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BAPTISTS AND UNITY

JAMES BRUTON GAMBRELL
(1841–1921)

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The Nature and Function of New Testament Churches

This is an outline article, not a full discussion.

In the consideration of this question we must take account of the meaning of the word “church.” It is a translation from a Greek word which means congregation or assembly. The Greek word, like all words of its class, must be carefully studied in order to understand its use. The Greek *ecclesia* was applied to assemblies of different sorts, and the word itself does not carry in it the idea of any particular kind of assembly. It was applied to the children of Israel in the wilderness. It was applied to a mob that gathered at Ephesus; but it never loses its root meaning, assembly or congregation.

The word church has now a wide and varied use. Any sort of religious assembly or organization is now called a church, as the Christian Science church, the Mormon church, the Presbyterian church, Methodist church and on and on. Our word church has slipped away from its original meaning, as it is now applied in many cases. It is applied not to assemblies or congregations, but to great ecclesiastical organizations.

This wide, loose, varied and indiscriminate use of the word church calls for discrimination and limitations. We must always limit our meaning, if we wish to discuss any particular organization called a church. The use of the word now, to embrace all professors of religion and all organizations, is the limit. The Scriptures know nothing of such use.

The discussion proposed by the headline of this article is limited to a particular kind of churches, the kind revealed to us in the New Testament Scriptures, the kind to which some of the Apostolic letters were directed and about which the Savior spoke. These churches were of divine origin. They were gathered under the direction of the Holy Spirit. They did not arise out of the social instincts of humanity. New Testament churches have a divine constitution and are under divine law. This is abundantly displayed in the Scriptures.

John the Baptist, under the commission given directly from heaven, began the work of preparing people for membership in New Testament churches. The method of preparation has never been essentially changed. John preached the gospel. He required repentance and faith as a condition

for baptism. He then baptized the people and made ready a people for the Lord. When Christ came, John disappeared. Jesus took the material prepared by John, and prepared other material which went into the First Church at Jerusalem. It was to this church that the three thousand baptized on the day of Pentecost were added.

As to the kind of people eligible to membership in a New Testament church, the case is clearly made out. They must be penitent believers who have been baptized. So teaches the Word of God.

In this article I am not giving attention to the many vagaries which have arisen concerning church membership; I am only following the New Testament teaching. It is certain that New Testament churches were voluntary organizations. All religion, under the dispensation of the gospel, goes on the voluntary principle. So that, touching the nature of a church, we may say with confidence that it is a voluntary association of baptized believers, under the headship of Jesus Christ. Its mission is to carry forward the work of Jesus Christ in the world.

As far as appears in the Holy Scriptures, the organization of a New Testament church is very simple. In fact, the New Testament abhors anything that is not simple. The vast ecclesiasticisms of modern times, with their gorgeous ceremonies, their pomps and dignitaries, are all apart from the simplicity that is in Jesus.

But a church is more than an organization. It is an organism. Normally, a New Testament church is a living thing. The members are members one of another. Each several church is a body of Christ and He is the head of it, and His will and law control it. We have thought very meagerly upon this subject, if we think of a church simply as an organization; and we have thought widely of the mark, if we think of a church as a mere human organization. It is an organization composed of human beings grafted into Christ by faith, each subject to His holy will.

It is plain from the Scriptures that each separate church in apostolic times was a complete, self-acting body. This appears from the very nature of the church, having Christ for its head. It appeals, also, from the apostolic letters, giving various instructions to the churches severally, as to their duties, privileges, etc. A New Testament church is a democratic body. The church at Jerusalem elected its deacons, and that Master of men, who is the head of the church, declared the great doctrine of the equality of the brotherhood. Over-head bishops and dignitaries are usurpers.

I have thus given a brief statement as to the nature of New Testament churches. Of course, what is said means that they are apart from the world. They are composed of those who have been called out from the world and separated to the service of Christ. Nothing, from a New Testament

standpoint, is more monstrous than that the churches of Jesus Christ should be tied up to worldly institutions.

