

AS OTHERS SEE US, AND AS WE ARE

The Plea and Position of the Disciples of Christ, as They Are,
Presented in Contrast with the Erroneous Views Usually Held
of Them by the Denominational World

BY

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PREFACE

IN this book the author makes no effort at a "scholarly" or literary production. The chapters of the book contain the substance of a series of Sunday-evening sermons delivered in Central Christian Church, Cincinnati. The one and sole purpose of the preparation of this work for the press, is, that those whose ideas of the church of Christ are erroneous and confused, may have a clearer understanding of the nature and purpose of the church, and thereby advance the cause of Christ's kingdom on earth.

To clearly set forth the true plea and position of the Christian Church, we have, so far as possible, endeavored to be simple, concise and clear; we have tried, so far as practicable, to avoid *theological* phraseology, and to use the plain language of the people.

If, in drawing the contrast between the disciples of Christ "As Others See Us, and As We Are," one soul may be made to see the truth more clearly as it is in Christ, the author shall be satisfied. However, he sends the book forth, earnestly praying that, with God's blessing upon it, many souls may, through its instrumentality, find "the Way, the Truth and the Life"—even Christ the Saviour.

Central Christian Church, Cincinnati.

April 16, 1908, being the thirty-sixth anniversary of my birth.

John L. Hill.

INTRODUCTION

J. M. GORDON

Aside from the clearness of presentation, the accuracy of its statements, and its strong and lucid style, the book before us should have a special interest for the men and women of today.

In the first place, the *author has a right to his opinion*. "Every man has a right to his own opinion," is one of the many popular adages which receive acceptance among men, because of their want of thought. No man has a right to an opinion on any subject unless he has given that subject special thought and investigation, and so stands in a position to know. The truth of the above statement is shown by the fact that men never so stultify themselves as on the subject of religion. Ask a sensible man in one line of business to express an opinion as to an entirely different line, and he will promptly tell you that he knows nothing about that business, and therefore cannot express an opinion; but ask the average man a question on politics or religion, the life here or hereafter, and he will answer you and give his opinion with a glibness exactly in proportion to his lack of knowledge of these great questions.

Mr. Hill has a right to tell us "how others see us," for as others see us, he once, in all good conscience, saw us himself. Our author was born into a family most earnest and exemplary in the belief and practices of a great denominational church; he was reared amid such surroundings and influences, and finally educated in a theological seminary of the highest standing. He was ordained a minister of that church while he was hardly out of his teens, and by the time he reached the age of twenty-five years, was occupying a prominent pulpit of that denomination, and was prominent in its counsels and high in its esteem.

Then followed a period of great intellectual combat and unrest; he found himself slowly drifting away from the old moorings, into a sea of uncertainty and doubt; the foundations were being shaken around him he heard the crash of falling creeds, and he

longed to plant his feet on a rock of immovable knowledge.

He turned away from the study of creeds and confessions, and the commandments of men, to study of the words of Him “who speaks with authority,” and there found the anchor of his soul, the rock which abides, in the facts, commands and promises of the New Testament. There he also found the new name by which God had promised to call his people, and which he felt himself privileged to wear—the name “Christian.”

Sadly, but resolutely, he turned away from the church of his childhood, of his father and mother and friends, resigned his charge, and, utterly unsupported by any promises of the brotherhood into whose communion he was to enter, stepped out upon the promises of God, and declared himself a Christian only.

These are the facts of the author’s life during the period when he saw us “as others see us.”

The writer of this introduction has a right to make public these facts, as during this period he was the author’s most intimate friend, and finally had the great privilege of burying him in baptism in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. Hill was at once given position and recognition among the Disciples of Christ, and rapidly advanced till he attained the prominent place which he now holds, being minister of the Central Christian Church of Cincinnati, one of the oldest and most historic pulpits among the Disciples. So, from the very facts of the case, he is peculiarly fitted to give the world that which he sees from his double viewpoint.

So long as the church is regarded as a “Transfer Society” to land men on the heavenly shore, the more routes the better; but today the church is beginning to realize that her mission is not to take men to heaven, but to bring heaven to men, by overturning the kingdom of Satan and upbuilding the kingdom of God. Today there is being recognized in the religion of Jesus the moral equivalent of war. Man is a fighter by nature. He must find the right enemy and then fight to the death.

Men are beginning to realize that to enlist under the banner of

the great Captain of our salvation does not mean merely to keep step and mark time, to appear on dress parade, and to do garrison duty, but it means real warfare. The Christian soldier is called on to endure hardness, to lead a forlorn hope, to fill a perilous breach, to resolutely advance and plant the banner of the cross on every citadel of sin, till every knee has bowed and every tongue confessed Jesus Christ is Lord.

Long ago the church won the hearts of the women, recently the hands and feet of the children, but the strong arm of the men, how win that? By issuing the *call to heroism*; by calling upon men, not to come up and get saved, but to come up and get lost—lost to self and found to service. That call has been issued, and grandly the men are answering it; from north, south, east and west they are coming in companies, and rallying to the standard of the King.

Over against this army of the king stands the army of Satan, drilled and disciplined, leagued and banded together, standing heart to heart and shoulder to shoulder, presenting a solid front to all that is good, a tremendous example of the power of unity and solidarity.

What shall unite and solidify the hosts of the Christ? Two things alone unite men—a *passion* and a *purpose*. Men can never think alike, but they can love alike and hate alike. Satan's hosts are united by the passion of hate, and the purpose to build up the kingdom of Satan.

God's hosts must be united by the passion of love and the purpose to build up the kingdom of God!

The basis, then, of Christian unity is the basis of every union, a personality. Search the records of history, and you will find that every union of men rested on a personality. When the personality passed, the union perished and fell to pieces.

A lasting union must be based on a lasting personality—Jesus the same yesterday, today and forever.

The book before us is a plea for such a Christian union, based on the only bond of union, the personality of Jesus Christ. Loyalty and allegiance are the strongest passions in the hearts of men;

men by nature are hero-worshippers. Jesus is the great hero of the race, and alone worthy of worship!

The *passion* to unite men is the passion of love, loyalty and allegiance to our King; the *purpose* is the establishment of the kingdom of God, which will have fully come, only, when God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. When Jesus is thus lifted up, no more to a cross, but to a crown of unending dominion, the petty differences which now divide his followers will be forgotten in the ardor and enthusiasm of the great battle for the Christ and for the right.

The only question debatable will be, "What think you of Christ? Whose son is he?" Then, if a man give the answer, "I believe him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God," the one fact of the New Testament which comes to us on *evidence*, will have been accepted. There is no room for debate or argument; does the King command it, does the Christ promise it?— is the court of last appeal.

Divisions came from allegiance to many Christs. Some cleaved to the Christ of history, others to the Christ of tradition, still others to the Christ of creeds and confessions, or poetry and art. Union will come from allegiance to the one Christ, the Christ of the four Gospels, who is the Christ of God!

The book before us is a plea for such unity, and though it may not effect it, it at least clears the ground of much prejudice and misconception, and points out the path down which the children of men may walk in unity and love—the path of glory, that leads not alone to the grave, but beyond it to life eternal.

WILMINGTON, O., Apr. 1, 1908.

CHAPTER I: “A DENOMINATION, FOUNDED BY ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.”

In religious parlance, there is no expression oftener used than the “different churches.” That there have been and are many religions, all will agree. Man is naturally a religious being, and wherever he exists we find him bowing before some shrine, worshipping at some altar. He instinctively believes in some kind of a God, and has ever dreamed of a “future life.” This characteristic is true both of the heathen and the worshipers of the true God.

The history of the worshipers of the true God is divided into two great dispensations, viz.: the Jewish and the Christian. With the former it is not our purpose here to deal, but to the latter let us give close attention and careful consideration.

As already stated, the prevailing opinion held by the masses is that the representatives of the Christian religion are divided into a great many different churches, and how often do we hear the statement, “It makes little difference what *church* we belong to, if we have been converted and are true Christians.” The idea is that the churches are afterthoughts, and are institutions founded upon various interpretations of the Bible to suit the peculiar ideas and temperaments of different people. Without going into detail, it is safe to say that every religious sect known to the history of Protestant Christianity has come into existence in this way.

This idea of the “churches” is not confined to the masses, among the “laity,” but the more learned representatives of the denominations recognize the propriety, right and authority of the “churches.” While no one sect will accept as true all the tenets of any other sect, and each believes the other to be teaching some untruths, they are regarded as necessary evils, because “all people can not see alike.”

Inasmuch as great minds have not been able to see alike, they have deemed it wise to found “churches” holding forth to the world their own interpretation of the Scriptures concerning

church doctrine and government. In this way Wesley and Williams, and many others, founded churches. In this same way many good people believe that at a certain time Alexander Campbell organized a church known as "Christians," or "Disciples of Christ," but often called "Campbellites" by the sectarian world. It is upon this point, first, we note the vast difference between the light in which others see us, and as we really are.

It is true that Mr. Campbell and others stood for some long-neglected principles of truth, and inaugurated a movement in the religious world that has proven a mighty force, its adherents now numbering more than one and a half millions of people; but the idea of organizing a "new church," or creating another sect, never entered his mind, for above all other things this he most vigorously opposed. Nothing appealed to him as being so hurtful to pure Christianity as the schismatic divisions of Christendom, and the entire energy of his great soul was set against division and discord, and for unity and harmony among Christ's followers. On renouncing Presbyterianism, so fearful was he of a following which the world might regard as another "church" or sect, he cast his lot with the Baptists, and remained with them so long as he could "speak where the Bible speaks," and be "silent where the Bible is silent." Later Mr. Campbell and his collaborators stood for the laying aside of all sectarian divisions, and the unity of all God's people with Christ as their creed and the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice. Instead of organizing or creating anything new, they stood for dispensing with all that is of human origin and unnecessary to the "one body" among Christians, and for the restoration of the apostolic simplicity of the one and only church of Christ as it came fresh from the hands of the apostles in the first century. For this they argued, on the basis of eternal truth itself, upon which may stand in fraternal union all who love to do his will.

There is in existence no such thing as a "Campbellite Church," nor is there any such thing as a "Christian Church," or "Disciples of Christ," or people represented by any other name, "organized" or founded by A. Campbell and those who labored in accord with

him. They were leaders in a restoration movement, and the taking up of the long-neglected principles of apostolic simplicity held forth by the people known as "Disciples of Christ" can be traced to no one man in particular. A. Campbell by no means embodied originally in his teaching all for which the disciples stand, or rather was not first to argue for the restoration of some neglected doctrines.

For the restoration of many of the great outstanding facts and teachings of the New Testament to the faith and practice of those who claim to be "Christians only," we are indebted to various individuals of different times and places. While we have no formulated creed or "Confession of Faith," save the Bible, yet as the rule and guide of our faith and practice the New Testament plainly sets forth many doctrines and duties not contained in sectarian creeds; and in many instances in the creeds human ideas that are directly opposed to the New Testament teaching have been substituted. The simple yet sublime truths of apostolic teaching have by different ones been restored to the church of Christ of today. Among them are such names as James and Robert Haldane, Ballantyne and Ewing of Scotland, B. W. Stone, Walter Scott, Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, and others. They took the Bible as their only textbook, and their plea was its self-sufficiency. From it they promulgated no set of doctrines, formulated no creed. Under the guidance of the Spirit, they ever searched for the truth contained therein, and so each succeeding generation has done. Bound by no creed save that "Jesus is the Christ," which can never need revision, the learners of him, ever free to accept the truth as it may be revealed by the Spirit through the Word, in no way committed to the beliefs or teachings of any one save those who have upon them the stamp of divine inspiration, wearing no human name, espousing no human theories, submitting to no ecclesiastical authority instituted this side of the New Testament, tracing their origin to no one save Christ and his apostles, and by the truth as it is in him, made free to perform their part in bringing about the divine ideal in the mind of the Master when he prayed that they might all be one as he and the

Father were one, in humility, yet in his strength they stand, inviting to join in this glorious movement all who love the Lord.

While many others may regard us as a sect, or one of the many churches, and may call us “Campbellites,” thinking Mr. Campbell was the “founder” of the church, these are not the facts, as a careful and unprejudiced investigation of the subject proves.

CHAPTER II. THE NAME “CHRISTIAN”— IS IT A PRESUMPTION?

“The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Many of our religious neighbors designated by different names given, and taken on by men at different times as circumstances have to their minds seemingly justified such procedure, think there is a large degree of presumption on the part of those people who call themselves “Christians,” or the “Church of Christ.” A great congregation in one of our large cities was once taken severely to task for styling itself “The First Christian Church” of —, implying, as the critics said, that this congregation was presuming to be the first church of Christ’s true followers in that city. They said: “We are all Christians in that we are believers in and followers of Christ. Then, why should you presume to call *yourselves* the ‘Christian Church’?”

They asked: “Are not Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and many other denominations, Christians also? What right have you to a monopoly of the name, as though you were the only Christians?”

It is argued, further, that there is but little in a name, the power of the church depending upon her inward life, and not upon any outward designation; that the various denominations are simply “divisions” or “companies” of the Lord’s army, and are properly fulfilling their mission by wearing these different names.

As others see us still further, we are inconsistent with our plea for acting only upon divine authority, when we call ourselves the “Christian Church,” claiming that this name was given to the disciples of Christ by their enemies at Antioch, and was a nickname flung at them in derision. Therefore we should not contend, even from our own viewpoint, for that which was not of divine origin, but be satisfied to be called “Campbellites,” and take our place as one of the many “churches” in the denominational ranks of Christendom.

The foregoing, we believe, is a fair and impartial statement of the prevailing opinions regarding us, in the minds of a large majority of the preachers and laity of the denominations. And now, keeping constantly in mind the one great plea of the Christian Church, viz.: *the restoration of primitive Christianity as the only possible basis for the unity of the Lord's people*, let us note the contrast between this view "as others see us," and what we really are, as regards the name "Christian."

We choose to wear this name because it was divinely given. Upon this point the writer submits an argument taken from a sermon by James Vernon, minister of the Christian Church at Henderson, Ky., considering it the very strongest he has ever seen. Bro. Vernon says: "The word 'Christian' is, of course, derived from Christ—which means 'anointed'; and to be a Christian is simply one who belongs to Christ.

"That the name 'Christian' was given to the disciples at Antioch by their Jewish or heathen enemies in derision, or contempt, there is not an atom of proof, but is a pure assumption made in the face of very material proof to the contrary. Conybeare and Howson, and Canon Farrar, have disposed of the idea that it was given by the unbelieving Jews. They tell us that the word 'Christ' was one of the most sacred words in the Jewish language, and that not to have saved their own lives would they have applied it to those whom they regarded as disciples of a spurious Christ and a foul apostasy.

"We know that the Romans did not give them the name, because Farrar quotes Gregory, Gibbon and Renan, who say that the emperor Julian issued an edict forbidding the disciples to call themselves 'Christians' and commanding them to call themselves 'Galileans.'

"Meyer, the great German commentator, says: 'There is nothing to support the view that the name was given in derision.' A. J. Gordon, the justly celebrated Baptist preacher of Boston, said: 'If you study the Greek word for "called," you will conclude that they were divinely called Christians. God gave them the name.' Bishop Baldwin, of the Episcopal Church, said: 'The word

“called” here is deeply significant. It is not the ordinary word “call,” but the word which denotes a heavenly vision. The disciples were called by a heavenly vision “Christians”.’ ”

After quoting a number of others from among the world’s greatest scholars, Bro. Vernon justly concludes:

“(1) The name was not given to them by their enemies. (2) That it was given from heaven. (3) That when it was given to them, the disciples at once accepted it and proclaimed their acceptance openly to the world.”

After commenting at length upon the Greek text, in which he clearly establishes the position herein maintained, Bro. Vernon gives us another most significant fact, when he says: “It has been customary in all ages to give *new names* to persons and places to mark important events or the passage of critical points in their history. The Lord changed Abram’s name to Abraham; Sarai’s name to Sarah; Jacob’s name to Israel. He changed Simon’s name to Peter, and Saul’s name to Paul.

“The time came in the history of the church, as has been pointed out by Bishop Baldwin, which called for the giving of a new name. The church was now outside of Palestine, it was free from Judaism; outside both the temple and synagogue, under a new leadership, with a new ideal and a new hope, and through Paul and Barnabas the Lord gave it a new name. ‘The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch’.”

The foregoing arguments that the name “Christian” was bestowed upon the followers of Christ by none other than divine authority, are unanswerable, and by this name they should ever be known. The church is the “bride of the Lamb.” Christ being the bridegroom, the church surely should wear none other than his name.

Not only is the name “Christian” Scriptural, but many of the greatest and best men among the leaders in Christendom have advocated it. Dr. P. S. Henson, one of the greatest among Baptist preachers in America today, at the General Convention of Northern Baptists in Cleveland, O., on the 19th of May, 1904, said: “I

sometimes feel sorry that the word 'Baptist,' which was flung at us by our enemies and stuck, should be our name, for often its accent of an act obscures to others our great mission to the world. Perhaps yet we will go back to the name 'Christian'." Dr. R. S. MacArthur, of New York City, said: "The names of Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist and Baptist, however much we love them, and however loyal we are to them now, will give place to that name which is above every other name. The day will come when the dashing waves of time and eternity shall strip off every name but one. Not our name, but the name of our Lord and Saviour, our Prophet, Priest and King, will abide, and amid the light of earth, and the increasing glory of eternity, that name shall alone be read, 'Jesus Christ'!"

Luther said: "I beg that my name be passed in silence, and that people call themselves, not Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? The doctrine is not mine, I have not been crucified for any one. Why, then, should the children of Christ take the unhallowed name of a frail, vile mortal like me? Do it not. Let us put away party names, and bear the name of Christ, whose doctrine we hold."

We maintain that there is much in a name. In history, both sacred and profane, names have signified much. Perhaps the mightiest name among men of affairs in the nineteenth century was that of Napoleon. Victor Hugo said of him: "The frontiers of kingdoms oscillated on the map, the sound of a superhuman sword being drawn from its scabbard could be heard, and he was seen, standing erect on the horizon, with a gleam in his hand, and a splendor in his eyes, opening in thunder his two wings, the grand army and the Old Guard. He was the 'archangel of war.' " Compared with the divinely named "Prince of Peace," the human name "Archangel of War" fades into insignificance. Napoleon yielded to Christ the palm and the crown when, in the days of exile, he contrasted the waning glories of Caesar, Alexander, Charlemagne and himself, with that of the increasing splendor of the name of Christ. Should the believers in Christ bear his name? No worthy disciple can say, "no." Should a clear view and full ap-

preciation of this name be obstructed or hindered by any other name? "Never," the unprejudiced and loving heart must answer. The name of Christ is the mightiest among men below, and the most glorious in heaven above.

The body of Christ's followers who call themselves Christians do not wish a monopoly of the name, and they humbly, but in the majesty and glory of the exalted honor, deny the charge of presumption on their part in wearing the name which God has ordained to distinguish the followers of his Son from the devotees of the other religions of the world. We do not claim to be the only Christians, but "*Christians only*."

