

NOT LEGISLATION BUT REVELATION

by A.S. Copley

THE CHURCH INSTITUTED

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter ("petros," a stone), and upon this Rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it" - Matthew 16:18.

The phrase "My Church," was a new thought to Peter, which he did not then understand. It is the first hint in the New Testament of what Paul afterward called "the Church," or "Body of Christ." Note, also, the following words of Jesus - "For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" - Matthew 18:20. Two is the sufficient number of competent witness; and it is the smallest possible number that can be called a church or an assembly. It is implied that such are gathered by the Holy Spirit; for He alone is the gathering power into the one only Name, Jesus.

What does it mean to be gathered into Jesus' Name? It means that the two or three or more are there as He. If INTO (Greek "eis," into; not "en," in) HIS NAME, then their own names are lost sight of. All other names are barred. The Father had recently revealed to Peter that His Name was "the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of the living God" - Matthew 16:16. Therefore, gathered into Jesus' Name means gathered as anointed ones (Christians - Acts 11:26) and sons of the living God. Glory to His excellent Name! When we receive Jesus as Saviour, by the new birth, we become sons of God. By receiving the Holy Spirit, we become anointed ones of God. Thus, we are anointed sons of one family - "the household of God" - of which Jesus is the eldest Son. Jesus purchased sonship for us by His death; and, also, the Headship over us for Himself. By redemption right, He is the Head of His Body the Church. Therefore, where the Holy Spirit assembles two or three or more into His Name, He is the essential figure. He is there "in the midst" as their Head, their Life, their Light, their Wisdom, their Strength, their Director, their Counselor. Not every so-called church is a part of Christ's Body, because not every religious company is assembled by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes they are saved, but meet in some other name than the Name of the Lord. If people gather in another name, what guarantee have they that Jesus is there? How can we be gathered in two names? Men may assemble themselves, or be assembled by some human leader; but, certainly, the Holy Spirit never assembles God's people together into the Name of the Lord and into the name of some denomination.

If the following invincible words of Jesus are true, what need have we of any other name than His alone? He announces the fact of His Sonship to be the "Rock" on which the Church should be erected. He is the "Rock." He Himself is the wise and sure Builder. "I will build," He exclaimed. Who can hinder Him? As if He knew that death and hell would be always yawning with heated hate to swallow down the Church, Jesus declared that "the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it." With such a bold challenge in our behalf, why should we falter or fear? Also, remember that Jesus said, "My Church" - "which He hath purchased with His own blood" - Acts 20:28. He does build it. He builds nothing else. He is interested in no other. He builds of "living stones," even as He had termed Simon Peter "a stone" - I Peter 2:5 Revised Version; John 1:42. Observe the oneness of Christ and His people expressed by our Lord's language "My Church," not churches. There is only one Church. The Greek word "ekklesia" is from "ekkaleo" - "to call forth, to call out to oneself." All whom God calls out of the world for His Son constitute one company only. There is "one Body" of Christ. Organization makes many bodies, because it sets bounds and thus causes divisions. How marvelous, that Jesus announced the smallest possible number that can be called "Church." It is impossible to organize two persons. How silly to attempt it. It requires a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and also a board of control, in order to form an organization. Then they add board after board, committee after committee. Introduce human machinery into God's things, and you necessitate more machinery to keep the machinery running. Oh, how many saints are crushed between the cogwheels or entangled and torn by the belts of religious machinery. When will they learn the Truth by the Word, and not be moved by self-appointed leaders?

EARLY CHURCH ORDER

In the beginning, the Church kept simple. It had a REVELATION of Christ as Head, and felt no need of LEGISLATION. There is not the slightest intimation of organization anywhere amidst the first disciples. Even local assemblies were not organized; much less were they gathered into sectarian groups to be ruled by human heads, district elders, or superintendents. They were

endued with divine power to witness for Christ, and "there were added unto them about three thousand souls" - Acts 2:41. To what were they added? To a sect? To the Catholics, or Methodists, or Pentecostals? Nay, never. Who added them? This is no small question. Let the record answer both these questions: "THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH daily those that were being saved" - Acts 2:47. Friend, does not the sweet simplicity of all that appeal to you? But the modern unbelief would exclaim, "We must organize, else how can we hold those three thousand?" Ah, that is the shame of it exactly. "WE" want to hold them. "WE" do not want the dear Lord to have the privilege and honor of holding them for Himself. How terrible would it be if He were not holding them, despite the interference of men.

