

## March 8

*God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. 1 Corinthians 12:18*

NO member of the body of Christ can say that he has no need for another member,

(1 Cor 12:21) "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."

F309-311 "It is in the nature of things that each human being must seek some companionship; and experience attests the truthfulness of the proverb, that "Birds of a feather flock together." If, therefore, the fellowship of the spiritually minded is not appreciated, longed for and sought after, if we do not improve opportunities to enjoy it, we may be sure these are unhealthy indications as respects our spiritual condition...

It may be that he is diseased with a kind of spiritual pride and self-sufficiency, which leads him to say to himself, I need not go to the common school of Christ, to be taught with his other followers; I will take private lessons from the Lord at home, and he will teach me separately, and deeper and more spiritual lessons... Such brethren should remember that they have not one solitary promise of the Lord of a blessing so long as they are in this attitude of heart and conduct. On the contrary, "the Lord resisteth the proud and showeth his favors to the humble." The Lord blesses those who hear and obey his instructions, saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." To those who are in a right attitude of heart it is quite sufficient that the Lord has enjoined that we come together in his name; and that he has promised special blessings to so few as even two or three obeying him, and that the Church is representatively his body, and is to be prospered by "that which every joint supplieth," and to edify itself and to "build one another up," as members in all the graces and fruits of the Spirit. Sometimes the difficulty is not purely a spiritual egotism, but partially a neglect of the Word of God and a leaning to human understanding, supposing that the promise, "they shall be all taught of God," implies an individual teaching, separate the one from the other. The customs of the apostles and their teachings, and the experience of the Lord's people, are all contrary to such a thought.

However, on the other hand, we are not to crave merely numbers and show and popularity, but are to remember that the Lord's promised blessing is to "two or three of you"; and, again, through the Apostle, the exhortation is to "the assembling of ourselves together." It is not a sectarian spirit that the Lord and the Apostle inculcate here, when they intimate that the assemblies are not to be worldly assemblies... The worldly are not to be urged to come to these meetings. They are not of *you*, even as "Ye are not of the world"; and if they were attracted, either by music or other features, the spirit of the injunction would be lost, for where worldliness would abound, and a desire to please and to attract the worldly, very speedily the proper object of the meeting would be lost sight of. That proper object is explained to be "the building up of yourselves in the most holy faith," "edifying one another," "inciting one another to love and to good works." Jude 20; 1Thess 5:11; Heb10:24"

and no member may say that there is nothing whatever that he can do in the service of the body. Under the guidance of our glorious Head each member who is filled with His Spirit, and desirous of serving Him, may do so. When the time for rewards shall

R850 "Ques.--DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: In these perilous times, when Satan is so busy with his deceptions, allurements and sophistry, and when human agencies are so often the disguised emissaries of the adversary, is it not the Christian's safest plan to discard all human exposition and take the Word of God alone, expecting the Lord to open up its truths to each of us personally, unaided and unhindered by each other? What think you? In this idea, can there be any of the adversary's art to beguile and mislead?"

Ans... The apostle counsels the church to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together, and so much the more, as we see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:25.) And again, "Build one another up on your most holy faith." The Lord foresaw these perilous times, and knew how much more than ever we should need each other's sympathy, encouragement and help. Surely, then, we must recognize in any opposite suggestion the attempted deception of the adversary.

He would have you believe you are strong and that you have no need of assistance from any other member of the body. But the Lord warns us again -- Shall the hand say to the foot or eye, I have no need of thee? Hath not God set the various members in the body? and if so, has he not given, especially to some members, eyes to discern the truth with special clearness; and has he not given to some members special ability to express it forcibly? and likewise various other gifts among various other members?...

All the members of the body are profitable to each other... It is not reasonable then to suppose that God will change his plans and vest in each of us, all the diversified gifts heretofore appointed to various members of the body, and thus make us independent of each other, and so divide the body. No, rather will he use a brother as an index finger to point out to you the will of God in this matter. And had you not looked among the various members for an index finger, possibly you might not have noticed the Master's teaching and the deception aimed at your overthrow."

