

A few earnest Questions by a Pastor to his Flock.

1. Do you always attend church and prayer meeting when you can do so?
2. When you fail to do so when you could have attended, do you not feel that you have failed to do your duty and have done yourself and others a wrong?
3. Who do you suppose received your part of the sermon, prepared perhaps with much study, prayer and anxiety probably for you?
4. Who will dare attempt to tell the amount of discouragement the pastor is caused to suffer by your absence?
5. Do you support your pastor according to your ability with your prayers and sympathy with his work of saving souls and edifying the church?
6. Do you ever think seriously and prayerfully that your pastor has loved ones, who love him and desire his company and counsels, and are dependent on him for support? If so and you love the Master, will you not contribute liberally to his financial support?
7. Do you read a good religious newspaper? If not, subscribe for one at once; you need it.

Temperance.

"My Mother in Jail."

"Did you put my mother in jail?" asked a little tot of a girl, while she pushed her sun-bonnet back and looked from one officer to another, as he stood in the Philadelphia Central Police station. She was but a child so young that she could hardly speak plainly, and so small that a policeman had to help her up the steps at the station house.

"Did you put my mother in jail?" The officers stared at the little waif; they had arrested a tangled haired woman who spoke four languages in her rage, and fought the officer like a fury, and they did not dream that this was her child, but it was.

The little thing seemed so innocent and pure they did not want her to see her mother caged like a wild beast behind iron bars; but the mother heard her voice and called for her, and so they swung open the corridor door, and let the little creature in. She went to the cell door, looked in, and cried out:

"Why mother are you in jail?" The mother sunk back against the door and the child dropped on her knees upon the stone floor, clung to the iron door and prayed.

"Now I lay me down to sleep, and I hope my mother will be let out of jail." The strong men had a strange, mournful look about their eyes as they gently led the little thing away, and when the case came into court His Honour whispered to the woman to go home, and for her child's sake behave as a mother should. Perhaps she will do so, unless she should meet with some one licensed to deal out, for the "public good," that which makes fathers act like brutes, and mothers forget the suckling child.

Perhaps she will prove a true mother, unless some honorable and respected citizen gets her crazy on a dram on which he makes a profit of six cents. Strange things are done in this world; but few are more strange than the wonders wrought by this devil's draught, which in an hour turns love to hate, calmness to frenzy, quiet to confusion, and a mother to a fiend.

A Modern Parable.

And it came to pass as a certain man journeyed from the cradle to the grave, he fell among saloon keepers, who robbed him of his money, ruined his good name, destroyed his reason, and then kicked him out worse than dead.

A moderate drinker came that way, when he saw him he said: "He is but a dog; they served him right; let him die; he is a curse to his family."

And also a licence signer came that way, and when he saw him he said: "The brute! put a ball and chain on his leg and work him on the street."

And a fanatic teetotaler came that way, and when he saw him he had compassion on him and raised him up, assisted him to his home and ministered to the wants of his family; got him to sign the pledge and started him on his journey in comfort and happiness.

Whom think you was the greater friend of humanity, the saloon-keeper, the moderate drinker, the licence signer or the fanatic teetotaler?

Sermon.

Reciprocal Care among Church Members.

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THE SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, AT BILLTOWN, NOVA SCOTIA, JUNE 27TH, 1881, AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THAT BODY.

"That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another," I Cor. xii. 25.

Subject—*The duty of reciprocal care on the part of Church Members.*

When the Apostle wrote this great epistle, "the church of God at Corinth" was spiritually, in some respects, in a very unsatisfactory condition. Though the power of the cross and grace of Christ had been wonderfully and gloriously demonstrated in the ministry of the Apostle by their acceptance of the gospel and their conversion to God; though many of them had also received from Christ marvellous endowments of spiritual gifts,—the gift of tongues, the power of healing diseases, and making miracles, the interpretation of tongues, the gift of prophecy and discerning of spirits, yet there arose among the members of the church "envy and strife," "pride and contention," also "schisms," or divisions of a very serious nature, one party saying, "I am of Paul;" another, "I am of Apollos;" another, "I am of Cephas;" and yet another, "I am of Christ."

There were also discussions and speculations among them on the great christian doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body, which resulted in greatly disturbing the faith of some, or destroying that of others, in that fundamental doctrine of Christianity. The church had, of course, lapsed into a carnal, or rather into a low spiritual condition, and had, therefore, instead of advancing in piety, receded.

And what was, perhaps, of still graver consequence, there were among them cases of serious moral delinquency, nay, enormous offences against christian morality; impurity and sensuality had beguiled some, one case of incest was notorious, and drunkenness also existed in some cases. There was working in the church a leaven of insincerity and impiety, which threatened its progress and influence, if not its very existence. Even the sacred memorial Supper of the Lord suffered abuse by the spirit and conduct in which some came to the communion.