That simple custom of the first days continued, as they "went every where preaching the Word" - Acts 8:4. In Acts 5:14 we read, "Believers were the more ADDED TO THE LORD, multitudes both of men and women." But, there is not a word, of being added to anything else. Note that to be added to the Church or to the Lord was the same thing, because Christ and His people are "one Body." Again, in Acts 11:24 we read, "And much people was ADDED UNTO THE LORD"; but not once to anything or anybody else. Everywhere we behold largeness and abundance, but with simplicity in unity. Why? Because there was only one Head, CHRIST; only one Book, THE WORD; only one power, THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Lord had such full control, that "of the rest durst no man join himself to them" - Acts 5:13. It should be so today. Brother Pastor, if you dare to give Jesus the Lordship of your meeting teaching your people of the richness and safety and power thereof and of the oneness of His Body with Him, you will not be troubled much with false joiners. The flesh retires, before the mighty Spirit and living Word of God. The Christ of apostolic days is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" - Hebrews 13:8. Over and over I hear the lamentation, "We have not the power; something is wrong; no one measures up." Possibly it is because first-day simplicity is not observed.

Follow the ministry of the apostles and evangelists with their Kingdom Message, scrutinize Paul's three Gospel tours of twenty years, and point out one digression from the above order of procedure if you can. Again and again we note that the people "believed," or they "received the Word of God," or they "turned unto the Lord." See, for example: Acts 8:12, 14, 37; 11:21. I challenge anyone to find a diversion from this way. The choosing of seven men, to serve tables that the poor might be fed, was no break in that order. God sovereignly swept two of them into the evangelistic field without asking even the apostles the privilege of so doing. See Acts six to eight. The appointment of elders is no ground for organization - Titus 1:5. One man, by the guidance of the Spirit, was to do that where he traveled. They were not voted in by a conference of preachers. Even the experience of Barnabas and Saul is no exception - Acts 13:1-4. They had heard the call of God to the ministry of the Word long before. Indeed, before Saul had an opportunity to be ordained by the apostles or by the Church in Jerusalem, "he preached Christ in the synagogues (in Damascus), that He is the Son of God" - Acts 9:20. Not the whole Church, but five prophets and teachers were worshiping God when Barnabas and Saul were set apart for the work. It was not "a business meeting." To them the Holy Spirit spoke, and note the sweet simplicity of the whole proceeding - "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul." Let Me have them "for the work (nothing said of an office here) whereunto I (the Spirit) have called them." "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." How very different from modern operations. Their work was indicated by the Spirit, they were called by the Spirit, separated by the Spirit, joined as workers by the Spirit, and sent out by the Spirit. Oh, that it were like that now!

Are we after the Truth for the Truth's sake and for Jesus' sake? Then bear with me, my Friend. I repeat it: There is not one example of an organized church in the New Testament. Neither the twelve apostles, nor the Apostle Paul and his co-workers, ever moved in sectarian channels. Paul said, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" - I Cor. 11:1 R.V. Should we not imitate him in Church order, as well as in other matters? The Greek word "organon," which means "instrument" and "tool" and from which our words "organism" and "organization" are derived, is not once used in the New Testament. Neither are these derivatives, "organism" and "organization," ever used. Are not these facts to be considered?

The Greek word "methodeia" comes the nearest to "organization." It is used twice, but in both cases with reference to Satan or designing men. "Methodeia" means "craft, artifice." Our words "method" and "system" are derived from it. It comes from the verb which means "to work by method, to deal craftily, to follow after, to inquire scientifically." In Eph. 4:14, "methodeia" is

translated "he in wait"; in Eph. 6:11, it is rendered "wiles." God does not act by method or cunning artifice. He is not scientific, nor systematic, nor methodical, according to man's thoughts. It is a sad fact that Christian workers seek to be guided by human reason rather than by God's Word. They prefer the counsels of men rather than "all the counsel of God" - Acts 20:27. Oh, how deplorable!

