1</sup> pictures a graphic scene on the battlefield. A company is charging; shot and shell plunge about it and riddle the standard they are seeking to follow. But they press on as that standard rises and falls before them. What is it? Only a piece of cloth, but that piece of cloth is the flag of their country! "So long," Doctor Boardman says, "as the flag floats over his ranks the soldier feels that he has everything to fight for. Wrest his flag from him, and he feels that all is lost." So, likewise, is it with the church in reference to the ordinance of baptism, for example, which Jesus Christ has given. "Substitute any other banner for it and you substitute a human device for a divine; an heresy for the gospel; secessionism for loyalty." There can be no true love and no true loyalty apart from obedience. Jesus Christ is to the true disciple Lord and Master, and to be obedient to him is the test of his fidelity.

<sup>1</sup> "Madison Avenue Lectures," p. 135.

VIII

The Absolute Severance of  
Church and State

*O glorious days! When Church and State  
Were wedded by your spiritual fathers,  
And on submissive shoulders sat  
Your Wilsons and your Cotton Mathers.  
No vile "itinerant" then could mar  
The beauty of your tranquil Zion  
But at the peril of the scar  
Of hangman's whip, and branding-iron.*

. . . . .  
*What marvel that, in many a mind,  
Those darker deeds of bigot madness,  
Are closely with your own combined,  
Yet less in anger than in sadness?  
What marvel if the people learn  
To claim the right of free opinion?  
What marvel if at times they spurn  
The ancient yoke of your dominion?*

—Whittier, "The Pastoral Letter."



## VII



FROM the very nature of the individual relationship of the man to God and to the kingdom and the church, there can be no organization legitimately uniting these with the State. The Church and State must, in order to be true to this ideal, be distinct and separate. They are interrelated, but they are independent. The one deals more with the spiritual, the ethical; the other with the material, the earthly. The Church then dominates legitimately and properly in one realm; the State in another. This fact was distinctively indicated by our divine Lord. "My kingdom," he said, "is not of this world," "One is your Lord, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." When they brought the denarius or penny to him, seeking to entangle him by the question whether or not it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, he said, "Whose is this image and superscription?" When they answered, as they could not help answering, "Cæsar's," then came the reply, directly distinguishing between spiritual

and temporal allegiance, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."<sup>1</sup> The very essential nature and heart of the kingdom and church of Christ are diverse from those of the State. In the latter position is sought, authority is exercised, greatness is determined by station. In the former it is absolutely the reverse. Ye are not to be, Jesus said to his disciples in substance, as are the Gentiles. They exercise authority the one upon the other, and among them their exactors are great, but so shall it not be among you. He among you who would be greatest shall be your minister, and he who would be chief shall be servant of all.<sup>2</sup>

History tells us very clearly and distinctively how and when this idea of separateness began to be perverted. In A. D. 325, Constantine, the sole emperor of Rome, summoned the magnates of the church to meet at Nicea. Ostensibly they were called to settle certain questions and doctrines in connection with which disputes had arisen. In reality it was called that the emperor might secure for the service of the empire an influence so domi-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 22 : 21.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 20 : 25-28.

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nant as the church had then become. Constantine was far-sighted, and he saw what a power for the unity of the empire—which at length was brought under his sole sway—the church would be able to exert. Most of those in that celebrated council failed to discern the real purpose of him who had summoned them. There was one, however, more clear-visioned, who most distinctly divined the emperor's purpose and forecasted the future. It was Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, and the reputed founder of the party that afterward gave the Roman Church so much trouble. Being reproached for remaining day after day in silence in the great conclave, while others were taking part in the prevailing discussions, at length he arose and said: "For me, a poor presbyter of the Christian church, to assume the right to deliberate upon and prescribe laws for the empire would be gross impudence and arrogance. For any human authority to usurp the right to make laws controlling the faith of Christ's church would be as gross a sacrilege. Was Constantine crucified for you? or were ye baptized into his name? Do ye hope for salvation by faith in and obedience to him? I was not. I have come hither, therefore, in obedience to the imperial mandate, and have spoken by the

emperor's command. As to the empire, I have no authority and no desire to make laws for it; as to my Christian faith, no man nor angel hath right or power to meddle therewith or to prescribe laws for it. It is a thing between my soul and its Saviour, whom I have served all my life long in spite of imperial laws, and whom I will continue to serve no matter what laws may be enacted. Brethren, will ye do likewise, or will ye now deny the Christ?"<sup>1</sup> It may, perhaps, be questioned whether or not Arius really spoke these words. He could not have spoken more truthfully, certainly, had he done so; and whether he uttered them or not, they accord with the exact conditions of the teaching of Christ, and with the position of Baptists in the history of the church.

