

## CHRISTIAN UNION.

BY JOEL A. SIMONDS.

### ALL THE SAINTS SHOULD SPEAK THE SAME THING.

"I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." 1 Cor. i. 10.

How earnest, how large, how precise, how strong is this exhortation. *Earnest.* "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"—by the authority of his name, by the preciousness of his name, and by all the hopes that center in his name. How could it be more earnest? *Large.* "That ye all,"—"all that are sanctified in Christ Jesus,"—"all the saints,"—"all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord,"—"all the members of the church of God," without any restriction. *Precise.* "That ye all speak the *same thing*"—the same truth—the same faith—the same gospel—the same hope—the same plan—the same terms of discipleship for all the saints, and of the same church. *Strong.* "That ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," that the whole church of God be *one*, as Christ and the Father are one—one in faith, in purpose, in sympathy, rooted and grounded in the love and in the hope of the gospel. How strong! how complete! How it honors God, and the gospel of God. How it elevates the purpose and the character of the saints.

### THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

The truth in relation to the faith of the gospel, as contained in the Scriptures, is the basis and the measure of *Christian union*. Christians are united only so far as they understand and believe and obey the truth.

They must be "begotten by the word of truth," James i. 18.) "the incorruptible seed"—"the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Pet. i. 22. They must be sanctified by the truth. John xvii. 17. They must purify their hearts in obeying the truth. 1 Pet. i. 22. They must be made free by the truth. John viii. 32. They must be saved by the "word of truth," which is "the gospel of their salvation." Eph. i. 13. Nothing besides the truth can make them Christians, or sanctify them, or save them. Truth is always in harmony with itself. Those who are in harmony with the truth, must be in harmony with each other. Therefore, the truth is the only basis and measure of Christian union. On this basis alone can all Christians be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, so as to speak the same thing.

DO THE SCRIPTURES FURNISH A BASIS FOR SUCH A CHRISTIAN UNION?

They do. *They were inspired of God.* "The prophecy (of Scripture) came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 21. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 16. Then they must reveal one plan.

*They are the word of God.* "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Heb. i. 1. The Savior said, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." John xvii. 8. And Paul said, "We thank God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." 1 Thess. ii. 13. The Scriptures, then, are the word of God, which He spake by the prophets and by his Son and by the apostles.

*They are true.* They are called "The Scriptures of truth." Dan. x. 21. The Savior said, "Thy word is truth." John xvii. 17. "The Scripture cannot be broken." John x. 35. Paul said, "God cannot lie," (Titus i. 2,) and that, "as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay."

2 Cor. i 18. Then they must be in harmony, they must speak the same thing.

*They reveal the only true faith.* If men speak not according to the Scriptures, it is because there is no light in them. Isa. viii. 20. The Savior said, "In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." Matt. xv. 9. And Paul said, "Though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. i. 8. The Scriptures teach one particular faith, and exclude every other; Christians are to strive together for this one faith.

*The Scriptures are sufficient to make the Christian perfect.* Paul said to Timothy, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17.

The Scriptures, then, are the word of God. They are true as God is true. They contain the only true faith. In this faith is found every thing that is needful to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly prepared for every good work. Therefore, they *do furnish* a complete foundation for Christian union, as set forth in our text.

#### THE ONE BOOK.

Christians have but one book; that book is true. It reads the same to all. It is claimed to be the only rule of faith and practice for Christians. It reveals all that is known of the objects of faith and hope. It contains the history of the world from the beginning, through all the future. It reveals God's purpose concerning the world forever, and the gospel through which that purpose will be accomplished. It reveals the destiny of the righteous and of the wicked, and the conditions upon which that destiny depends. These are things of which the Bible speaks, and concerning which Christians are exhorted to be of one mind and of one judgment.

## THIS DUTY ENJOINED.

Jude said : "It was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude i. 3. This was a particular faith, which was delivered to the saints at a particular time. If the saints complied with this exhortation, they must have spoken the same thing. Again Paul writes to the Ephesians : "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, endeavoring to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace. There is *one* spirit and *one* body, even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling. *One* Lord, *one* faith and *one* baptism. *One* God and Father of all." Eph. iv. 1, 6. This one faith must be the same that was once delivered to the saints, for there is but one faith. If the saints obeyed this injunction, they must have spoken the same things concerning the topics mentioned in this passage. Again the same apostle exhorts the Philippian church "to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." This faith of the gospel is the same faith that has already been mentioned ; for there is but one faith. If the saints at Philippi did strive for this faith, they did strive to speak the same thing. I will now introduce our text, to see how it will correspond with these other exhortations. "Now I beseech you, brethren, that ye all speak the same thing ; that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," concerning this one faith.