And yet, notwithstanding the serious moral disorders and blemishes that existed and operated so injuriously among members, the church itself was not grieved or abased in consequence, and had not aroused itself to remove those wrongs, or to reclaim the offenders, but rather gloried and were puffed up one against another. Such, in brief, was the state of the Corinthian church at that time.

And the Apostle, this inspired teacher, this wise master builder in the church of God, sought to ameliorate the spiritual condition of the brethren at Corinth, to remove or rectify those serious misapprehensions of Divine Truth, do away with the wrongs and remedy the abuses mainly by presenting, working out, and enforcing one grand idea and fact—that of *Unity*—in, at least, three different, though intimately related, aspects: 1st. The unity of *Christianity*; 2nd. The unity of the *Church*; 3rd. The unity of the *Spirit*.

He shows them that the redemption announced by the gospel was not grounded on any compact or partnership between Christ and Paul, and Apollos, nor Cephas; that neither Paul, Apollos, nor Cephas was crucified for sinners, but Christ, the Incarnate Lord, was crucified for men; and that Jesus alone is before God accounted unto us "Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption." He reminds them that they had been baptized, not into the name of Paul, but into the name of *Christ*, on whom they believed, and whom they were bound to serve and follow.

The Apostle asserts strongly that Christ is not "divided," and that He is the Foundation, and the only Foundation of the Church, that great building and temple of God, through which the Divine glory is to be most sublimely and wonderfully made manifest to the universe.

Paul declares that when he introduced Christianity into Corinth he preached not himself or others, but "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," and assigns to himself and fellow-labourers a position infinitely inferior and subordinate to that of Christ; they were but mere instruments; it was from Jesus that life and power, grace and glory, came.—Christianity gives the crown and sceptre to Christ; God has exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to Him the Holy Spirit bears witness as the Lord of all.

The Apostle intimates that Christianity recognizes and teaches only one God and Father who should be served and glorified in all things; and one Spirit that communicates all spiritual gifts and endowments to believers, and works in all; and one Lord Jesus Christ under whom all administrations are carried on. And the service which the gospel requires of us is one in complete harmony with those great truths and facts.

But as the main purpose of this discourse is to bring out the great lesson of the text, only the second point named will be dwelt on particularly.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

is the great thought elucidated by the Apostle to enforce the duty of mutual, reciprocal care on the part of the church members. In doing this he draws a beautiful and instructive parallel between the living, human organism, and the church of Christ. The Apostle's argument is this: That as man's physical organism requires due attention and care to prepare it to discharge all its functions properly and efficiently, so the church of Christ requires to be spiritually cared for and tended with the greatest solicitude and regularity, in order that each and all its members may, by the faithful discharge of their duties, according to the measure of each, attain the development, purity, and growth which will directly contribute to the perfection, harmony, and glory of the whole church; that, as in the body, schism or division, part arrayed in hostility against part, or holding back from its duty, would result in inefficiency, damage, or grievous loss, so also in the church. It is, therefore, the duty of each member to so attend to his own duty as to promote the spiritual welfare of the other members, and the prosperity of the whole church; to act in harmony, to cooperate for the good of all, and to promote the glory of Christ in the world, according to the law of its spiritual nature, and the design of its Divine Founder.

It might be thought that as it is the pastor's duty to care and labour for the church of God, its peace, prosperity, progress, and perfection, that is sufficient; but if unaccompanied with the sympathy and cooperation of the members, his efforts will be thwarted, and prove totally insufficient to effect the work required.

This brotherly, mutual, reciprocal care is not superfluous and unnecessary; nay, it is indispensable to vigorous spiritual life and power in the church, to real union of effort, and to large success.

BUT WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

It is the grandest and noblest miracle of time, and the mightiest wonder of eternity; the most marvellous and magnificent product of Divine wisdom, love and power, operating most mysteriously and mightily in our Incarnate Lord, to redeem men from the depths of sin, depravity, and misery into which mankind had fallen, to gather them into one vast family, and place them in the closest and happiest relations with God, eternity, and the universe, which it is possible for creatures to sustain. The church stands in the most intimate and unique relation to Christ; and that which cannot be predicated of any other society or organization in the universe can be predicated of the church,—it is the *Body of Christ*,—that spiritual and glorious Body, of which He is the Lord and Saviour, and which He redeemed for Himself by the blood of the Cross.

The living, human organism is a Divinely chosen figure employed to symbolize the church as the Body of Christ, inspired and directed by His Spirit for the highest ends possible.