What evils have sprung from this perversion, history does not fail to tell us. Doctor Mullins quotes from Mr. Bryce, in his "American Commonwealth," as follows: "Half of the wars of Europe, half of the internal troubles that have vexed European States, from the controversies in the Roman empire, of the fifth century, down to the 'Kulturkampf' in the German empire, of the nineteenth century, have arisen from the rival

<sup>1</sup> "Arius the Libyan," pp. 328, 329.

claims of Church and State.”<sup>1</sup> Buckle, in his “History of Civilization,” as also quoted by Doctor Mullins, says: “During almost one hundred and fifty years Europe was afflicted by religious wars, religious massacres, and religious persecutions, not one of which would have arisen if the great truth had been recognized that the State has no concern with the opinions of men, and no right to interfere even in the slightest degree with the form of worship which they may choose to adopt.”<sup>2</sup> It would doubtless be unjust to charge all the evils from which the church may be regarded as suffering to-day upon its union with the State, but certain it is that vastly the larger proportion of these come therefrom. It is only yesterday, as it were, that we read of the sufferings, the privations, the inconveniences encountered by the Dissenters of England in consequence of the imposition of a school tax coupled with religious instruction. This was sought to be imposed by the State upon those who did not, and do not, believe therein. Such a condition could not exist where the State and the Church are absolutely severed, as they ought to be.

<sup>1</sup> “Axioms of Religion,” p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Baptists were the pioneers in the severance of these two essential institutions. They were the first, apparently, to grasp the true principles of Jesus Christ's government, and seemingly they were the first to endeavor to put those principles into practice. Says Dr. E. Y. Mullins, "The Baptists grasped the conception of liberty in its full-orbed glory from the beginning. This doctrine, and those related to it, shine in the early Baptist Confessions of Faith among contemporaneous creeds like a constellation in the clear sky seen through a rift in the darkness of the surrounding clouds. It found its sublimest embodiment when Roger Williams took it in his hand as a precious seed and planted it in the soil of Eastern New England, saying, in the words of God's true prophet, 'Out of this seed shall arise the most glorious commonwealth known to human history.'" <sup>1</sup> Such commonwealth did arise. It was glorious in itself, but more glorious in the results flowing therefrom. It may be of moment for us to quote the exact language of the charter which formed the basis of the foundation of Rhode Island: "No person within the said colony at any time hereafter shall be in anywise mo-

<sup>1</sup> "Axioms of Religion," p. 268.

lest, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any differences of opinion in matters of religion; but that all and every person and persons may from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgment and consciences in matters of religious concernment.”<sup>1</sup> Such sentences strike one even at this distance as almost inspired. The singular thing about it, likewise, is that Roger Williams was not the first to strike this lofty chord in the instrument of human freedom. Even the so-called Anabaptists themselves, those much maligned people, discerned the same great spiritual truth, and put it into a document that would do credit as to its breadth of view to the nineteenth or even the twentieth century.

It will be readily seen upon what a high plane this conception of the Church and State placed the relations of the two in Baptist thought. There could be, there can be, no persecution where this ideal obtains. With this ideal these words from Professor Sarolea are untrue. He says, “Wherever any church is alone in possession of the field, and has no rival to dread, that church is ever intolerant. There is a guarantee of tolerance only

<sup>1</sup> Curry, “Establishment and Disestablishment,” p. 48.

in those countries where religious opinions are profoundly divided, and where several churches are struggling for existence.”<sup>1</sup> Planted upon the Baptist foundation, with the conception of Jesus Christ’s rulership and the soul’s responsibility and obligation to him alone, any church, whether standing by itself or by the side of others, must be tolerant; nay more, it must grant liberty to others to hold what they believe, equal to that which it claims for itself to hold what it believes.

Baptists have been consistent, and they have been influential in shaping legislation and in influencing States in regard to this important matter. They were Baptists who in the early days of the formation of the Federal Constitution insisted upon guarantees of religious freedom in this favored land of ours. That Constitution as first formed did not meet with their approval. A committee, of which James Manning and Isaac Backus were influential members, came to Philadelphia and presented the matter to the Federal Congress then in session in that city. Their influence prevailed, and the Constitution was so amended as to guarantee to the nation, for all time, absolute religious freedom. There can be

<sup>1</sup> “Cardinal Newman,” p. 142.



no structural relationship between the Church and the State under our national Constitution. The State is to protect the Church; to guard its property, and to maintain its political rights; but it is not in anywise to interfere with its services or doctrines or principles. It may not dictate to the church in any way as to these, and much less may it in anywise compel. What a tide of woe, what rivers of blood, what agonies of soul that have cried to heaven would have been spared had this idea, that now is so universal, prevailed throughout the church's history!

It may be said in just a word, that this ideal of which Baptists were the pioneers, and of which they have ever been the adherents, is growing to-day. In France, within these recent years, and almost months, movements have been made for the severance of Church and State looking toward the relegation of each to its own and proper realm. In Italy the same influence is at work, and likewise in Spain. Moreover, the influence of this religious freedom is great in the direction of political freedom. When one enjoys the liberty of worshipping God according to the dictates of his own conscience, he feels that he, as a part of the people, has a right to a voice in the determi-

nation of his political fortunes and fate. Baptists may be grateful for the part they have been permitted to take in the progress of this great idea, and in the position that it has attained. Others than Baptists now advocate it and sustain it. To such an extent, perhaps, does this obtain, that it may be forgotten by some who were the original propagators and defenders of the true relations of Church and State. No student of history, however, can fail to discern this fact, that Baptists have been the pioneers in holding and defending that principle of the right relationship of Church and State which culminates in the ideal, a free Church in a free State.

VIIII

Individual Freedom Essential  
to Progress

*Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell,  
That mind and soul according well  
Shall make one music as before,  
But vaster.*

—Tennyson, "In Memoriam," Prologue.