What are the functions of New Testament churches? The answer may be given in general terms. The business of New Testament churches is to carry out the will of Christ in the world. As organizations they are to function in the great work laid out by Christ in His commission. The primary work of every church in Christendom is to face out and go to the lost with the gospel. Evangelism is the first great outstanding task of every church in the world. A church that will not go forfeits the divine companionship and help. The Master said, "Go, and I am with you." He never said, stay, and I will stay with you.

It is the business, moreover, of churches to baptize. The true churches of Christ have a mission to baptize, as distinct and certain as to do anything else. The head over each church has put His divine authority into the commission and on every church. It is not for true churches nor for ministers of churches to cheapen baptism. When they do, they cheapen the divine authority of Jesus Christ. This is not the place to argue it, but there is a great evangelistic and evangelizing force in Christian baptism—not in sprinkling and pouring—but in Christian baptism. Each church, in the carrying forward of the work laid out in the commission by apostolic preaching and precedent, is to reproduce itself by making other churches. It might be well enough, in view of current thought, to say that no church can lend itself to the production of so-called churches differing from the New Testament churches. Here, everything is to produce after its kind, and churches being executive, rather than legislative, can make no changes.

What has been said is strongly supported by a view of the churches given in the Scriptures. It is said that the church is "the pillar and the ground of the truth." When churches fail, the truth lacks support. There is not a human organization on earth that can be trusted to care for the truth. The whole superstructure of divine truth depends for its propagation and advancement upon the churches. When the churches become infected with heresies, the truth, not only in the church, but beyond, is weakened also. Christ, Himself, said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." The truth is to make the world free and the churches are to maintain it. And to this sacred task, every New Testament church in Christendom should dedicate itself.

The church, moreover, is charged to maintain discipline and order. This is not only to honor Christ, but to make the church vital and wholesome. There has arisen, in recent times, a seductive idea of religious liberty. True churches of Christ are founded in the great principles of religious liberty. But that liberty belongs to the churches as well as to individuals. When a preacher wishes to preach heresy, the church will not follow the

rule of State churches and persecute, but they will let him do it on his own responsibility. It is an abuse of liberty to suppose that a preacher has a right to stay in a church, and, especially, to be supported by a church, to preach against the truth for which that church is set in the world. There is liberty enough to go around—for the individual and the church, too.

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The Union Movement and Baptist Fundamentals

President Mullins recently said that preliminary to all consideration of the Union Movement, as it relates to Baptists, we should decide whether Baptists have a special mission and message, which the world still needs. That is one way of raising the question: Are the fundamentals of the Baptist faith worth contending for and living for? Is it worth while to maintain a separate denominational existence in order to maintain that form and substance of truth which automatically set Baptists off to themselves? If it is not, the question sounded for discussion by the headline of this article has small importance. If, however, it appears that Baptist fundamentals are, in fact, fundamentals of the Christian faith; if they are, in essence and form, the truth, as taught and practiced by Jesus and His apostles, then they must take a large place in the future of Christianity and must be guarded with ceaseless and zealous care.

It ought to be said with entire frankness, that logically Baptists favor Christian union in every community in the world, for they hold to a single standard of faith, Holy Scriptures, for all the world. They are compelled, however, to condition the union they favor. There might be “union” without “unity.” When a cold, hard, dead nail is driven into a living tree, that is union, but not unity. The divorce courts bear many painful evidences of the fact, that in marriage, there are many unions without unity. If all Christendom were unionized today, with people thinking as they do, the Christian world would be convulsed by internal dissensions, to be followed by a regrouping around distinctive views, wrong or right. Even the present Union Movement is hastening to the formation of a new sect, based on nothing practical. This is the logic of it—a sect without standards of faith or definite form, and hence without force.

