

CHRISTIAN HERALD.

EDITORS:

D. T. STANLEY, BRUCE WOLVERTON,
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Authority in the Church.

Jesus the Christ as the Great Head of the church has lodged authority for the government of the "family on earth" in the hands of men. The plan of salvation, or the terms on which any man might be pardoned, were never told any man by the Lord directly and personally. This work of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, he also committed to the hands of men.

In the Gospel economy man is an important factor in the saving of other men. When about to leave the earth, Jesus told his disciples "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on the earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The authority received from his father, he gave to his disciples, and, putting them under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit, sent them to save the world.

Acting under the divine commission and by the spirit's guidance, they not only preached the Gospel as God's power in order to salvation, but established churches of those who "became obedient to the faith," and set in order the things that were wanting to perfectly furnish the churches for the work they were expected to do.

In setting in order the things that were wanting, they ordained elders in every city as bishops and deacons to take the oversight of the flocks over which they were appointed.

The necessity for these two offices—bishop and deacon—arises from the two fold nature of man—the physical and the moral and mental, and consequently two classes of wants—temporal and spiritual. While in the flesh the members of the body of Christ must be supplied in earthly affairs as other men; and in addition must have their spiritual needs cared for.

From this double necessity arose these two offices; the deacons to look after the temporal affairs of the church, and the bishops (frequently, though we think improperly called elders,) to "feed the flock

of God" with the heavenly food furnished in the Gospel. So, then, the earthly affairs of the church, as the building of houses, raising funds for any purpose, providing for the sick and needy, etc., devolve on the

deacons. The duties of this class are so numerous and so arduous that Paul very properly says that "they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The bishops are placed under a great weight of responsibility in taking the oversight of the house of God. Teaching and exhorting, urging forward in the path of duty or restraining from the way of sin, helping the strong and strengthening the weak, throw great opportunities in their way, as well as involving great responsibilities. Truly should the bishop who rules well be counted "worthy of double honor."

But the duties incumbent on these officers could not be performed unless they were clothed with authority to act in the various matters that fall to their lot. This authority has been given. The power that instituted churches for the home of Christians lodged the authority of the church in its officers, and every member should not only count those who rule well worthy of honor, but as commanding their submission in all things that come under their respective duties. To the deacons all must submit in the management of the temporal affairs, and to the bishops in the managements of the spiritual affairs of the church. He that purges to be under authority is self-willed and guilty of the sin of insubordination.

Order is the result of the observance of law. The greatest glory of the church is observed when every member of the body does its part meekly, but faithfully, and neglect not his duties to God and to each other.

The Desire for Christian Union.

In proportion to the increased interest manifested in home and foreign missions, is seen and felt a growing desire for unity of sentiment and action among Christians. As the difficulties of evangelizing are more and more known—the attention of missionaries is directed to their causes. As these causes are known, the church feels its dependence upon the strong arm of him who ever supports, and in

these extremities, divided Christendom is instinctively drawn nearer and nearer to Christ. In this approach, differences are more willingly laid aside, for the sake of him who prayed that all who believe may be one that the world may believe.

One instance of this kind will suffice. In Jamaica, where Bro. W. K. Azbill has been for some time laboring as a missionary, the desire for the one name, the one word and a full and hearty communion of all believers, is strong and constantly increasing.

Baptists, among others, as they understand our teachings, are found even anxious to cast off their name that all may unite in a common cause of preaching the Gospel to the people. Bro. A. gives as a chief reason that this desire for Christian union is greater than in the United States, is that the teachers and missionaries have dwelt less upon denominational things. Driven to seek the strongest powers to battle against this superstitious, heathen darkness, they found the simplicity of preaching the savor of life.

The language of a Presbyterian minister who was questioned in reference to the demand for, and use, of the confession of faith of their church was, "They have no time for that." In truth, the cry from heathendom to-day reproaches the isms of God's people. They are becoming ashamed of division. They dwell less upon these subjects and upon the Gospel more. "Christ crucified" is their great need. Is it so that the enlightened heathens from the isles of the sea must come back to America, whence their missionaries were sent, and teach by practical example, Christian union? Well be it so. And may God speed the day. But let it not be forgotten that the same causes which would seem to conduce to a desire for union of Christians among the heathens of other countries are present with equal force in this country.

There are heathens in our own land in as dark ignorance and as wholly given to sin as elsewhere. And the same Gospel, with the same united effort must be used for their salvation.

And this truth is becoming patent to the minds of all who really have the welfare of the world at heart. It is because of sin, of ignorance, of infidelity and all forms of opposition to the truth, that

Christians are beginning to feel the force of Jesus' plea, "That the world may believe."

Good Thoughts.

The *Apostolic Times* in an editorial on "Missionary Work," says many good things. We would especially call attention to the following:

The great difficulty in the church now is the old sin of unbelief. This is the sin of sins; and it has ever clung to man like his shadow. We are satisfied in one sense with our theory of redemption; that is, our intellect is satisfied. But if we look in a little deeper, we shall find that our hearts are not satisfied with righteousness. We feel that something is wrong, and we often wonder what it is. Let a man read the 13th chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians, and he ought to perceive the cause of the spiritual desolation.

It is the lack of that unique divine love of God and man which gives all to God and man in response to the gift of Christ. This is the key which unlocks the door of the mystery of both the providence and the grace of God. When Christians shall see and feel that there is no fellowship in God that does not manifest itself in *sacrificing* wealth to the salvation of the world, they will enjoy another pentecost of blessing *without* its signs addressed to the senses; and feel that the power of God is still the same *without*, as with, the signs addressed to the ears and eyes. The poverty of the church consists in unbelief. To be "rich in faith" is to be "strong in the Lord."

There are thousands of souls destroyed every day by money. Parents destroy their children by gratifying their fleshly desires. Wealth has made hundreds of homes miserable to-day, that with only one-fourth, or one-half the riches, might have been summer houses in Eden, blessed with the melodies of heaven and earth. There are crushed hearts to-day, to which gold can bring no medicine, and music no joy. The son a drunkard, or a gambler, the companion of "wassailers of low degree;" the daughter married amid soft lights, queenly raiment, and strains of music that would be the coast of royalty itself, now poorly clad, deserted and alone, whose sighs mingle with winter winds as they fly through the gaping holes—are the results of "the wish to have more" of the gold that per-