## VIII

**B**ELIEVING in the soul's responsibility to God, deprecating and repudiating all dictation from ecclesiastical or civil authority, and regarding the spheres of Church and State as separable, while yet related, Baptists hold to the individual Christian's freedom and responsibility. According to them the soul, as a unit, is answerable to God alone in the ultimate analysis. The man himself is competent in all religious matters, both for judgment and decision. So it comes about that the true Baptist is tolerant of others from the very nature of the case. What he claims for himself he accords to them. He does not, as it is said the old Puritan did, claim freedom for his views and sternly repress those opposed thereto. He is tolerant of all. Nay, to put it in a stronger form, he grants absolute freedom of thought to all. It is each one's right, according to him, to think as he will. There can therefore be no heresy trial for him. There can be no edict against Modernism for him. He frowns

down any attempt to repress freedom of thought. To his own Master alone the man stands or falls. This does not mean license, nor does it mean invective in anywise against others. It means simply individual liberty. Recognizing Jesus Christ's headship alone, his will to him, the Baptist, is law. His mind is to be brought into willing subjection to him, his Lord, and he pays in the last appeal, allegiance to no other. There may be those who practically would question the accuracy and the emphasis of these statements, but to be true to the Baptist ideal, the position indicated must be held.

Very early in the history of Baptists this view began to obtain. As far back in the pathway of the years as 1527, Balthasar Hübmaier "contended that any believer led by the Holy Spirit can discern the true sense of Scripture, at least so far as all things necessary to salvation are concerned."<sup>1</sup> Dr. George C. Lorimer says of Baptists, "They believe that man's primary allegiance, so far as earthly powers are concerned, is not to the church, but to himself; to his own reason and consciousness; to his own dignity and destiny."<sup>2</sup> In another part of the same work,

<sup>1</sup> "The Baptists in History," p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

quoting from Dr. Thomas Armitage, Doctor Lorimer indorses this sentiment, "Their (that is Baptists') primary idea is not to build up an ecclesiastical system, but to create high and manly Christian character. In other words, it is to create in each individual soul and life a legitimate independency of all men in matters of faith and practice Godward."<sup>1</sup> It were impossible to state too strongly the position Baptists have held in respect to this matter of individual freedom and responsibility.

This position is justified by the nature of the kingdom into which, by spiritual birth, men are brought. Dr. George H. Ferris, in a sermon on "Faith and Finality," outlines this kingdom in these true and suggestive words: "What is the religion of Christ? It is just a glorious mountain view of truth with ranges of divine possibility reaching in endless succession that fade in future realms of mystery. It realizes itself in any environment from which it takes its form, but these forms do not contain it or express it or hold it. It is ever freeing itself from them, that it may arise to a purer and higher spirituality. It is above all things progressive. Its advance is slow,

<sup>1</sup> "The Baptists in History," p. 4.

silent, oftentimes unconscious; arrested by the power of reaction; hindered by the spirit of fear; and yet as certain as the seasons, as inevitable as the tides.”

The highest efficiency in the direction of outlining this kingdom and molding its forms rests upon individual effort. Masses cannot do it. The church as a whole will be found incompetent. It takes individual effort to look beyond the horizon, to dip into the future that is to be. This is true in science, it is true in art, it is true along all lines. It was Hahnemann, the individual, who sought out the specifics in medicine that should help mankind, and submitted personally to their influence in order that he might speak authoritatively in respect thereto. It is the individual in ethical and religious matters, likewise, who is the pioneer, who discovers the new truth, and who modifies the old. Puritan John Robinson said that new truth should break out of the word of God in the processes of time. It is the individual who will discover this truth and not mankind in a mass. Not all of Xenophon's returning ten thousand Greeks saw the sea at first. It was the foremost rank that discerned it, and they called out the joyful news to those who were behind. So



ever is it the pioneers that receive the first vision and give the tidings to the rest. Let the individual be cramped or suppressed, and progress is—must be—hindered. He cannot be under despotic tuition in this matter of truth's investigation, and he cannot be subjected to fear therein. Milton says in one of his famous pamphlets, "And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching; how can he be a doctor in his book, as he ought to be, or else had better be silent, when as all he teaches, all he delivers is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal licenser to blot or alter what precisely accords not with the hidebound humor which he calls his judgment!"<sup>1</sup> When this law of individual investigation and progressiveness has been disregarded, inertia, stagnation, has inevitably resulted. History records how true this is in the Roman Church in Italy, and in France and Spain. It is only when men as individuals have broken away from the despotic authority that would cripple them that any advance has been made. In minor measure this has been true in other circles than that of Christian believers. True efficiency, as likewise true life, can only re-

<sup>1</sup> "Famous Pamphlets," "Areopagitica," p. 48.

sult where each individual is free. It is each twig, each leaf, each branch of the vine that contributes to the life of the whole, and so is it in the assembly of men, whether secular or religious. The life of the body as a whole must be generated, and must be nourished in the individual man, otherwise there will be no growth in the body taken together.