NEW TESTAMENT SYMBOLS

The Holy Spirit has set before us seven significant symbols of the Church of Christ. These are all plain and very wonderful. They cover every phase of Church life and activity. Here they are: the Body; the family of God; the flock of Christ; the building or temple of God; the one bread, or loaf; God's husbandry or farm; and a chaste virgin. Not one of these admits of organization; for to attempt it is to destroy their symbolic value and beauty and power. For example: Can you organize a family? Can a flock of sheep choose one of their number to super-intend all the rest? No. They need a shepherd who will herd and feed and protect them in the wildest open country surrounded with wolves. It would be insane to think of organizing a temple, or a loaf, or a farm, or a woman; yet all these common things symbolize the Church, the Body of Christ. What is the purpose of the imagery of these objects, if it is not to teach what they represent? If God meant something else, why did He not use other language? If He meant the Church to be organized, why did He not instruct us in plain words to do so? Why do we not once read of such offices as organizations require? God has spoken about other matters. He commands the sinner to repent and believe. He teaches the saints to be baptized and to observe the breaking of bread. He gives instructions about elders and bishops. Why is He silent about organization? Because to organize is to destroy the representative meaning and value of all the New Testament symbols of the Church.

NO REASON FOR ORGANIZING

If there is no Scripture precedent or proof for organization, then it must originate in the human mind. Exactly so. People form some sort of religious machinery, because they think it is necessary. The fact remains, that unbelief toward God is the cornerstone of organization, though very few saints know it. Perfect faith in God as Father, and in Jesus as Saviour and Head, and in the Holy Spirit as the safe and sufficient Guide, sees no need of man-made machinery; but gloriously demonstrates the simple way today. But untaught and carnal believers are always asking questions, or offering wise (?) suggestions. For example - Ministers get special railroad rates in an organization. Brother, how can you go against God's Word to save a little money? Is God poor? If ministers were absolutely shut up to the will of the Lord, and had no one to trust but Him alone, some of them would read the Bible and pray more and travel less as "clouds without water" - Jude 12. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help" - Isaiah 31:1. For many years the writer has proven that, when God wanted him in a certain place, the means was provided without borrowing or begging. One says, "We cannot solemnize marriages in some states, if we are not in an organization." Well, Friend, has God called you to solemnize marriages or to proclaim the Gospel? This argument is scarcely worth mentioning. Then it is asked, "How can we keep the people together?" I ask in answering, "Do you really keep them together by your legislation? Does no one ever leave your meetings?" Thank God that He has not sent us to hold people together in sects, but to give them the Truth that makes men free. He is the Gatherer and Keeper. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" - Psalm 127:1. If Jehovah led and kept two million of His people for forty years by the oversight of one man Moses, can He not "keep the feet of His saints" in every age? - I Samuel 2:9. One exclaims, "But you cannot keep out wrong doctrine." I ask you, "Is it not a fact that, though false teachers are dismissed or excommunicated by legislation, yet they creep in or arise in your midst again? Is it not also a fact, that legislation often excommunicates God's true messenger who comes with the most needful Message for that meeting?" Beloved, learn the Divine way of keeping the house clean. "Preach the Word"; the Spirit will do the cleansing - II Timothy 4:2. "Feed the flock of God"; the hungry will eat and grow thereby, and pampered appetites will soon hunt vitiated pastures - I Peter 5:2. Where Christ is Head and the Word is given in the tenderness and firmness of the Spirit, false prophets will have no permanent power.

MISSIONARY PROBLEM

How can missionaries reach the regions beyond, if they are not in some organization? This truly

is a serious question at the present time. Who but organized religious bodies are to blame for this condition? International relations are such that it appears impossible. Again, we fall back upon God's Word, for the solution of our problem. Let us not appeal to human reason, for God is not dead. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear" - Isaiah 59:1. Bear in mind that the Church of Christ is a spiritual Body. Its members are born supernaturally. They obtain supernatural physical healing. They receive supernatural wisdom and power through the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Unbelief and human logic are perpetually at work to eliminate the supernatural. They take from or add to the written counsel of Jehovah. The calamitous fact is that ministers do not know their Bible. Let us study how God provided for His people in olden times, and we will have the answer to our puzzling question.