(Eph 4:11-14 KJV) "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ... (14) That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"

R768 "He gave some apostles, and some prophets...and teachers... Every thought suggested and every exposition of Scripture advanced by these must be brought to the test of the Word; and the testing may be of great service, if the assemblings of the saints be largely devoted to this important work, not in the spirit which so often marks controversy, each more anxious to maintain and establish his own opinions than to discover truth, but in the spirit of meekness

have come, who knows how much of the usefulness of Paul and Apollos may be accredited to some of the humble ones, such as Aquila and Priscilla, who in various ways ministered to and encouraged and supported their abler brethren in the Lord's work.

which totally ignores such base considerations, in an all-absorbing desire to discover the Lord's will and plan."

R3332 "God will raise up some faithful pastors and teachers who will "watch for your souls as they that must give an account." True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the Word of the Lord and seeking by cunning sophistries to subvert your souls; but if in simplicity of heart God's children require a "Thus saith the Lord" for every element of their faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able to distinguish readily the true from the false. And having done so, the Apostle Paul (Heb. 13:17) counsels us to have confidence. The Lord, our Shepherd, will care for the true sheep."

F273-275 "Each congregation or *Ecclesia*--even if composed of only two or three--is to seek to recognize the will of the Head in respect to all of its affairs. It is to feel a oneness with all the dear *ecclesias* of "like precious faith" in the dear Redeemer's sacrifice and in the promises of God--everywhere. It is to be glad to hear of their welfare, and to recognize the fact that the Lord, as the overseer of his work, may today, as in every period, use some special instruments for the service of the *Church as a whole*, as well as use certain members of each little local company. Looking thus to the Lord and recognizing the character of the servants he would use--humble, zealous, well reported of, clear in the Truth, giving evidence of having the anointing and the unction of the Spirit--they would be prepared to *expect* such general ministries to the needs of the whole Church, and to *seek* a share in the general blessing and dispensation of the "meat in due season" promised us by the Master. He will specially remember, too, how he promised special blessings in the end of this age, and that he would provide things new as well as old to the household of faith through appropriate channels of his own choosing. Mat.24:45-47

The means, the channels of these blessings, the Lord himself will oversee and direct. All the members of the body united to the Head are to have confidence and to look for the fulfilment of his promises; but, nevertheless, are to "try the spirits"--to test the doctrines from whomsoever they emanate. The proving does not imply a lack of confidence in those recognized as divinely directed channels of the Truth; but it does imply a faithfulness to the Lord and to the Truth as superior to all human teachers and their utterances; it implies also that they are not listening for the voice of man, but for the voice of the Chief Shepherd;"

R3276 "God hath set in the body the various members as it hath pleased him." (1 Cor. 12:18)... With this thought in mind the choice of elders would not be conducted along lines of earthly preference or family kinship or selfish ambition, but instead the Lord's preference, the Lord's choice, would be sought. And, so far as the Lord's mind

would be discerned, none other than his choice would be recognized by any of his faithful ones."

*(Jam 3:1 ASV) "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment."*

R4503 "The besetments of teachers are, (1) pride, and (2) arrogance. (1) Encouraged by the laudatory words of the brethren, the tendency is for them to feel that they are somebodies, and to attribute the success of their efforts to natural ability, talent, etc., rather than to the wonderful power and beauty of the Truth."

*(1 Pet 4:11 KJV) "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified..."*

F258 "It is a responsible thing to undertake to any extent to be the mouthpiece of God--to make sure that not a word is uttered which would misrepresent the divine character and plan, and thus dishonor God as well as do injury to those who might hear."

#### LIKE OUR LORD, SPEAK ONLY WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN

*(John 8:28 KJV) "Then said Jesus... I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."*

*(Eph 4:16 KJV) "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

*(Jude 1:20 KJV) "...building up yourselves on your most holy faith..."*

R3006 "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." The eye serves the hand in some respects; the hand serves the eye in other respects; the foot serves both in still other respects, and both hand and eye serve the foot. The lesson here is that each of us should seek to find the position in which the Lord is pleased to have us and to use us, and finding this we are to exercise ourselves therein as best we

are able;--continuing, if the will of God be such, to abide in that condition and service forever, and thankful for the privilege of serving the body of Christ in any capacity."