These exhortations are very earnest ; they apply to all the saints ; they relate to a particular faith, and they all speak the same thing. They are all applicable to the church of God, but they cannot apply to a church that is made up of different denominations. The Scriptures do not recognize different denominations in the church. The members of this church are all to speak the same thing, and be of the same mind, which would be impossible if the church is made up of different sects. If there were to be different denominations in the church, then these exhortations should be modified so as to read, "All Christians should speak the

same thing, so far as they can consistently with their differences; and they should be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, so far as they can be consistently with their different organizations. But as the Scriptures acknowledge only one church, and as that one church is the body, of which all Christians are members, and as those members are not allowed to form themselves into different denominations, and assume different names, (as in 1 Cor. i. 13), we must accept these exhortations as they are, and as being applicable to all the saints, which in every place call upon the name of the Lord.

#### BUT WHAT DO THESE EXHORTATIONS MEAN?

Do they really mean what they seem to import? Is it the duty of all the saints to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment? Are they to stand fast in one mind and with one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel? Ought they to contend earnestly for the one faith? Is it their duty to understand the faith of the gospel so well that they can all speak the same thing concerning it? Does the Bible furnish information sufficiently definite to justify such exhortations? The Savior in his prayer in John xvii. explains how perfectly Christians should be joined together. After having prayed for the apostles, He said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be made perfect in one, even as we are one." In this prayer we are taught that, as Christ is one with the Father, so Christians are to be one with Christ, and one with each other. Then if we can learn how Christ and the Father are one, we can understand how the saints are to be one with them. Then let us inquire

#### HOW CHRIST AND THE FATHER ARE ONE?

*They are not one being.* God is the Father, and Christ is the Son. The Father is greater than the Son, as the Creator is greater than the created. He is the giver.

Christ is the receiver; He commands, Christ obeys; He is independent, Christ is dependent. Christ received from his Father his life, (John v. 26) his knowledge, (John xii. 50,) his power, (Matt. xxviii. 18,) his judgment, (John v. 22,) his authority, (John v. 27,) his throne (Luke i. 32,) and his kingdom, Luke xxii. 29. Then they cannot be one in the sense of being one Being.

*But they are one in purpose.* The Father commands the Son what He must do to abide in his love. The Son keeps his Father's commandments and abides in his love. John xiv. 10. They both work for the same end, and are one. Christ said, "Not my will, but thine be done." Luke xxii. 42. They both work for one will; they are one. Christ came in his Father's name. John v. 43. One authority is acknowledged; they are one. Christ sought the honor and glory of his Father. John viii. 49, 50. In this they were one. Christ did always those things that pleased his Father. John viii. 29. They were both pleased with the same things; in this they were one. Christ said it was his meat to do the will of his Father, and to finish the work He gave Him to do. John iv. 34. In this they were one. God so loved the world that He gave his Son to save it. John iii. 16. Christ so loved the world that He gave his life for the life of it. John vi. 51. In this they both worked for the same end, and are, therefore, in this sense, one. Christ and his Father were one, because Christ obeyed his Father. He made his Father's will his will—his Father's purpose his purpose—his Father's work his work—his Father's words his words—his Father's honor and glory the object of his life. Because He thus yielded Himself to his Father's plan, they were one. They could not have been one in any other sense. In this sense they were perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, and they spake the same thing. Thus Christ and the Father were one; and in this way Christians ought to be one with Christ, as He is one with the Father.

WHAT MUST CHRISTIANS DO TO BE ONE WITH CHRIST,  
AS HE IS ONE WITH THE FATHER.

They must hear the gospel of the kingdom. Matt. xxiv. 14. They must understand the object of it, and how that