In the early history of the church the disciples of Christ were known as Christians, and by this name were distinguished from the believers in any other religion, be it Jewish or heathen. This was so until the one body was divided by schismatic strife, and different parties took upon themselves names given by men. That these names are dishonoring to Christ and a hindrance to the progress of his kingdom, all fair-minded people will sooner or later admit. As history affirms, many of the great religious reformers protested against their followers calling themselves after their own names, and no doubt today, redeemed and glorified, standing in the presence of the ascended great High Priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, those heroes of the cross, such as Calvin, Luther, Whitefield, Wesley, Williams and Campbell, could they speak back to us from on high, would in unison exclaim, "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb to receive all honor—and more than the sods of men can bestow—we are sinners saved by grace—unworthy are our names to be compared with his—call not any part of the church militant after us; for when you, too, behold the King in his beauty, you will feel as we, that it was poor, weak, human, vain, earthly and temporal to take any other name than his."

Why should there be "Methodist Christians," "Lutheran Christians," or "Campbellite Christians"? Why not all be "Christians" only? Were all these human names set aside, with all believers espousing only the name of Christ, would not one of the great

barriers to Christian unity be removed? Instead of wishing to monopolize the name, the Christian Church is pleading with all her might that all who love and obey the Master leave off every other name, and be known by this "name that is above every name." Why cling to a practice that unduly honors men, or measures or theories or doctrines by substituting their names and wearing them instead of the name of Christ?

That the name "Christian" is the one supreme and all-powerful name is seen in the unfolding of history, in the divine logic of events. The great world movements in the religion of latter times have risen above denominational lines, and left out all references to denominational names. The "Young Men's Christian Association," the "Woman's Christian Temperance Union," the "Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor," are the great world movements. The "Baptist Young People's Union" and the "Epworth League" can never be world movements, because their very name precludes the possibility of it, narrowing their boundaries, and limiting their scope to the lines of denominationalism .

The most optimistic supporters of any religious body designated by a human name, such as Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran or Presbyterian, can not hope that the day will ever come when any one of these names or creeds made and given by men will be accepted by Christendom and conquer the world. But thanks be to God, *all* who believe in Christ may not only hope for, but rest secure in the blessed assurance that Christianity is destined to triumph! One great step, then, toward the realization of this "one far-off divine event, toward which the whole creation moves," would be for all who believe in Christ to call themselves "Christians," for "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch," and this was the name divinely given which they should wear forever.

CHAPTER III.

“EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION”— “IS SALVATION BY FORMULA?”

“Heartfelt” religion—“Experimental” religion—these were terms very much used by sectarian people some years ago, and are much in vogue in some quarters today; so much so, that even now candidates for membership with some denominations are required to relate their “experience” as one of the conditions upon which they may be received, which, if satisfactory, they are usually “voted” in. This exercise usually consists of the candidate, in his own way, telling how he was by the gospel, or by some other means, convicted of sin; at last his rebellious will was broken, he fell prostrate before God, he “agonized” at the altar of prayer, and finally, “coming to the end of his own strength, and making a full surrender, God for Christ’s sake pardoned his sins.” According to his experience, the things he once hated he immediately began to love, and the things he once loved he then commenced to hate. Thus the average “experience” was told, amid the rejoicing of the assembled listeners. Be it far from the writer to in any way reflect upon the honesty of purpose on the part of those who did, and do yet, so believe and practice. In his early boyhood days, before he knew the horror of sin, or could comprehend the meaning of a Saviour, he was in fright led to a “mourner’s bench” and wept, he knew not what for, and tried to pray for the forgiveness of imaginary sins that he had never committed. Alas! he became a sinner, after he had as a child “professed religion.” He also, blessed be the name, learned to believe in Christ, and in faith and repentance obeyed him in after years, when his only hope was and is that of a sinner saved by grace.

It is not here my purpose to discuss the logic or Scripturalness of the mourner’s-bench idea of “experimental” or “heartfelt” religion. Suffice it to say, that this old-time practice has nearly passed away. Now and then we hear preachers “calling mourners,” pleading for penitents to come to the altar and seek salvation. But

now most religious bodies receive members into their fellowship upon a simple confession of faith in Christ, followed by "baptism" according to their "mode" of administering it. However, the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit, a work of grace in the heart amounting to full salvation, is taught and insisted upon as a prerequisite to baptism and church membership (except in the case of infants), by many of the denominations.

The great contrast in former days between the methods of those who insisted upon "experimental" or "heartfelt" conversion, upon "getting religion" at a mourner's bench, on the one hand, and those who, under the teaching of Mr. Campbell and the pioneers of the Restoration movement, on the other hand, received members into the fellowship of the church according to the New Testament way, viz.: upon faith in Christ, a repentant heart, and public confession of the same, followed by baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in accord with the command of Christ and the practice of the early church, was so marked, that the one class openly charged that the other class were unbelievers in "heartfelt" religion, knew no inward religious experience, but taught the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, or, rather, that salvation is by formula. And until this good day the same opinion prevails. As others see us, we are a people who believe in and advocate the mere form of a confession of faith in Christ, and then water baptism, the two acts making a Christian, independent of the Holy Spirit or of any inward work of grace.

In another chapter I shall discuss the nature, place and purpose of faith, repentance, confession and baptism. It is the purpose now to note the contrast between the views regarding us as held by others, and the position we really occupy upon the question of heartfelt or experimental religion. The leaders in the Restoration movement in the early days of its history, and the great body of the Christian Church, did, and do now contend, that the only possible ground of Christian unity is the word of God, and the only infallible examples are those of Christ himself, and of the early Christians who acted under the direct inspiration of the Holy

Spirit. Upon this basis, then, we preach Christ and him crucified, setting forth the great teachings of the New Testament in connection therewith. The doctrine of faith, embracing the conviction of man's entire spiritual being which believes in and takes hold upon Christ as the only Saviour from sin, and the only way to eternal life; the doctrine of repentance which signifies the change in one's heart, the wellspring of action, by which the inclination and motive to all conduct becomes good instead of evil; the duty of confession before men, because Christ has required it as a prerequisite to his confession of us before the Father; the doctrine of baptism, instituted and observed by Christ, commanded by him to be practiced by us in making disciples of all people, universally observed by the apostolic church into which every member, according to Acts of Apostles, was received by this ordinance, the one and only objective picture of the burial and resurrection of Christ, typifying that the Christian is dead to the life of sin, being "buried with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" —these fundamentals, we believe, teach, and endeavor to follow because they are of divine authority, can not be denied by any who accept the word of God, and constitute the only way to salvation from sin, so far as we have been shown by infallible teachers.

The idea that we do not believe in "experimental" or "heartfelt" religion is very erroneous. These terms, as pertains to New Testament teaching or as theological expressions, or even in the sphere of psychology, are meaningless. Common usage, however, has given them a prominent place in religious vernacular, and the ideas for which they stand deserve attention. A religion that is not experimental is no religion at all, and whatever in the realm of mind or spirit has any sort of existence in connection with a human being can not but be "heartfelt." In the profound and eternally important process of becoming a Christian, and of living the life of a Christian, the noblest powers of the entire being are called into the finest action possible to a creature made in the image of God; he *experiences* joys that are beyond expression;

and the heart, the seat of storm and calm, *feels* the “peace that passeth understanding.”

The confusion and difficulty arising out of the question of heart and experience in religion, is due to a misconception of the purpose and nature of the work of the Holy Spirit. *As others see us*, we are unbelievers in “heartfelt” religion, also unbelievers in the operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion and regeneration. Their opinion is based upon the fact that we do not pray to the Holy Spirit, nor do we believe that the Holy Spirit is the sole power operative upon the individual in making one a Christian, acting independently of the word of God or of any other instrumentality. This is called the “dispensation of the Spirit,” and in the failure to comprehend the nature and purpose of the Spirit, Christ and the Bible are often practically ignored in imploring the Spirit to come and speak directly to, and act independently upon, the human heart in “convicting and converting power.” That the Holy Spirit’s mission should be of such nature Christ never taught. Before taking personal leave of his followers, the Saviour told them of the coming Comforter; but that he, the Spirit, would speak and act of himself independently of Christ, the Saviour did not promise, but stated just the contrary. Christ said: “When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you” (John 16:13, 14). Christ is all and in all, and the worship of the Holy Spirit by some Protestants is an error like unto the worship of the Virgin Mary by Roman Catholics. That he, the Spirit of truth, came, and still is here, no one who believes the Word can doubt. But that much of the so-called “presence and power of the Spirit” which has often been seen in the frenzied excitement of religious revivals, is Scriptural, we are not prepared to believe. It is true that the coming of the Spirit upon the day of Pentecost, was a manifestation of “power from on high.” He came, however, upon the band of believers, and was an inspiration to Peter in preaching the great sermon which led so many to accept Christ,

repent and be baptized, and which added to the church upon that day three thousand souls.

The work of the Holy Spirit was, first, to inspire, or “guide into all the truth,” the early speakers and writers of the Word, thereby creating a new and sacred literature, viz.: the New Testament, which should ever afterward be the rule of faith and practice for the followers of Christ. The Spirit directed Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to write the Gospels, directing and strengthening their memory that they might leave upon record a correct biography of Christ, and history of his words and deeds. The Spirit guided the apostles and evangelists of the first century in preaching the oral gospel, and establishing congregations of the church, the history of much of which we have in Acts of Apostles. The Spirit inspired the writers of the Epistles of the New Testament, and opened to John upon Patmos the apocalyptic vision of the glories that are to come. This work of establishment being done, the new and sacred literature being created for the guidance of the church for all time, the Spirit’s work has ever been the wielding of this sword of truth. He is with Christ’s people, giving them life and power.

Without the presence of the Spirit, we could not understand and apply the gospel of truth. Without the presence of the Spirit, the disciples would have forgotten what Christ taught, and there never could have been a New Testament. Men of different heredity and environment, men of different temperaments and opinions, would have produced, without the aid of the Spirit, writings as widely different and inconsistent with each other as the varying creeds of Christendom are inconsistent with and different from each other. The perfect harmony of the Gospels and the doctrines of the Epistles can be attributed only to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And now, in the sacred Book, we have the history and plan of redemption, and are commanded by the Lord himself to go forth, proclaiming it to the world. “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” We can not

teach things spoken by the Spirit of himself, for he has spoken nothing save what he has inspired or guided the writers of the New Testament to put upon record concerning Christ and his kingdom. We honor the Spirit, therefore, in adhering to the words of truth given by his inspiration, and by relying upon him as the power to wield the sword of truth, the words of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

We believe in the absolute necessity of the presence of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation, else God would not have sent him as a comforter and guide after the ascension of Christ. There can be no true conversion and regeneration without the aid of the Holy Spirit. It would be a spurious repentance and baptism, unaccompanied by the presence and guidance of the Spirit in accord with his own voice, which we can know only by reading, or hearing preached, that gospel which he inspired men of old to write.

In contrasting, then, this view as others see us, and as we are, let us note two extremes of danger into which many have fallen. Many good people have emphasized the necessity of "experience," "feeling," "spirituality in religion," without knowing either the meaning or purpose of the Holy Spirit in Christianity, or anything of the laws of psychic phenomena in human nature. Without due regard for the plain language of Scripture, they have under strong emotional pressure stirred people to great excitement, and by a kind of hypnotic influence upon themselves and their hearers produced extraordinary conditions, all of which is mistaken for the presence of the Holy Spirit manifested in power and glory. Such belief is utterly without ground in God's word, and has done great harm to the cause of Christianity. The simple reason is, that those who are thus hypnotically wrought upon and made to believe that they are "experiencing" conversion by the power of the Spirit, are, when out from under the spell, dazed and disappointed, without knowing the reason why. They are never happy again unless again hypnotized, and thus become religious fanatics because they never knew the nature of the kingdom of Christ, never had the real experience of salvation by intelligent and faithful obedience to Christ. Therefore, many hundreds of people, whose

intentions were unquestionably good, have gone into the denominations, either to develop into religious cranks, or to realize the emptiness and worthlessness of their "experience," and fall by the wayside believing there is nothing worthwhile in so-called Christianity.

Let us not, however, make the fatal blunder of the opposite extreme. In taking the word of God for our guide, let us not cling to the "letter that killeth," neglecting the "spirit that giveth life." It is a lamentable fact that many have stumbled here, observing the mere outward form of confession and baptism, never experiencing real faith and repentance, remaining utterly ignorant of the spiritual life of true Christianity. While we should ever rejoice at the coming of the hundreds and thousands into the church, there is great danger of the untaught, in the fever of excitement, coming forward and making confession without the slightest comprehension of the meaning of the act. It is sadly true that most of our congregations have numbered among their members unconverted people. They do not really believe in Christ, they do not devoutly love him, if we are to know the trees by their fruit. If their consecration is to be judged by their loyalty to the church, their love for humanity and interest in the salvation of others, they have observed the form of becoming Christians, without experiencing the life of the Christian. Alas! alas! that the footsteps of many who wear the name "Christian," are not ascending those altar-stairs of service, sacrifice and love which lead up to the portals of eternal day!

Let us avoid these extremes. Let us, with humble faith and devout prayer for guidance, turn to the one Book, follow in the footsteps of the one Leader and Guide, obey implicitly the commands of the one Captain of our salvation, and yield ourselves to him in perfect love; and in desiring to do his will, we shall know of the teaching. Thus, all may become one in him, and that experience shall be ours which is life—life more abundant, here and hereafter.

CHAPTER IV.

“DANGEROUS DOCTRINES”— DO WE TEACH THEM?

Soon after renouncing sectarianism and taking his stand with the people who claim to be “Christians only,” the writer received a long and urgent letter from a minister and former friend in the denomination out of which he (the writer) came, pleading that he at once open his eyes to the fearful blunder he had made, and return to the fold from which he had strayed. In one sentence he said: “Think not alone of the probability of losing your own soul, but of the hundreds, maybe thousands, who will be lost under your ministry as a Campbellite preacher!” This letter was written by a man of high standing in his denomination, an author of some note, who, I believe, has since received the degree of “D. D.” from some institution in the South.

His argument and plea with me upon the ground that the “Campbellites” teach dangerous doctrines, he felt, justified him in predicting that under my ministry many souls might be led to destruction, for he verily believes that we teach “baptismal regeneration,” and other “dangerous” things, which, if people accept, they can but blindly stumble into the pit. Such opinions prevailing in the mind of ministers, and other educated men, it is but natural that the masses of the “laity,” many of whom do not think for themselves upon such subjects, but without investigation accept the opinions of the preachers, would also regard us as a people who teach “dangerous doctrines.” We know a family of high standing in their community who only a short while ago refused to allow their children to attend a revival meeting being held in their community, on the ground that it was dangerous for them to listen to a “Campbellite.”

It is true that such opposition to us is not so strong now as in years past. Those acquainted with the earlier history of the movement know how church doors were locked against Mr. Campbell and many of the pioneers who came after him; how our

people were misrepresented and bitterly persecuted. In some cities preachers who belong to the present generation have been ruled out of ministers' associations, and our congregations ruled out of union evangelistic meetings, because they were not "orthodox."

Is it not worthwhile, however, to carefully investigate the reasons why we are more cordially received today? Of course, it is largely due to the fact that the general mind of the religious masses is more enlightened, and therefore more liberal, than heretofore; but in this fact we do not by any means find the sole reason for the kindlier attitude toward us on the part of the sectarian world. One other reason is, that, in spite of opposition we have grown to be a mighty people in numbers and influence among the religious forces of the world, and thus, from the human point of view, command more worldly respect. This is well for us, provided it comes without our compromising any part of the truth, or being in any way disloyal to the great principles of Christian unity laid down in the New Testament, and proclaimed by our fathers in the early movement of the Restoration. It *is not* well for us if we allow the opinion to obtain that we are one among the many "churches," and fail to constantly teach the truth that there is no such thing as our being counted among the denominational ranks. Whenever and wherever we do this, we are barred from declaring the whole counsel of God, the denominations see little difference between them and us, and hold pleasant affiliation with us. But, as a rule, when we preach the doctrines wherein we differ from others, which doctrines alone afford us grounds for existence as a religious body, the pleasant fellowship with others is at once broken, and we are accused of preaching "dangerous doctrines."

What are *dangerous doctrines*? *Dangerous to what*? We must know before the question can be answered. That we have taught and do teach doctrines dangerous to the salvation of souls, no doubt many honest people believe. We claim to teach only that which is set forth by the word of God. "Where the Bible speaks, we speak, and where the Bible is silent, we are silent." We have

no creed or any sort of man-made interpretation of the Scriptures which we prescribe as a rule of faith and practice. So long as we adhere to the Bible alone, no one who accepts the Bible as the inspired word of truth, can accuse us of teaching doctrines dangerous to the salvation of souls.

We freely admit that the doctrines we teach are very dangerous to sectarianism and the creeds of Christendom. It is upon this point, and this alone, that the real objection to us has been raised. So long as we do not antagonize the creedism and ecclesiasticism of the denominations, we are held in high esteem; but when we preach the full gospel, setting forth the nature and purpose of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, we at once meet with opposition. This is but natural, for we must believe that most people are honest in their convictions. Inherited opinions and formulated doctrines are sacred to their adherents, and whenever they are opposed or assailed, there is resentment. The believers in any creed conscientiously think it the correct interpretation of the Scriptures—therefore, any doctrine dangerous to that creed is, in the minds of those who adhere to the creed, dangerous to the truth, and therefore dangerous to the salvation of the world.

In the days of sectarian supremacy, new voices were “heard in the wilderness,” as it were, proclaiming the dawn of a new day, calling the people to come together in Christian unity, asking that all human names, human creeds, party differences and schismatic strife be relegated to the rear, so that they may be lost in oblivion; and that all Christ’s followers be one, “while God is marching on.” This plea for the restoration of apostolic Christianity, for unity in Christ, for the Bible as the only book of authority, was, of course, indirectly an attack upon every creed, every denomination, and every clergyman clothed in the robes of ecclesiastic authority. Though the pioneers taught, and we still teach, only the word of God, the plain doctrines contained therein are antagonistic to all divisions, dangerous to all creeds, and mean the final overthrow of human ecclesiasticism.

For these reasons alone, while our pioneers did, and our faithful preachers and teachers today do, set forth only a con-

structive gospel, its plain teachings which build up the church of Christ according to the New Testament pattern, are necessarily, though indirectly, dangerous to sectarianism. It is axiomatic that where unity thrives and increases, divisions decrease and pass away. The existence of sectarian bodies is based upon division. Remove divisions, and sectarianism is gone. The full answer to Christ's prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John means the death of all denominationalism in Christendom, and the faithful preaching and practice of New Testament teaching, for which alone we plead, will eventually bring this about. Because of these facts, we have been accused of teaching "dangerous doctrines." Dangerous to real Christianity? Yes, if taken in the light of some man-made creeds and inherited prejudices, but not, if taken in the light of the New Testament. Dangerous to the life and prosperity of sectarianism? Yes! Now and always. Christ arrayed himself against it, he taught his followers to avoid every appearance of it, and in the ultimate triumph of his gospel it shall vanish from the earth.