The unity and the union Paul prayed for, is the kind every knowing Baptist wishes—“that ye stand fast, in *one* spirit, with *one* mind, striving *together* for the faith of the gospel.” It must be clear to the thinking mind, that mere union, gathering together in one body incoherent elements, would be to promote discord, weakness and waste. The spiritually wise

will not approve union without unity. But it should be said that all Christians should keep a friendly face toward all honest efforts looking toward uniting the scattered groups of Christians. There are reasons why Christians should be one, especially, as they are, in fact, one by a common faith in Christ, the one Savior of all true believers. Baptists do not repel overtures looking to union. I am, by appointment of the Southern Baptist Convention, accredited to a conference called by the Episcopal Church on "Faith and Order." It will give me much pleasure to meet representative men of any number of other denominations and lay on the table the things most certainly believed by Baptists as the true apostolic ground upon which the Christian world may be reunited.

Let us advance a step. In the present state of the Christian world and of the lost world, too, all discussion of union should be as open and clear as the sunshine, and as honest as the Word of God. Anything like secret conclaves, especially to attain overhead management, will be reprobated, and any who seek by methods other than fair and direct to gain control of existing bodies, will be repudiated by the honest sentiment of the Christian world. We are in the supreme day of democracy and open diplomacy. The union worth while will come from the hearts of the common people, and not from any overlords in religion, whether they wear red hats or other hats. Baptists should welcome this new day and the widespread and insistent call for the reconstruction of modern Christianity. The times and the call demand equally widespread, open, honest discussions, going to the fundamentals of Christian faith and order.

It is timely, also, to say, that it ought to be allowed, even more, solemnly affirmed, that the revealed truth of God alone must settle and fix the basis of Christian union. In this better day, when men of many communions are seeking to find a common ground to stand on, it should be insisted, all round, that traditions, ancestral alignments, personal tastes and preferences shall all yield to the voices of divine revelation. If the Christian world, in this big time, can approach the large question of Christian unity and union in a prevailing spirit of loyalty to Jesus and His truth, we may hope for benign results.

But let us come to the specific subject set for this discussion. I take hold of the subject last end first. What are Baptist fundamentals? Here are some of them: The deity and lordship of Jesus Christ; salvation through the atonement made on the cross by Christ's death; a personal faith in Jesus, essential to personal salvation; regeneration by the Spirit of God; a converted church membership; obedience to the command of Jesus in baptism, hence immersion of a believer, and this a condition of church membership; baptism and the Lord's Supper as symbols not sacraments; each local church independent and self-governing, on the principle of a

pure democracy; no orders in the ministry; the inalienable right of every soul to worship God or not to worship God, according to his own volition, or, in brief, the freedom of the soul in religion; separation of church and state, in the Kingdom of Christ; the Scriptures the supreme law.

These fundamentals carry wide and exceedingly important implications. The whole doctrine of individualism in religion, versus proxy religion, is involved. Hence the impossibility of infant baptism. The deity and lordship of Jesus excludes Unitarianism, and disallows all those huge and cumbrous ecclesiastical systems erected on the findings and decrees of Popes, councils, etc. The Scriptures, as the only rule of faith and order, bring us back to the apostolic foundations. Baptism and the Lord's Supper as symbols, not sacraments, destroy the false and delusive hopes of sacramentarians and restore the ordinances to the teaching service of spiritual Christianity. The nature of a New Testament church, as a simple local, self-governing, spiritual democracy, will destroy every hierarchy on earth and reduce all the overlords of Christendom to the common ranks of the universal brotherhood of believers.

Are these fundamentals worth anything to the world today? Many martyrs have died for them. Is it worth our while to live for them? They furnish the only true apostolic and certain platform upon which to unite Christendom, unless we return to the Papal dream of unity and union under the rule of the Popes. The alternatives are the Papacy or the Word of God, as a center of unity. We cannot unite on negations.

