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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

THE FIRST BAPTIST.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

The first Christian Church was the fruit of John the Baptist's labors; matured by the "Sun of Righteousness." Of this church Jesus Christ was a member. In His sovereign right and with the hearty consent of the members, He took charge of them. In Him they had for their pastor the Great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. In no other visible church was He ever known as a member. Of no other was He ever the Pastor. To this church He gave Apostles, Evangelists, and Teachers.

To this church He gave instructions as to church discipline.

To this church He administered the Lord's Supper. "On the same night on which He was betrayed He took bread, and when He had given thanks He broke it and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me.— And after the same manner He took the cup, when He had supped, saying:

"This cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

If they were a church of Christ, and as such received from him the ordinance with the above instructions as to how and why they should perpetuate it, then it is an ordinance that should be sacredly kept by all such churches. It belongs to them and to no other. If they were not a church of Christ the Supper was never given to one, and so is not a church ordinance.

This must be admitted. It cannot be shown that a different church was organized and approved by Christ, or that the Supper was afterwards or otherwise given by Christ.

Other but not different churches were afterwards gathered in different cities and villages. Important questions arose among them and were referred to the church at Jerusalem for advice. An Apostle found the church at Corinth perverting the Lord's Supper and rebuked them for it, exhorting them to keep it as given by the Lord on the night that He was betrayed. But not one of the Apostles ever intimated that the Supper was for other than the churches of Christ or that there was other authority for partaking of it than that given by the Saviour before He was crucified.

It was to this first church of baptized believers, then and afterwards in Jerusalem, that the Lord added daily such as were saved.

It was from this church that the twelve Apostles were chosen, and in the judgment of this church no one was competent to be an Apostle who had not been baptized by John and had a full course of instruction under the entire ministry both of John and of Jesus. Wherefore, after the death of Judas and the ascension of Jesus, Peter stood up in their midst and said, "Of these men who have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that Jesus was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection."

Joseph and Matthias were such men.— They had accompanied with the eleven all the time from the day that John baptized them until the day that Jesus was taken up.— This shows that the Apostles had been the disciples of John and of Jesus during their entire ministry, otherwise they could not have accompanied with them. They had a perfect understanding of all things from the very first. "They were eye-witnesses from the beginning."

It was from this first church of baptized believers at Jerusalem that the twelve apostles were sent forth by the Saviour as witnesses of His resurrection. They were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the word they preached and in the baptism they administered. They taught that every one who believed the gospel should at once show his faith in the resurrection of

Christ and be a witness to it in being buried and raised with Christ in baptism. The baptism they administered was "a figure of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

It was from this Baptist church that the twelve Apostles and the seventy-two disciples were sent forth to gather other churches and to ordain other ministers, and as they would not preach another faith or administer another baptism than their own, and would not organize churches unlike the one to which they belonged and from which their Lord had sent them forth, and would not ordain ministers to do either; the inference that the churches they gathered were like the first church and the ministers they ordained were like themselves, is unavoidable. They were what would now be known as Baptist churches and Baptist ministers.

And if the fact that Jesus spoke kindly to little children and took them in his arms and blessed them, justifies the common inference that JESUS LOVED LITTLE CHILDREN, how much more does the fact that Jesus always spoke highly of the first Baptist, that He walked more than fifty miles to be baptized by him, that He received with favor the people that he had baptized, that He committed to them the preaching of His Gospel, that he gave them His ordinances with authority to administer them, that He gave them the Holy Spirit and a promise of His perpetual presence, justify the inference that JESUS LOVED BAPTISTS.—*Macedonian.*

THE SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING.

