

to bruise the serpent's head, not the seed of Joseph nor the seed of man; it required something stronger than that. If Christ had been of the seed of woman and man He would have been all human like any other man, and a human sacrifice would have been as weak and unacceptable as any other animal. It required some one approaching the *divine*, therefore the woman being overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and the power of the Highest, constituted the Son of God, both human and divine, making the sacrificial blood of Christ all powerful to save to the uttermost all that would come to God by Him; and God stands justified before the court of heaven, and Satan completely foiled. As every sinner has forfeited his life—his blood—the blood of the sinner had to be shed or a ransom found; hence a ransom was sought and found (see Job xxxiii. 24; Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6) in the person of Christ; and He, having died for the sins of the world, bore our sins and carried our burdens on the Cross, made a complete atonement for sin and opened up the new and living way to heaven. As Christ was with the Father before the world was, and in its creation and all things upon it, He had to do in man's creation. When God said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness," Christ had to do in his creation; hence His love to their noblest work was unbounded. His attachment to man was so great that when it was necessary for a ransom to go from heaven to earth, not one of the angels of the highest was worthy of that high honor (see Hebrews 1st and second chapters), but the *logos*, the Word, accepted the position and came. More on this in my next.

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### SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

#### NO. II.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." Acts ii. 42.

This passage of scripture records in a most concise manner, the practice of the primitive Christians in their stated worship. The statement that they "continued steadfastly" in the things mentioned, indicates a stated custom. The things enumerated indicate the features of their worship. Let us look at them briefly in detail.

**1ST. THE APOSTLES' TEACHING.** The apostles, as all know, were the authorized teachers of the religion of Christ. They were commissioned to perform this work by Christ himself. Matt. xxviii. 18-20. They were qualified for an infallible execution of their commission. Jno. xiv. 26, 16, 13; Acts ii. 4. They were not only to teach sinners the way of the Lord and make disciples of them, but they were also to teach the *disciples* all things commanded them by the Lord. Matt. xxviii. 20. When the church in Jerusalem of which the statement of the text is made, was organized, the apostles were present in person, and in fulfillment of the specifications of their commission they gathered together the newly made disciples and proceeded to "teach them" all things whatsoever Christ had commanded them. Hence it is said that those persons "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, &c."

**2ND. THE FELLOWSHIP.** We might perhaps better understand this term were it rendered *partnership*, for that is the commonest meaning given to the word in the scriptures, and the most evident meaning in this place. The church is a great co-partnership in which every member is a partner. So that in giving and receiving, each one participates. Those early Christians were partners in each other's joys and sorrows, trials and triumphs, sacrifices and advantages. They had fellowship,

or partnership, in the instruction given by the apostles, in the support of the poor, and in all the exercises of their worship. They continued steadfastly to participate in these things.

**3RD. THE BREAKING OF BREAD.** This was, without a doubt, the institution of the Lord's Supper. This is the memorial institution of the church of Christ. It is to Christians what the Passover was to the Jews, a monumental feast. Jesus instituted it to preserve His memory among His people, and the apostles taught the disciples to observe it.

**4TH. THE PRAYERS.** Prayer was an element in all their worship. The apostles taught them to be a devotional people, and doubtless this term is intended to indicate all their devotions.

The plain implications of the passage quoted is, that these were constant elements in their worship. They had instruction in the truth, fellowship with the brethren, the remembrance of Christ in His suffering and death, and devotional exercises. There were the best of reasons existing why all these elements should constantly enter into their worship.

1st. They were ignorant of the Christian life and its duties. Their education had been in an entirely different direction. Educated as Jews, they had been contented to observe the formalism of the Jewish ritual. Now they had passed from the letter to the spirit, from the symbol to the reality, and the duties and responsibilities of their new relation had all to be learned. Hence it was a supreme necessity to them to have teachers who could infallibly instruct them in these matters; and their steadfast continuance in the teaching of the apostles' has its most obvious reason in their own wants.