Originally fashioned by Divine Power out of the crude dust of the earth, and rendered insinect with life by the breath of the Almighty, and dominated and controlled by the intelligent spirit which God imparted to it, man's body came forth from his hands the most beautiful

and attractive form that moves on earth, or that will shine in heaven forever with unfading splendour and glory. But the body was organized for work, and every member has an assigned part to fulfil. The eye, the ear, the hands, and the feet, nay, even the stomach, and the tiniest nerve or vesicle, as well as the ever pulsating heart, which sends the life current through the whole system, and the ever active lungs, which draw in and extract nutriment from the atmosphere, must perform its office in order that the physical system may be in a position to accomplish the purposes of its organization,—work, development, and enjoyment, as the servant and companion of man's spirit. And as diversity of members, gifts, strength and endowments do not necessarily militate against unity of purpose and action, and the welfare of the body, but can be so used as to contribute effectually to carrying out that purpose and action, and securing that welfare; so in reference to the church of Christ, while there is diversity, very great diversity as to members, their gifts and endowments, knowledge and strength, &c., yet real, substantial, living unity may, *should* exist, all becoming assimilated into one body, and acting together increasingly by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them. The church is also organized for work, to serve Christ Jesus, show forth his doctrines and promote his glory, in short, to act as his representative and witness in the world, and to enjoy His approval and have fellowship with Him.

On the church the Lord Jesus has concentrated his love, in the church the Holy Spirit is to dwell and operate, and in the perfected church divine grace is to attain its most glorious culmination, and God be glorified in the highest degree forever. That multiplicity and diversity as to members, with their various endowments, gifts, and attainments, conflicts not with the unity of Christ's church is evident from what the Apostle says in this chapter, where, though he recognizes that diversity in the fullest degree, he yet insists on the Unity of the Church:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. . . . But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. . . . But now are they many members, yet but one body."

Elsewhere in the New Testament similar representations occur. Thus the Apostle Paul, in referring to the design of the Lord Jesus in calling men to be "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers," declares it to be

"The perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." "And gave Him (Christ) to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." "For as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

And among the seven grand and most glorious Unities of Christianity which the Apostle enumerates, he places the *Unity of the Church*: "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."

Now, as in the physical, human organism there is *interdependence* between the different members, they being mutually dependent on one another, and that to set in disregard of this fact or in opposition to it, would cause *schism* in the body, and consequent injury, weakness, or loss; so, likewise, it is necessary to recognize the *mutual dependence* that exists among the members of Christ's church, and the obligation it involves that all should act with a due regard to that relation, and the unity

and welfare of the whole body. Thus the text teaches us so to cooperate "That there be no schism in the body; but that the members have the same care one for another."

WAYS OF SHOWING THIS CARE.

Some of the more prominent of these will now be pointed out.

1. *By mutual instruction in the things of God's kingdom.* The doctrines of Christianity are so deep, comprehensive, and all embracing, so precious and divine; and the facts of christian experience are so various, suggestive, and sacred, that christians may at any period of their connection with the church militant, receive valuable instruction by communing with one another on such hallowed and soul-inspiring themes as the gospel and christian experience, in its various phases, unfold to humble and earnest souls. And all should be willing, nay, glad to impart and receive in this way, as opportunity and ability permit. But especially should young converts, and the more inexperienced, inactive, or, it may be, careless, members, be carefully, tenderly, and wisely looked after, to remind them of Divine realities by setting before them, in the right spirit, the verities of the gospel both in regard to doctrine and duty, privilege and promise. Edification, not only of one's self, which is a prime christian duty, but edification of others also, would, by the blessing of God, certainly result from these brotherly, humble, christian efforts. And how important to all, and incumbent upon all, efforts in this direction are, the Scriptures abundantly show.

"We," says the Apostle to the Gentiles, "who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour to edification." "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers."

2. *By commendatory words and kind acts.* These tend much to stimulate and encourage brethren to spiritual activity and self-sacrifice, and to sustain and comfort them under the burdens and trials of the christian warfare. Some good people are so afraid of inflaming the pride of christians and ministers that they carefully withhold words of commendation even when well deserved, lest the brethren commended should yield to self-complacency and self-adulation. But members thus parsimonious in this matter forget that such words do sometimes, at least, prove *humbling*, as well as stimulating and cheering. And Scripture does not warrant such withholding. Our Lord commended the faith of the Syro-Phoenician woman; and the benevolence of her who cast the "two mites," "all her living," into the treasury of God, he commended in the most emphatic manner. And, though compelled to censure in several respects the Corinthian brethren, yet the Apostle failed not to commend them in other respects; "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." And our glorified Lord, when addressing words of censure, reproof and counsel from his throne to the seven churches of Asia, condescended, in his wisdom and love, to express high commendation of the things which He approved. Anxious care for the spiritual welfare of the church and of each other will lead to a proper and wise use of commendation; accompanied, when necessary, with faithful and kind rebuke.

3. *By guarding against declension and defection on the part of brethren who, from inexperience, peculiar temptations, or untoward circumstances, may be especially liable to be enticed away from Christ, and the path of duty.* See how the kind and thoughtful mother, discovering her son's proclivities to evil, and the moral dangers towards which he is heedlessly rapidly going, plans and contrives to keep him away from the places where temptation is ready to entrap him, and from the companionship which corrupts. She seeks to have him employed at home or elsewhere in some honorable and useful occupation, or will try by innocent amusement to save him from the clutches of the destroyer that is plotting either by the fell enchantments of the cup of intemperance, the system