object is to be accomplished. Matt. xiii. 23. This will make them acquainted with Jesus Christ, his purpose, his position and his work. They must believe this gospel, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38. They are now members of his body; (1 Cor. xii. 12,) they have now a right to his name, (Gal. iii. 26, 29,) and are joint-heirs with Him to his inheritance. Rom. viii. 17. Now as Christ lives by the Father, so Christians should live by Christ. John vi. 57. As Christ taught not his own words, but the words of his Father (John viii. 26, 28,) so Christians should not teach their own words, but the words of Christ. As Christ did not insist on having his own will, but submitted to the will of his Father, (Matt. xxvi. 39,) so Christians should submit their wills to the teachings of Christ. As Christ kept his Father's commandments and abode in his love, (John xv. 10,) so Christians should keep Christ's commandments that they may abide in his love. As Christ finished the work his Father gave Him to do, (John xvii. 4,) so Christians ought to be able to say with the Apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." All Christians being members of the body of Christ, which is the church, should sympathize with all the members of that one body. If one member suffer, all the members should suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members should rejoice with it. 1 Cor. xii. 36. In this way Christians ought to be joined with Christ as He is with the Father. If Christians are thus one with Christ, and if they teach only what Christ taught, and if they obey Christ as He obeyed the Father, then they will be perfectly joined together in the same judgment, and they will speak the same thing as set forth in our text.

#### WHAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT DO.

They should not be dishonest, nor unteachable, nor self-willed. They should not teach any thing, or believe any thing as religious faith, that is not plainly taught in the words of Scripture. It is better not to teach anything, than to teach what is not true. As the gospel of the kingdom is

what must be preached in all the world. (Matt. xxiv. 14,) they should not preach any other gospel than this. As the Scriptures do not recognize different denominations in the church of God, Christians should never form themselves into different denominations, and call themselves the different branches or denominations of the church of God. As Christ was not divided, and as Paul was not crucified for them, and as they were not baptized in the name of Paul, they should not take to themselves different names, as, "I am of Paul," or "I of Apollos," or "I of Cephas," or even "I am of Christ," to designate themselves from other Christians. Unless Christians cease to do these things, Christian union is impossible.

As Christ and his Father were one in purpose, and as Christians are to be one with Christ in that same purpose, and as they cannot be one in that purpose farther than they understand it, I will enquire,

1. WHAT IS GOD'S FINAL PURPOSE CONCERNING THIS  
WORLD, AS REVEALED IN THE BIBLE?

What do the Scriptures say about it? The first well defined expression of God's purpose concerning the world, is found in God's covenant with Abraham, and is comprehended in this saying: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18. All the nations of the earth constitute the whole world. According to this promise, the time will come when the whole world will be blessed. This is the great and controlling purpose in this covenant. Do the Scriptures speak elsewhere of this great purpose concerning the world? Yes, frequently. The Lord said to Moses, "As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Num. xiv. 21. Again, "All the nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee and glorify thy name." Psa. lxxxvi. 9. Again, "All nations shall serve him, all nations shall call him blessed. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. And let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Psa. xxxvii. "All the ends of the world shall remember and



turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." Psa. xxii. 27. "All the ends of the earth shall fear him." Psa. lxxvii. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Isa. xi. 9. All people, nations and languages under the whole heaven shall serve and obey him. Dan. vii. 14, 27. In the Lord's prayer it is said, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Matt. vi. 10. The stone that was cut out without hands will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. Dan. ii. 45. For "all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest." Rev. xv. 4. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of the city, and the kings of the earth do bring the glory and honor of the nations into it, and the leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations; and there shall be no more crying, nor sickness, nor pain, nor death, nor curse." Rev. xxi. 4, 22; i. 1, 3. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 9, 11.

These promises show what God has purposed to do for the world. The wording of them varies a little, but in substance they all speak the same thing. They are all universal, and include the whole world at the time of which they speak. The blessings are complete. When these promises are fulfilled, all the nations of the earth will be blessed, so as to be cursed no more. The nations will learn war no more. The knowled'ge and the glory of God will fill the whole earth. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. The will of God will then be done in earth as it is done in heaven, and forever. This is the one great purpose of God as revealed in the Bible. All other purposes are only means to this one great end. This is the purpose of the Father concerning the world, in which Christ is perfectly one with Him. Christians should be one with Christ in this purpose, as He is one with the Father. Then the Father, and Christ, and all the saints will be

of one mind, and perfectly agreed in this one purpose to bless the world.

## 2. HOW WILL THIS ONE PURPOSE OF GOD CONCERNING THE WORLD BE ACCOMPLISHED?

What means will be used to accomplish this wonderful work? In God's covenant with Abraham it is said: "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 17, 18. The seed of Abraham then will do this work. The work will be accomplished after this manner. The seed will have power over the nations as rulers, and subdue them, and bless them. The thing to be done is to bless the nations; the means by which to do this work is the seed of Abraham. This seed is Christ. Gal. iii. 16. Those who are Christ's are also the seed. Gal. iii. 29. They are joint-heirs with Christ to his inheritance. Rom. viii. 17. Christ and the saints then constitute the seed, or instrumentality by which the nations will be blessed. In God's covenant with David, He said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me." Psa. lxxxix. 3, 4, 35, 36. When the Savior was about to be born, the angel said of Him, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Luke i. 32. Christ was raised from the dead to sit down on David's throne. Acts ii. 30. Before He was to sit upon his throne, He went to heaven to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. Luke xix. 12. When He returns, then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory, and when He sits upon his throne, the saints will sit down with Him in his throne, and then the seed of Abraham, Christ and the saints will have power over the nations, that they may serve Him.