Unfortunately, the church as a whole has too often planted itself in the pathway of this individual progress. Times have changed, and hence despotic and persecuting measures are no longer possible. The Inquisition has been destroyed and can never be reestablished. And yet the church, in its different branches, finds means oftentimes of repressing individual effort. The great contest of the day in the Roman Catholic Church is the contest against those who therein are called Modernists, who have imbibed modern thought, and would bring the Church somewhat into line with the scientific and critical methods of the day. That is the contest that is going on in other areas of the kingdom of Christ. And while measures that are persecuting, as in the olden time, cannot be resorted to, there are others that can be employed. The innuendo, the resolution of censure,

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the quiet influence that may issue in expulsion from a given position, are still at hand and can sometimes be used. History records in words that still burn and blister, how men have been persecuted for varying in thought from current positions. Galileo was silenced under pressure that was as cruel as the grave. Luther would have lost his life had he not been protected by the secular princes. Wycliffe's grave was dishonored, and his ashes went journeying on the Swift and Avon to the sea because of his loyalty to his convictions. In later times, and in different fashion, opposition has been dealt out to other investigators in the realm of advancement. Darwin was labeled an infidel, and Herbert Spencer an enemy to the cause of truth; and others have been treated in similar manner. It seems singular in the light of experience, along all lines of advancement, that this opposition should obtain, and it is difficult from any point of view to find words for its legitimate defense. Society has ever been prone to honor its historians and stone its prophets. It has not been wrong in that, but it has been eternally wrong in this; for its prophets have made the history its historians have written. "Pioneers are usually martyrs," is a headline appearing recently

in a daily journal, and is an expression of the same thought. The words are used in connection with the daring aerial flights that marked the year 1908. This martyrdom, however, is caused by the laws of nature, and is perhaps inevitable. That, on the other hand, which comes so often to pioneers in the realm of thought is not inevitable. It is due to the opposition of narrow bigotry, or the misconception of duty, and could not be were the minds of the many widened as are the minds of the few, and the right of every man to think his own thought recognized and acknowledged.

But there is danger in such independence of thought. Yes, there is always danger where there is freedom. Danger attends the man when he begins to think, as it does the child when he commences to walk. But we do not, or should not, veto the efforts of either because of this. When the prisoner long inured to the dungeon comes into the light, he is blinded by the glare and profusion of color. But we do not, therefore, thrust him back into captivity. We give him time that he may become adjusted. We give the thinker time likewise, and he too may learn adjustment, and mayhap may grow more modest. He should be this. He is not the first to plunge

into the ocean of thought, as he is not the only one who has reached right conclusions. There were great men before Agamemnon. Not all that is old is either ill-founded or untrue; but, nevertheless, the man, if he will, must be free to break a lance against it. It is far better that he prove himself wrong, than that he be suppressed; and he may be right. At any rate, it is in the line of his heritage that he shall have the chance to try whether he is or not.

This is entirely in accord with true Baptist thought, and to the positions that in the main Baptists have held throughout their entire career. Any pressure intended to stultify or to repress, any effort to crucify the truth or the truth-holder, that is still within the reach of the one willing to employ such means, any real unfriendliness, even, that should seek to hinder or to block individual progress in the truth is un-Baptistic. Our divine Lord in answer to Peter as to what should be the destiny of his brother John, answered, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." In the spirit of this injunction Baptists say, What is it to thee what the other man holds as to essential truth; look to yourself and care for that. This does not mean a lack of interest in what others may think,

or what they may express, but it does mean the according of absolute freedom to each one to think and to speak as he will. "Thou must be free thyself, wouldst thou be free to teach the truth."

But some one says, Is there not an opposite side to this? Are there not vested interests and cherished positions and revered standards and hoary traditions that ought to be cherished, and against which no organized opposition should obtain? We may reply that there is this side, and they who differ from these ought well to consider their ground. In the words of Dr. John Watson, substantially, as he expresses himself in his "Cure of Souls," the man who differs from others on those points that they regard as essential, should have consideration and kindness and tact. He should not belittle their adherence nor denounce their seeming lack of enterprise. This unquestionably is true, but at the same time the man should not refrain from thinking his own thought and uttering it on fitting occasion. And, after all, are we afraid of the truth? Shall we by our anxiety betray any fear as to its ultimate triumph? Shall we fancy that the ark of the covenant cannot stand the jolting of the roadway without our

sustaining hand? In other words, shall we give our enemies the chance to say, "They are afraid; their positions are not secure; and so they deprecate and sometimes denounce all opposing forces." Surely this is not wise, and most surely it is not in accord with those advocates of the truth in all ages, who are clear-visioned as well as loyal.

But, says another, there can be no organization with such attitude and liberty for individual thought as you would permit. Organization would be an aggregation of individuals such as is formed by particles in a gravel heap, without unity, and with little cohesion. In answer let it be remembered that in what we have already said we have been outlining certain common elements supposed to be accepted, in the main, by such as would come together on the Baptist foundation. It is with these that we are especially concerned. With the common ground of the soul's relationship to God, with faith as the key to the kingdom, with the supreme headship of Jesus Christ, and with common church ordinances and organization, they have that which binds them together. Any holding these, though perhaps here and there in differing forms, have common ground and the basis of unitedness. To any one asking for ad-

mission not holding any or few of these, the answer might well be made, "You are not of us, why ask for union with us?" If then it is replied, "This is forming a test adverse to free thought," we respond "No. It is simply making provision for a basis of union without which there can be no organization at all." In the kingdom, which is an attitude and spiritual condition, there is no need of such test as this. In the church, however, which is and must be to a certain extent definite and formal, there is this need, and the demand to satisfy it must be respected.