It is not our purpose in this chapter to specify the doctrines we teach which others have branded as dangerous, They themselves could not do so. In the accusations, they have dwelt upon generalities, for indeed they could not be specific without misrepresenting us. Perhaps the nearest we could arrive at something definite would be their claim that we do not believe in the Holy Spirit in conversion, and that we teach the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration." With the first point we dealt in the preceding chapter, and the question of baptism and regeneration will be discussed in articles which are to follow.

The writer would not have any one think that he believes there is no truth set forth in the statements of human creeds, or that he thinks the denominations stand for nothing good. But the fact that no two creeds agree, and no two denominations stand for the same things, is sufficient proof that there is error in one, or the other, or both. The doctrines of the Bible, then, when set forth with the power of simple faith and love, strike these errors of the creeds, break down the walls of denominationalism, un-

dermine the foundations of ecclesiasticism, and are naturally branded as "dangerous."

The doctrines of firm faith in Christ and his word, and loyal obedience to his commands, are "dangerous" only to skepticism, infidelity, rebellion and sin. The doctrines of sacrifice, service and love are "dangerous" to all the designs of Satan, but not to the purposes of God in redeeming the race. None other doctrines than these, in the realm of belief and practice, have we preached. These we have believed and taught and tried to live, by authority of Christ and the word of God.

In all humility and love, we say then, brethren, that the very elements which have caused us to be regarded as teachers of dangerous doctrines, have been the elements of our strength, and the cause of our growth and power in the world. Christ taught "dangerous doctrines," so dangerous to the fixed forms of religion, and the rotten life of the age in which he lived, that they persecuted him, and finally put him to death, thinking when they killed him that they would put a stop to his doctrines. The apostles and early Christians taught "dangerous doctrines," and in like manner they were persecuted and many of them put to death. Their doctrines are eternal, but so long as they are faithfully preached, there will be those who will call them "dangerous."

When we as a people are no longer accused of teaching "dangerous doctrines," it will be when one or the other of two things has happened, viz.: we shall have become disloyal to the New Testament teachings, having taken our stand as one of the denominations, teaching and doing no more than they; or when error has been overcome, and all the professed followers of Christ are a unit in him. The first of these things will never happen; were such to be the case, however, there would be no possible excuse or reason for the existence of such a people. The latter, thank God, some great, good day, will be true. Let us, then, with fear, love, and all long-suffering, continue steadfast, and "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST — ITS ORIGIN AND GROWTH.

To know the origin, the nature and growth of the church of Christ is necessary to a full appreciation of the meaning and purpose of the gospel. If all Christendom were agreed upon this, the hosts of the Lord would be one united band, with the one and sole purpose of extending this kingdom o'er all the earth.

The Christian Church today pleads for the restoration of the purity and simplicity of the early church, in faith, life and practice. We do not ask the various denominations to "join us," or to join "our" church. We plead alone for the laying aside of all things, by all people, that cause divisions, except those things practiced by the early church, and plainly set forth in the word of God. We ask only that others agree with us as we are in harmony with the life and teachings of the early church; and in setting forth the plea and position which we maintain, we can do no more than look to the New Testament for its history, and to Christ as the one authority. If there be any difference between the way others see us, and what we really teach and are, we stand ever ready to be shown wherein we err, and to be corrected by the word of God. We look, therefore, to the early church as our pattern, and beg all others to do likewise. Looking upon *us*, others may see many mistakes and inconsistencies; but looking upon Christ and the inspired leaders of the first century, we see the perfect examples, following which none can make mistake.

In considering, then, *the church of Christ—its origin and growth*, we confine the thought of this chapter to the first century.

Christ was the founder of his church. The birth of Christ was the pivotal point upon which turns the destinies of all ages. It was the central fact of all history. It was the end of a long time of preparation, in which men and nations, kingdoms and empires, all under the guiding hand of God, moved onward and upward to the

final culmination. Says Dr. Philip Schaff: "When 'the fulness of the time' was come, God sent forth his only begotten Son, 'the Desire of all nations,' to redeem the world from the curse of sin, and to establish an everlasting kingdom of truth, love and peace for all who should believe in his name,"

Not only did all previous history lead up to this great central event of all events which marked the close of the long period of the world's dark night, but also this event marked the beginning of all subsequent history. It was the beginning of a future that should have no end.

The life of the historical Jesus of Nazareth was of short duration. He was numbered among the meek and lowly of earth. His birth was in a stable in the town of Bethlehem near Jerusalem. We know but little of the history of his early life; for the most part, it was spent in obscurity. When about thirty he entered upon his active public life, which continued only three years. He chose, as his associates, people from the poorer walks of life. He was not allied with the material forces of his age and generation; he was not sustained by social prestige, commercial wealth, military force or temporal power. He came from God—came with a divine mission. He came absolutely unarmed with any of man's material forces. His task, the most tremendous one ever committed to any being, human or divine, was performed by that power which is only manifested in God's working in and through humanity. Christ is human and divine.

"Deep strike thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod;
Most human and yet most divine,
The flower of man and God!"

The early days of the boy Christ were doubtless spent with his mother and her husband Joseph, living the simple life, in obedience to parental authority. At the age of twelve we find him in Jerusalem, and, afterwards lingering to talk with some thoughtful men, he replies to his parents, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" when they question him concerning his actions. He was ever about his Father's business. During the

eighteen years intervening between this event and the entrance upon his public ministry, he was doing his Father's will, biding his time, waiting in preparation for the hour to strike when he should be proclaimed the "Lamb of God," the world's Redeemer. This time came when he was thirty. He was heralded, and his kingdom announced by God's chosen messenger, John the Baptist. He was baptized in the Jordan by John, and the voice of God announced his divine sonship. Within three years from this time his earthly task, so far as his being present in the flesh was concerned, must be performed. He lived among men, "full of grace and truth." He gave his chosen apostles the oral gospel. He did many miracles. He not only taught, but was the way, the truth, the life. No fault was in him; he was perfect and righteous altogether.

He not only taught the divine life, but revealed the state of the life to come, the glorious nature and attainment that shall be ours when we are "raised in glory," when on Hermon's heights he was transfigured before Peter, James and John, and in the returned presence of Moses and Elias.

Besides living among men "full of grace and truth," it was his mission to die for us, to shed his life's blood in atonement for our sins. And then, greatest of all his work on earth in person, was his resurrection from the dead, bringing "life and immortality to light." Afterward he ascended to the Father, henceforth as our great high priest to sit at God's right hand and ever make intercession for those on earth who believe in him, and call upon God in his name.

The work of human redemption, however, was not accomplished with the end of Christ's bodily presence on earth. The means by which it was to be accomplished were perfected and revealed to mankind. But the actual work of saving the race yet remained to be done; the means were yet to be applied under the direction of the Holy Spirit, whom Christ said should afterward come. He told his disciples that it was expedient for them that he go away. He foretold his future work among them, in the building of a spiritual society, that should be increased through all ages as the children of men should believe on him, and become identified

with his unending kingdom. He promised his abiding presence in the person of the Holy Spirit with his obedient followers, until the consummation of the age. Upon the fact of his divine sonship as confessed by Peter, and all the forces operating in the world resulting therefrom, he said: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Christ is the founder and builder of his own church.

The Christian church was born on the day of Pentecost. The followers of Christ were commanded to tarry in Jerusalem until they were "endued with power from on high." They continued in waiting and in prayer until ten days after the ascension of Christ, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, which time and occasion marked the birth of the Christian church. The sending of the Holy Spirit was the first mediatorial act of the risen and ascended Redeemer, fulfilling his promise that he would send the Comforter unto his people, by whom they were to be led into all the truth; it was the beginning of the fulfillment of his promise to be with them in his spiritual omnipresence, "always, even unto the end of the world."

This Pentecost was the beginning of that spiritual society composed of all who hear, believe and obey the gospel of Christ. It was a divine manifestation of power, operating wondrously upon the disciples—for "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." The beginning of the church of Christ was attended by wonderful signs, when the Saviour from the throne sent the Spirit upon them. When God long before spake from Sinai, his voice was accompanied by "thunder and lightning, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and all the people that was in the camp trembled" (Ex. 19:16).

In the beginning of the new dispensation, "when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues,

as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). This was the beginning of the presence and power of the Spirit, in revealing the truth and purpose of the reigning Christ in giving his gospel to the world, the formation of the spiritual society which should constitute his everlasting church. It was now in existence. Under the influence of the Spirit, Peter stood up and preached to the vast multitude, explaining the wondrous manifestation they had beheld, as the fulfillment of prophecy, and then declared unto them the full gospel of Christ—his life, works, teachings, death, burial, resurrection and ascension—in the climax exclaiming: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36).

"They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:41, 42). Thus we have the account of the beginning of the church, and of the first additions thereto. As the feast of Pentecost was the "feast of harvest," or of the "firstfruits," how appropriate that upon this occasion the Spirit should come and inaugurate the spiritual harvest of the Christian dispensation, which shall not cease until the golden sheaves from all the ends of the earth are gathered into the garner of God.

From the day of Pentecost the church began to grow. It was not long until the membership numbered five thousand. This first congregation in Jerusalem became the mother church from which emanated the blessed influences of the gospel extending in every direction. This was the mother congregation of Jewish Christianity, and of all Christendom.

There is no more interesting study in all history than that of the growth of the Christian church in the first century. The beauty and purity of the early church is fascinating for the devout soul. But, ere long, the church had her difficulties from the insincere within, and from her foes without. The church encountered persecution, even as Christ had undergone, but was only made purer

and mightier by it. To the pure in heart among them, the early history of the church was a continued experience of joy; nothing discouraged, nothing baffled those early disciples. They contended not with carnal weapons, but armed with eternal truth, guided by the unseen hand of faith, the altar fires upon their hearts ever bright with hope and love, they went forth against every material, carnal foe, "conquering and to conquer."

The church in the first century had three great tasks to perform, viz.: to make conversions from Judaism, to gather within her folds converts from the Gentiles or heathen nations, and then to unify these elements brought in from such widely different sources. These three tasks were accomplished under the divine leadership of three men, guided of the Holy Spirit in this special work, thus making them the three most conspicuous characters in apostolic history. They were Peter, Paul and John. Peter was pre-eminently the preacher to the Jews; Paul carried, in the face of every opposition, the glad evangel to the Gentiles; John, the apostle of love, finally welded together into inseparable unity these two elements, which could be united only by the divine alchemy of his Spirit-filled heart.

In studying the development of the apostolic church, we are more and more impressed with the greatness of the work of the Holy Spirit in executing the will of Christ. As was said in a preceding chapter, that one great mission of the Spirit was to create a new and sacred literature, viz.: the New Testament, and we should not forget that it was done by inspiring men to tell the story of Christ's life on earth, and of all the truth, as it is eternally in him. We have, then, not only the writings of the New Testament as such, but, from another viewpoint, the oral gospel as it was inspired by the Spirit, these two being one and the same.

In observing the growth of the early church, we not only get a revelation of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit, but also a revelation of man to himself, the truest portrayal of human nature that has ever been given to the race. There we see humanity in its weakness and its strength, its despair and its victory, its shame and its glory, either passing out into the darkness of un-

ending night or mounting to the portals of eternal day. In the early church, we see, perhaps, most strikingly the transforming power of the gospel of Christ. It turned weakness into strength, darkness into light, death into life, sinners into saints. The shrinking, faltering, timid disciples, who forsook the Saviour and fled from him in the trying hours of his trial and death, were, by the Spirit, in the early church, transformed into the most glorious heroes and heroines of all history.

Finally, may I say that perhaps the most glorious characteristic of the Spirit's work in the early church was his unifying influence? Peter was narrow and sectarian, holding inherited prejudice against the Gentiles; but after his visitation from the Spirit at Joppa, that prejudice was cleared away, and his heart of love was large enough to take into its sympathy all mankind and to dwell with them in unity, for he learned that "God is no respecter of persons."

Naturally, under the preaching of Peter and his colaborers among the Jews, and that of Paul and other missionaries to the Gentiles, many of the inherited tendencies from both extreme sources would linger among the early converts. John, the apostle of love, bound them together. His three Epistles are rich in Christian experience, giving us the true inwardness of the everlasting kingdom of love, transcending all the limitations of sectarian, party or national life. His apocalyptic vision from the Isle of Patmos is a revelation of the final state of the church. So, in the first century, and recorded in the New Testament, we have a view of the beginning and of the consummation of the church of Christ. We are now in the middle ground. By and by we shall be caught up into the realms above. Let us listen to the one Voice—the voice of the Captain of our salvation. He spake in those early days by the Holy Spirit. The words he uttered, and his will concerning us, we find recorded in the New Testament. Guided by that authority, the church in the first century grew in spite of every opposition; even so it has been growing in succeeding centuries, and is growing today. If we are led by the Holy Spirit as he has spoken in the word of God, we shall go forward, invulnerable and invinci-

ble—and in unity—*one, even as he and the Father are one.*

CHAPTER VI.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

Having in previous chapters dwelt upon the origin and nature of the Christian church, the question naturally arises at this point, *How did the early disciples become members of the church?* We must all agree that the preachers of the gospel at that time, being under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, their teaching and methods of inducting people into the church were in perfect accord with the will of Christ, and that there is no other authoritative way by which we may become members of his church. The New Testament, and the New Testament only, gives us the authentic history of how membership was obtained in the Christian church in the first century. The main part of this history is found in Acts of Apostles, which is Luke's divinely inspired record of the fulfillment of Christ's command to disciple the world, so far as it was carried on in apostolic times.

We must agree, also, that the same process which made a Christian then, makes a Christian now, for there is no record that any change has ever been made in the plan. Another great advance toward Christian unity would be the abandonment of every theory and practice known to Christendom pertaining to the making of church-members, save one, which may be known by turning back to the one authoritative period, and learning from the New Testament the will of Christ which was done in that age in adding people to his church. Would all seek to know and follow this pattern, many differences and difficulties would be removed.

The terms "making disciples," "becoming Christians," "joining the church," etc., are, according to the New Testament idea, synonymous. They stand for one and the same thing. In modern parlance, how often do we hear people say, "Become a Christian first, and then decide what church you will join." Such an idea is the natural result of denominationalism, being nowhere suggested by the genius and philosophy of Christianity. In apostolic times, to the followers of Christ there were no "churches" in the de-

nominal sense. They never dreamed of becoming Christians and afterwards joining some “church” according to their convenience and liking, for the same process that made a Christian then, also put one into the kingdom, the everlasting church of Christ—is it not even so now? Must not every fair-minded individual answer, *Yes!* The question of church membership will be settled once for all when all arrive at the one inevitable conclusion upon this point. Forever dropped from the minds of the people will be the idea of different “churches,” and “joining the church after becoming a Christian,” when we know full well that there is and can be only one church, and to be a Christian is to be a member of it. It is true we read in the New Testament of different churches—there were seven churches in Asia; but these were not sectarian organizations under different names, but all churches or congregations of the one church of Christ. Church membership, in the broad sense, is simply to be a Christian, a citizen of the spiritual kingdom of Christ; in the local and temporal sense, it is to be affiliated with a local congregation the members of which are banded together for religious fellowship and co-operation in preaching the gospel and extending the kingdom of Christ throughout the world. Obedience to the gospel constitutes a true church-member, and that individual, if intelligently consecrated to the cause of Christ, is logically a member of the congregation of the saints, or local church, wherever he may be. Should there be no local company or organization of Christians where one is located, he is still a member of the church, and should be a living witness for Christ, make other converts to the faith, and establish a congregation there.

There are two all-important considerations for the one who would have unending acceptance of God, viz.: to become a citizen of the kingdom of Christ, and to remain a loyal subject of his until this earthly course is finished—to be a church-member in the true sense—to become a Christian, and continue a Christian until the end. It is the first of these duties we are considering in this chapter. What was it to become a member of the church, a Christian, in the days of the apostles? By a careful study of the sacred rec-

ord, we find that four successive steps led into the brotherhood of life. They were *faith, repentance, confession and baptism*.

The first great fundamental principle of Christianity is faith in Christ. It is faith not alone in the Messiah, the prophetic Christ of the Old Testament (in him the Jews believe, and expect him yet to come), but a faith that accepts *Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ*. It was upon this point that Christ questioned his followers when he said, "Whom do men say that I am?" When they answered that some say you are one person, and some another, he questioned them further, saying, "But whom do you say that I am?" Peter answered, his words constituting the one creed of Christendom, which can never be revised, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." When Christ answered, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," he did not mean that he would build it upon Peter, as some have taught, but, since the name "Peter" means *rock*, that which is firm, solid and enduring, he meant—were we to turn the thought into present-day usage—to say, "Peter, as your name is solid, sound like the rock, so the statement you have made concerning my divine sonship is true—it is a solid, a sound confession of the fact that is more lasting than the hills and mountains, the one eternal foundation of my Father's plan and purpose to save the fallen race—'And upon this rock,' the solid fact that you have confessed—that I am 'the Christ, the Son of the living God;' 'I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.' "

This the Jews did not believe, and Jesus of Nazareth they would not accept as the Son of God. Beside the Jews was the great Gentile population of the world, groping in heathen darkness, bowing before gods made with their hands, and looking for light through the medium of human philosophy.

The great task of the early church, yea, the one task of the church of all time, for that matter, was, and is, to persuade men to believe in and look to Jesus as "the way, the truth and the life;" to see in him "the Sun of righteousness rising with healing in his wings;" to know that his advent into the world was the visitation of the "dayspring from on high" to give "light to them that sit in

darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Faith, then, meant to those who became Christians in the apostolic age, and to all who have become Christians in succeeding ages, the belief in the sonship of Christ, and acceptance of him as the Saviour from sin and the giver of eternal life; it meant the acceptance of Christ to the exclusion of all other doctrines not in harmony with his teaching; it meant a full surrender to him, and absolute obedience to his authority; to believe with all the earnestness of one’s soul that “Jesus is the Christ,” is to take up his cross and follow him. This doctrine of faith in Christ was the burden of apostolic preaching; to prove that he was the Christ, was the theme of Peter at Pentecost; wherever Paul went among the Gentiles, this was the burden of his matchless discourse; Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch; the persecuted and scattered disciples, wherever they went, told the story of the cross, and were living witnesses to the creed of Christendom: “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Naturally, belief in and acceptance of this doctrine was accompanied by confession and repentance. During his earthly ministry Christ taught that those who believed in him should confess his name before men—that those who were ashamed of him, he could not confess before his Father in heaven. Paul tells us, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Repentance is the inevitable condition of the life that accepts and follows Christ. It is the change that is wrought in the heart, the wellspring of action, which gives different color and purpose to life, with all the fullness of its meaning. It is the change in the will, the transforming of the affections, the concentration of all the powers of one’s being to pursue the holy life and do the righteous deeds that are in perfect harmony with the mind of the Master.