What organization delivered Daniel from the lions, and his three friends from the furnace? How did Ezra get from Babylon to Jerusalem after the captivity? "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia" to give Ezra leave to go and to help him on his way. Read Ezra 1:1-4. When Nehemiah, a hundred years later, heard of the "great affliction and reproach" of his people in Jerusalem he yearned to go and relieve them. How did he do it, being the cupbearer of a heathen king? He "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of Heaven." Read the first two chapters of Nehemiah. Is not Proverbs 21:1 still true - "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will"? The continued existence of true missionaries in the regions beyond is a perpetual miracle. Cannot the miracle-working God take them thither by miraculous means, if need be? How did Philip reach Azotus? He had no credentials, not even from the apostolic federation of churches. He had no clerical permit. But he did have a permit and transit from Heaven. "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip ... Philip was found at Azotus." Indeed, how had he come to "the south" country? The Spirit told him to go. He started on his way. Then the Lord sent along a high class chariot which the evangelist mounted, and proclaimed the Word of God - Acts 8:26-40. Is not the God of Philip our God today? Truly, financial and material needs were trivial matters in the records of the first Christian workers. The will of God and the Word of God were the supreme concerns. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" - Acts 9:6. This was the great cry.

Interdenominational and international relations are becoming so intricate, because of the increasing power of anti-Christ, that true whole-hearted missionaries will find it difficult to reach the regions beyond even through recognized religious bodies. Better begin now to trust God absolutely, and not wait until compelled to do so. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" - Proverbs 3:5.

Unequal distribution of funds is given as an argument in favor of organization. What Scripture warrants a few men to control the disbursement of my money, or my brother's money, or the substance of the whole Church? Who ever attempted to put limitations on the offerings that the first Gospel heralds were to receive? Suppose that rule be applied to those who made it? Certainly some religious operations would come to an end. On its very face, that scheme is unfair and unjust. What if God means to bless one field more than another? He asks, "Can I not do as I will with My own?" If God calls a man or woman to the field, certainly He ought to be allowed to have His way with him; and that missionary ought to be allowed to do God's will. If foreign missionaries need guardians, what business has any organized company to send them and support them there? What a reflection on Divine leadership and on the wisdom of other saints. Organization demands existence on the ground of being against "one-man rule," as they call it. Again we revert to God's Word, and request the honest inquirer to consider Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the kings and the prophets under the Old Covenant. They all moved independently of men, but they were dependent upon Jehovah. Then study New Covenant accounts. Who, but Peter, was the chief man in evidence during Pentecostal days? Who, but Paul, was "the chief speaker" in the first days of the Church? Paul wrote, "The Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter" - Galatians 2:7. But neither of them used ironclad authority over the other apostles, or evangelists, or saints. Most certainly each pastor had rule over his own parish, and each evangelist had control of his God-appointed appointment. No man was amenable to the others. Every fellow was answerable to God. There was fellowship in the Truth and in the Spirit. The cooperation of workers with workers was not by legislation, but by revelation. Nobody was boss; hence, nobody was bossed. There was variety in unity. There was harmony in liberty. There was unlimited power

in one- accordness. Each learned God's will for himself and allowed his fellow to do the same, and permitted the Lord to lead them all.

OBJECTIONS TO LEGISLATION

First of all, organization is entirely unscriptural as we saw before. That alone ought to settle our attitude thereto. Brother, if you know by the Word that legislation is wrong, how can you endorse it? "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" - James 4:17.

Second, organization inflicts limitations. It informs you where to go and where you cannot go. It hinders the Holy Spirit from placing people in God's geographical will, and assumes authority to remove those whom God has placed. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the only rightful "stationing committee." That a few men should have jurisdiction over all the rest is simply preposterous. Only those who are weak in faith will submit to it. No one can trust and obey God absolutely in an organization.

Third, organization circumscribes the Truth. It dictates what shall be taught, and what shall not be taught. God holds each teacher responsible for His doctrine; and no other man, or company of men, can have Scriptural jurisdiction over him. A prophet may be moved to give a message of warning or instruction to a brother minister, and through him to his meeting; but no one has authority over him. "Unto the angel of the church ... write," was the Spirit's Voice to John concerning each of the seven letters which he wrote - Revelation two and three. Excluding some of the Truth is the history of all organized companies. Invariably, they fail to continue with what they themselves first termed the Truth. They draw back, become formal and heady, and end in apostasy. To them the cry comes, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" - Revelation 2:5.

Fourth, organization destroys the oneness of Christ, breaks the fellowship of saints, and turns the cold shoulder to all who do not come under its sectarian dominion. It puts a fear, a spell, on people. It binds, not with the serfdom of love but of sectarianism. Paul asked, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" - Acts 19:2. Now people ask, "Are you in the ... ? What church do you belong to?" If you are not a joiner somewhere, you are nobody. Paul and Peter would certainly feel lonely if they were here today. But they surely could not be induced to be circumscribed by any sect. Indeed, which one should they join? For the same reason we ask, "Which one shall we join?" It is exceedingly wise to be a stay-outer of all sects. When the writer surrendered his last credentials, it seemed that a demon power was broken. He was conscious of an unwordable freedom in Christ, and of a boundless field of usefulness in cooperation with Him. Beloved, if you are under the ban of any organization, you will never know the joy of freedom until you throw off the yoke.