ix

Love, not Law, the Binding Factor

*The wise men ask, What language did Christ speak?  
They cavil, argue, search, and little prove.  
O sages, leave your Syriac and your Greek,  
Each heart contains the knowledge that you seek.  
Christ spoke the universal language—love.*

*—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

## IX

**W**E have thus far seen in our discussion of Baptist principles that, in connection therewith, the controlling power is not in anything external. It is not in law as expressed by any earthly authority. It is not in any creed formulated by human hands. It is not in any decree issued by any ecclesiastical assembly. It is not in any church conclave, however high in authority it may deem itself, or however wide may be its representation. There must be, however, and there is, some bond binding Baptists together. It is, as we have tried to point out, the divine commandment, and the love of the heart which binds the disciple to it and to Him. This love, to the true Baptist, that is to one who aims to be supremely the disciple and follower of Jesus Christ, is the supreme controlling, governing force.

In support of his position that it is love and not law that is supreme, he goes back to the teaching of Jesus Christ himself. He sees that in that love is the keynote. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy

God with all thy heart and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." In this commandment, according to Christ's own declaration, is summed up all the law and the prophets. Love to God and love to man will carry everything else with it in the nature of obedience, or consecration, or beauty of life. There can be no disobedience to a higher power where there is supreme love for that power. There can be no injurious influence exerted against any one when love obtains. There can be no failure to exert a helpful, uplifting line of action where love exists.

How completely this supremacy of love seemed to dominate the mind of the Master himself is indicated by his parable of the Good Samaritan. The man was sorely wounded by the thieves and left helpless by the roadside. The priest passed by, fearing lest in helping he might impair his dignity. The Levite also went to the other side lest he might defile his robes. It was the good Samaritan, the member of an outcast clan, who came along and took the poor fellow lying helpless there, and put him on his beast and carried him to the inn and ministered to him. Above priestly authority and Levitic position was enthroned the Samaritan's love, and there it abides

immortal. Recall the scene in Simon's house when the woman of the street came in and bathed the Master's feet with her tears, and dried them with her tresses with a love that seemed to redeem all the past. Think of that vase of costly ointment that Mary broke upon the Master's feet, in loving anticipation of the anointing that should be needed, when she received the encomium from him she loved—that in all the future that which she had done should be published as a memorial of her because of the love of him which it manifested. In all of this it stands forth most clearly, how supreme and above all other motives and emotions is that which love controls. Catching the spirt of this, Paul wrote his inimitable thirteenth of First Corinthians. In the language of the poet, and with the clear vision of the prophet, he compares love with all the other qualities he could summon up, and then declares that while might abide Faith and Hope, Love was to be crowned above them all. We recall likewise how John, the beloved apostle, in his inimitable interpretation of the Master's teaching glorified this quality of love. So completely did it possess him that, as tradition tells us, in his last days, when borne by loving hands into the assembly of the

saints at Ephesus, he could utter only few words, these were the ones he spoke over and over and over again: "Little children love one another." In all of this we see how supreme a bond this quality of love will weave. The poet is well justified in declaring: "He prayeth best who loveth most, all things both great and small." Beyond the bond of legal decree or ecclesiastical fiat or conclave authority is this, the potency of love.

This love is twofold. It is the love of God and Christ to us on the one side. God so loved that he gave, and Jesus Christ so loved that he came. So supreme and all-controlling is this on the divine side that in defining God the apostle declares that he is love. The terms are synonymous; God is love and love is God. This is the love of Christ that constrains us according to Paul's thought. It sends us into service; it holds us to our posts; it thrills every act; it is a love from which Paul, in that triumphant eighth chapter of Romans, declares nothing can separate us. Nothing in heaven or on earth or above the earth or beneath it can separate from this love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is this love thus manifested and thus supreme and regnant that generates love in us. "We love

him because he first loved us," the apostle exclaimed. It is this love in the home that makes it the place of peace and joy and happiness. It is this love in the church which preserves the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace—a love which makes any service light, and any sacrifice a joy. It is this love in the school that makes authority something to rejoice in; which transfigures tasks that otherwise were hard, and helps to smooth a pathway that without it were one of obstacles that might prove insurmountable. And how this love prompts to the gift of self for the happiness and helpfulness of others. One of the most unique and interesting characters in Ian Maclaren's books, "The Bonnie Brier Bush" and "The Days of Auld Lang Syne," is Drumsheugh. The readers of these unique stories, which in some respects are in a class by themselves, will well recall this man. He seemed to live for himself. He was close in his bargaining. He was miserly, seemingly, as to the employment of his savings. But it all comes out at last when he reveals to the good old doctor the story of his life. In early days he loved Marget Howe. Because of his retiring nature he never told her, and he lost the girl he might otherwise have had to brighten his

life. She accepted another, but that other proved not untrue, but unthrifty. He never could make things go, and privation came to his household. It was Drumsheugh who flew to the rescue. It was his money that educated Marget's son, and his means that lifted the encumbrances from her estate. She never dreamed it until at last one day fortune brought them together for a little while, and she took tea at Drumsheugh's house. Then the secret was revealed, and she exclaimed: "A' never dreamed o' this, an' a'm not worthy o' sic luve, whereof I hev hed much fruit an' ye hev only pain."