The last and crowning act of induction into the church of Christ was, and is, Christian baptism. This rite Christ himself instituted and obeyed. There is no instance upon record in the New

Testament when any one was received into the church without baptism.

It is not our purpose in this chapter to discuss the so-called “mode” of baptism, as this belongs to the following chapter on the “Ordinances and Doctrines of the Early Church.” Here we are dealing with the question of becoming Christians, or church-members. In the early church, the ordinance of baptism was the last step into the church of Christ. But some one says, here you become narrow, making baptism essential to salvation. Upon this point no human being has authority to speak. Christ through the Holy Spirit has given us directions as to how we are to come into the fellowship of his kingdom. It is not ours to question or set aside, but to obey. As to who shall finally be accepted, he alone is the judge.

However, upon the question of baptism as essential to church membership, those who are “Christians only” could not possibly be charged with the narrowness that characterizes most sectarian denominations; for, with but few exceptions, they require baptism for membership in their organizations. Many of them even “baptize” infants who can not believe, and record their names upon their books. An inconsistency, too, among our religious neighbors is that, according to their teaching and practice, it is more difficult to get into their “churches” than it is to become a Christian, or get into the kingdom of heaven. They say, “You can be a Christian, and could go to heaven without baptism, but you can not get into our churches without it.” As already stated, we maintain that the same process which makes a Christian, makes also a church-member. According to apostolic practice, this was done by faith, confession, repentance and baptism. The divine order has not changed. That which made a Christian in the first century, also makes a Christian in the twentieth century. To be a Christian is to be an obedient follower of Christ. To be a Christian is to be all Christ would have us be. To be a Christian is to be a member of the one and only church—against which the powers of darkness can not prevail.

CHAPTER VII.

ORDINANCES AND OFFICES OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

In the preceding chapter we discussed the way people became members of the church in the first century. As we have noticed, baptism was the final and crowning act in fulfilling the conditions by which one becomes a Christian, or a member of the church of Christ. While baptism is usually regarded as a *church ordinance*, strictly speaking it is not so, especially in the sense of its being by the same persons continuously observed at stated periods. It is different from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in that it (baptism) is only observed once in life by the individual, and that at the time of death to the world, and of putting on Christ. It is not an ordinance of perpetuation like unto the Lord's Supper, to be continuously practiced, the one typifying Christ's burial and resurrection, the other to "show forth" his death until he comes again.

Concerning the "mode" or action of baptism, it is rather strange that on the part of fair-minded investigators there should be any dispute; however, upon this point there has been, and is, much disagreement. In this brief space we can do no more than state some significant facts, but without fear of any contradiction—facts, accepted as such by the representative scholars of denominations whose practices upon this point are inconsistent with their admitted belief concerning New Testament teaching and the practice of the early church.

Briefly, let us look at the original words, which, in the New Testament as we have it, were not translated, but anglicized. For the original *baptisma*, we have *baptism*; for the original *baptizo*, we have *baptize*; were these words not anglicized, but translated, we would, instead of *baptism*, have *immersion*, *dipping* or *plunging*; and instead of the word *baptize*, we should have the words *to dip*, *to immerse*, *to plunge*, etc. In support of this position we have the testimony of the world's best lexicographers, from the many

of whom we mention Bagster, Dawson, Green, Groves, Liddell and Scott, Robinson, and Thayer.

That the meaning of the original New Testament Greek words for baptism and to baptize was immersion, and that the early church immersed for baptism, we have the testimony of the world's greatest encyclopedias. We mention, for reference, a few from the many, such as the Americana, Blaikie's Modern, Britannica, Chambers', International and Schaff-Herzog. In addition to this, we have the testimony of the church historians, the greatest of whom agree that the Christian baptism of the apostolic church was by immersion. Among them we mention the names of Bosuet, Bower, Conybeare and Howson, Gregory, Kurtz, Mosheim, Neander, Stanley, Philip Smith and Philip Schaff.

If we accept the New Testament as the one authority upon this and all other questions, we need only to study the "plain English" text as we have it, and to interpret it in the light of pure, concentrated reason, to see the truth and beauty of the ordinance of Christian immersion. It is not necessary to understand the Greek, nor do we have to call upon the lexicons and historians for evidence upon which to base our belief. The simple setting of the situation in connection with New Testament baptisms is sufficient in every case to convince us that it was immersion. Why such expressions as "in the river," "much water," and "down into the water," if baptism was only the sprinkling of a few drops upon the head?

The very significance of baptism can be made plain only by immersion, as we see it set forth by Paul in Rom. 6:4. Says Aitken, in "Newness of Life," pages 4 and 5: "In this passage Paul speaks of our being buried with him by baptism into death. We never understand holy baptism until we take this view of it. It is not a mere washing; it is a burial and raising from the grave; its lesson is death and resurrection. We can understand how eloquently this symbol must have appealed to the feelings of those converted to God from heathen or Jewish systems. We can understand, as they passed down into the waters of baptism, and rose up again recognized Christians, how completely they would feel they were

severed from their old relations, and identified with Him in whom they had professed their faith. They were saying farewell to associations of their former years; they were saying farewell to the habits of their former lives; they were turning their backs on their old selves. As they rose up from the water, they must have felt that they occupied a new relationship to the world, a new relationship to their fellow-Christians; nay, a new relationship (if I may use such an anomalous expression) to themselves; their own nature possessing a harmony in itself to which it had previously been a stranger, and, most of all, a new relationship to God, into whose family they had been introduced, and to whom they had become bound by an indissoluble tie." In commenting upon this same passage (Rom. 6:4), Luther says: "When the washing away of sin is attributed to baptism, it is rightly so attributed; but the meaning of the phrase is too slight and weak to fully express baptism, which is rather a symbol of death and resurrection. For this reason I could wish that the baptized should be totally immersed, according to the meaning of the word and signification of the mystery."

As the scholars, theologians and historians of Christendom are practically agreed upon the nature, action and design of baptism, we also believe that when the New Testament is freely read by the masses, and viewed in the clear light of consecrated intelligence, they, too, will be united upon this point, and when the "ecclesiastical authorities" which have prescribed other than immersion for baptism shall have been overcome by general knowledge of and demand for the apostolic way, we shall have made another great advance toward unity among the hosts of the Lord.

We learn from the New Testament that the other ordinance which Christ instituted and commanded his followers to observe, was the Supper to be taken in memory of him. His body was broken and his blood was shed to atone for the sin of the world. As a memorial of that sacrifice for us, "the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is

broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

After the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost, it was the custom of the disciples to meet on the first day of the week for teaching, fellowship, communion and worship. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

With the beginning of the Christian church, the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day became inseparably connected. Instead of observing the Sabbath as was done under the Jewish dispensation, the subjects of the new kingdom met on the first day of the week, calling it the Lord's Day in memory of his resurrection. They could not forget his words, "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come," and this feast, therefore, was no doubt the primary object of their assembling together. In this way Christ chose to perpetuate his memory on earth among his own until the end of the world. In some other way he might have erected a memorial—a towering monument might have been builded into the skies, the story of his suffering and death might have been graven upon the solid stories, or with each rising and setting of the sun it might have been flashed across the heavens in letters of living light—but, no! the communion board must ever be to us as the mercy-seat. We eat the bread—fit emblem of his broken body—and drink the wine, reminding us of the blood that he shed to cleanse us from sin. And so do the faithful saints of each generation in remembrance of him, on each Lord's Day, meet and commune; and at his own appointed time the Master calls them higher, to join the saints redeemed and glorified, to participate forever in the festivities of the triumphant hosts.

It is sad to contemplate the fact that the two great ordinances which the Master instituted and commanded his followers to ob-

serve, have by so many professed disciples been underrated, misinterpreted or set at naught. A very large percentage of the professed Christian world do not observe the ordinance of baptism as Christ observed, and commanded we should practice it. Many have depreciated its value, and set it aside as a "non-essential." The other great ordinance, the Lord's Supper, has been undervalued by its seldom being observed. Worshipers by the thousand meet on the Lord's Day without in this way showing "the Lord's death till he come." But the saddest of all, perhaps, is, that so many who have been well taught concerning this duty and privilege, and in whose house of worship this table is spread the first day of every week, will, through indifference, or from the most trivial excuse, remain absent from the house of God, and forget their Master and Lord. Is not his heart grieved, and does he not look upon us with pity and compassion when we show so little gratitude to our best friend on earth or in heaven?

With the making of disciples, the extension of the church of Christ, and the assembling of themselves together, the church at large naturally resolved itself into local congregations. As a natural consequence, as well as of divine expediency, there had to be organization, order, government, unity of effort, harmony and co-operation in extending the kingdom of Christ into the world. For this purpose, Christ himself, while on earth in person, chose twelve apostles. This office was to continue only to the end of the life of these men. One of them, Judas, was a devil, and betrayed him. Paul was afterward called to be the apostle to the Gentiles; but the apostolic office was temporal, was for a specific purpose, and when that was accomplished, the office ceased. There were, however, for the government of the local congregations, and for the extension of the church, permanent offices established by the Holy Spirit in the early church. These offices have not been changed by any divine authority. What they were then, they are now. Their meaning, scope and work then, should be so now.

The permanent offices of the early church were those of the *elder*, the *deacon* and the *evangelist*.

The highest, most sacred and important office in the church is

that of the eldership. The qualifications for one who fills this office, according to Paul, we find in the First Epistle to Timothy, the third chapter, verses 2 to 8. There are very few who measure up to this high standard, but certainly every man who holds this, the most exalted position in the church, should keep constantly in his mind this high ideal, and strive to attain unto it. In the early church, the terms *elder*, *bishop* and *presbyter* (which also include the idea of shepherd or pastor) stood for one and the same office. The elders were the spiritual heads and rulers of the congregations. They were worthy of all confidence and honors they were the examples for the membership; they were the counselors and advisers in all matters pertaining to the life and conduct of the disciples; they were the visitors to the sick, comforters to the sorrowing, restorers of the erring, protectors of the oppressed, defenders of the innocent. They were, by authority of the Holy Spirit, in complete control of the church; they were leaders of the people, even as they themselves were guided by the word of God through the teaching Spirit. It should be so today, and is, wherever the apostolic church is reproduced. All honor to the elders! The constant prayer of the church, as a whole, should be for a Scriptural eldership to lead us in the way of the Lord. Those men whom we choose for this office should have the highest respect of every member of the church.

Next in importance in management of the affairs of the local congregation is the office of *deacon*. The office was created in the first congregation at Jerusalem as a practical necessity, in order to the proper conduct of the temporal affairs of the church. By divine approval, the office was continued, and doubtless every congregation in the early church had its board of deacons; these *servants* had charge of the business side of Christianity. They had authority in raising and dispensing money to aid the needy saints, to meet the financial obligations of the church, to support preachers of the Word, and to send the gospel to other parts of the world. The qualifications for the ideal deacon we find also in 1 Tim. 3:8-15. We have New Testament precedent for the appointment of *deaconesses* also, in event there are in the congregation

no suitable men for the office.

These offices belonged only to the local congregation, the persons occupying them having no jurisdiction beyond the bounds of the membership they were appointed to serve. The great, far-reaching ecclesiasticism made up of the "presbyteries," "synods" and "presiding elders," big "bishops," "priests," "prelates" and "Pope," have no precedent or authority in the New Testament church. These offices were a necessity to the welfare of the local church, and were not created for the adornment of any individual. No officer in the early church was meant to be a mere figurehead. He was called to his position, not because he sought an honor, or a place of power by which he could "lord it" over others, but because of his peculiar fitness, in the opinion of his associates, for the important work the office required. The elders were godly men who ruled in the fear of the Lord, and not after the dictates of human passions and prejudices. The deacons applied to the management of the affairs of the church the very soundest and best judgment and wisdom of which they were capable, in order to keep the business of the church above reproach.

The third office or position which became permanent in the church was that of *evangelist*. He was pre-eminently the *preacher*. His was the special work of proclaiming the glad evangel of salvation through Jesus Christ. His peculiar work was not confounded with the special work of the elders and deacons. True, all who told the story of the cross were in a sense evangelists. Preaching was not limited to the special evangelists; but those who gave their full time to this ministry did not perform the peculiar duties of the elder or deacon. Timothy was an evangelist. Paul's two letters to him make plain the nature and importance of this work. The evangelist was a prophet, in the sense of being a teacher or proclaimer of the gospel. He was to be a specialist in knowing and preaching the doctrine of Christ. He was to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." His first great duty of preparation was to study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman

that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Preaching was the work of the evangelist—winning and converting souls to Christ was his chief business. "Meditate upon these things," says Paul to Timothy; "give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." In the New Testament sense, the preacher was always an evangelist, whether he preached continuously in one place, or went from place to place.

Having thus seen the offices of the early church as they were established by the Spirit, is it not sad and discouraging to note the wide departure from those times and conditions in the ideas and prevailing practices of the church today? Of all things most needed among our own people, in the opinion of the writer, is the restoration and revival of apostolic government and New Testament evangelism among our congregations. In too many instances have we departed from the divine pattern. The eldership is not held in the high esteem that should characterize it. Taking for granted that the elders of our congregations are men of God, worthy and well qualified for the position to which they are elected, every member of the churches should look upon them as their bishops, their spiritual heads and rulers. The original work of the elder should be restored to the office in this present day, and not delegated to the modern "pastor." With their venerable years and long experience, they are the ones to comfort the sorrowing, discipline the erring, and restore the fallen.

We need also a restoration and revival of the original work of the deacons. The board of deacons are, in the true church, the real finance committee of the congregation. Practical, earnest and honest business men who love the church, and would as zealously guard her interests as they attend to their own personal affairs, should be deacons in our congregations. They are not simply men to act as ushers, to pass the collection baskets, and the bread and wine at communion; they are to set the example in looking after the welfare of the church, and to see to it that others do their duty in these respects. Everything that has to do with temporal needs and conditions of the local congregation belongs primarily to the deacons—naturally, of course, with the counsel and advice

of the elders.

But, above all, we need the restoration and revival of the spirit of New Testament evangelism. The prevailing opinions regarding, and practices of, the modern so-called “pastorate,” will never convert the world. The work of the latter-day “pastor” is neither Scriptural, logical nor practical. The preacher should be primarily an evangelist. He may speak every week in the year from the same rostrum, or he may visit many places, but if he is not an evangelistic preacher, he is not a gospel preacher. The modern idea, however, is that of “pastoral duty,” which includes a part of the work of all the offices of the church, but is usually no great success at any. The shepherding or pastoral phase belongs to the elders, but our minister must do much of this work, or he soon comes into disfavor with those who are looking for something to criticize. The raising of funds and management of all financial matters should be done by the deacons; but sometimes there are congregations who blame the preacher when the collections come short, and criticize him for not being a good “business man.” We knew a church once where the preacher had not only many duties of the elders and deacons to perform, but also often had to act as assistant janitor. In the name of all reason, let us ask how it is possible for a man to prepare himself properly and preach the Word with power, in a modern congregation? How can he give himself “wholly to these things,” as Paul enjoined Timothy to do, when, instead of being a “prophet of God,” he is reduced to the office of “private chaplain” to hundreds of individuals who, instead of holding up his hands and helping him to win souls to Christ, feel that he should always answer their beck and call to gratify a passing whim, or to please a changing fancy?

The church exists for the salvation of souls. The church has her divinely appointed offices for the most effective means of reaching the world with the gospel. One office should not find fault with the other, but all, making a complete unity, should work together in harmony and with irresistible power. Let us agree that perhaps the line of demarcation can not be distinctly drawn between the work of the elder, the deacon and the preacher. All fit

in together, making a perfect unit. One is to help the other. The preacher for a congregation is very foolish who dislikes to do anything but preach. He should be in close fellowship and sympathetic touch with all his co-workers, and all should be "laborers together with God." Wherever and whenever he can be of service in any way to those with whom he has to do, he should be ever ready to "spend and be spent" for their good.

But, on the other hand, the officers and congregation make by far a greater blunder when they require or expect of their preacher or evangelist the impossible, viz.: that he shall be practically all the while doing "pastoral" work, or looking after the affairs of the church, and at the same time be a true preacher of the Word, an evangelist of Christ. The restoration of early Christianity, the revival of evangelism, will find the preachers primarily devoting their time to preaching the gospel in public and in private. His chief business will be winning souls. His time when out of the study will be for the most part devoted to the unconverted; and back of him will be an eldership and board of deacons looking after the spiritual and temporal welfare of the church, taking care of the new converts, bringing them up in the way of the Lord. And back of the preacher and all the officers will be the entire membership dwelling together in unity, earnestly engaged in every good word and work, rejoicing in the beauty, power and triumph of the gospel. May God speed on the day of this restoration and revival, when every congregation shall stand upon the Scriptural basis; when every church officer shall perform his mission; when every preacher shall be an evangelist; when, through the ministry of all, every day shall witness hosts returning to the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISSIONS THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY.

We have thought upon the origin, nature, ordinances, offices and growth of the early church. We have seen in the church of the first century the divine pattern for the church of all succeeding centuries. We have beheld in that body the power and glory of the Lord, his will manifested among men. The establishment and triumph of the church of Christ is the marvel of all history. Standing upon the basis set forth of old, that "it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," the church went forth upon her mission. She was undaunted, though confronted by every material difficulty; yet victorious over every opposing force, but never resorting to carnal weapons, never relying upon temporal power, in that glorious campaign of conquest. True, the disciples often suffered bodily harm, physical pain, yea, death; but all this, according to the divine law, was unto victory. That which in the eyes of the world is apparent failure and defeat, in the plans and purpose of God is eternal victory. Truth and righteousness have never been, and can never be, defeated so long as Jehovah sits upon the throne of moral sovereignty in his universe.

As we endeavor, then, to know the nature and discover the secret of the power of the early church, that the same may be reproduced in this age, let us not fail to see the primary cause of the success of the gospel in their hands. They triumphed, their numbers increased, the kingdom grew, Christ was with them in his spirit, because they were essentially a *missionary people*. The missionary spirit was the very heart of the apostolic church, and is the heart and soul of true Christianity in every age and generation.

This fact is based upon the nature and purpose of the kingdom of Christ. The gospel of Christianity is remedial and redemptive in its nature, and its purpose is to reach and save all the human race. Christ lived on earth, died and rose again, and now sits at God's right hand as our great High Priest making intercession for the redemption of the whole world. There were no limitations upon

the infinite compassion of the Father when he “so *loved the world*” that he made possible the redemption of every fallen son and daughter of Adam’s race. Vast is the domain of Satan and unspeakable the malady of sin with which the race is afflicted; but mightier is Christ and his kingdom, and in him we have a remedy as universal as the disease, given for the healing of all. The purpose of the gospel of Christ is limited only by the habitation of man.