Fifth, organization disqualifies for the highest reward. The 144,000 will be wholly of Israel - Rev. 7:1-8. They cannot be "defiled with women; for they are virgins" - Rev. 14:4. Who are the "women," but religious organizations, even as the Catholic Church is termed a "woman"? - Rev. 17:3, 6, 18. She is called "that woman Jezebel," in Rev. 2:20. If the 144,000 must be disentangled from human machinery, how much more must the Bride group be free? A bride can have no other head, and lean upon no other arm, than her beloved. "The Lamb's Wife" is one in faith and spirit and truth. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" - Rev. 3:13. Not all who are free from legislation will be in the Bride; but, certainly, none who are bound by legislation will be in the Bride. To admit any lordship other than that of Christ is to forfeit the highest place in glory.

Finally, mark the striking words of our beloved Brother Paul; for only, by heeding all his example, can we observe these closing words - "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ (what a Name, what a leverage!), that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" - I Cor. 1:9, 10.

SCRIPTURAL UNITY

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called (the upward calling - Phil. 3:14), with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord,

one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" - Ephesians 4:1-6.

Several perplexing questions confront the mass of believers, namely: "If we are not organized, what shall we do? How can we keep together? How can we go forward with the Lord's work?" These questions are all answered by finding out who we really are, what our relation to Christ is, and why we are here. We who believe on Jesus Christ are the Church (ekklesia, Greek), or the called-out ones. We constitute Christ's Body - Eph. 1:22, 23. "So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another" - Romans 12:5. Also, I Cor. 10:17 and 12:27 - "For we being many are one bread, and one Body: for we are all partakers of that one Bread" (Christ - John 6). "Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular." Observe that the first of the seven "ones" of Ephesians four is "one Body"; that is, all believers on Jesus everywhere are counted as "one Body" of believers. Study the following verses. "The Lord added those who were being saved daily to the Assembly (ekklesia)." "And more believers were added to the Lord." "And a large crowd was added to the Lord" - Acts 2:47; 5:14; 11:24. To what were they added? "To the Assembly. To the Lord." To be added to the Church or Assembly, was the same as being added to the Lord, because there was only one Assembly of which God had made Jesus "Lord and Anointed" - Acts 2:36. Who did the adding? "The Lord added." "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them" - Acts 5:13. So it is today. The Lord only, who is the Head of the Church, can do the adding. How were they added? By gladly receiving the Word - Acts 2:41. Some are teaching that no one is in the Church, or Body of Christ, until he is filled with the Spirit and speaks in tongues. If that be true, then there has been no Church since the first three hundred years of this age until of late. Then where were we, who have been consciously and joyously saved for years, before the latter rain fell? Such teaching cuts off from the Body of Christ, all believers who do not speak in tongues. Thus, the champions of the "unity movement" defeat their own purpose at the very outset. Our reception of the Spirit has nothing to do with our union with Christ, except to make us know it - John 14:20. But it has everything to do with our growth and usefulness as united to Him. Not one recorded instance of the anointing with the Holy Spirit even intimates that it has anything to do with our being a member of the Body of Christ.

GOD IS MY SOURCE

My Advocate

I sinned. And straightway, post-haste, Satan flew
Before the presence of the Most High God,
And made a railing accusation there.
He said, "This soul, this thing of clay and sod,
Has sinned. 'Tis true that he has named Thy name,
But I demand his death, for Thou has said,
"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Shall not
Thy sentence be fulfilled? Is justice dead?
Send now this wretched sinner to his doom.
What other thing can righteous ruler do?"
And thus he did accuse me day and night,
And every word he spoke, O God, was true!
Then quickly One rose up from God's right hand,
Before whose glory angels veiled their eyes.
He spoke, "Each jot and tittle of the law
Must be fulfilled: the guilty sinner dies!
But wait ... Suppose his guilt were all transferred
To ME and that I paid his penalty!
Behold My hands, My side, My feet! One day
I was made sin for him, and died that he
Might be presented faultless, at Thy throne!"
And Satan fled away. Full well he knew
That he could not prevail against such love,
For every word my dear Lord spoke was true!