"Ye're wrang, Marget, for the joy hes gien ower the pain, an' a've hed the greater gain. Luve roosed me tae wark an' fecht, wha nicht hae been a ne'er-dae-weel. Luve savit me frae greed o' siller an' a hard hert. Luve kept me clean in thocht an' deed, for it was ever Marget by nicht an' day. If a'm a man the day, ye did it, though ye nicht never hae kent it. It's little a' did for ye, but ye've dune a' thing for me . . . Marget."<sup>1</sup>

What the love of woman could do for this man, and has done for many another man, that the

<sup>1</sup> "The Days of Auld Lang Syne," p. 189.



love of Jesus Christ can do, and vastly more, in the Christian heart. It can lift him above temptation and obstacle, and glorify sacrifice, and form a bond in life and character that can be surpassed or even equaled by no other.

This love then as a supreme bond in the Christian and church life the Baptist would exalt. He does not much believe in legislation in order to advance the interests of the kingdom. He would rather put love for Jesus Christ and his work into the individual heart. He does not seek very much for Sunday laws in order to maintain the sacredness of that holy day. He would rather place the love of the Christ and so of his church and work, in the heart of man as the restraining and uplifting supreme motive. He would not write the name of God in the constitution of either the nation or the State. He would rather rely upon the love of God in the heart that should be the controlling force in the life. If the latter is absent, he is inclined to say, the former will have little force. He does not even contend very strenuously for the reading of the Bible in our public schools. As to this, there is diversity of opinion, but the feeling on the part of Baptists generally, in exact accord with the thought that

it is the inner spirit and not the external letter that should control, inclines them not to contend for such reading. Contention over these exercises might be more injurious, even in success, than would be their cessation. Everywhere and always they discount righteousness by edict, and seek to implant righteousness by love.

We dream and speak sometimes of the coming of the kingdom of our Lord, when holiness shall prevail and anything that defiles shall be frowned down; when righteousness and peace shall dwell in our homes; when contention and division shall obtain no more; when the nations shall dwell together in unity; and when the battle standard shall not lead armed hosts, nor the throb of the war drum be heard summoning them to conflict; when the sanctity of the home life shall be preserved, and families shall not be scattered by the influence of sin. But how shall this come about? It cannot come by legal enactment; it cannot come by any coercion, whether applied to the individual or to men in the mass; it cannot come by the influence of any external act or rite or service. It can come only by the enthronement of this supreme love of God and Jesus Christ in the heart of the individual man. And this unit man shall be mul-

tiplied one by one, one by one until the single man shall become a multitude, and the whole earth in process of time shall be filled with his glory. It is love then that is supreme, and love that is the binding, regnant, dynamic force that shall regenerate life. How splendidly in his own sonorous, rhetorical fashion Dr. George Dana Boardman expresses this: "Love is thus the rhythmical keynote, the discretive index, the fundamental principle of the kingdom of God or Christian religion. Or, to express myself in phraseology suggested by the undulatory theory, love is the ethereal medium pervading God's moral universe, by means of which are propagated the motions of his impulses, the heat of his grace, the light of his truth, the electricity of his activities, the magnetism of his nature, the affinities of his character. In brief, love is the very definition of Deity himself. . . Love is the greatest thing in the world. And . . . in the world to come.

"I'm apt to think the man  
That could surround the sum of things, and spy  
The heart of God and secrets of his empire,  
Would speak but love; with him the bright result  
Would change the hue of intermediate scenes,  
And make one thing of all theology."<sup>1</sup>

—*Anonymous.*

<sup>1</sup> "The Kingdom," pp, 209, 210.

We think sometimes of and pray for the unity of the Christian church. We see her divisions, and often her strifes. We behold rivalry, not infrequently, that is dishonoring to the Master, and which, by its influence on the world, is injurious to the advancement of the interests of his kingdom. We wonder at times how these things shall be eliminated, and the church become one in the spirit of Christ's own prayer, "That they may be one, even as we are one." Perhaps it cannot be by organic unity in any form. We are sure that it cannot be by any ecclesiastical edict. It is just as sure that it cannot be by any common creed in whatever form it may be wrought out. Likewise, it is certain that it cannot be on the foundation of the "historic episcopate," as is sometimes indicated. It cannot be, in a word, by anything external. It can only be by the dominance of this supreme quality and emotion of which we have spoken, namely, love. Where abounds the love of God and the love of man, there his kingdom will be set up, and it is this kingdom in the supremacy of its dominating emotion, love, for which the true Baptist always and ever stands.

£

**A Redemptive Service the Church's  
Supreme End**

*Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring happy bells across the snow;  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

. . . . .

*Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land;  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.*

—Tennyson, "In Memoriam," Canto cv.

## X

**A**T a service of worship, not long since, the writer listened while the minister prayed these words, "Make us true to the purpose and end of life." There can be no question as to the importance to be attached to the answering of such a prayer. Surely no life could have grander goal than this. But what is this purpose and this end toward which all should endeavor to direct their lives? It surely is not living for self in any of its forms; simply to breathe, to consume the fruits of earth, and doze away existence. This cannot be the true purpose and end of life. It cannot be either the living for advancement in any personal direction whatsoever, aside from that which is advancement toward truth and virtue and nobleness. It cannot be seeking after earthly profit or pleasure or position in any of their forms for self alone. The true purpose and the end of life must be the espousal of that which is best in self, and for the highest good of others.