R732 "The foot is an important member of great value in the service of the body. It aids the Eye and Hand and Ear in their service; it carries forward and in a measure "runs" the body. True the body could see and hear without the feet, and it could make progress slowly, but without feet the progress would be much retarded. Yet without the eye to guide, the feet would stumble and get the body entire into confusion and distress..."

The *foot* member of the body may not unreasonably represent some who have neither the Eye quality of *discerning* truth, nor the Hand quality of helping cleansing and feeding the church; but who can and DO, bear much of the weight and carry the body forward over obstacles. May not the foot then be the member possessed of money talent which uses it *thus*?

If the entire Body could but recognize its oneness and each use the gift or gifts possessed, remembering that the gifts bestowed are not *for itself*, but for the BODY, how great would be the strength and vigor and present power of the Body.

It is astonishing how many members desire to be EYES, and how few care to be FEET. Some will spend days and years to force eyesight: Determined that they must discover some new truth -- some "new light." Many succeed in forcing something, but is it not more likely to be human darkness than divine light obtained in such a manner? If you are an EYE member you will see what is *due* to be seen without forcing, though not without studious care. And what you see will be so clearly seen, as to enable other members of the BODY to test and prove your exposition as harmonious with all other parts of God's Word.

Besides do not those who attempt to exercise some other gift than the one they possess, usually neglect the gift they have and thus deprive the body of their assistance? Thus it was in Paul's day; he "labored," working with his hands, as well as in preaching and expounding the Scriptures. Because the other members were not exercising their gifts, Paul's love for the body and the truth, led him to attempt still greater *service* to make up for the deficiency of others. But who will say that some missed a grand opportunity for the exercise of the FOOT member's office or gift, when Paul *needed* to make tents to support himself.

R5501 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

### CHRISTIAN LIBERTY BASED ON PRINCIPLE

WE MUST never forget that our authorization to meet as brethren is the Master's Word: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.) As this is our charter-right for meeting as the Lord's people, we must concede an equal right under it to all of God's people who may choose to meet in His name at any place and at any time. We should remember the Bible illustration of this principle: On one occasion the twelve disciples had returned from a preaching tour, and St. John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke 9:49,50.) This one forbidden by John would correspond well with some now holding meetings other than those which we attend. What did Jesus say? "Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name that can lightly speak evil of Me."--Mark 9:38-40.

And who will say that the BODY was not injuriously affected to the extent that those members were derelict and unfaithful in the use of their talents? How many valuable suggestions and how many *expositions* of truth that church failed to get, because the member for that office was otherwise *necessarily* engaged, who can know? See Acts 18:3; 1 Thes. 2:8,9; and 1 Cor. 4:12...

The duty and privilege of every member of the body of Christ is, to soberly, and honestly judge of his *abilities*; neither in pride overrating them, nor in false humility underrating them; that he may diligently and faithfully use them, earnestly hoping for his own increased efficiency in the service; not from self-love and vain glory, but from love of the body and of the Head...

But let us take heed: these gifts are not inalienable. By neglect to use them, or by their abuse, they may be lost. If any member fails to use his gift, or using it, fails to use it to the Lord's glory and for the good of the body, but in pride attempts to use it for self-glory, his place can readily be filled by another, by him who places the members, exalting another to his place and taking from him that which he had failed to properly use. Matt. 25:14-30."

R5726 "Christ laid down His life for us, so we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren... I have found some very dear children of God who seemingly found it much easier to do something for the world than for the Church. That is not the proper sentiment..."

We are to bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, and *not* to please *ourselves*. How much that means! I trust we are learning this. I am merely pointing out what you all know, that the love of God is the fulfilling of the Divine requirement, and that this love is to manifest itself toward those whom He acknowledges as His children and receives into His family. If I see that any man has God's fellowship, I dare not deny my fellowship..."