The nature and purpose of the gospel is not only for the salvation of the individual soul, but for the salvation of the universal social life. “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” Christ taught his disciples to pray. The prophets of old, looking on down the ages, saw this accomplished through the application of the gospel under the reign of the Messiah. Through the church of Christ the world is to be saved individually and collectively. That individual who feels himself saved, but has not a care for the salvation of his brother, and through his brother for the salvation of every unsaved soul, is standing upon dangerous ground, for he is most likely self-deceived. The very nature of redemption begets within the soul of the saved a yearning desire for the salvation of others. He who has the mind of the Master lives for the welfare of society, for the temporal and eternal betterment of human conditions. This constitutes the nature and purpose of the church of Christ, and no other word in our language expresses it so well as the term “missionary.”

The missionary spirit is the heart of Christianity, according to the life and teaching of Christ. He was the missionary from heaven, to a lost and dying world. While on earth in the flesh, “he went about doing good,” feeding the hungry, healing the sick, recovering sight to the blind, making the deaf to hear, causing the lame to walk, preaching the gospel to the poor, bearing the message of life and salvation to all. He lived and died for us. There was no selfishness in his nature, but he found infinite satisfaction in bearing from the Father above, in his own divine personality, the message and means of redemption to the world. His was an unending going and a boundless giving. No one can be a disciple of

Christ according to his own terms, by taking up the cross daily and following him, without being missionary in spirit. To be like Christ is to labor, give and love unceasingly, even at the greatest sacrifice, for the good of others.

The central idea of the church is missionary according to Christ's own plans and instructions for carrying on his work in the world. He did not promise to be with his people upon any other conditions. He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," after naming the conditions, which were, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It is an utterly unthinkable thing that Christ can constantly abide, in his guiding presence and power, with a people who are not up and "going," who are not continually giving to others that which they have received from him. In fulfillment of this command, we find, then, that the apostolic church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was pre-eminently missionary.

We can not be too true and loyal in contending for the apostolic doctrines and ordinances in restoring the early church to the present age, but we lose it all if we are not apostolic in missions. Of what use are the great doctrines and ordinances of the early church if they are not given to the world lost in darkness and sin? "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bear glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (Rom. 10:13-16). No people can lay consistent claim to being apostolic and primitive in Christianity, and at the same time be non-missionary.

This was the most glorious feature of the early church. Though perhaps they seemingly failed in some other things, they never failed to be missionary. Whether they went out upon a

well-planned journey with the definite purpose of preaching the gospel, or whether driven under the scourge of persecution, each and every disciple, wherever he went, was a living witness for Christ, and wherever they went, they bore testimony to him, and made other disciples. As was demonstrated by their work, the early church was nothing more nor less than a missionary body, to evangelize the world. Paul, the great light of the apostolic church, stands first among the missionary heroes of Christendom.

It might be well for us to consider that the early Christians were not missionary in theory so much as in practice. They *did missions*. Christ had commanded, the Holy Spirit inspired, and they obeyed. The New Testament is but the history of missions in the first century, and the divine plan for missions in all succeeding centuries. There is not much theory, very little philosophy, not much need of theology, but there is a burning passion in New Testament Christianity which impels the true disciple to the rescue of the lost; its voice ever is, Go! Go!! Go!!! No wonder, then, the early church grew. It grew in spite of every opposition. But had the early Christians, after the day of Pentecost, settled down into a selfish satisfaction, feeling themselves saved, but recognizing no obligation to give the message of salvation to others, the church would not only not have grown, but they themselves would have been lost. For Christianity is one thing no one can keep without giving to others.

Subsequent history of the church has proven that the missionary spirit is the heart of Christianity. Throughout all the history of Christendom, those religious bodies that have been active in missions have grown and prospered. They that have been unmissionary have dwindled and died. Not only so with denominations, but the same has been true of local congregations; yea, the principle has applied without exception to the individual life. No individual soul *grows in grace*, save as the desire for the salvation of others grows in his heart. No individual has a broad vision, and really enjoys religion, who has not in some way caught the missionary spirit.

Referring to religious bodies in whose history this principle has

been demonstrated, we have only to look in modern times, for instance, to the Baptists for verification. A great branch of that people was divided upon the question of missions. One of the divisions became known as "Missionary Baptists," while the other remained simply Baptists, sometimes called "Hardshells." Though these latter were a good people, distinguished for their integrity and many other noble qualities, yet, as a religious body, they have well-nigh died out of the earth; while, on the other hand, the *missionary branch* is one of the mightiest forces for good in the world, and is marvelously growing every day. An illustration of the same kind may be seen in the Christian Church today. Some of our brethren, while not claiming to be antimissionary, have been stumbling over methods of co-operation, spending much of their time and talents in criticizing those who are missionary. They say we are "digressive;" to say the least, if they are not antimissionary, they are practically unmissionary, if we are to judge by the number of converts they have made to the faith both at home and abroad, as compared with those whom they call "digressive."

But among the local congregations of all denominations do we find this principle most strikingly illustrated. The missionary congregation is always a growing congregation. It is ever evangelistic at home, and the more that congregation does for missions the more it can and will do in its own community. The missionary preacher is the growing preacher, and his congregation grows with him, both in numbers and in power and usefulness. The unmissionary preacher is the dying preacher, and his congregation either dies with him or gets rid of him. This is not a dogmatic statement, but the verdict of history. It could not be otherwise, for the heart of Christianity is missionary, and Christ is only with those who have the spirit of evangelization, the desire to see others saved, the purpose to "go."

In reflecting upon the general theme of these papers, "As Others See Us—And As We Are," there may be occasion for disciples themselves to "re-reflect" as we go forth preaching the restoration of apostolic Christianity as the only basis of Christian unity. And as we reflect again, we may learn that the best and on-

ly way to restore the life and practice of the early church is by *missionary effort*. We can justly make no claim to apostolic Christianity save to the extent that we are truly missionary. This, of course, involves all practical preaching, witnessing and winning souls to Christ at home and abroad. It includes all true evangelization, whether it be the work of scattered disciples, gathering around them by personal effort a little band and establishing a congregation; whether it be the great evangelist winning hundreds in revival meetings; whether it be the faithful minister of the congregation gathering in the lost one by one and building up the kingdom in that way; whether it be the city missionary laboring in the slums; whether it be the consecrated servant on the foreign field bearing the light of the gospel into heathen darkness—it is all Christian, because it is missionary, and it is all missionary, because it is Christian.

Every service rendered in His name is missionary. One of the best missionaries I ever knew was a good woman who earned \$2.50 each week by working over the washtub, and gave twenty-five cents to the church every Lord's Day. Hers was one of the brightest and happiest faces in the congregation, and was ever an inspiration to the preacher. Her influence for righteousness was equal to that of any of the wealthiest members of the church. She contributed of her small earnings to every call of the church. She personally won many souls to the Master. She is happy, now, here on earth, but possibly couldn't tell you why, for she is too busy serving to think about herself. She is a living missionary of the cross. On the day of final adjustment, when the crowns are passed around, there will be one for her, and in it—stars.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PASSING OF THE CLERGY.

“And he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father.” —Rev. 1:6.

Perhaps in no other one thing do we find a more striking difference between the way in which we are viewed by others, and the position we really hold, than upon the question of the nature and work of the “clergy.” To a certain degree the priestly idea prevails throughout the sectarian world. It obtains completely among all Catholics. To a large degree the same is true among all Episcopalians. Among Protestant denominations the clergy is regarded as a peculiar office separate and apart from the great body of the church; the clergyman is looked upon, to a greater or less degree, as a mediator between man and God, and in the mind of the masses is supposed to live and move in a different atmosphere from other people, and to do a work all peculiar to himself, in which the “laity” can have no part.

As others see us, the Christian Church holds this position along with others, and our ministers are supposed to be “reverend” the same as the clergymen of the denominations. This we repudiate, for nowhere in the New Testament do we find authority for clerical separatism. One man can be no more reverend in the kingdom of Christ than another. The priestly idea prevailed in Judaism. And true it is that in the new dispensation the office was not degraded or put away, but, instead of having a few priests to enter into the *sanctum sanctorum* of God’s presence to intercede for the masses, every Christian is made a priest unto God, and through “the great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God,” *all* may “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” While on earth, in the eyes of God above, and in the divine economy of the church below, there can be no distinctions between Christ’s followers, save those natural ones made by talents bestowed by nature, which in no way affect our acceptance with God, or our

duty and privilege of approaching him. Every one must make his own sacrifice, every one must perform his own consecration, every one must himself commune with his Maker; no priest or preacher can do these things for him.

We therefore rejoice in the truth, beauty and glory of the universal priesthood, the glory of citizenship in the "kingdom of priests" in which each subject stands upon equal footing and a common level with every other. No distinctions are recognized, none are allowable, for Christ has forbidden it in saying: "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 23:8, 9). The forbidding of the distinctions "rabbi" and "father" also precludes the idea of "reverend," or any other distinctions among Christians, save those divinely appointed offices for the spiritual government and temporal management of the local congregations, which in no way affect the individual's personal relationship to God.

In pleading, then, for the restoration of primitive Christianity, we must do away with all clericalism. No minister in the Christian church who understands, and is loyal to the New Testament church, can willingly and consistently wear the title "Rev." To be a Christian gentleman is the highest attainment possible to mortal man. To wear the crown and hold the scepter which by divine right belongs to every Christian gentleman, is to be clothed with a royalty that fadeth not away, belonging peculiarly and only to this glorious "kingdom of priests." Plain "Mr." when applied to a man in this high sense, being his passport as a Christian gentleman, is the most honorable prefix to any name. The glory of this, too, rests upon the fact that it is within the reach of all. It is an inherent right, vouchsafed to every one by virtue of his own inward character. It is not inherited from our ancestry, it can not be bought with money, it can not be conferred by men; it comes by virtue of our personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ, and is within reach of every one. It is the divine aristocracy of this earth, the royal family of the universe, dwelling in the humblest homes as well as the mansions of the rich, but always clothed

with the purple and fine linen of humble but triumphant faith, hope and love.

Before the doctrines and practices of the early church are restored, the idea of the clergy must pass out of the thought and life of the church of today. The logic of events, the demands of the times, the "survival of the fittest," in harmony with the truth of the New Testament, are all conspiring in these latter times to bring this about.

The church can never evangelize the world under the administration of the "clergy" as a separate and distinct class of men from the great body of Christians. The mass of disciples must recognize their individual responsibility to God and men, and that every one is to be a living witness for Christ, and worker in his moral vineyard. The church is not a body of people to be served by the "clergymen," whom they expect in some way to intercede for them, but every Christian must "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling." "According to his several ability," every one must serve the Lord. If God has given to some, peculiar talents for preaching, for evangelization, let them give themselves wholly to such ministry, but as plain men, ever—as clergymen, never. There is coming, even now, a great revival of this truth. And when it is fully upon us, the church will sweep the world as never before. When all Christians realize that they, too, are priests; that they are living epistles from God; that they are witnesses for Christ; that they are not to be served, but to serve, and that he who occupies the position as their minister is only one among them, a plain man among men, perhaps by virtue of his natural endowments a leader of the company of Christian soldiers, then the church will go on to victory.

But before this is true we must undergo the process of evolving out of the long-standing error upon this subject, must be made free from the traditions of the clergy; in other words, the clergy must pass, for it is a cumbering weight which the church can not carry and make the progress she must make.

With the passing of the clergy, will also pass one of the great problems of the church of today. The clergy themselves are a

problem for the church, and when ultimate Christianity, Christian unity, prevails, there will be no clergy.

In this advancing, practical age there is no vital, necessary place for the average "parson," and with the passing of the non-essentials the "clergy" is no longer in demand. For preachers who are more than clergymen, for preachers who have a great heart and soul message for humanity, for preachers who do not belong to the "sissy" set, the supply is by no means equal to the demand, and never before had such men the opportunity for usefulness, and never before were such men so highly appreciated, as today.

Some years ago the late Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) discussed the question, "Shall the Old Preacher Be Shot?" The problem of the old preacher has been a grave one in view of the fact that, as a rule, the churches demand the active, aggressive spirit of the younger men in the settled ministry, and most preachers are put upon the "shelf," and usually in poverty, too, before they arrive at the age of threescore and ten—hence Dr. Watson's question. But today the problem is not alone what shall be done with the old preacher, but what disposition shall be made of the entire "profession."

Be it far from the writer to, in any way, depreciate the power of the gospel of love or call into question the necessity of the church, for true civilization has ever followed in the wake of the religion of the Bible. But this religion is an inward life of principles. The word of God or the logic of events never sanctioned its being the bone of ecclesiastical contention, or put upon the plane of commercialism, reducing its promulgation to a "profession," in which are seen the prejudices and jealousies common to other walks of life.

The prevailing opinions—at least, the orthodox views—regarding the clergyman are that he is "divinely called," must be specially prepared, and, at length, when this preparation is completed, he is, by the laying on of hands, made "reverend," more holy and sacred than other men. These processes work an outward change in the man, and separate him from the masses of men. He cultivates the "clerical" voice and manner. He wears a

different garb, and, in a sense, lives and moves in a different world. He is, thus, by custom and expectation, almost forced to live and act in an assumed and artificial manner, and when he does lay aside these things and comes down upon the earth and becomes natural and real, some of the conservatives are ever ready to cry, "He is degrading his calling," even as they said of Christ, "He is the friend of publicans and sinners."

Genuine goodness is never to be distinguished by outward forms and manners, but by inward principles, which constitute the wellspring of all noble action. The world needs godly, knightly men and saintly women, the one to go forth to do deeds of kindness and love, but the badge of their sanctity should be graven in their hearts and not cut into their coat collars; the other to be sisters of love and mercy, all the more beautiful because they wear no special garb to be seen of men.

The unnaturalness of the clerical office has rendered it weak and effeminate. In the practical affairs of life no set of men have so little influence as clergymen, or, rather, as they have in their clerical capacity. Indeed, very many men known to the world as clergymen have been and are mighty factors in the affairs of men; but it is in their ability as men among men, or their powers of thought and expression, that they have supremacy, and not in the clerical office. Indeed, is not the bony, side-whiskered, over-pious, sanctimonious parson the object of jest and ridicule, and has he not been a good subject for the cartoonist and fun-maker?

The clergy is passing because they are not in touch with the great masses of the people, especially the lower strata. Christ was heard gladly by the great common people, but not so the modern parson.

Let us have preachers and preaching, yes, but deliver us from reverend clergymen. Let the preachers be only men, as God makes them, and confer upon them no man-made distinctions. Such men the world and the church need, and while they may for awhile have only meager support, sooner or later they come into their own. God doeth that which is best for them, and real worth

and divine favor are not always to be measured by the size of the salary one receives. For true ministers there is always a place, and for them there will always be adequate support. If God calls a man to preach, he will certainly call a congregation to hear him. And he will also see that he does not have to beg bread. But, in our opinion, he “calls” men to preach just as he calls them to every other useful work, simply by naturally endowing them for a special work and giving them a heart and conscience to do that work.

The clergyman, then, must pass, in the sense of dispensing with the clerical voice, in laying aside the clerical garb, in repudiating the special call, in disclaiming to be more “reverend” than other good men. Otherwise he must pass, for the world will not hear him, and the church can not endure him.

CHAPTER X.

CORPORATISM AND ECCLESIASTICISM IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

While the beginning of the kingdom of Christ was the immediate result of the life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and the initiatory work of the Holy Spirit, yet, looking backward over the centuries, it was the logical sequence of long years of preparation in accordance with the divine plan which led up to the "fulness of time." Centuries of experience were necessary for the world at large in any way to be ready to receive the truth upon which is based, as a foundation that can not be shaken, the superstructure of the invisible, eternal kingdom of our Lord.

The three great world powers, prior to the coming of Christ, were mighty factors in the affairs of men, not only in their own ages, but in many ways have influenced each succeeding age and are of vital significance to this present time. These nations, the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans, under God, demonstrated the full possibilities of the human family independent of a Saviour. The Jews, though under the providential care and guidance of Jehovah, and though they developed the idea and established forever the recognition of the one true God, which was absolutely necessary as a part of the preparation for the coming of Christ, also have shown to the world the inefficacy of ceremonialism, symbolisms, outward forms and ecclesiastical rites as saving powers within and of themselves.

Ancient Greece developed the aesthetic and artistic possibilities of human nature, and, while ignorant of the true God, reached the high tide of human excellency, and presented to the world the full flower and fruit of human endeavor, so far as it is possible for man, even with the very best conditions, to attain, independent of the redemptive grace of God through Christ.

The Roman Empire was the embodiment of material power, the full strength of human law, the gigantic dream of corporate

force, endeavoring to dominate mankind and rule the world. The empire rose and fell, writing to remain forever upon the pages of history, and indelibly stamping upon human experience, the utter failure of human law, material power and corporate force to build up and maintain a so-called human civilization, not to speak of a government for man's unending inner life.

Ages, nations and generations, like individuals, learn life's great lessons by the processes of experience. God could have revealed the great principles of his kingdom through Christ to the world at once, and with the fall of man sent to him the incarnate Saviour. But man would not have seen and believed by the mere telling of the truth to him; so, through the long processes of experience, even as now the individual must do in the kingdom of Christ, he had to "work out" his own salvation, as it were, to bring on the "fulness of time," when the kingdom came on earth among men.

Happy are we, then, if we learn the philosophy of the history of God's dealing with the race. We are now in the meridian splendor of the spiritual kingdom, but in our temporal skies there are still some clouds that float over from the ages past, and by them our vision of the Sun of righteousness is often bedimmed. In the clear light of the day we should live, never appropriating the shadows of the past, which can only obscure our vision of the perfect way. From them we may learn valuable lessons, and by their failure we may profit.

What are the great lessons, to the disciples of the kingdom, from the ages past? Are they not those of the utter inefficacy and failure of ecclesiasticism, human philosophy and corporate force? When Christ, the great establisher, came, the world was stocked with these ideas. The Jews were formalists; their religion was all outward, symbolic and ceremonial. Greek philosophy and art glittered in the intellectual firmament. Roman legions held mankind in martial grip; Roman law governed the world. But to none of these things did Christ appeal for help; upon none of them did he rely for aid. It had been prophesied that "his reign no end shall know," and concerning his church he said, "The gates of Hades

shall not prevail against it." His own disciples at first did not understand the nature of his kingdom. They thought it would be temporal. There was contention among them as to who should hold the important places in the kingdom over which they expected him to rule in person. But Christ dissipated their hopes, he repudiated the ecclesiasticism and Pharisaical hypocrisy of the Jews, he employed not the arts and devices of the Greeks, and not only did not rely upon material and corporate force, but resisted not the power of Rome. This course led him to the cross, but his work of service, sacrifice and love, all based upon eternal truth, brought him forth more than conqueror.