What will the Union Movement, if successful, do with these Baptist fundamentals? By the Union Movement is meant the Movement led by Drs. Mott, Speer, and others. What is the program laid out by these leaders? Happily, we may speak with certainty, for they have written, not one book, but many. In a sentence I will say that I am discussing conduct, "findings," programs, not motives. The program is to "scramble" the beliefs of the great non-Catholic bodies and make one church or body, not of any defined form of belief; but in China one sort, in South America another sort, and on. Each church to take on racial and national characteristics. It is called an "indigenous" church. To blend all denominational life, on foreign fields into one body, it is proposed to delimit territory, so that each denomination shall confine its efforts to a limited field. Methodists going into the Baptist territory would become Baptists on their sprinkling, and that by presenting a letter from a Methodist church. Presbyterians, Lutherans, and all on the same plans. Denominationalism will be territorial, not doctrinal, till it ceases to be. An arbitrary line, not Scripture, fixes one's church relations. But independently of all territorial considerations, church letters are to be exchanged between Baptists and all other non-Catholic sects. To facilitate the breakdown of doctrinal differences, there are to be union

schools, especially theological, union literature, union evangelization and such like. This is the foreign program. The home program is in the same spirit, and designed to effect the same results. The Continuation Committee of the Edinburgh Conference is the main operating force abroad. I think I am safe in saying that the Federal Council of the Churches is the chief operating force on the home field, though there are many organizations, with interlocking managements, all working to the same end.

If the efforts of Dr. Mott and his associates succeed there will not be one Baptist fundamental left, and I go further and say that Christianity will be devitalized, and the world turned over to Romanism; for humanity craves something definite and sure in religion, and will follow the lead of those who promise it. Vagueness is weakness, and indefiniteness is sure failure.

The Union Movement has, to a large extent, adopted the reprehensible methods against which our government has been legislating in the commercial world. The leaders have assumed an overhead leadership of the affairs and interests of all the denominations at home and abroad. I advisedly say, assumed; for no responsible bodies have invited them to do what they are doing. They show no courtesy to nor consideration for the great historic bodies, which have done and are doing everything that has been done, or is being done, to Christianize the world. They have set aside the authority of Jesus, and His word, and substituted a human leadership, they themselves being the leaders. They are following in the trail of the great apostasy, which culminated in Romanism, by supplanting the divine authority with human wisdom. Many of the methods are such as right thinking men must condemn for lack of openness and fairness.

This is a limited review, but it is correct as far as it goes. If Baptists believe their fundamentals worth anything; if they have any conscience toward God concerning them, there is only one attitude to take toward the seducing, undoing apostasy fostered by this movement, and that is one of consistent and persistent opposition. It is misusing a noble sentiment in millions of Christian hearts to foster a bastard Christian union without the substance of truth in it. It is misusing and abusing the words of Jesus, even His prayer for the unity of His people, to foist on Christianity a "scrambled" mass of incoherent teachings, under pleasing but misleading names and phrases. The only union worth consideration is union on the authority and teaching of Jesus. The platform is simple, and the way to it is plain. The insistent call of Scripture is "hear ye the word of the Lord." To that we do well to take heed.

Rome and her several branches have contended with Baptists through the centuries to break down the solid scriptural framework of doctrine revealed in the New Testament. Baptists have resisted to blood many times

and their views are now penetrating the world. A new turn is taken by the leaders of this Union Movement. They seek to destroy the Baptists by a process of doctrinal dilution and suffocation. They aim, with great swelling words, to induce the surrender of the truth of God under a pleasing spell of miscalled Christian union. The words of the great Apostle are timely, "Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Amen.