It is the Father's will that we should cooperate with Him in assisting the brethren in every way possible. There are various trials and difficulties for these brethren that you and I know about. All the soldiers of the cross have a narrow way, a battle with the world and with the flesh and with the Adversary. You and I have battles due to the fallen condition of our own flesh. What sympathy it should give us with all other soldiers in the battle!"

Here is a general principle which will serve to guide, to instruct God's people of today respecting His will in similar matters. We, of course, think our arrangements most pleasing to the Lord, or we would not have them so. If others think differently, the responsibility is with them and with the Lord. It is not for us to forbid them, but it is for the Lord to bless them or not to bless them, according to His wisdom in the management of His work.

Some one may suggest, Would not this thought, acted upon, break up the meetings of the Lord's people into very small classes? We reply that this must depend upon the brethren themselves. They have the right to meet in twos and threes or in larger numbers. If they can find it to their advantage to meet in larger groups, no doubt they will be glad to do so. This means a great deal of liberty in the Church within the lines of the word and spirit of Jesus' teaching, directly and through His Apostles.

Brethren meeting as a class should understand that in so doing they properly waive, or make void, some of their personal liberties and privileges. Individual preferences are to be more or less subjected to class preferences. Even the majority of the class should be considerate of the wishes of the minority, and if possible, should moderate the arrangements, so that all can be accommodated and pleased in respect to speakers, and in respect to place and character of meetings. No one should selfishly consider merely his own preferences and welfare. The spirit of co-operation, the Golden Rule, the spirit of love, should prevail. And as this is true, all those filled with the Spirit of the Master and living close to Him will find fellowship one with another in yielding personal preferences in the interest of the whole number.

#### CONSCIENCE TO BE RESPECTED

The only things that may not be yielded to the will of the majority are matters of *conscience*. No one is to do what he believes to be sin, injustice, wrong, even though all the remainder of the brethren think it right. And no one is to leave undone what his conscience dictates, even though so directed by all the remainder of the brethren of the class.

Conscience is always to be respected--never to be throttled or violated. Nor is any one who stands faithful to his conscience to be disesteemed therefor by his brethren, even if their consciences view the matter differently. On the contrary, his courage in standing by his convictions is to be considered estimable.

On these principles liberty may be maintained in the Body of Christ; and we shall find blessing in proportion as those of one mind can fellowship with each other. Where fellowship is not maintained, the assembling is neither desirable nor in harmony with the Divine arrangement. But where the brethren find it advantageous to meet in different classes, it will usually be found, we believe, that originally too great restraint of personal liberty was exercised, and that the majority were too careless of the sentiments of the brethren constituting the minority.

But even where it may be found necessary or desirable to have more than one gathering of the Lord's people in one city, it certainly still is true that they should have one heart and one mind, and be of one brotherhood under the Anointed Head. They should consider each other's interests, and do all in their power "to provoke one another to love and to good works."-- Hebrews 10:24.

R3152 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## BAPTISM UNTO REPENTANCE NOT BAPTISM INTO CHRIST

--ACTS 18:23-19:7.--MARCH 1.--

*"If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?"--Luke 11:13.*

AFTER leaving Corinth the Apostle completed his second missionary tour, and returned to Antioch, stopping en route at Jerusalem, where he greeted the Church and, no doubt, gave them an account of the Lord's blessing upon his recent ministries in Europe. Aquila and Priscilla went with the Apostle as far as Ephesus, and the vessel on which he traveled remaining over the Sabbath at the port, he improved the opportunity to speak for Christ in the synagogue of Ephesus. His discourse was no doubt in the nature of a preparation for a future work which he hoped to do there. He doubtless spoke only along the lines of first principles--respecting the glorious prophecies of Messiah, and the fulfilment which should now be expected. His discourse was well received, and he was urged to remain longer, and gave his promise of a later return.