The duty of cheerfulness, the obligation of thanksgiving, the majority of mankind do not comprehend and feel as they ought. People say, "How can I be cheerful and thankful when things go awry?" True, we cannot change our mood in an instant from sadness to gladness, but we can make it our duty to look at every bright and blessed thing in our life; we can trace the line of providence in the lives of our fellow-men, in the history of our country, in the progress of mankind. We can look for things great and good and beautiful as eagerly as we now search for things troublesome and evil and ugly. We can shake off our selfish whims and gloomy moodiness by doing something helpful to others. We are not the sport of a relentless fate, but our life is in the hands of a celestial Benevolence.— We can form a habit of thanksgiving which, like other good habits, will become a part of our better nature, and keep us always in the road of grateful obedience. The best things do not come to men in their sleep, and are only found by faithful searching. Animal spirits are often the gift of nature, but the spirit of thanksgiving comes by grace, and is the highest reward of a consecrated life.

There is a little dingy house that I pass every morning, which has quite won my affection by the cheerfulness of its inner looks. All along the street rise stately brown-stone fronts, resplendent in carving and plate-glass; but in the foggy, shivering morning air they repel by their grand and freezing aspect. But through the one little window of this place I see a miniature wilderness of flowering plants, with birds perched upon the hanging baskets, and always beyond, the merriest of blazing coal fires, lighting up the snug interior into a little heaven of radiant warmth amid the ocean of chilly mistiness. The little dull, homely house seems to say, "I have had a pretty hard time of it, and soon the masons will be after me, too, and I shall be a heap of rubbish; but while I do live, the world shall know that I have a warm and thankful heart, and send out my loving salutation to every man that walks the pavement." How often it happens that the spirit of thanksgiving chooses for its home some tried and troubled soul, vexed and set upon by all the contrary winds of life, and makes it glow with such a fervent gratitude that all men look to it as the pledge of human worth, and a new demonstration of the invincible immortality of man. It is not necessary that one should be very great or very prosperous or very famous to be greatly thankful, for the Almighty God himself will dwell in the lowliest heart, and no spot

on earth is too humble for an outlook through the heaven of heavens. All that is wanted is the will, the firm resolve to look persistently on the God side of life, and force the dreariest providence to bear the divinest fruit.

THE MARKET VALUE OF A SOUL.

"The real value of a soul is much greater than its market value." "Market value!" I hear some one say: "why, what do you mean?" I mean by market value the price that souls commonly sell for. "Sell for! why, human souls are not in the market to be bought and sold." Indeed, my brethren, I fear they are. The devil is bidding for souls all the while, and the market value of each soul may be said to be that which its owner is willing to let it go for. Every time that a man, under the influence of some temptation, deliberately commits a grievous sin, does he not know that the consequence is the forfeiture of the soul's eternal liberty and happiness? What is that but trading with the devil who takes nothing but souls in payment.

"The devil is a pedlar, and goes about to sell his ill-gotten wares for souls. Ah! how many a clerk has sold himself to the devil for a few pieces of stolen silver from the drawer! How many a driver or car conductor for the privilege to embezzle a few half-dimes a day! How many a miserable girl, for a stolen dress, a pair of shoes or stockings, a bracelet, a ring, a breast-pin!

"The devil is a smuggler. How many a merchant has traded away his soul for a fraudulent return to the custom house, or the tax commissioner—sealing the horrible contract with an oath.

"The devil is a pawn-broker. That girl pawns away to him religion and her soul, for the sake of a marriage! ay! and pledges away beforehand the souls of the children that may be born to her.

"The devil is an attorney. When people buy and sell real estate, there is always a third party, the lawyer. The same rule holds in every sinful transaction. See that ragged, wretched man leaning on the counter at the grocery. Is it only a dime he gives for his drink? No! but he lays down on the counter his wife's heart, and his children's bread. And that other man that sells to him behind the bar! Is it only so much fiery drink he sells, to help his neighbour on to ruin? No! but, as he empties that decanter, he pours away his own hopes of heaven, his part in God, the water that baptized him, the share he has in the blood of Christ that died for him. There is a third party here, a hideous thing, curled up like a black ape on the counter. He acts as attorney between the parties. He claims his fees, and for payment takes a mortgage on the souls of both.