Thus the seed of Abraham will have power over the nations, and subdue them, and bless them, as in God's

promise to Abraham. In this purpose Christ and the Father are one. The purpose is complete, including all that God has promised concerning the world. It is simple, and easy of comprehension. It is simply to bless all the nations of the earth by the seed of Abraham. This seed, when perfected by a resurrection from the dead, are to take possession of the nations, and rule over them, and subdue them, so that the will of God will be done by the nations, as it is done in heaven. This purpose is *the faith* that was once delivered to the saints; the *one faith*, the *faith of the gospel*—the *gospel of the kingdom*, concerning which all the saints are exhorted to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

This one purpose is the basis of Christian union. All who are one in this purpose are one with God, and one with Christ, and one with each other. In this way all the saints may be one, as Christ and the Father are one. It is just as easy to make this purpose our purpose, as it is to make any other purpose our purpose. It requires no more ability to yield ourselves to this purpose than it does to yield ourselves to any other purpose. And, when we have yielded to this purpose, we have made the whole of God's purpose our purpose, and are therefore one with Him.

If we accept God's final purpose as our purpose, we must also accept all the conditions which are necessary to secure that end. This is so in all business matters. And if God has purposed that all the nations of the earth serve Him as long as the sun and moon endureth; (Psa. lxxii.) and that they shall do his will in earth as it is done in heaven; (Matt. vi. 10,) and if God's plan is to have this work accomplished by the seed of Abraham, (Gen. xxii. 17, 18,) then the seed of Abraham must be qualified for such a position and such a work. As this work of the seed is to continue as long as the sun, the life of the seed must be of equal duration.

Now let us trace the work of the seed backward from the consummation of the promise, to the promise. All the nations of the earth are blessed. The will of God is done in earth as it is in heaven. In order to reach this condition of the world, the nations must be subdued to God. In order to this subduing of the nations, the seed of Abraham must have power over them. In order for the seed of Abraham to have power over the nations and subdue them and bless them forever, the seed must have everlasting life; they must become immortal and incorruptible. In order that the seed may have everlasting life, they must be raised from the dead; in order to be raise

from the dead they must be worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead. In order to become worthy to be raised from the dead, they must believe the gospel of the kingdom, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope steadfast unto the end. In order to believe the gospel, they must understand it; and in order to understand it, the gospel must be preached in all the world. This is the way we understand all subjects, we begin with the final object, and trace backward the means by which to reach any given end. The end always controls the means. But after understanding a subject, we work it out from the beginning. We will now trace the working out of this purpose from the beginning to the end.

In order that we be of the same mind and the same judgment, it is essential that we have the same final end in view. This end, the condition of the kingdom that is to be secured through the gospel of it. Then this gospel of the kingdom must be preached that it may be understood; it must be understood that it may be believed and obeyed; it must be believed and obeyed that we may become worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead; we must be raised from the dead to receive eternal life; we must have eternal life that we may receive the kingdom; we must receive the kingdom in order to subdue the nations, and we must subdue the nations, in order that the will of God may be done in earth as it is done in heaven; and the will of God must be done by all the nations of the earth as it is done in heaven, that God may be all in all, and that his immutable promise made to Abraham may be fulfilled.

When men have one object to accomplish, and one instrumentality by which to accomplish that object, they will be of the same mind and the same judgment and speak the same thing; so, when men understand that God has one final purpose concerning the world, which is to bless all the nations of the earth so that they shall be no more cursed, and that He has one instrumentality by which to accomplish that purpose, which is the seed of Abraham, and that the process by which this work may be done, is, that the seed of Abraham will take possession of the nations, and subdue them, and bless them, then men will begin to be of one mind, and one judgment, and speak the same thing.

The truthfulness of God, and the immutability of his promises, are the basis upon which the exhortation in our text rests. Then let all Christians contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and stand fast in one spirit, and with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and thus become one, as Christ and the Father are one.

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