We are not informed how long the Apostle remained at Antioch, but "after he had spent some time there he departed and went over all the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, establishing all the disciples." While the Apostle was energetic in the establishment of new companies of the Lord's people, he was not slack in looking out for the spiritual welfare and growth of those which he had already established, as is evidenced by this statement--this being his third visit to these churches.

When the Apostle returned to Ephesus he found that in his absence a Christian brother named Apollos had come and had preached eloquently in the synagogue, using very close, logical and convincing arguments, and securing twelve converts to Christianity. He was a Jew, born at Alexandria, one of the chief cities of that time, specially noted for its schools of learning, and extensive libraries. The common version says that Apollos was "eloquent"; the revised version, that he was "learned", and the Greek word seems to be with equal propriety translatable either way: in all probability he was both learned and eloquent. However, he was not as thoroughly advanced in the knowledge of the Lord and of the truth as were Aquila and Priscilla who had for a time accompanied the Apostle; and as soon as they heard Apollos in the synagogue they recognized him as a Christian brother, and took him to their own home, where they had good opportunity for communicating to him "the way of the Lord more perfectly."

We have here a beautiful illustration of how the Lord is pleased to use his consecrated people. He had use for the talents and education of Apollos; he had use also for the less talented Aquila and Priscilla who, though not qualified to speak in public in the synagogue, were, nevertheless, used of the Lord to bless his more eloquent disciple, and thus to be sharers with him in the fruits of his more public ministry. The same is true today, as the Apostle explains. (1 Cor. 12:12-26.)<sup>[1]</sup> No member of the body of Christ can say that he has no need for another member, and no member may say that there is nothing whatever that he can do in the service of the body. Under the guidance of our glorious Head each member who is filled with his spirit, and desirous of serving him, may do so. When the time for rewards will come, who knows how much of the useful

ness of Paul and Apollos may be accredited to some of the humble ones such as Aquila and Priscilla, who in various ways ministered to and encouraged and supported their abler brethren in the Lord's work. The Apostle mentions very tenderly some of this class who collaborated with him, supporting his work by their influence and by their means. (Phil. 4:3.) Similar opportunities are still open, and<sup>[2]</sup> no child of the Lord should be content to let the days of the present harvest time go by with their golden opportunities for service and cooperation without seeking each day to lift the royal banner himself, and to publicly show forth the praises of him who hath called him out of darkness into light, or by assisting and cooperating with others whom the Lord in his providence has placed in more advantageous positions for public service.

Apollos, hearing from Aquila and Priscilla of the glorious work accomplished by the Apostle Paul at Corinth, went thither, taking with him a letter of introduction from his newly found friends at Ephesus, who had so recently left Corinth. Incidentally we are told that his going to Corinth proved a blessing to the Church there, because of his thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures and his ability in expounding them, so that he could "forcefully confute the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." That the Corinthian brethren were greatly pleased with the masterful ability of Apollos as a teacher of the truth is implied by the fact that some of them were disposed to say that they were followers of Apollos, while others, also sectarian in spirit, claimed to be followers of Paul, and others of Peter--all of which sectarianism the Apostle distinctly reproved subsequently in his epistle to them.-- 1 Cor. 3:3-7.

There is room for all the ability of all the brethren in the Church, and such a thing as rivalry or partisanship is entirely out of place. We have one Lord, one Head: we all are brethren, and our highest aim should be to honor our Head and serve the fellow-members; and each one who so endeavors should be highly esteemed, whether his talents are greater or smaller than those of others. Another lesson here is the importance of being well versed in the Scriptures. The sword of the spirit is the Word of God, and he who would serve the cause best must know how to use this weapon which the Lord himself has provided--forcefully, convincingly and yet lovingly. The Scriptures with which Apollos was familiar were the Old Testament writings, since the New Testament was not yet compiled, though doubtless a few of its books had already been written. Whether Apollos had seen these or not, he had from some quarter "been instructed in the way of the Lord," before meeting Aquila and Priscilla, and was now, through them, still more thoroughly furnished for his ministry of the truth. Let us each resolve that by the Lord's grace we will put on the entire Christian armor, supplied us by the Lord, not neglecting the sword of the spirit--the Word. Let us learn, too, to be ready to accept further instruction as from the Lord, however humble may be the channels through which he may send it to us. Humility is one of the graces highly