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Out of the Old into the New

The meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta last May was the most significant event in the history of Southern Baptists for 50 years. It was the culmination of forces long working among Baptists of different sections and of all classes, hastened and accentuated by issues growing out of the war. From before the Civil War there existed sectional differences among Southern Baptists. These resulted from the leadership of strong men in different parts of the country, holding divergent views on matters of varying degrees of importance. From the Civil War this way, for decades, a strong spirit of controversy prevailed in the middle and south-western parts of the territory. There was much debate between leaders of different communions, often rancorous, and always uncompromising. The inevitable happened. The general tone of the denomination was deeply affected, not always for the better. The controversial spirit showed itself in contentions, often sharp, sometimes unbrotherly, within Baptist ranks. These controversies were rarely concerning things set out in the articles of faith and often the less important they were, the warmer the discussions grew. Not a few theological crudities were developed which, to a distracting degree, occupied the time and attention of considerable bodies of brethren to the neglect of the weightier matters of the Kingdom. It often happened that disagreeable and hindering personal elements sadly hindered a practical working understanding among brethren at heart sound and anxious to find the path of progress.

I am far from insisting that the debates and tumults of the past were without value. Conditions were generally unstable. In the newer parts of the territory, opinion on nearly all subjects was unformed. The Campbellite crusade had not spent itself. Methodism was aggressive and sometimes crude. The truth had to be cared for and not a few valiant Baptists did it, albeit not always as we of today might think best. But it was done

according to the times, with the result that the country is very decisively of the Baptist faith and order. And, too, the way to purify water in a pot is to boil it, and the only way to boil a pot is from the bottom. A democracy must maintain freedom of speech and the full liberty of the press, and pay for it in the excesses sure to result. The price is small compared with the immense value.

On the principle of action and reaction, there was developed two general groups of Southern Baptists, represented by such stalwart and commanding leaders as the dignified, courteous and very judicious Dr. J.B. Jeter, of Virginia, and the very powerful and aggressive Dr. J.R. Graves, of Tennessee. Lines were not clearly and sharply drawn and could not be, for their views were less distinct than their tendencies and methods. There was, also, a middle group composed of men who did not agree with either of the two main groups throughout. These were such men as Drs. Boyce and Broadus of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. A good many disagreed with one set on methods, which seemed ill-suited to the settlement of religious differences, but largely agreed on principles. I enter myself as one of that persuasion. There is a time limit running against all superficial and merely human agitations among Baptists. Superficialities exhaust. The scum goes over the top when the pot boils awhile. The water clarifies and the better things appear.

For more than a decade the streams of Southern Baptist life have been converging. Certain powerful forces have been steadily, silently at work to bring us into better working relations. I would name first the inefaceable common sense of the noble, Christian brotherhood. The words common sense are used in their deepest meaning, not so much the thinking faculties of the mind as that heaven-born spiritual sense, which Paul declared necessary for the discernment of spiritual things. As divisive agitation has died down, the better feelings have asserted themselves.

One of the most unifying agencies among Southern Baptists has been the Home Board. It has woven our missionary life into one web. The Foreign Board has greatly helped and so has the Louisville Seminary; and for decades the Sunday School Board has been a unifying agency of great force.

To one acquainted with the inner life of our Southern Convention it has been manifest that for several years back there have been aspirations and struggles in the body for a larger life. The travail was hopeful to the discerning eye, though quite trying sometimes. Growing pains are not comfortable, but they are inevitable, if we grow.

The Great War forced on Southern Baptists grave issues. They were precipitated on us in such a way that each man had to decide on his own course without any wide council. Unusual efforts were made by

outside forces to capture and take over the leadership of the Southern Convention in the interest of plans destructive of the faith of the gospel. The convention in its Atlanta meeting was at the parting of ways. There was much heart-searching, and much prayer. Personally, I do not doubt that God, the Holy Spirit, dealt with the hearts of His people all over the South and prepared them aforetime for what happened at Atlanta. The convention was the greatest ever assembled on this continent, 4,200 messengers plus. It was widely representative. All the estates of Israel were there. The Spirit of grace and power was on the assembly. The convention rose to its greatest height, and did two vastly significant things. It disposed of all questions of alliances with other orders holding different standards of faith and practice, by passing, with amazing spirit and unanimity, a carefully considered report, which defined the Baptist position so clearly, that all the world may understand. And the convention put on a program so large, so noble and so commanding as to challenge Southern Baptists as they have never been challenged before in their history. Thus the healing tides of Southern Baptist life met and Jordan overflowed its banks. As never before in all their long history, Southern Baptists are together after Paul's ideal of efficiency—"in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel." At Atlanta a new era opened and we are in that new day now. What Isaiah cried out for and some in our day have longed for came to pass. Southern Baptists awoke. They broke forth on the right hand and on the left hand. They are putting on their strength. They are enlarging the place of their habitation, and there is a new high note of courage and joy sounded out from every hilltop in all the Southland.