If this is true in a general sense—and none would be inclined to question it, however adverse to its ideal their lives may be—it must be pre-eminently true of the kingdom and the church of Jesus Christ. These are lifted to the plane of the ideal life. These should lift up before the people the true standard of living. If they do this they must show how little they seek after self, and how greatly they seek after others' good; in a word, how completely they seek for others' redemption, namely, to buy back from the low in the interests of the high. From the beginning to the end of Jesus Christ's life and ministry this was the purpose of it. Hear him as in the synagogue at Nazareth, when coming back from his victory over the tempter, he lays down the programme of his campaign. He is come to bind up the broken-hearted, to break the fetters from the captives, to give the oil of joy for the ashes of mourning, to preach the gospel to the poor, to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. Listen to him while he declares his mission, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Stand among his disciples as he sends them out, two by two, to go among the people and minister in his name, declaring to them "Freely ye



have received, freely give." With rapt gaze behold him on the side of the mount just east of the city, when having finished his earthly work, having heartened his disciples by his reappearance among them, he gave them what has been regarded ever since as the Great Commission to the church, its marching orders: "Go ye into all the world and teach all nations." That is, go ye and be the messengers of redemption to all men in all climes and in all times.

The early church caught and honored this mission. They went everywhere preaching redemption in the name of Jesus, and endeavoring to exemplify the principles of that great errand. Peter, Philip, Paul, and the rest all went forth proclaiming the uplift of humanity in the name of Jesus Christ. Beautiful upon the mountaintops were the feet of them who carried the glad tidings. And the church of to-day, no less than the church of the past, must be redemptive if it is at all true to the spirit of its charter. It is the redemption of mankind throughout the whole sphere of their lives that it must always and everywhere set before it as the purpose and the end of life. How splendidly Henry Drummond in his "Programme of Christianity" sets this forth:

“Anything that prepares the way for a better social state is the fit work of the followers of Christ. Those who work on the more spiritual levels, too much unhonored, the slow toil of multitudes of unchurched souls who prepare the material or moral environments without which these higher labors are in vain.

“He who joins this society finds himself in a large place. The kingdom of God is a society of the best men, working for the best ends, according to the best methods. Its membership is a multitude whom no man can number; its methods are as various as human nature; its field is the world. It is a commonwealth, yet it honors a King; it is a social brotherhood, but it acknowledges the Fatherhood of God. Though not a philosophy the world turns to it for light; though not political it is the incubator of all great laws. It is more human than the State, for it deals with deeper needs; more catholic than the church, for it includes whom the church rejects. It is a propaganda, yet it works not by agitation but by ideals. It is a religion, yet it holds the worship of God to be mainly the service of man. Though not a scientific society, its watchword is evolution; though not an ethic, it possesses the Sermon on

the Mount. This mysterious society owns no wealth but distributes fortunes. It has no minutes, for history keeps them; no member's roll, for no one could make it. Its entry money is nothing; its subscription, all you have. The society never meets and it never adjourns. Its law is one word—loyalty; its gospel one message—love. Verily, 'Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.' ”<sup>1</sup>

Baptists very early in their history regarded this mission of redemption as the chief end of their existence. There are some who do not think it claiming too much when they declare that the New Testament churches themselves were Baptist churches. Certainly, when we consider the New Testament polity and compare it with that of Baptists to-day, the former seems to come closer to the latter than does any other. But without claiming too much in this direction, or that which might be regarded as too much, Baptists early in their modern history became missionary. They believed their organization to be formed, not for themselves alone, but for others as well; hence they endeavored to carry the good news wheresoever they went. Baptists were doubtless not the

<sup>1</sup> "The Programme of Christianity," pp. 60, 61.

first, as Professor Vedder in his recent book admonishes us. He says:

“And just here a caution to Baptists: Do not be guilty of making the claim that the Baptists were the pioneers among modern Christians in the world of foreign missions. . . More than fifty years before Carey was born, Ziegenbalg, the Dane, went to India and began a mission among the Tamils, founding Christian schools, gathering converts, and translating the Scriptures into the vernacular. Forty years before Carey sailed for India, Schwartz the Prussian became Ziegenbalg’s successor, and carried forward the work. Thirty years before Carey’s birth, Moravian missionaries set out to preach the gospel among the Negroes of St. Thomas, the Indians of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Eskimos of Greenland.”<sup>1</sup>

And yet so insistent were Baptists in this direction, both at the beginning and immediately following, that it may be said they really originated modern missions. To quote from Professor Vedder again:

“So, from the work of Carey, though he was not the first of modern missionaries, from the or-

<sup>1</sup> “Christian Epoch-Makers,” pp. 292, 293.

ganization of the Baptist Missionary Society, though it was not the first missionary organization of modern times, dates a conception of the duty of Christians so greatly enlarged, an increase of missionary activity so vast, that as we properly call Columbus the discoverer of America, we may with equal propriety call Carey the father of modern missions.”<sup>1</sup>

This, during all the history of Baptists, has been a characteristic of their general activities and their public gatherings. Not being ecclesiastical, they do not legislate. Having no formal doctrine, and no creeds to revise, they have no occasion to spend time in trying to bring their standards into accord with modern thought. Their meetings are missionary therefore. They gather to hear reports from the home field and the foreign field. They come to know what the colporter, and the Sunday-school missionary, and the missionary on the frontier, and the one who has borne the evangel to foreign shores has to report about his or her work. They consult as to the progress of the kingdom and the church, and seek to know what measures may be adopted for their greater furtherance. This may possibly be one reason

<sup>1</sup> “Christian Epoch-Makers,” p. 294.

why their meetings are not so generally reported in the daily press as are others. Reports of missionary operations do not furnish material for startling headlines. Less public than those of others, their meetings are of even greater importance; for, forever more important is the redemption of a soul than the construction of a rubric or the revision of a creed.