<sup>[1]</sup> Mar. 8 Manna, 1Cor. 12:8

<sup>[2]</sup> Mar. 9 Manna, Heb. 6:10

esteemed by the Lord, and one of the points upon which he frequently tests his followers: "Except ye become as little children [teachable, guileless], ye shall in nowise enter the Kingdom of heaven."

It was while Apollos was at Corinth that the Apostle Paul came to Ephesus, according to promise, and began a ministry there which lasted two years (19:10). Aquila and Priscilla had seemingly left Ephesus by this time, as they are not again mentioned; but the Apostle speedily found those whom Apollos' ministry had reached, twelve in number. (Vs. 7.) Our Common Version would seem to give the inference that the Apostle was surprised that these believers at Ephesus had not yet received gifts of the holy spirit. But not so; he merely wished to bring to their attention the fact that such gifts were possible to them, for only an apostle could convey the gifts of the holy spirit, as we have already seen. (Acts 8:14-17.) The preaching of Apollos was merely along the lines of first principles of the doctrine of Christ, represented in the baptism of John to the Jews, while these believers were, evidently, by nature Gentiles.

Apollos had explained the gospel merely to the extent of repentance from sin and faith in Christ as the Redeemer. He had no knowledge of the fuller meaning of baptism as explained by the Apostle (Rom. 6:3-5) --a baptism of consecration, to suffer with Christ --to be dead with him, to participate in his resurrection to the new nature and to be ultimate sharers with him in the heavenly Kingdom. The Apostle explained to them this "mystery" of fellowship with the Messiah-- participation in his sufferings, and by and by in his glory (Col. 1:26,27): and when they heard this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus--as members of his body, to fellowship in his sufferings, even unto death.

How many believers there are today who, like these described, are members of "the household of faith," but not members of "the body of Christ"-- who have gone so far as a baptism of repentance and reformation, and faith in the Redeemer, but who have not been instructed respecting the great privileges which belong to this dispensation--that we may become "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together!" Wherever we go, let us each seek by the grace of God to explain the way of the Lord more perfectly to these already partially indoctrinated ones. So long as there are a plenty of such to labor with, it would be unwise, yea, contrary to our covenant and commission, to specially devote our lives and energies to the world; for although we are to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, it is to be chiefly to the household of faith. All around us,

R2877 "FINALLY, BE ALL OF ONE MIND" *"Finally, be all of one mind [harmonious--in accord], having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."--1 Pet. 3:8,9...*

It is the harmonious union of the seven colors that constitutes the beauty of the rainbow. So also in music: one strikes a chord on the piano or the organ and the result is harmony, oneness, union--the variety of the notes gives a melody which could not be obtained from any one of them, or from a sameness of equal volume. This is the thought the Apostle's words give us in respect to God's people... The divine alchemy by which the human is transmuted into the spiritual, the old mind into the new mind, does not wholly destroy, and is not intended to destroy, the elements of character and disposition; but is intended to take from each one its dross and imperfection and discordancy, and thus to permit all eventually to unite in and develop into a harmonious whole...

The Lord does not expect, however, that this condition of complete harmony, will be attained by his people the instant of their consecration... He says, *"finally,"* not primarily, we are to be all of one mind--harmonious. It requires long years, generally, in the school of Christ, for his disciples to so grow in grace and in knowledge and in

in the churches of the various denominations, are, we believe, hundreds, yea, thousands, who are in the condition of these mentioned in the lesson, knowing only the *baptism of repentance*, knowing not the *baptism of Christ*--the baptism into his death, the baptism of full consecration. Let us be diligent in this highest department of the work of the ministry, feeding, instructing, the Lord's flock.