The tides are rising every day. New streams of influence and power from every direction are flowing into the swelling current. Under the persuasive call to mobilize and move forward, local differences, some of them of long standing and grave, are yielding to fraternal adjustments. Personal preferences and even serious personal interests are being swallowed up in the large spirit of the new day. The swelling current will sweep the debris out of the channels of denominational life, and make all the future larger and better.

Up to this writing, there is every encouragement to believe the great task set before Southern Baptists at Atlanta will be accomplished, not easily, but by a new heroism and a new consecration. People love to be called to great enterprises. The proposition to raise 75 millions to set all our work forward at once arrested the attention of all classes of Baptists and its unifying effect has been almost magical. We will likely raise it and more, and never again will we be content with little things.

Let us take another look at the hopeful situation. It has been said that the unifying effect of the campaign we are in is great. There is another

good word to say. The unity is without friction or the compromise of any principle. It is on Christ's program for world conquest. It is solid from the ground up and out.

The day we carry through our present plans the efficiency of Southern Baptists will be far more than doubled. On some lines it will be quadrupled. All our schools will be on enduring foundations. Our mission work at home will be far more than doubled, and everything else set forward. But the biggest thing of all will be the discovery to the denomination of its strength and power to get together for large things.

We are in a new era, facing world-wide opportunities in a new spirit of conquest. Having put our hands to the plow, let not one of us look back.

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Individualism and Co-Operation

Christianity is individualistic. Judaism nationalized a family. Christianity individualized the human race. Everyone must give account of himself to God. Each responsible soul must repent for itself, believe for itself, be baptized for itself, give for itself, live for itself, die for itself, give account of itself at the judgment. Personal responsibility carries with it the competency and freedom of the soul. This means the right to read the Scriptures, to hear preaching, etc., and at last to decide. The New Testament magnifies the individual as the unit in Christ's Kingdom.

The very nature of Christianity necessitates the acceptance of the voluntary principle in Christian living. And this compels the acceptance of the principle of appeal to the individual judgment and conscience. Preaching and teaching precede intelligent action. This is the scheme of the New Testament. Christ was and is the world's greatest leader of men. He did not employ physical force in the realm of mind and spirit. He led by putting His spirit and truth into the hearts and minds of the people, so that His people were and are a willing people in the day of His power. No one is ever saved till he wants to be. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to so change the heart of a sinner as to make him willing to be saved Christ's way. Grace in the heart is the source of all acceptable service to God, as all service is the response of the believing heart to God's call to service.

The voluntary principle is the only possible principle in Christian service. It rules throughout all the affairs of the Kingdom. Love is the motive power. The believer with the love of God shed abroad in his heart confesses Jesus because he wants to. He is baptized because he wants to

obey Christ. He unites with a church purely on the voluntary principle. The love of Christ constrains him. The grace of God in his heart has a holy affinity for those of like precious faith with himself. He comes under the rule of Jesus, because he believes in him and loves him. The obedience of faith and the constraints of love make up the sum of all right Christian living. There is no where the least place for human authority to intervene between a redeemed soul and its Redeemer.

A church is an assembly of redeemed, obedient people, who voluntarily associate themselves together under the law of Christ to do His will. In church relations all are equal. A church never ceases to be a voluntary, self-determining body, limited only by the law of Christ, its head. No body of people is a New Testament church if it has a human head to exercise authority over it.