"Oh! if I had the power, I would compel that wicked fiend to come up here in his own shape, and make him point out the unfortunate creatures that he has bought, and confess what he paid for each. I can imagine his confession to be something like this: "I bought that miserly-looking man for a few promissory notes and some tenement houses. That other one near him cost me a corporation contract. Some of my bargains were cheaper. I bought two or three of them, soul and all, for the right to vote upon a false oath. That young girl with paint on her face, for a night's dance and a beau. That other one for a new cape; and that old woman sold out for some blankets and a few bars of stolen soap.— That little politician gave me his soul for an office; and do you see that man that looks as if the wages of all the laborers of the parish had gone into his one body—he and I trade in souls; I bought his for a corner grocery, and he brings me in a whole army of drunkards," and then when the wicked spirit had ended his confession, I would call for an angel's trumpet, that I might shout over the heads of the whole congregation, with a voice like that which will one day startle the dead in their coffins, those words of Jesus Christ: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

A WORKING CHURCH.

The London *Independent* gives the following account of the operations of the Church meeting at Hare Court Chapel, Canonbury:—

The annual meeting of the church and congregation was recently held. Dr. Raleigh presided, and reports were presented by the secretaries of the various societies, giving information respecting the operations of the past year. After devotional services and a short address from Dr. Raleigh, Mr. Maclean, the church secretary, read a statement, from which it appeared that the present number of members was 929, of whom 646 belonged to the parent church and 283 to the branch churches. The additions to the church during the year had been 179, the transfers, removals, and deaths, 83, leaving a net increase of 89 members.

Dr. Raleigh then called upon the secretaries of the various societies to present their reports. Upwards of twenty were read, each relating to some branch of Christian work in which the Church was engaged. As it is impossible to give here anything like a detailed statement of these reports, we present a few particulars which will give our readers an idea of the operations that have been carried on. Independently of the income arising from the pew rents, which it is understood, amount to over 1,000*l.* a year, there was raised during the year upwards of 4,300*l.* for religious and benevolent objects. Of this 464*l.* was devoted to foreign work, and the remainder (3,800*l.*) to home missionary efforts.— The London Missionary Society and operations connected with it absorbed 317*l.* of the 464*l.*; the remainder was divided between the Colonial Missionary Society, the Evangelical Continental Society, and the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, in varying proportions. The following particulars taken from the report of Mr. Sinclair will show for what purposes the greater part of the 3,800*l.* devoted to home operations was applied:—During the year five branch churches have been sustained, three rooms have been regularly occupied for religious services for the young and several others for weekly Bible readings with the poor, which have been well attended. Three day-schools, and five Sunday or ragged schools (independent of the classes at Hare-court Chapel), two large week-evening schools, and several smaller ones, have been in healthy operation. These schools are attended by upwards of 2,000 scholars. Four penny banks, with 1,465 depositors, whose deposits amounted to 611*l.*, have been carried on, and a fifth has just been started. Seven mothers' meetings, superintended by ladies in connection with the church, headed by Mrs. Raleigh, are in full operation.— These have 559 members enrolled, and about 430 garments per month for the mothers and their families were for the most part made at the meetings. These meetings are independent of the Dorcas and Maternal Societies connected with the church, and which have for their object providing garments for the destitute poor. In the Elder-walk district a nursery had been opened for children and infants whose mothers are obliged to leave them during the day. Several coal clubs have been carried on, by means of which upwards of one hundred tons of the best coals were delivered to the poor at their own homes. In addition to all this, funds had been contributed sufficient to maintain and educate the thirty boys in "Quiet Resting-place" at the Little Boys Home at Farningham; and by the generous help of the Children's Dinner Society, and by means of a gift of eleven hundredweight of rice from Messrs. Horniman and Company, and of two sacks of peas from Mr. C. F. Shaw, 7,124 dinners had been given to poor children during the winter months. A number of ladies made an appeal to the congregation at Christmas, the result of which was a contribution of upwards of 80*l.* towards providing Christmas dinners for the poor. Other gifts came in, and more than 400 families, comprising, as near as could be ascertained, about 2,500 individuals, had