-Martha Snell Nicholson

BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

"In one Spirit, we all were baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free, and all were given to drink into one Spirit" - I Cor. 12:13.

Ignorance of the meaning of the baptism in the Spirit is the root of the above mentioned error. Preachers and people continually call the personal anointing with the Spirit the baptism of the Spirit. Of course, confusion reigns in teaching. They fail to note that there is only "one baptism" - the sixth item of Paul's seven "ones" - Ephesians 4:5. We never read that anyone RECEIVED the baptism of the Spirit; neither ought we to say it. John the Baptist announced that Jesus would baptize the disciples in the Holy Spirit. After His resurrection, Jesus said, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" - Acts 1:5. Here, Jesus intimates the meaning of the Spirit baptism, as Paul explains it - I Corinthians 12:12, 13. As water is the element in the one case, so the Spirit is the element in the other case. As John was the baptizer in the one case, so the Lord was the Baptizer in the other. John's baptism was only figurative, symbolizing the cutting off of the whole old creation. It was a baptism "into His death" - Romans 6:3. The old creation, as one bad "whole lump" (Gal. 5:9), was cut off once in Christ's death (Col. 2:11, 12); but we can show it out by the individual act of water baptism. By the spiritual baptism, the Lord instituted the Church His Body. Therefore, Paul calls it "one baptism" and declares the saints to be "one Body," explaining that "in (not by) one Spirit (the Holy Spirit) were we all baptized into one Body" - I Corinthians 12:13 R.V. Observe the past tense, "were we all baptized," not "are baptized" as if people were being baptized continually. "We all" does not mean "the Church of God which is at Corinth" only; but "all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord," "whether we be Jews or Greeks" - I Cor. 1:2; 12:13. "All" includes the one hundred and twenty at Pentecost and the house of Cornelius (Acts 11:15, 16) and all believers throughout this age. Let the reader bear in mind that twice only is the baptism in the Spirit mentioned as to its fulfillment. The first citation (Acts 1:5) refers to the descent of the Spirit in the upper room, and the second (Acts 11:15, 16) refers to the house of Cornelius. These two events though ten years apart are called the "one baptism," because then the Spirit made His advent upon Jews and Gentiles. There, Jesus began to build His Church, which He has been building ever since. It is never said of an individual in the Scriptures, that he was baptized in the Spirit or that he received his baptism. As to personal experience, Paul was "filled with the Holy Ghost" - not baptized. He received the Spirit, but not his baptism.

The first reference to the Church in the Acts implies its existence already - Acts 2:47. When did it come into being, if not on the day of Pentecost? All the references to it thereafter, in the Acts and the Epistles, show the same fact. By believing on Jesus, sinners become saints; they pass out of death into life, and they become children of God. Will you tell me that by faith sinners step out of the world into an unnamed something, and then by what you call the baptism of the Spirit they step out of an unnamed something into the Church - the Body of Christ? How much simpler and how much easier to believe, even as the Word teaches, that they "have put off the old man with his deeds (by faith in Jesus, of course); and have put on the new man" - Col. 3:9, 10. They step out of the old Adam into the new Adam. Then they "RECEIVE the Gift of the Holy Ghost," become "FILLED with the Spirit," "ANOINTED" with the Spirit, "SEALED with that Holy Spirit of promise" - New Testament expressions of personal experience as to the Spirit - Acts 2:38; Eph. 5:18; II Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13. Oh, the sad lack of "sound doctrine," "good doctrine," which Paul emphasized. How few give heed to "the form of sound words." How few "endure sound doctrine." Another positive proof, of the difference between the baptism in the Spirit and receiving the Spirit, is the two distinct statements in our explanatory text - "were we all baptized," and "we all were given to drink" - I Cor. 12:13. If these two are one and the same thing, why are both mentioned? God never is guilty of tautology. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon "the whole house of Israel." But did they all drink that day? Nay, only one hundred and twenty really drank and were experimentally filled with the Spirit. The Lord appeared to five hundred other brethren before His ascension - I Cor. 15:6. Where were they when the Spirit came? They were given the privilege of drinking, if they had been with the one hundred and twenty in the upper room. We have no doubt that they did drink later.