In Christ was incarnated all truth; in his life among men was the one perfect ideal for all types and times; in his teaching in person, and through the Holy Spirit afterward, we have the pattern and instructions for his church for all time, for which nothing can be substituted, and to which nothing can be added.

In contrast with the preceding ages, it is well to note in the early church, by Christ's own authority, the abolition and absence of all ecclesiasticism and corporatism, such as had characterized the former times among the Jews, Greeks and Romans. His kingdom is a spiritual unity. It is among men, a silent, unseen, eternal force. It "cometh not with observation." The promulgators of it must go forth, armed only with eternal truth, bearing the message of light and life to a dying world, in utter unselfishness teaching the principles of the kingdom to all people. Thus the early disciples did, and thus have the faithful disciples of succeeding generations done. It is only in Christ's way and with his Spirit that the church has really prospered. Whenever his followers have turned aside and relied primarily upon these human instrumentalities and resorted to carnal ways and worldly devices, the cause of Christ has been retarded. Whenever human ambition and selfishness have taken the place of sacrifice, service and love; whenever liturgy, ceremonialism and formalism have taken the place of worship in spirit and in truth; whenever ecclesiastical rule has superseded true freedom in Christ; whenever numbers, social position, wealth and temporal power have been relied upon

above the Spirit of the living God, pure Christianity has to that extent been set aside, and those doing these things have turned away from Christ, the source of all power, and gone back to the impotent grounds of the Jews, the Greeks or the Romans.

In the restored, apostolic church in the twentieth century, which is destined to evangelize the world, there is Scripturally and logically no place for ecclesiasticism and corporatism. May it not be, that in a sense we are approaching another “fulness of time”? As God was for centuries teaching the race by experience the futility of ecclesiasticism, of human art and philosophy, of material power and corporate force, as means of restoring man from his fallen condition, so may it not be that through all these years of the Christian era he has been teaching us by experience that these things are not to be relied upon in the kingdom of Christ, and that before we have Christian unity, when the church shall sweep the world, all these evils must pass?

Indeed, if we rightly discern the signs of the times, if we correctly read the omens of the hour, when viewed in the light of the history of Christendom, must we not agree that the foregoing observations are true? The great ecclesiasticisms are waning, they have had their day, and are ceasing to be. So sure as the Roman Empire had its rise and fall, just so sure shall the Roman Catholic ecclesiastic monster, in its own unnatural, top-heavy condition, in the providence of God, totter to its fall. Romanism can not withstand the searchlight investigation of twentieth-century Christian civilization. Already the powers of Rome are rapidly waning in Europe, and while they are apparently gaining strength in America, it is really not true, for the American spirit can never be dominated by any despotism. Not only is Romanism waning, but the very spirit of ecclesiasticism in every form is everywhere dying. The creeds of Christendom are crumbling. The trend of the times is everywhere away from, and there is a united protest against, the rule of authorities that ought not to be, whether it be the one Pope on the banks of the Tiber, or a thousand little popes wherever they may be found. The church of the twentieth century understands as never before the meaning of Christ's words, “Ye

shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

What, then, is the position and duty of the Christian church of today in view of the teaching of the New Testament and present conditions of the world? Is it not our duty, yea, our profound privilege, in pleading for the restoration of the early church to give forth no uncertain sound upon these all-important questions? If the purity of the church is to be maintained among us, there is no place for ecclesiastic domination or corporate rule. In fact, the kingdom is a spiritual unit, and can not be divided against itself. That which is of God stands and triumphs; that which is not of God of itself comes to naught. We are not in any sense an ecclesiastic or corporate body. The Christian church in America was not divided by the war of the sixties, for there was no corporate body to be divided. We can have no heresy trials, for there is no ecclesiasticism by which heretics may be tried. Truth is eternal, and God’s spiritual tribunal with unwavering balance deals justice to all. By this truth every one stands or falls, and in his scales every one sooner or later is weighed. Meanwhile, the church of Christ’s building remains intact. The difference between us as “others see us, and as we are” on these questions, should now, as never before, perhaps, be made clear and plain to all people. We are a body, loyal only to Christ and his authority. There can never be among us any “leaders” or “rulers” save as by natural endowment they may under God lead us in the ways of truth and righteousness. There can not be among us even any coteries of “leading brethren” who can corporate or conspire together for the promulgation of any cult or dogma which is not the common property, by virtue of common discipleship, of every Christian in the land, from the greatest to the least; and if it is not the common property and for the spiritual good of every disciple and in perfect harmony with the universal Christian democracy, it soon comes to naught because of its own insufficiency. In the kingdom of Christ, only truth can live. Ecclesiastical politics, ring rule and corporate promoting, in the interest of any one man, or set of men, in this realm, are as ill at ease as bats in broad daylight, and die as naturally as fish out of water.

Let us ever have unity and co-operation in extending the kingdom everywhere, but let us ever avoid ecclesiasticism and corporatism which exalt some above others, and give special privileges to the few which belong alike to all in the divine economy of our eternal King.

CHAPTER XI.

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM.

In the preceding chapters we have endeavored to present in a concise and simple way the fundamental facts concerning the origin, nature and purpose of the kingdom of Christ, claiming that the Christian Church of today is pleading and endeavoring to restore the early church in its original simplicity as the only basis of unity upon which all Christendom may stand. We do not claim that the "Christian Church" of today, as viewed by others, solely constitutes the kingdom or church of Christ on earth. We have endeavored to set forth the view others have of us, and, in contrast with that view, to state the real position of the church of the New Testament, claiming that we are the church of Christ to the extent that we reproduce that church in this age. We maintain that this is the only possible way by which the will of Christ can be done, and unto this our hearts are set, and for this we strive, pleading that upon these grounds there may be a glorious union of all who love the Lord.

The question arises, however, as to the reason for and necessity of such a restoration or reformation at this time. If the church of Christ was founded upon the rock of eternal truth, and the powers of darkness could not prevail against it, why then has not the church through these nearly two thousand years been an all-conquering force? Why have there ever come divisions among her ranks? Why has darkness at times settled like a pall over the disciples of Christ and shut out their vision of God? The answer is, that the kingdom of Christ "cometh not with observation;" it can not be materialized; it can not be promulgated by ecclesiastical authority; it can not be set forward by temporal power; it can not be strengthened by corporate force. The kingdom of Christ is among men like unto the "leaven hid in meal"—it can not be seen, but silently and surely it does its work, leavening the whole lump. So, in the great lump of humanity the leaven of Christianity

is working, and shall continue to work until its mission of redemption is performed. The reason why at times it has seemingly failed is because men have tried to take it out of the heart of humanity, and bring it into "observation" by hedging it around with sectarian dogmas, by embodying it in man-made creeds, by guarding it with ecclesiastical authority, by delegating its work to men and setting them upon thrones of temporal power, attributing to them authority which Christ has given to no man. All the divisions and weaknesses in Christendom may be attributed to misconceptions of the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and by endeavoring to find power in "externals" when it comes only from the living principles implanted within us by Christ through the word of truth.

In all these years the leaven of Christianity, despite the misconceptions of men as to the nature of the kingdom, has been surely and irresistibly working. It has been the one force, though often under cover of darkness, that has bound humanity together. Had it not been for the Christian conscience in the heart of humanity, implanted and ever growing there by the grace of God, the race long since would have lapsed into moral and social chaos.

Before the church of Christ holds sway over all people, and leads the race into the full beauty and splendor of the purpose of God concerning mankind, these errors and evil practices on the part of those who profess to do his will, must be corrected and abandoned. Before the church of the first century becomes the universal church of the twentieth century, the wrong conceptions and erroneous methods that have arisen and are now in vogue must be set aside.

The history of religion among professed Christians during these two thousand years may be divided into several distinct periods. The first, of course, is that of the apostolic church, in the first century. Upon this we have dwelt, and, as before stated, have tried to present the truth according to God's word, as to its origin, nature and purpose. There are three other periods, or, rather, phases of history, which we should know in order to appreciate the meaning, nature and purpose of the Christian church in the twentieth century. These are Roman Catholicism, the Middle Ag-

es, the Reformation and consequent Protestant sectarianism, and the Restoration of the early church leading to Christian unity.

While the heading to this chapter is the "Origin and Growth of Roman Catholicism," the reader can not expect us in this limited space to enter into any sort of detailed history of this gigantic institution. We can only note the great periods of history in their logical and philosophic relation to each other, and how all are related to the kingdom of Christ in its varied history and leading on to its ultimate triumph. We may note the conditions of the thought and life of the world which under God led on to the fulfillment of his purposes. D'Aubigne, the great historian, says: "Primitive Christianity and the Reformation are one and the same revolution, brought about at different epochs and under different circumstances. Although not alike in their secondary features, they are identical in their primary and chief characteristics. One is the repetition of the other. The former put an end to the Old World; the latter began the New; between them lie the Middle Ages. One is the parent of the other, and, although the daughter may in some instances bear marks of inferiority, she has characteristics that are peculiarly her own." It may be truthfully added that primitive Christianity, the Reformation, and the present *Restoration* are one and the same thing. What was the cause that made necessary the *Reformation* of the sixteenth century? Roman Catholicism, is the answer. What was and is the cause and necessity for the *Restoration* of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Sectarian Protestantism, is the answer. And, instead of "organizing" another "church" or founding another denomination, as "others" think, the leaders in the restoration of primitive Christianity were, under God, taking the initiative in a mighty world movement, the beginners of an epoch in the religious life of man, which shall by the future historian be recorded, and by future generations be regarded, as second in importance to no other work or period of the church since the days of the apostles. It is so because it marked the beginning of the end of strife and divisions, with which the hosts of the Lord can not succeed, but without which they shall go forth conquering and to conquer.

One of the darkest hours in human history was when circumstances seemingly conspired to turn the simplicity of the early church into the ecclesiasticism of Rome, which has been one of the greatest curses upon the human family. Upon this point we quote at length from D'Aubigne, for perhaps from no other historian do we get so clear and forceful a statement of the facts. He says: "The church was in the beginning a community of brethren, guided by a few of the brethren. All were taught of God, and each had the privilege of drawing for himself from the divine fountain of light. The Epistles which then settled the great questions of doctrine did not bear the pompous title of a single man—of a ruler. We learn from the Holy Scriptures that they began simply with these words: 'The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren' (Acts 15:23).

"But these very writings of the apostles already foretell that from the midst of this brotherhood there shall arise a power that will destroy this simple and primitive order. (2 Thess. 2.)

"Let us contemplate the formation and trace the development of this power so alien to the church.

"Paul of Tarsus, one of the greatest apostles of the new religion, had arrived at Rome, the capital of the empire and of the world, preaching in bondage the salvation which cometh from God. A church was formed beside the throne of the Caesars. Composed at first of a few converted Jews, Greeks and Roman citizens, it was rendered famous by the teaching and the death of the apostle of the Gentiles. For a time it shone out bright as a beacon upon a hill. Its faith was everywhere celebrated; but ere-long it declined from its primitive condition. It was by small beginnings that both imperial and Christian Rome advanced to the usurped dominion of the world.

"The first pastors or bishops of Rome employed themselves in converting the neighboring cities and towns. The necessity which the bishops and pastors of the Campagna felt of applying in cases of difficulty to an enlightened guide, and the gratitude they owed to the church of the metropolis, led them to maintain a close union with it. As has always happened in analogous circumstances,

this reasonable union soon degenerated into dependence. The bishops of Rome considered as a *right* that superiority which the surrounding churches had freely yielded. The encroachments of power form a great part of history, as the resistance of those whose liberties are invaded forms the other portion. The ecclesiastical power could not escape the intoxication which impels all who are lifted up to seek to mount still higher. It obeys the general law of human nature.

“Nevertheless, the supremacy of the Roman bishops was at that period limited to the superintendence of the churches within the jurisdiction of the prefect of Rome. But the rank which this imperial city held in the world offered a prospect of still greater destinies to the ambition of its first pastor. The respect enjoyed by the various Christian bishops in the second century was proportionate to the rank of the city in which they resided. Now Rome was the largest, richest and most powerful city in the world. It was the seat of empire, the mother of nations. ‘All inhabitants of the earth belong to her,’ said Julian; and Claudian declared her to be ‘the fountain of laws.’

“If Rome is queen of the cities, why should not her pastor be king of bishops? Why should not the Roman Church be the mother of Christendom? Why should not all nations be her children, and her authority their sovereign law? It was easy for the ambitious heart of man to reason thus. Ambitious Rome did so.

“Thus, when pagan Rome fell, she bequeathed to the humble minister of the God of peace, sitting in the midst of her ruins, the proud titles which her invincible sword had won from the nations of the earth.”

Thus do we find the origin of the Roman Church, rooted and grounded deep in misguided human nature, but developing inevitably in accord with natural law. A human institution prompted by selfish, human ambition, yet promulgated in the name of the divine. It had its beginning in a misconception of the nature and purpose of the kingdom of Christ. The ones who first turned away from the reality and simplicity of early Christianity, yielded to the temptation and inclination of human nature to apotheosize mate-

rial and temporal power. Thus Rome became the seat of ecclesiastic authority, which spread over and dominated the religious world. Her growth was marvelous, her power apparently irresistible. We quote again from our author: "The kingdoms of Christendom, already subject to the spiritual authority of Rome, now became her serfs and tributaries. Thus everything was changed in the church.

"It was at first a community of brethren, and now an absolute monarchy was established in its bosom. All Christians were priests of the living God, with humble pastors as their guides. But a haughty head is upraised in the midst of these pastors; a mysterious voice utters words full of pride; an iron hand compels all men, great and small, rich and poor, bond and free, to wear the badge of its power. The holy and primitive equality of souls before God is lost sight of. At the voice of one man, Christendom is divided into two unequal parties: on the one side is a separate caste of priests, daring to usurp the name of the church, and claiming to be invested with peculiar privileges in the eyes of the Lord, and, on the other, servile flocks reduced to blind and passive submission—a people gagged and fettered, and given over to a haughty caste. Every tribe, language and nation of Christendom submits to the dominion of this spiritual king, who has received power to conquer."

The centuries passed. The oppression of the people, the withholding of light and truth from the masses, the subjugation of the subjects of the church to the greed and ambition of the popes, with all their dignitaries, became worse and worse. Intolerance, inhuman cruelty, all manner of persecution and bloody martyrdom, were endured at the hands of vile and polluted men who did these crimes in the name of the Lord. Spiritual night had settled down upon the world, and the people groped for long years in darkness, without a leader, but in search of a guide. Meanwhile, the leaven of pure Christianity had not died out of the hearts of all men. God raised up a great reformer, and with him associates to lead the benighted into the light. Martin Luther was the man whose "voice was heard in the wilderness," as it were,

and he called the people who had eyes to see and ears to hear, back to light and liberty. He was a seer and a prophet, a man of destiny—God's own man to meet the appointed hour.

The Roman Catholic ecclesiasticism still lives, but, with the coming of Luther and his work of reformation, it became a negative instead of a positive power in the world. Catholicism still exists, and is a mighty factor in the affairs of men, but it is a waning power. The church of Rome is not an enlightening force; she exists only by negations—by withholding from her subjects the light of truth. Free investigation is not allowed, for her leaders know her teachings and practices will not bear thorough investigation. The power of Rome is becoming more and more a spent force with each passing generation, and the Christian civilizations of the future need have no fear from this source. True, the church of Rome has power still, but it is the power of the material and external—not of the invisible, spiritual kingdom of Christ which is destined to hold sway in the hearts of all people.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REFORMATION.

The beginning of the Reformation was a crisis period in the history of the church, a pivotal point upon which, in divine providence, turned the destiny of mankind in relation to the kingdom of Christ. The history of Protestantism is of profoundest interest to every student of Christianity, and of greatest consequence to the true evangelization of the world. Under the leadership of Martin Luther, raised up of God to do a mighty work for humanity, a new epoch was begun in the history of religion, a new era dawned upon the human family, which, through the Dark Ages, had been enveloped in the gloom of night.

The Reformation marked a transformation in society in general, as well as a reformation in religious thought and life.

We can not within our brief space enter into the detailed history of the life of Luther and of his wonderful achievements. These things are, or should be, more or less familiar to all Protestants. However, as our general purpose is to set forth the position of the Christian Church of today, in its true light, and in contrast with the erroneous views held of us by our religious neighbors, it is necessary to study the Reformation in its real setting as it is related to the religious conditions of the world prior to and after the reformatory work done by Luther and his associates, and how that work is philosophically and providentially related to the religious conditions of the present time.

The state of affairs in the church prior to the Reformation was the most deplorable in the history of Christendom. We know how some of those who assumed to be God's representatives among men, who sat from time to time upon the Papal throne, were debased and debauched to the depths of degradation; how they had caused the masses of the people to look upon them as possessing divine authority governing and determining the individual happiness of their subjects for this life and the life to come. We know how they put the salvation of their followers in the commercial

scale, teaching them that with money they could buy indulgences for this life, and bliss in the future world. They even made the great seat of power which they occupied a position to be bought and sold, and at times some of the world's most debased characters and cruel tyrants reigned upon the banks of the Tiber, degrading themselves and subjugating the people, all in the name of God and holy religion! Under such conditions, the masses were benighted, and the individuality which should characterize every Christian in his priestly dignity before God, was completely lost. The word of God was taken away from the people and given into the hands of priest and prelate, who, instead of declaring unto all the unsearchable riches contained therein, withheld from them the truth, and, in withholding the truth which alone makes men free, took from them their liberty, thereby casting the multiplied thousands of Catholics into abject slavery. This slavery, too, was the worst form of slavery known to history. The slavery of the body is, for misery and sadness, incomparable with the slavery of mind and spirit. The people were in spiritual and mental servitude to the dignitaries of the mighty ecclesiasticism, and this practically involved bodily servitude, for, beyond the scantiest living, all the hard earnings of the poor subjects of Rome went into the corrupt treasury of the so-called "church," upon which substance the "holy fathers" indulged in extravagant and riotous living.

In such circumstances, the people were not to be blamed, but pitied. There are many motives in human nature that will lead the masses to unanimity of action. The great majority of people do not think for themselves, but follow the crowd. They fall into the current of public sentiment, lose their individuality, and become mere atoms of a great aggregation. The aggregation, in turn, becomes, in a sense, a unit, and is moved to action by many motives which, perhaps, would not always determine the course of the individual, were he to act independently.

The crime of the Roman ecclesiasticism, then, was doubly great, because it appealed to the strongest motive within the nature of man—viz.: his religious instinct—for the support which it appropriated, not for the welfare of the race and the glory of God,

but to the gratification of its greed for gain, desire for temporal power, lust for carnal indulgences, and self-deceptive purpose to soothe its conscience by doing all under the guise of "Christianity."

