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The One Church.

That the Church of Christ exists somewhere at the present time we think no one will call in question. Daniel teaches us that the kingdom of God, which evidently has reference to the Church of Christ on earth, shall never be destroyed, that it shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms and that it shall stand forever. The Savior also taught us while he was among men that the gates of hades should not prevail against his Church. If these passages mean any thing they teach us that the Church is still existing on earth and that it can be found and enjoyed by all those who will seek and enter according to the will of God. But what we wish to say more particularly is that there is but one Church of Christ. Though there be churches many and teachers many, yet there is but one Church of which Christ is the head, and but one Flock of which he is the Shepherd. There was a church before the birth of Christ, but it was not his Church, and there were churches during the lifetime of the apostles, but they were not churches of Christ. From the mere fact then that many churches exist now is no evidence that there is more than one church of Jesus Christ. Daniel did not say that the God of heaven would establish kingdoms, but he declared that he would set up a kingdom. It was not said to Peter that upon this rock I will build my Churches, but the Savior spoke of but one Church. Hence Paul could truthfully say to the Ephesians, "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith and one baptism," etc. Now as there is but one true Church of Christ there is but one entrance into that Church. There are not many ways of salvation, but the Bible knows of but one way. All men are to be saved, if saved at all, upon precisely the same conditions. Hence every one who enters the Church of Christ must enter at the same door and comply with the same condition of entrance. All who have done this are not only in the the Church of Christ and made members of his one body, but they have been saved, made

children of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Their sins have been washed away in the blood of Jesus which alone can cleanse from all sin. If these continue faithful to the end they have the promise of eternal life. Now in view of this blessed promise, what more could we desire and what else could we ask? If a person is in this Church of Christ, has been saved, made a child of God, an heir of heaven and has a promise of everlasting life, he needs nothing more. Then in the light of these facts the question arises, if being in the one Church is sufficient, what use have we for more than one? For example, if it be admitted that a person can be saved according to God's regular order of things without being in the Presbyterian church, then what use have we for the Presbyterian church? If a person is saved just as well without being in the Methodist church, then why have such a church? If a person can be saved outside of the Baptist church, then why contend so earnestly for the existence of such an organization? And just so throughout the whole catalogue of denominational churches. If we can be saved without being in any of them and can enter the Church of Jesus Christ without joining any of them, then they are not only useless but absolutely worthless. Thus endeth denominationalism. But how is it with the One Church? Have we a promise of salvation without being a member of it? If so, where is such a promise to be found? Then as we can not be saved outside of it, the Church of Christ becomes a necessity, and the only necessity so far as churches are concerned, under the broad heavens for the salvation of sinful men and women. When men therefore are spending their precious time and wasting their energies in building up denominations and sectarianism they are engaged in that which is a positive detriment to the cause of our Master; and it would be far better if they would give their time to the destruction of all sectism and to the firm establishments of the one true religion of the Christ and his apostles.

But in order not to be misunderstood, we must remember that while faith and obedience were all that were required to constitute a person a member of the church of Christ, that in order to be edified and to worship God acceptably as Christians it became necessary for them

to meet together on the first day of each week to break bread and to exhort one another to faith and good works. Of course, as these saints were scattered over many provinces and on different islands of the sea it was impossible for them all to meet at the same place on every Lord's day, and hence those in one city, town, or community would organize themselves into local bodies, appointing their own officers and keeping the ordinances of the Lord's house according to the Divine directions. These assemblies of the saints were often called Churches of Christ, and in this sense and this only is there more than one Church of Christ. But as these local congregations were *alike* in creed, name, faith and practice, they were simply the One Church of Christ meeting in different places for worship. When these sacred principles are better understood by the people there will be less confusion in the religious world.

What Shall We Preach?

When we ask, what shall we preach? we use the pronoun "we" to include all the true disciples of Christ. In one sense these are all to be preachers. We are told that the disciples who were at Jerusalem when they were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. The disciples of Christ are also commanded to let their light shine so that others may see it and be benefited by it. Hence we not only include those who minister publicly to the people but all who are able to preach in any other way, for there are many ways of doing this good work. It is not expected that all preach from the pulpit; but those who can not do this because God has not endowed them with this faculty are none the less required to preach. They can do this in a private and individual way. Neither is it required that all the members of the body preach by word, for even in this simple method of instruction some may not be very skillful. But there are none who can not preach in deeds and by a living example, and there are none who are not positively required to do this. If we can do nothing more than let our light emanating from a daily Christian character simply shine out to the world, we must do that much, for if this light exists it will shine, and if it has gone out, we cease to be Christ's disciple. Seeing then that all are to be preachers in some

sense, the question arises, What shall we preach? We must evidently preach something that will benefit and save the people, for if we do not preach in this sense then it is difficult to assign a good reason for our preaching at all. Neither will it do to simply preach that which will tend to benefit and elevate the people in this world only intellectually, socially, and morally, for while this is all very good and serves as a solid foundation for that which is better, yet it does not go far enough. We must have a preaching that will take hold of the soul of a man, and lift it out of a state of sin and rebellion against God, wash it and make it white in the blood of the Lamb and save it with an everlasting salvation. All the philosophy of a Bacon, the logic of an Aristotle, the science of a Darwin and the eloquence of a Cicero that the world has ever heard or learned can not do this. There must be a moral and a spiritual influence brought to bear upon the mind, the heart and the soul of the man in order to convict and save him. Hence we need a preaching and a power that are far-reaching and that can search the *inner man*. Now let us turn to the Scriptures and by a few brief paragraphs learn what all must preach. We have seen that we must preach something that will save people, and that this something must be a moral and a spiritual power affecting the heart and the soul of the sinner. But what is this power? Paul says the "Gospel is God's power unto salvation to every one who believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." As then the Gospel of Christ is the power that saves, it follows that this is the Gospel that must be preached. Hence Christ commanded his apostles, saying, "go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." As this is the only power God has ordained for the salvation of the world, it is necessary that it be preached to every creature. And again, Paul says to the brethren at Corinth that he was "determined not to know any thing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified." This is what the great apostle preached, and this is what all are required to preach. We must preach that he died according to the Scripture, that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day according to the