Three plain facts remain: First, the Church as one grand whole was once for all constituted such,

by one sovereign act of God - all believers in this age by "one baptism," the Lord being the Baptizer, were baptized in the Spirit into "one Body." Hence, all believers on Jesus are one in Christ, whether they believe it or not and whether they act like it or not; just as truly as they all died with Christ and were all raised with Him. Second, all believers in this age have the privilege of receiving the Holy Spirit. He was poured out "upon all flesh" - Acts 2:17. The third fact confronts us, that not all appreciate their privilege. Some do not drink, on the false assumption that they received the Spirit when they received Christ. Others do not drink for other reasons. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." "For ye are all one in Christ Jesus" - Gal. 3:26, 28. Yet so few avail themselves of their rights and privileges in Him.

JESUS' PRAYER ANSWERED

"Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are ... That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us ... That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" - John 17:11-23.

The cry of many honest hearts today is that the above petition of Jesus might be answered. If they understood the Scriptures, they would be free from that burden, even as they would be free from many other burdens. How rejoiced I am to inform you, that the above intercession of our High Priest was answered by His own death on Calvary and by His "one baptism" of believers "into one Body." Let us consider the prayer. First, He prayed for those immediate Jewish disciples whom the Father had given Him - 17:11. Then He prayed for the Gentiles who should believe on Him through the word of those Jewish disciples - 17:20. Now exactly what is the petition? "That they all," Jews and Gentiles, "may be one." This is exactly what Brother Paul declares has taken place - "we all were baptized into ONE Body." Praise God! Note the pattern of this oneness - "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee ... even as we are one." The Father and the Son are two distinct Persons; but they are one in nature, spirit, and purpose. Likewise all believers, being born of God, are partakers of His Divine nature; hence, they are one in nature and spirit and purpose, as to their new creation life. "But now are they many members (many persons), yet but one Body" (I Cor. 12:20) - "one in us," the Father and the Son. How? "I in them, and Thou in Me," said Jesus.

Behold, in Ephesians two, how Jesus made this all possible through His own death. He reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God in His own body through the Cross - 2:16. Thus, He made both Jews and Gentiles one, as to Gospel privileges - 2:14; 3:6. For what great purpose? "To make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace" - 2:15. Through the "one baptism" at Pentecost, He actually constituted this "one new man" and began to build the "one Body." Jesus had declared this wonderful truth to the disciples: "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" - John 14:20. What day? The day of the Holy Spirit's Presence and operations in the Church. Then the prayer of Jesus was answered; and the one Body, made up of many members, began to be instructed. They learned that all who believe are one, as the Father and Son are one, not simply that they might be made one.

Therefore, the apostle does not exhort the saints to pray for unity or oneness, or endeavor to bring about unity; but he exhorts us to give "diligence to keep the unity" already made - Eph. 4:3 R.V. It is not an outward, visible, formal unity; but it is an inward, unseen, spiritual unity - even "the unity of the Spirit," as expressed by Paul's seven "ones," stated at the beginning of this article. When saints see that there has been "one Body" from the beginning of this age and that - all saved people constitute that one Body, and when they really want to do God's perfect will they begin to talk and act like it. They assume an unsectarian attitude. They treat all believers as members of the "one Body" of which they are members, though they may not be able to have perfect fellowship with them because of their religious views or their imperfect walk. They accept Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Head, and as Lord and Head of all other saints. They refuse to be lords over others, and refuse others the right to be lords over them. They endeavor, as much as lies in them, to "live peaceably with all men" - Romans 12:18. Where each individual maintains this stand in a meeting, there is an unsectarian assembly. There the Lord exercises His Headship, and that assembly is a representation of the entire Church of Christ.

OBJECTIONS TO THE UNITY MOVEMENT

The religious world has been invited into what its promoters term, "The Unity Movement." (This is not the philosophical cult called "Unity." Now the term used is "ecumenical," Ed.) Of course, this

scheme appeals to some saints, because divisions and strife are horrible to peace loving people. However, as a lover of peace and Scriptural unity, in defense of the Gospel the writer files the following objections against the movement lest perchance some honest hearts may be misled.

1. God has never called anyone to preach unity. He does call men and equip them to preach Christ as the Head of the Church which is His Body. They are to proclaim the Gospel, which saves men from sin and hell and places them in the fold of Christ and builds them up in Him. Thus, they endeavor or give diligence to guard "the unity"; not that which man has made by legislation, but that "of the Spirit" in the uniting "bond of the peace." Observe that peace is the uniting bond.