The time came when a reformation was necessary to the salvation of religion. The time came when the great question was not what the individual should do to be saved, but what the church, as an organization or visible body among men, should do to be saved. The plan of individual redemption was never changed, and the spiritual kingdom of Christ among the true disciples of the Master ever remained intact. But there is another sense in which the church is to be as the "salt of the earth," the "light of the world," a "city set on a hill"—not an ecclesiastical body or corporate force, but a brotherhood dwelling together in unity, "living epistles known and read of all men." The crisis came when those purporting to be Christ's followers and the true church of God, like the pendulum, had swung to the opposite extreme from all that Christ taught and would have his people be; at this point destiny must turn—the reformation was inevitable.

In the extension of the race into time, with the growth of civilization, with the rise and fall of kingdoms, empires and republics, with the unfolding of the divine plan concerning the children of men, in the crises of history, when great leadership upon the part of some one was necessary to save the day from disaster, and pilot the ship of church or state past danger into safety, God has always provided that leader. To lead the early tribes out from the cradle of their birth, turning their faces toward the unknown, and to become the "father of the faithful," God provided Abraham; to lead his own out of Egyptian darkness and bring them free from bondage, turning their hopes and aspirations toward the land of promise, he provided Moses; during the long years of weary waiting when the people of God were sore oppressed, while looking and longing for the Messiah, he gave to Isaiah and to Jeremiah, with others, the vision of prophecy, and as they looked down the ages and saw the glories to come, they took up their harps and sang to the listening centuries the jubilant song of a

triumphant day. True, in some of their singing we hear the minor strain of lamentation over the sorrowful conditions of their own days, but above that lamentation ever rose the major strain of victory to come; when, after the long processes of preparation had been wrought, when the race was groping in darkness in search of the light, when mankind was dying for a savior, “when the fulness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons;” when, after the establishment of the church, and the Gentiles were without the fold, with no one to bear to them the message of salvation, God provided Paul, who was by divine authority a “chosen vessel” to do this great work; when the church had gone on for fifteen centuries, and, under the leadership of selfish and unchristian human nature, had lapsed from apostolic purity and simplicity into a state almost as bad as heathenism, God raised up Martin Luther, cleared his brain, strengthened his heart, nerved his arm, spiritualized his entire being, and set him to the mightiest task ever given to an individual since the days of the apostles—it was that of the Reformation.

The work of Luther and his collaborators is rightly called *reformation*. While the ultimate end of the two is the same, there is a deal of difference between the work of *reformation* and that of *restoration*, which latter subject we shall discuss in the next chapter. The Reformation was a necessary precedent to the Restoration. So inactive and benighted was the intellectual and spiritual condition of the masses at the time Luther began his work, it was necessary to begin practically at the bottom, and reform the whole mentality and spirituality of those who listened to his teaching. His work was largely a *leading away* from the false conditions and evil practices of Rome, rather than going back to the primitive conditions of the first century to restore them to the Christians of the sixteenth century. It was from utter darkness and degradation that he would call them forth, waiting for future days to restore the ideal conditions of the church. It was to save them from being crushed under the Juggernaut car of the Papacy that

he raised his voice of protest.

Reformation was the one great need of the hour, for the conditions were not ripe for restoration. When people are perishing in a burning building, the primary question is not as to where and how they shall be afterward cared for but to rescue them from the flames. Luther was the man of God, to protest against Rome, to call the people out from under that power which was dishonoring Christ and degrading the dignity of humanity. How well he succeeded, history has recorded. He began a movement which resulted in putting back into the hands of the people the word of God; he called around him a band of Christians who thought and acted for themselves, and became a mighty force for truth and righteousness; he lighted afresh the torch of liberty, and it has never gone out, but has flamed across the intervening centuries giving light to all who would walk in the paths of freedom; he sounded the death-knell of ecclesiasticism, and while the sect of Rome still lives, and while numerous other sects have arisen from among those who protest against Rome, they all are destined to pass and be no more, for in the light of God's truth no error or evil can be prolonged beyond its natural period in the course of events.

So surely as Christ sits at the right hand of the Father as our great High Priest, making intercession for us, just so surely shall his kingdom triumph o'er all the earth. Pure Christianity is destined to take up its abode in the hearts of all people. And when we look back over the past three centuries and study the Reformation, viewing it in the light of the work done in the intervening period, and in the brighter light of present conditions in the world, we can see more clearly the purposes of God relative to his designs for the early evangelization of mankind through the instrumentality of his church. In divine providence the nations are in swift preparation for the reception of the gospel of Christ, and, also, Christendom is in rapid preparation for taking this gospel to the nations. This could not have been so had it not been for the Reformation, the calling away from Catholicism by Luther and his fellow-laborers.

Protestantism, the result of the Reformation, is composed of a mighty host, but there are divisions among her ranks which must be obliterated before the final onslaught upon Catholicism, and the glorious taking of the world for Christ. In the next chapter we shall consider the question of the origin and development of denominationalism among Protestants.

Let us rejoice in the glorious progress of the kingdom of Christ, as we note that in the course of history Protestant reformation has led up to the time of restoration. The hosts of the Lord are preparing for conflict and conquest, and the twentieth century is destined to be the mightiest and most glorious of all the centuries in carrying out the will of Christ for the world's redemption. The twentieth century will mark the passing of the Roman ecclesiasticism, the passing of all sectarianism among the followers of Christ, and the imperial reign in spiritual dominion, over all the nations of earth, of our enthroned Redeemer and King! God speed the day when all who love the Lord may unitedly and consistently sing:

“Like a mighty army, moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;
We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.”

CHAPTER XIII.

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF MODERN SECTARIANISM.

The foregoing studies bring us face to face with present-day conditions in the Protestant Christian world. From the period of apostolic Christianity, the lapse of the "visible church" into the *regime* of priest and prelate, the final Papal rule, the gloom of the Dark Ages, and the succeeding Reformation, were all successive steps leading up to the period of Protestantism.

It is necessary to take this comprehensive view of the history of Christendom in order to appreciate the plea and position of the Christian Church in the twentieth century. The great reason why "others" do not see us "as we are" relative to the religious denominations of our time, is because, in their grasp of the situation, they do not go back of the conditions and events existing and transpiring since the days of the Reformation. As a rule, they do not know of the remote influences which inevitably produced the different denominations among Protestants.

The difference between the Restoration movement inaugurated about a century ago by Mr. Campbell and others, and the denominations, or "churches" organized at different times by various people, is, that these denominations in most instances were the results of local and temporal conditions. They sprang up from some schismatic strife, from some creedal difference of opinion, from some contention over ecclesiastical authority, from some desire for or rebellion against corporate power, or from unholy ambition upon the part of some men to make for themselves a name, and to obtain a position of leadership among the people. On the other hand, the Restoration movement was in no sense the founding or organizing of another "church," as we noted in the first chapter of this work. While it relatively had a local significance, its origin dated back to Pentecost, its purpose reached forward to the consummation of the will of Christ for the unity of all his followers; its inherent nature and life was drawn

from all the ages past, and was destined to be projected into all the ages to come, until the will of God is "done on earth as it is in heaven."

It is but natural that "others" should see us as one of the denominations, when taking the limited view and local setting of the movement begun by leaders in the great work; it is also natural that "others" should take this view of us, for it is the only setting that can be given a Protestant sect founded by men. It is historically illogical and impossible, and Biblically unthinkable, to give a modern sect created by men, subscribing to a man-made creed, and wearing a human name, a divinely authorized and permanent place in the life and development of the human race; they belong to the things that are temporal and transient; in divine providence, they may in many ways aid in the fulfillment of God's purposes, but as such they can not permanently abide as the institution of which Christ spoke, when he said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." No institution can permanently stand that is not of his building.

The difference between the Restoration movement and the organization of the denominations is, that as the origin of the denominations can be attributed only to local and temporal conditions, and can be studied in no other light, on the contrary, the origin of the Restoration can not be attributed to local and temporal causes, but is of divine origin; it can not be comprehended by a study of local conditions, but can be understood by taking in the grand sweep of God's purpose concerning his people through all the ages.

But to what cause, it may be asked, can be attributed the divisions and uprising of the sects among Protestants after the Reformation? Does it not seem that after the great work done by Luther and his associates in calling the people away from the authorities of Rome, and protesting against the rule of powers which ought not to be, that they unto whom the Bible had been restored would have stood as a unit upon that Word, and never have been divided into so many different factions and never have

taken upon themselves so many different names to distinguish one party from the other? By referring to the chapter on "The Name 'Christian'," we see that Luther did not desire divisions among his followers, and he protested against their calling themselves "Lutherans." His desire was that they should be known only as Christians. But, alas! as we have noted from D'Aubigne, and as history has so well demonstrated, that even out of the brotherhood of the apostolic church there arose a power that destroyed her simple and primitive order, so, out of the Reformation there came those elemental tendencies of human nature that ere long divided the simple body into many schismatic factions and set them to warring against each other. This has ever been the result of men trying to walk in their own wisdom. Whenever they have in any sense discounted the inspired word of God, and substituted therefor the conflicting interpretations of it made by men, then the adoption of these interpretations necessarily resulted in divisions. In this way the different denominations had their origin.

History has shown us, too, how difficult it is for one age and generation to break away from the beliefs and practices of those preceding. It was only by emphatic and repeated teaching, and finally by miraculous demonstration, that the converts from Judaism in the early church were completely turned away from the Judaistic practices that were to have no part in the Christian Church. The Roman Church, by natural heritage, had many of the customs and practices of paganism, and clings to them until this day. And while Luther protested against the great spirit of evil in Romanism, he or his followers never fully broke away from all the purely human and paganistic tendencies of that great organization. Many of these things we find among Protestants today. To what origin may be attributed, and from what source came all the clericalisms, ecclesiasticisms, unnatural, unreasonable and unscriptural habits, customs and performances among many preachers and sectarian denominations today? They can all be traced directly to Roman Catholicism, and from Roman Catholicism back to paganism and Judaism; none of them have origin, sanction or authority in the New Testament, or find precedent in

the early church, the teachings, ordinances and life of which we are endeavoring to restore.

We can not here enter into any history of the hundreds of sects among Protestants. Of Lutherans, there are a number of different bodies; among Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and other great sectarian sections of Christendom, there are many subdivisions caused by minor differences—some doctrinal, some governmental, some as to polity, some political, and others purely human and prejudicial. But of all the hundreds of human organizations called “churches,” not one has a right to existence as such, by divine authority.

The true position of the Christian Church of today, relative to all these denominations, is the main theme of the writer in presenting the question *“as others see us, and as we are”* We have seen how, in the natural course of affairs, the denominations have come into existence. We have seen, also, how these sects are, in history, related to the church of Christ. The main point to be made clear in this book is, that the body of people known as the Christian Church is not a denomination, is not a sect; that it came not into existence by human origin, but that in the providence of God, when the time was ripe for the movement, it was, and is, nothing more or less than a restoration of the primitive church of Christ. We do not maintain that time ever was since the days of the apostles when the true church was extinct; it is not a restoration of something that was entirely lost from the life and practice of all the Lord’s people. The church of Christ from the day of establishment at Pentecost in Jerusalem, was an indestructible and ever-growing movement. But for a long while human instrumentalities and man’s wisdom were substituted for God’s wisdom and God’s power, and these were falsely regarded as the true church. So it is today, and, instead of offering to Christendom some new thing, or some substitute for systems now in vogue, we plead for the abandonment of all systems and doctrines save what we find in the New Testament, and for the restoration to the life and practice of today that same life and practice which, in characteristic simplicity, belonged to the church of the first century.

In the “survival of the fittest,” this can but be the result. The Restoration is a movement that belongs to a “fulness of time.” It takes its place in the history of God’s dealing with the race, in importance, second to no other crisis period since the beginning of Christendom. It is the logical and inevitable next movement after the Reformation. In the onward movement of the church toward world evangelization and ultimate unity of God’s people, in Christ and upon the Bible, there is no possible place for abiding sectarianism. As we evolve out of darkness into light, out of error into truth, out of human selfishness into Christian fraternity, schismatic divisions must pass. They are rapidly passing. The great spirit and trend of this age is away from sectarianism and toward unity. The creeds are passing, the clergy is passing, the denominations are passing, the sectarian spirit is dying, and across the broken lines of division, and over the crumbling walls of creedism, are being extended, in fraternal grasp, the hands of those who love the Lord.

In the clear light of the glorious day that is dawning upon us, with the great missionary passion for the evangelization by the gospel of Christ of all people both at home and abroad, these sectarian trappings of the centuries that have so hindered the progress of the church, are being thrown aside, and soon shall be totally abandoned, so that the Lord’s hosts may be *free*—may be one, as Christ and the Father are *one*—and then we shall see nations converted in a day.

There is nothing that gives to the earnest heart a feeling of greater assurance than to study the philosophy of history, and therein note the certainty of the existence of a presiding God. Through all the shifting scenes in human affairs, both in state and church, we behold even the “wind and storm fulfilling his word.” Through the long process of the ages God has slowly but surely been working out his purpose concerning the redemption and restoration of mankind from death unto eternal bliss with himself. In the world of sin and darkness, no great form of evil can long exist. Within our own observation human slavery had to pass; the evil of intemperance and the liquor traffic is passing. In the realm

of church and religion the same truth applies. The Reformation came and marked the beginning of the end of Roman Catholicism. Following the Reformation came the evil of sectarianism, but God sent the Restoration movement, which marked the beginning of the end of sectarianism. Soon we shall have a united and unified church, and then, not by destructive conquest, but by constructive evangelism, the whole world will see the beauty of holiness in Christ the Lord, and turn away from Romanism, and away from all worldly evil, and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.”

There is a lesson here, too, for all who are identified with the Restoration movement. We should not claim for ourselves too much. We should not assume that simply because we bear this name and are in this movement, we have a patent right to the church and the truth, and to all for which they stand. The early Christians had the truth, and God gave to them the glorious opportunities of giving it to the world, but among their successors were those who deteriorated from the high estate to which they had been called. They suffered, but the truth remained the same, a unit, and indestructible.

We are the church of Christ only to the extent that we are loyal to the truth of God in his word of instruction and revelation to us. At times, among us, there may have been, and still may be, those who would, consciously or unconsciously as the case may be, sow the seeds of sectarianism. But in the garden of God these seeds can not spring up and grow. The Master has provided in his vineyard faithful servants, who, in humility, but with loyal courage, ever uproot these evils and throw them out.

We have been threatened at different times by various tendencies toward doctrines and positions which, if adopted by the great rank and file of the brotherhood, would forfeit our claim to the distinctive plea for unity upon Christ, and upon the “Impregnable Rock of Truth,” the word of God. The minor importance of New Testament ordinances—their being non-essential to church membership—some have taught; but this teaching has never made headway among the disciples, for it would do vio-

lence to our one book of authority. A small school of destructive critics has arisen, but, so far as holding sway among us, they have "gone the way of all the earth" and are no more. There is no place for them among our institutions of learning where truth is taught; journals for their propaganda are not read by the hosts of disciples, and soon cease to be; our congregations do not care to hear them trying to destroy the doctrines of truth, when they should be attacking the citadels of sin, and there can be no permanent place for them in our pulpits. Among them there is not one successful evangelist, for no uncertain gospel will ever call a sinner away from sin to a doubtful Saviour. A misconstrued federation movement would put us within the ranks of sectarianism. We should hail with delight, and co-operate to the fullest extent in any movement looking to the real unity of the hosts of Christendom upon the New Testament plea. But we should not, and the great body of our people never will, enter into federation which recognizes us as one of the many "churches," and federates with the denominations upon that basis.

All these evil tendencies have, or will, come to naught, giving way to the triumphal progress of the everlasting church of Christ. To have part in this is the greatest honor and the happiest privilege God has given to men. Many now living will remain to see the day when sectarianism will be no more; many shall see the glory and salvation of the Lord in that great day when unity shall prevail, and the Lord's people, like light, shall shine out into the world's dark night, and drive it away; when they shall be seen like "a city on a hill, that cannot be hid."

CHAPTER XIV.

ULTIMATE RELIGION: CHRISTIAN UNITY.

After all, what shall be the culminating and enduring state of the church among men? Looking to that "One far-off divine event, To which the whole creation, moves," there can be but one answer. The will of God shall be done, and to those who are able to discern the signs of the times, both past and present, the omens are indicative of the early realization of that high ideal state of the church—that ultimate religion among men when unity shall prevail.

That the next great era of religious activity is to be one of unity, and that it is to be the ultimate state of the church, is logical and inevitable, in keeping with the inexorable law of cause and effect, in answer and fulfillment of the prayer and purpose of the Christ, in accomplishment of the will of God concerning the race.

This is true, first, because the inefficacy of all other methods of procedure has been demonstrated and exhibited by long processes of history.

From the cradle of the race until now, the history of man is that he has been seeking light, endeavoring to advance, looking upward, pressing onward, ever evolving out of his lower self into the higher, reaching forth his hand to grasp a mightier force by which he would be assisted to a firm foundation upon which his soul, his real self, might stand, steadfast and immovable, amid the wrecks of time and the ruins of matter. Through the long, weary years, with the coming and going of the generations, many methods have been tried, have accomplished their mission, have been relegated to the past, and numbered with the things that are to be no more. The ecclesiasticism of the Jews failed, the philosophy and aesthetic culture of the Greeks failed, the strong arm of materialistic Rome failed. The dumb idols made by heathen nations, and worshiped as gods, have ever failed to give answer to the supplications of those who have bowed before them.

Our heavenly Father, who, in his wisdom, implanted this di-

vinity within us by making us in his own image, which was not completely destroyed by the fall of man from his first state, the remnant of which constitutes this instinctive longing In the universal heart for the higher and better, also, in the “fulness of time,” provided the means of our complete redemption and restoration by sending forth his Son to save us from sin and death. Through the earthly ministry and sacrifice of Christ, and by the work of the Holy Spirit, the church of Christ, the everlasting spiritual kingdom, the medium through which the world is to be saved, was established among men. It was as the placing of leaven in meal, it was the implanting of a new life force, a germ seed in the soil of dying humanity, which eventually would restore to it, life, and “life more abundantly.” This heavenly treasure was placed in earthen vessels. For its full development, its glorious flower and fruitage, a long process of growth to full maturity has been necessary. God, through the New Testament revelation, has given us the laws and conditions by which this kingdom is to grow. He gave us the perfect pattern in the apostolic church. All other methods previously tried by men in quest of light and salvation were insufficient, but here, through Christ, the race finds the “way, and the truth, and the life.” We have seen how soon the professed disciples forsook that divinely appointed way, substituted human ways and devices for the extension of the church, and history records their failure, upon some of the darkest pages in the annals of mankind. We have noted the efforts to depart from those errors in the great Reformation, with the consequent results.

Out of the Reformation and with the growth of Protestantism came modern sectarianism, with many denominations or “churches” founded by men. These divisions destroy the visible and real unity of professed Christians, and are at utter variance with the teachings of Christ and the divine nature of his kingdom.