Partaking of the nature of their spirit and of their polity, the work of Baptists has been voluntary. Each individual has come as he has been minded, and each church, likewise, to this work of making Christ known to the world. Societies, as we well know, have been formed for publication, and for home missions, and for foreign mission work. These have done noble service in the past. They will, it is believed and hoped, do still greater service in the future. Co-ordinated in the Northern Baptist Convention (as in the South in the Southern) there will be greater unity of effort, if not greater nobility of aim. It will still be voluntary. The independence of the individual, and of the church, and of the Association, and of the Society will still be regarded. There will be no legislation, no compulsion that shall influence any of these elements, but there will be,

as perhaps there has not been, a unity of action that will dominate the whole body, and advance thereby the interests involved. There will be, without having any form of absolute ecclesiastical government, a completer denominational control.

There is no need, perhaps, and yet it may be profitable for just a moment to try and get at the ground of this redemptive service which we have indicated as the purpose and end of the church. It is Paul's principle of indebtedness. "I am debtor," he said, "both to the Jew, and to the Greek, and to the barbarian." He was debtor, not because he had received anything from these, but because he had what these needed. Any man who lives in the spirit of the truth who has, must regard himself as debtor to those who have not. He is recreant by just so much to the highest standards if he fails. The church of Jesus Christ, therefore, is debtor to those who dwell in the dark and destitute portions of the earth. It has, as we have indicated, its task set it by its divine Lord, because it has been so endowed with that which he has bestowed. As Doctor Mabie has well said:

"This task is naught less than to take human

souls stricken and damaged by sin, and to begin to transfigure them—to change them from prostrate, sin-cursed, earthly sonship to radiant, glorified, heavenly sonship, like Christ's own, idealized in that mount.

“To bring such a salvation to men the Christian church not only has the right, but is bound, in the appropriate ‘times and seasons,’ to go everywhere upon this planet where the Redeemer himself would come.”<sup>1</sup>

It is only as such indebtedness is recognized, and such task performed, that the church conforms to the ideal her Lord has set up for it.

In the glory of this redemption, the church may find a basis for its being. How redemption in any direction glorifies the object of it. Holland dammed back the North Sea by her far-reaching dikes. She pumped out the water that then made the land a waste, and then she tilled the ground, and gardens grow where the waves before had rolled. There is redemption. In the far West, in the earlier days of the history of our country, there was the great American desert. Sage-brush and sand were the occupants of it. But settlers began to enter in upon its eastern confines, and

<sup>1</sup> “The Divine Right of Missions,” pp. 110, 111.



on the western they constructed flumes and passages and brought the mountain streams down into the arid wastes. And so where there was only desolation and emptiness, there are now to be found fertile fields and blooming gardens. Where was an expanse of desert, now there is an expanse of beauty, and there is redemption. The grace of God is poured into the life of a man or woman, and he or she is redeemed. Every virtue becomes enhanced, and every vice rebuked. Into homes it comes, into schools it comes, into communities it comes, this abounding, renovating, uplifting grace of Jesus Christ of which the church is the steward, and wherever there is this coming there is redemption. In Walter Pater's "Marius the Epicurean" there is a most eloquent passage depicting the coming of Æsculapius, the god of medicine, to this earth of ours. Where he first stepped a temple had been reared of marvelous architectural beauty. About the cupola these words appeared in letters of gold: "The Son of God coming hither has greatly loved this place." Beneath the dome of it there poured forth a fountain of healing waters. They filled the basin to the brim, but never ran over. Drawing from it did not diminish it, and refraining from drawing

did not increase it. Water taken from it and carried elsewhere regenerated other waters, and poured upon the ground caused other springs to arise responsively. The waters were regenerative, healing, redemptive. All this is fable, but that Jesus Christ has stood upon the earth and revealed to mankind the fountain of healing waters, that are immortal, is a fact. Of these healing waters, perennially flowing forth, the church of Jesus Christ is made the custodian and the missionary. We are, in the dispensing of this grace, to give ourselves as stewards of the Lord Jesus Christ. Failure here is failure in all.

It is this church thus constituted, with this spirit of obedience to its Lord and Head, and with this purpose of redemption with respect to mankind, against which the gates of hades shall not prevail. Forms may change, possibly forms may be annulled, and yet in some form this church, embodying the kingdom and founded by our divine Lord, must remain until its mission shall have been accomplished, and the kingdoms of the world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. It is of this church, in large measure at least, of which we have conceived, as we have depicted the principles of Bap-

tists. To hold these principles as the divine Lord reveals them, and to be true to the ideals of the kingdom and the church as he presented them, is the mission of Baptists in the world. To such honor have they been called, and for such service they need the constant enduement of Him who said, "Lo, I am with you alway to the end of the days." They may not resign this task nor prove recreant thereto, lest they incur the condemnation of Him whose bestowment of praise by and by will be their greatest reward.







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