2. The Unity Movement insists on an outward oneness at the expense of Truth. The Lord everywhere emphasizes His Word; and, it is impossible to have fellowship with error, even though it is taught by a brother. That is why we are urged to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit." He knew that some would not keep it but break it, and go in paths of their own making. If Christ is proclaimed in all His fullness according to Paul's Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, divisions will vanish. The proclamation of Paul's doctrine will produce a fullgrown man in Christ Jesus, and nothing else will - Ephesians 4:15.

3. The organ of the Unity Movement fails to point out the root cause of divisions; namely, not maintaining Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church. It scarcely intimates the Headship of Christ; but makes a hobby of "organic unity," or unity of the Body by its own power. Brother Paul declares emphatically that divisions and contentions in the Church in Corinth were due to the fact of more heads than the One, Christ. He asks, "Is Christ divided?" - I Cor, 1:10-13. For a divided Christ means a divided Body. In his illustration of the oneness of Christ's Body, the apostle does not separate Him as the Head from it; but he says, "So also is the Christ." No matter how united a company of people are, if our Lord is not acknowledged actually and practically as their Head and Lord, they do not properly represent the Church; and soon the fact will be evident. In Col. 2:19, we read that all trouble and error are due to "not holding the Head" which is Christ. If the Lord is held as the Head, He will control the members of His Body; for He has already "set the members every one of them in the Body, as it hath pleased Him" - I Cor. 12:18. He will raise up shepherds to feed His sheep and guard them from wolves. What need then of a movement that promises "the coming forth of the true Church" which, they say, is to be the expositor of the Bible and the settler of all controverted points of doctrine? If that condition should obtain we would have another sect whose members would say, even as people do now, "My church does not believe that; my church believes this, and does so and so." The Head of the Church has condemned this very thing, saying to the Thyatira Church, "I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants" - Rev. 2:20. The Lord, the Head, is the Teacher who chooses those through whom He gives instruction - "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ" Ephesians 4:12.

4. We object to the vein of legality that runs throughout their so-called "Herald of the Church." What Scripture warrants distinctions as between "laity" and "clergy"? That is Romish. What is the spirit of such statements as, "We stand pledged never to meet to ourselves and apart from the rest of the brethren, except in meetings of the really united Church. We urge that all controversy on the field be stopped"? Does not that sound Popish? Paul exclaimed, "I am set for the defence of the Gospel" - Phil. 1:17. Jude exclaimed, "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" - Jude 3. What Scripture teaches that membership in the Church of Christ depends upon a life and ministry of fruitfulness? Who ever authorized any man to require of the Gospel ministers to make a tenfold application for letters of commendation to all the other preachers in the world? Of all the religious lumber-wagon business on the road, this certainly is the climax. Personally, the writer is heartily ashamed that the sacred office of Christ's servants should be humiliated by such a carnal and legal scheme. Thank God, some believers are not looking for the coming of the Church which Jesus promised to build, for it is here. But they are waiting for the coming of Jesus, and for the going away of the Church to meet Him in the air. They heed Jesus' words, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." They hasten to help and bless all God's people everywhere, of every grade of Christian experience, in view of furthering their preparation for the return of our Lord to catch us away; the meanwhile running to win the Prize, even Christ as their Bridegroom.

5. The Unity Organ exclaims, saying, "This is a UNITY Movement, not a come-out movement." We ask, how can we come into this legal movement called "unity," without coming out of something or without leaving "the liberty where- with Christ hath made us free"? Shall we stand fast in our liberty? Or shall we be "entangled again with the yoke of bondage"? - Gal. 5:1. Paul said, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him (who suffered without the gate for us) without the camp (whether Jewish, or any other legal camp), bearing (suffering) His reproach" - Hebrews 13:13. No camp for me, even though it be an ecumenical camp. I am perfectly satisfied with the one flock and one Shepherd. "Unto Him," we have gone, never to return; for He is the Gathering Center for all saints. He is our Lord. We worship Him. Oh, Beloved, may we beware of all teachings and schemes that divert the mind from Christ Himself to supposed blessings and experiences and things and movements. We are safe and happy, useful and hopeful, as we trust absolutely the God who says, "I will guide thee with Mine eye," and "afterward receive" thee to glory - Psalm 32:8; 73:24. One ancient saint said wisely, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts" - Psalm 119:63. To those who have gone out to Him, our Bridegroom exclaims, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new Name" - Revelation 3:11, 12.