2nd. They needed sympathy, encouragement, help, and an outlet for their new impulses and energies. Their obedience to the gospel had caused many of them, doubtless, to deny father and mother, brother and sister, friend and helper. Their new position was one which courted, by its superior claims, the most virulent antagonism from its enemies, while it inspired all who held it to a life of self-sacrifice in behalf of others. New friendships must then be formed to take the place of the old, and those friendships must be strengthened by frequent and familiar intercourse. Sympathy was to be sought for among those who had the same aspirations and the same hopes. If material help was needed, it was to be expected from those of like faith who had the ability; while those who had possessions and whose newborn generosity sought for objects of benevolence, could find such objects among the poor of their own number. So they continued steadfastly in the fellowship, sharing equally both heavenly and earthly blessings. For while the apostles dispensed to all alike the heavenly bread of truth, those who had possessions sold them and brought the money and laid it at the apostles feet, and distribution was made unto all according to their needs.

3rd. They needed to be constantly reminded of their Master and their obligations to Him. They were the servants of a King who had gone into a far country and had given each man his trust. And amid the distracting cares of a life of persecution and toil, they needed to be periodically led back to the fountainhead of all their blessings, to the crucified Christ, that they might see the price paid for their freedom, and realize that they were not their own, but His possession.

4th. They needed constant communication with God. They had been trained to worship Him under the Law. They were to worship Him no less under the Gospel. And His worship would have a new significance to them, since they would approach Him through their newly accepted King. They needed, more than ever, the strength which comes from waiting on the Lord, and hence their

very necessity drove them to continue steadfastly in the prayer.

That these elements entered into the worship of all the primitive churches, and largely for these reasons, we have every ground to believe. The teaching of the apostles relative to Christian duty would be uniform in every place, as the wants of the disciples would be in every place materially the same.

This characteristic of primitive Christianity is worthy of close attention. Those things were imposed as duties by divine sanction. Not only so; they were provided as necessary means for the development of the divine life in men. If, then, these features of Christian worship have never been abolished by divine authority, it is evident that they are obligatory on Christians to the present day. And furthermore, since the needs of men are substantially the same, those divinely appointed means of growth and advancement are still a necessity to every Christian. The Christian worship of to-day, then, should be composed of those features. There is no sanction either in divine authority or from the condition of men, for the neglect or abandonment of any one of these features from the worship. When Christians meet together on the first day of the week, as did the disciples at Troas, it should be to "break bread." But along with that exercise, clustering around it as a centre, should be the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, and the prayers. In other words, there should be instruction in the word of the Lord and the duties of Christian citizenship, participation in both the benefits and the burdens of the work, and devotional communication with God. This would not only reproduce the primitive worship in outward form, but would also meet the inward necessities of every heart.

One thought more before I close. Granted that these features are reproduced in the worship, then there must be, in order to effect any permanent good, a reproduction of that *steadfast continuance* in those things which characterized the early Christians. It is good to hold a correct theory about these things. But if our practice does not correspond therewith it will avail nothing. "For-sake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is."

M. B. RYAN.

Williamsport, Pa., May 20, 1886,

### MISSION BAND.

On Friday afternoon, 14th ult., according to appointment, the Sunday-school class of Sister Miles met with some others in the school-room of the church, on Coburg St. Sister E. Christie, by request, acted as President for the meeting. After some preliminary suggestions and resolutions, it was moved and carried that this organization should be known as "The Young People's Mission Band of Coburg St. Church." That it should meet the last Friday in each month; in order to membership there should be an initiation fee of five cents and a monthly due of the same amount.

A considerable time was spent in the consideration of a motto. Several were presented: "Let us be seen by our deeds;" "Never be discouraged;" "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" "Let us keep our Heavenly Father in our midst." Several suggestions were offered as to the character these meetings should take and how the time for holding them should be spent. Both these questions were deferred for another meeting. The meeting then adjourned to be called by the President. The following were elected officers for the ensuing quarter: Sister Lorenzo A. Miles, President; Georgina Murray and Emma McInnis, Vice-presidents; Katie Harris, Treasurer; Josie Morrison, Secretary.