After instructing them thus respecting the true baptism, and after performing upon them its water symbol, the Apostle laid his hands on the believers and they received the holy spirit--that is to say, the "gifts of the spirit" were manifested in them--they spake with tongues, prophesied, etc., as described in 1 Corinthians 12. We have no power to communicate such gifts today, nor have others this power. It was an apostolic power, not transferable to others, as it was not the Lord's intention that those gifts should remain with the Church, but merely should be a witness in its infancy period;--until the New Testament writings should be within reach, and until the fruits of the spirit could be developed.

However, let none envy the primitive Church this special blessing, so necessary to its progress and joy; but remember that under the Lord's providence our conditions in some respects are still more favorable, in that we have the written Word for our admonition. Let us remember the testimony of the Apostle in our last lesson, too,--to the effect that faith, hope and love, *fruits* of the spirit, far excel the tongues and interpretations and miracles of the *gifts* of the spirit: so that, as he explained, if one had all these gifts, and lacked the one fruit of love, he would be "nothing";--it would profit him nothing as respects a share in the body of Christ, and in the glorious blessings, present and future, which belong to it.

Our Golden Text evidently refers, not to the miraculous gifts of the spirit enjoyed by the primitive Church, but to the holy spirit, or disposition, "the mind of Christ," the common privilege of all who are baptized into Christ's death, and who seek by faith to walk in newness of life. The miraculous gifts of the primitive Church could come only through apostolic hands; but the spirit, in the sense that we still enjoy it, the mind of Christ, the mind of God, with all the fruits and graces thereof, is still the privilege of the Lord's people, and dependent not upon apostolic or other hands, but upon our heavenly Father and upon the zeal with which we seek by prayer and every endeavor to have his mind, his disposition, controlling our thoughts, our words, our conduct. It is God's good pleasure to give us this spirit of love; but he gives it only to those who desire and seek it with patient perseverance.

love,--ere they reach the glorious condition expressed in our text, even "finally."

The Apostle Paul intimates that we are to continue so to grow in grace and in knowledge, and in love, as to attain in heart, in will, the stature of a perfect man in Christ. The "babe" in Christ has not the stature of a "man," and requires first the milk of the Word, and subsequently the "strong meat," that it may grow thereby, and finally attain to the ideal condition represented in our text,--a condition of harmony with the Lord and with each other...

It does require patient perseverance in well-doing to comply with the instructions--to fully attain to the transformed conditions even in our hearts--so that we *will* aright, however difficult it may be for us to always *do* right. And here arises a difficulty: many do not clearly see just what are the requirements, and hence go through life in a maze, in perplexity, in doubt, in fear, lacking the rest and peace and blessing which should come from a proper understanding and a consistent endeavor.

No doubt all have been struck with the fact that those who manifest the deepest interest in the divine plan are not always the most smooth and most agreeable people in the world: frequently they are so combative as to be continually distressing both themselves and their friends...

We want to suggest an explanation... Combativeness itself is not a bad quality. On the contrary, it is a good quality, -- a quality actually indispensable to the attain-

ment of the prize...

We are to remember that combativeness is not to be used toward the brethren... Instead of fighting against the brethren, we are to love them, and to fight for them, even as we are to fight for the Lord and for the truth. We are to remember, too, that our combativeness is not to be exercised against our friends, our neighbors... On the contrary, they need our sympathy, they need our help, they need our encouragement, they need whatever we can render them in the way of uplift...

#### FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH--1 TIM. 6:12...

The battle with self is the greatest battle... O, how much of energy and how much persistency in fighting the good fight of faith, and of loyalty to the Lord, is needful in the conquering of self--"bringing every thought [and so far as possible, every word and act] into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5)...

As we *finally*, in larger and larger measure, attain to harmony--to the subduing of our natural dispositions toward contention, gradually getting these combative tendencies into accord with the Lord... we will have compassion one of another... such a compassion, as would lead us to do everything within our power for their assistance...

How necessary, dear brethren, that we learn these lessons, if we would be prepared to be used in the glorious service of the Kingdom so shortly to be established."