Perhaps in no other period of church life has history been so swift in rendering her verdict, and in placing the stamp of insufficiency upon its life and methods, as upon that of modern sectarianism. A few centuries of Protestant denominationalism

are sufficient to show that a divided church can not convert the world. The masses of men at home, and the hosts of heathen abroad, will not believe in the Christ of God so long as they see the lack of unity among his professed followers. This is why Christ prayed to the Father, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). The clock is striking the hour, the time is up; sectarianism is dying, and soon shall be buried to be resurrected no more.

That the next, and ultimate, period of religion will be one of Christian unity, is true, secondly, because today the leaders in and masses of Christendom are wise, earnest and honest, and will profit by the history and experiences of the past.

The great host of preachers and the membership of the denominations are anxious for the world's conversion to Christianity. The time has passed for one-man, or a few-men, leadership in the church. God has always provided the leadership for the times. This is an age for the movement of the masses, and these masses, instead of following one man, or a few men, follow the trend of the real thought of the time. In the religion of today, the trend of thought and life is toward Christ, toward unity; it is growing everywhere, and those who are not in this triumphal procession are not marching with the hosts of the Lord. There are no great leaders defending sectarianism today. The public conscience is against sectarianism, and the "churches" dare not obtrude their denominational peculiarities upon the ever-developing public conscience, which is more and more toward unity in Christ. The leaders and the masses in sectarian Christendom realize this; they know full well how the denominations, as such, have lost their hold upon the people, and that sectarianism is a spent force in the world. They realize that pure, apostolic Christianity is the only religion that is efficacious, that is sufficient to meet the demands and answer the needs of the universal heart of the race. All must preach Christ as the only creed, and the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, for all other things have failed. When human doctrines and methods have been set aside,

when Christ and the Bible alone are preached, then we shall have Christian unity, and the ultimate plan and purpose of God concerning the life and work of his church on earth will be realized.

Third, Christian unity must be the ultimate religion, because it is God's way, and in perfect harmony with the law and order of all creation.

God's universe is builded and preserved as a unity. Unity is the law of all creation and preservation. The same divine wisdom and infinite power that moulds the tear on an infant's cheek, and fashions to perfection the wing of the insect we tread under foot, also, by the law of universal unity, gives shape to planets and spheres, and plumes the archangel's wing for the celestial fight. It is only in the thought and life of sinful man that this law of God is violated. In every other sphere of existence the perfect harmony and unity is preserved. Chaos is only known in human experience. Were the unity of God's universe marred in the least, it would throw all the suns and systems out of their courses, and universal night and death would reign. That is the condition in the moral sphere, but for the remedying gospel of Christ. It is the one purpose and mission of this gospel to restore order in the spiritual realm. It is to bring about unity among men, and between man and God, that the gospel of "peace on earth and good will to men" is preached.

Is it not, then, an irresistible appeal to every heart and conscience that has been redeemed and harmonized by the grace of God through Christ, that the church of Christ should, as a whole, be a harmonious unit among men? Is not all else anarchy in the spiritual realm? Should not all who believe in Christ, and who have respect for his authority, seek to bring about the unity among his people for which he prayed, and which alone is in harmony with the law and order of all other existence, except in the sinful sphere of mortal man? All that is divine is harmonious, and is a unit. How, then, can we regard as divine the sectarian, schismatic, warring institutions known as "churches," until they become unified in Christ?

Fourth, we argue that the state of ultimate religion, Christian

unity, is nigh unto us, because *the last great "fulness of time" is here, and speedily the whole world is to be evangelized.*

Then, in the purpose of God, unity of existence and united action are inevitable, because, in the divine economy, universal evangelization can not otherwise be accomplished. The masses of Christendom are just now being aroused to the full meaning of Christ's commission to his followers to go and make disciples of all nations. We are now just entering the golden age of evangelism. There is but one thing for the church to do, and that is, in the fullest meaning of the term, to evangelize all people, and it is only while endeavoring to do this that we can claim the presence of Christ, who promised to be with us "always, even to the consummation of the age," for it was only upon this condition that he made the promise. Then, all hail to the glorious day! Behold the unified and united hosts of Christendom! Hear, with enraptured ear, the stirring song:

"Sound, sound the truth abroad;
Bear ye the word of God Thro' the wide world;
Tell what the Lord has done,
Tell how the day is won,
Tell from his lofty throne Satan is hurled."

The perplexing question is, What is the nature of this unity, and how is it to be brought about? From the practical point of view, as it is related to the various religious denominations, *it all lies in clearly understanding the difference between Christian unity and organic union of the "churches"*

In the wonderful unity of the material universe, there is endless variety; no two things are exactly alike, yet all things constitute a perfect and harmonious whole. Some people would justify denominationalism on this ground, by arguing that the different "churches" constitute the "variety" in the religious life, but, as a whole, they constitute a spiritual unity of all who believe in Christ.

The above argument falls to pieces from the fact that there can be unity in diversity only when the divine mind proposes the

unity, and creates the diversity in harmony therewith. Such a thing, then, as Christian union, or the organic union of the religious denominations, is an impossibility, for all these sects are of human origin, and therefore imperfect and incapable of being harmonized one with another. This is clearly demonstrated in many great religious movements of modern times. In the Christian Endeavor and Young Men's Christian Association, for instance, there has been unity of action and great good accomplished. This could not have been done had not all denominational differences been completely set aside; not even any part of any sectarian name could be used, for that would have destroyed the unity of the purpose and work. The name "Christian" is acceptable to all, for it is of divine origin, and the common property of all who believe in Christ. Many great union revivals have been conducted to the glory of God and the salvation of multitudes of souls, but this work has been done only when all denominationalism was kept in the background. If this is possible in localities, for a brief time, it is possible everywhere, for all time. If it is impossible to have unity and harmony in a "union meeting" in a locality for a brief time, with each party holding forth its peculiar denominational tenets, then it is logically impossible for such a feat to be accomplished everywhere for all time; therefore, organic union of the denominations can never be.

The only basis, then, for Christian unity is for all followers of Christ to conform their thought and lives to the divine plan and pattern given to us through Christ and the Holy Spirit, recorded in the New Testament, and exemplified in the apostolic church. The unending diversity in this unified church will be seen in the varying personality and temperament of the individual disciples, no two being exactly alike, but all using their peculiar gifts and talents in the service of the Master, each one by divine grace shaping himself, and helping to shape others, as peculiar individual stones, to find at last a fitting place in "that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The Christian Church, as others see us, is but one of the many denominations, and, while we have no creed or tenets save the

word of God, in the union meetings we have, at times, been barred from preaching a full gospel—*i.e.*, the whole teaching of the Word—concerning salvation, because some New Testament teachings are antagonistic to many of the sectarian creeds. This fact, followed to its last analysis, makes organic union of the “churches” impossible, for no one body will accept the antagonistic dogma of the other sects. It is absolutely necessary, then, to altogether do away with all sectarianism, and with unity in Christ, and upon the Bible, the whole counsel of God may be declared without any one objecting to any part of it.

Upon the same basis of argument, church federation, as the term is used in the popular sense, as an ultimate goal to be reached by the denominations, is as impracticable, not to say impossible, as the organic union of the denominations.

We are not a denomination in the sense others regard us as being nor can we afford to compromise the divine plan of the New Testament for Christian unity, by accepting and occupying a position as a sect in a federation movement.

On the other hand, we should rejoice at every tendency on the part of the sectarian world to get away from the faults and limitations of creed-bound denominationalism. It is one of the unanswerable evidences to be plainly read in the signs of the times, indicating the insufficiency of, and pointing to the utter failure of Christendom to convert the world, and at the same time look after and keep in repair the denominational fences.

We should co-operate with, and encourage in humility and love, every movement among our religious neighbors, whether consciously or unconsciously upon their part, looking to the Scriptural unity of all Christ’s followers; but we should never compromise the true grounds of unity by taking our stand among the denominational ranks.

Christian unity, the ultimate state of the triumphant church on earth, is coming! Let us not be given to vain boasting, let us not be possessed of undue pride; for only when clothed with becoming humility, and trusting in God for guidance, are we worthy to plead

for this unity, and fit to exemplify it before men.

We, too, may have to be pruned and shaped again and again, according to the design of the Master, before perfect unity prevails.

To this end let us work, and for this cause let us ever pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

CHAPTER XV. A CENTURY'S GROWTH.

About one century has passed since the beginning of the Restoration movement in America. As already stated, this movement was begun by no one man in particular, and was carried on under the leadership of no individual alone, but was, in divine providence, a natural result of previous causes and of existing conditions. We quote at length from W. J. Wright, corresponding secretary of the American Christian Missionary Society: "The people known as Christians, or Disciples of Christ, first appeared as a distinct people in America in the early part of the nineteenth century. They sprang up almost simultaneously in various parts of the country and in various denominations.

"Rev. James O'Kelly, of Virginia, a member of the M. E. General Conference, led off from his church a body of people who refused to wear any name but 'Christian,' or consider any book other than the Bible as authoritative.

"In 1800 Rev. Abner Jones, a Baptist preacher in Vermont, started a similar movement. As a result, congregations were formed in all the New England and North Atlantic States. The Bible was the only book of authority, the historic creeds were rejected, and the people and churches bore no name but 'Christian.'

'In 1803 Rev. Barton W. Stone and several other Presbyterian preachers withdrew from the synod in Lexington, Ky., renounced all human creeds, took the Bible as their only guidebook, refused all names but 'Christian,' and proceeded to organize Christian Churches.

"In 1809 Rev. Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian preacher residing in Washington, Pa., published a 'Declaration and Address,' in which he said that 'the church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally *one*;' that within this church 'there ought to be no schisms or uncharitable divisions;' that, in order to bring about and preserve unity, 'nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them

as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God;' and 'that division among Christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils. It is antichristian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ, as if he were divided against himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of himself. It is antiscriptural, as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority, a direct violation of his direct command. It is anti-natural, as it excites Christians to condemn, to hate and oppose one another, who are bound by the highest and most endearing obligations to love each other as brethren, even as Christ has loved them. In a word, it is productive of confusion and of every evil work.'

"This address called upon the people of all denominations as 'dearly beloved brethren,' who are assured of esteem and love, to co-operate, not in forming a new sect or church, but in an effort to restore 'that original unity, peace and purity' which obtained in the church of the New Testament. This, it was said, could be accomplished only by rejecting the creeds as being of any binding authority, and substituting for them the Bible, especially the New Testament, and by being known as Christians rather than by denominational designations.

"It will be noticed that the leaders of these movements, though widely separated geographically and denominationally, and knowing nothing of each other's movements, alike saw and lamented the evils of a divided church; and that in the interest of unity and liberty, peace and progress, they alike rejected all the marks of denominationalism, and declared themselves simply to be Christians without denominations, and members of 'one body,' the church of Christ, or the Christian Church.

"It was natural that when these men learned of the nearly identical character of the movements they headed, they should seek to unify their forces. The two greater forces, that led by Mr. Stone, and that by Mr. Campbell, were brought into one in Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee in 1832, after conferences between Mr. Stone and Alexander Campbell, son of Thomas Campbell. Since that time, many independent congregations, holding common

principles, have joined the movement.”

A great Centennial Convention is to be held in Pittsburg, Pa., in October, 1909, to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the “Declaration and Address” of Thomas Campbell, which led up to the beginnings of the apostolic church in America. It will be of interest for the reader to note the progress of the movement during these years. In the increase in numbers and in every form of good work, looking to the extension of Christ’s kingdom on earth, the history of a century’s work and growth of the Christian Church in America is remarkable. In this work there have been several distinctive periods. In the early days, there was much opposition from many of the denominations, and the pioneer disciples had to contend earnestly for the faith, and, against so great opposition, it was difficult to make much progress. Naturally, the preaching of the early ministers in this movement was polemic. In fact, practically the whole body of the early disciples were preachers of the Word, each one a living witness to the truth. It became proverbial that the “Campbellites,” as they were called in derision, knew the Scriptures. Nearly every member of the church carried constantly a copy of the Bible, and was ever ready to substantiate his claims by the authority of the Word.

After the days of the pioneers came the period of a more aggressive evangelism, in which the gospel was spread over a larger territory, the church became more widely known, and a factor to be reckoned with in the religious thought and life of the nation. Following this, came the time of missionary activity, both at home and abroad. At the same time, these Christians entered upon the period of church-building, and rapidly, in the rural districts, the small towns, and in many large cities, there arose great numbers of beautiful church houses.

The great secret of the marvelous growth and success of the Christian Church is due to the fact that not one of the activities begun at any of these periods has ever ceased. Polemic preaching has been kept up through all these years, the spirit of evangelism has grown with each passing decade, each succeeding year witnesses the construction of more and more worthy temples in

which to worship God, and missionary activity increases mightily with every passing day. All these forces within the last decade seem to have combined and given to the Restoration movement a mighty impetus toward the culmination of the purpose for which, under God, it came into existence. We quote from J. W. McGarvey, in the Year Book of 1908, who says of the disciples, or Christian Church:

“Their growth during the last two decades, according to the census reports of the United States, has been more rapid than that of any other body of Protestants in this country, and they now number, according to the best obtainable statistics, 1,283,416.

“In order to greater efficiency in turning to the Lord, both in our own country and in foreign lands, zealous brethren have organized voluntary missionary societies. In almost every State in our Union there is a State missionary society, for the evangelization of the States individually. Besides these, for more general evangelizing in our great country, and for the promotion of world-wide missions, three other missionary societies have been organized; namely, the American Home Missionary Society, whose field is the United States and Canada; the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, whose field embraces all foreign countries; and the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions, whose field has no geographical limits. The first is now maintaining 418 missionaries; the second has missionaries in Japan, China, Tibet, India, Africa, the Hawaiian and the Philippine Islands, Cuba, Denmark and Sweden. Its number of missionaries and native helpers is 564. The third has missionaries in many States of our Union, and in Mexico, Porto Rico, Jamaica and South America. The work of negro evangelization and education in this country is also in its hands. It employs 452 missionaries and other workers.”

Besides the co-operative organizations mentioned above, the Christian Church has a Board of Church Extension, Board of Ministerial Relief, and a National Benevolent Association, all of which in their peculiar spheres are doing noble work in the name of Christ and for his church. In the great Christian Endeavor move-

ment, the Christian Church has had no small part. According to the statistics of 1907, the number of our Senior societies was about five thousand, and of Intermediate and Junior societies a little over three thousand.

There are three great phases of the force and work of these Christian Churches at the present time, all three being a unit for the accomplishment of one purpose, viz.: the early and full restoration of the church of Christ on earth, the evangelization of the world by the gospel of redemption; these three phases are: Missionary or evangelical, educational and journalistic (with our distinctive literature).

Lack of space forbids our entering into detail concerning our great missionary and evangelistic work. Great as have been the achievements of the past, it seems that the church is just being aroused to the vast possibilities and exalted privileges before us. There has never been such glorious evangelism as now, each week bringing the glad news that thousands, from every point of the compass, have been added to the church. This heavenly passion for the salvation of souls extends to the uttermost parts of the earth, and our Home and Foreign Missionary Societies are destined to accomplish greater things for the Master within the next decade than they have done within all their past history.

Educational work has been a mighty factor in the Restoration movement. Quoting again from W. J. Wright's tract, "The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ," we note that among us "there are about fifty colleges and schools of high grade in the United States. These provide classical, scientific and professional training for persons of both sexes, and cover every phase of ministerial training, including foreign mission work, there are also academies, graded schools and industrial schools for negroes."

Our religious journals, and other distinctive literature in the many tracts and books published from time to time, have been, perhaps, the mightiest force among all the agencies operative in the Restoration. The printed page—truth in permanent form, over which the thoughtful may ponder—is, perhaps, more effective than the spoken word. We have been blessed with a great litera-

ture, to which, with each generation, rich treasures are being added. Besides the many books that are coming out from time to time, the regular periodicals issued by members of the church of Christ, or Christian Church, are as follows:

Christian Standard Cincinnati, O.
Christian-Evangelist St. Louis, Mo.
Christian Courier Dallas, Tex.
Christian Union Des Moines, Ia.
Pacific Christian San Francisco, Cal.
The Lookout Cincinnati, O.
Our Young Folks St. Louis, Mo.
Christian Leader and the Way Cincinnati, O.
West Virginia Christian Bethany, W. Va.
Christian Worker Pittsburg, Pa.
Colorado Christian Herald Denver, Col.
Tennessee Christian Nashville, Tenn.
The Gospel Plea Edwards, Miss.
Oklahoma Christian Edwards, Okla.
Carolina Evangel Washington, N. C.
The Kansas Messenger Topeka, Kan.
Christian Monthly Richmond, Va.
The Christian St. John, N. B.
Gospel Advocate Nashville, Tenn.
Missouri Christian Message Kansas City, Mo.
Bible Vennen Ossian, Ia.
Christian Messenger Owen Sound, Can.
Illinois Christian News Bloomington, Ill.
Texas Missions Dallas, Tex.
Business in Christianity Kansas City, Mo.
Missionary Intelligencer Cincinnati, O.
Missionary Tidings Indianapolis, Ind.

The American Home Missionary Cincinnati, O.

The Restoration movement has reached a day of broad visions, of mighty undertakings, of triumphant achievements, rising above factional party or prejudice, and overleaping the boundaries of locality or section.

Perhaps the most significant of modern movements among us, and destined to be the most permanent and far-reaching in its results, is the motto of "The Open Bible" with the great teacher-training work now in progress. This movement inaugurated and pushed forward by the CHRISTIAN STANDARD, under the masterful leadership of Herbert Moninger, is, without doubt, the greatest of modern times, and is destined to revolutionize the life and activities of the church in every department of its work. It is a careful and systematic study of the Bible in which multiplied thousands are engaged. The "Open Bible," with systematic study thereof, can but result in the evangelization of the world. We thank God for, and take courage from, all these things, steadfastly and confidently looking forward to the great and good day when all shall be one in the Lord.

We can not, however, justly estimate the growth and work of the Christian Church during the past century, by statistics and historical facts. We can not, until all things are completed, estimate the force and worth of the influences that have been set in motion, the seeds that have been sown, the leaven of truth that has been placed in the lump of the thought and life of the age.

The influence of the Christian Church has been felt, and the effects of her teaching seen, far beyond the immediate scope of her work. Practically, the whole thought and much of the procedure of denominational Christendom has been changed by the wholesome influence of the Christian Church. Time was when, among many of the denominations, for instance, the "mourner's bench" was used, and the penitent sinner "got religion" by "agonizing in prayer." This custom has practically passed, and most denominations take the apostolic confession, according to New Testament example. In many other ways the denominations are unconsciously getting nearer and nearer to the way of the early

church. Let us hope and pray that sometime, in the not far distant future, all things, upon the part of all of us, not in harmony with the will of Christ, shall be put aside, and all things whatsoever he has commanded us, we shall do. Then we shall have Christian unity, and the church, the bride of the Lamb, spotless and clean, we shall behold in her beauty.

THE END.