Each church is competent to carry out the whole program of Christ for world conquest. No church can create for itself nor allow others to create for it an overhead authority. The action of any New Testament church on any matter within the realm of its prescribed activities as a church is final. There are no courts of appeal to confirm or reverse church actions. Associations and conventions do not function in the realm of the churches, and they have no ecclesiastical functions whatsoever.

As a free, voluntary democratic body, each church decides, by vote, what course it will take on any matter coming before it. It can co-operate with other churches or not, as it deems best. There can be no outward compulsion from any source whatever. A church can be appealed to, reasoned with, entreated, but the decision is with the church at last. This structural principle has forever made it impossible to create out of Christ's churches an overhead ecclesiasticism, such as has cursed the world for long centuries. It is the palladium of soul liberty. Rome was not possible until this principle was broken down. The future of a pure, spiritual religion is wrapped up in the organizing principles of New Testament churches. God has never made any man or set of men good enough to exercise lordship over His free churches.

With every church a complete unit in itself, free and self determining, how can they be brought to co-operate on a scale large enough to accomplish great tasks? It has been often argued that they cannot. Large enterprises, it is affirmed by hierarchs, require definite, tangible authority for their accomplishment. Theories all go down before demonstrations. The Baptists of the South, with 25,000 free churches, have recently given a practical demonstration of the working value of the voluntary principle in religion, applied full length to individuals, churches, associations, and on. By the voluntary co-operation of these utterly free bodies, a thing was done, as a brother of another order says, unparalleled in the history of

Christianity. In a time so short and with an organization so simple that it seemed an impossibility, the 75 million mark set was not only reached but passed by many millions, and at a cost so small that it seems almost unthinkable—less than three-fourths of one per cent.

What is the explanation? It is in the nature of Christianity applied to humanity. There is a saying like this: One volunteer is worth two drafted men. In war men fight with their souls. In all life men work with their souls. The conquering forces in the world are not mechanical. They are not tangible. They are mind and spirit. That system of work, or government or religion, which appeals most directly and powerfully to the individual is the most efficient, provided the appeal is intelligent and persuasive. The entrance of the American soldiers into the arena of battle, overseas, marked the beginning of the end of the great war, because they fought with another spirit.

The inner spirit of converted people given free play will insure the most perfect and efficient co-operation. It is the unifying force in churches and on out. Like attracts like throughout the universe. Churches of like faith and order having like objects will normally have little trouble to find ways of co-operating. Love lifts. Love conquers in all the big undertakings of life. Moreover, moral obligations arise out of relations.

Each church of Christ, while organically distinct from every other church and self-governing, nevertheless is one of a sisterhood of churches. As each man is free and self-determining, yet lives not to himself, but has moral and spiritual relations to all other men, equally free as he is, so each free church has obligations to all other free churches, which it ought to fulfill under the law of love, love for other churches and for Jesus, their common head. More, all the churches have identical tasks imposed by Christ. That spiritual sense given to saved souls enables them to discern the wisest and best ways to do things as love constrains.

So there is such a thing as inter-church obligations. There is also such a thing in the economy of the Kingdom as church inter-dependence. This is not true as respects the internal affairs of a church, for each church is not only competent to deal with its own internal affairs, but must do it. Still it is true as respects the things of the Kingdom, taken in the large. It is here that Christ's words "Ye ought" come into play to guide his free churches in the discharge of their co-operative work. Where co-operation is needed co-operation must prevail under the law of oughtness, and love has a good eye for the need of things.

The free play of these simple principles under proper teaching makes Baptist churches the most powerful forces for good in the world. They conquered heathenism in a marvelous way in the first century. The destruction of these principles brought on the dark ages. The supreme duty of all

Christians today is to revert to the New Testament type of church life, and so live under the law of Christ.

The need of Baptists is to put the principles set out above into constant use. The education of a spiritual democracy in the things of Christ is essential to its highest efficiency. To that task, along with evangelism, Baptists must give ceaseless care.

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