

Original Contributions.

SCRIPTURAL UNITY.

J. W. BOLTON.

In pleasing others we must consult their wishes. When we would please Christ we must consider what He would have us do. The only way we can discover what He would have us do is to consult His Word. In His Word we find He has given us many thoughts as to His will in regard to unity.

By consulting John 10:16, we find He says, "and there shall be one fold and one shepherd"—not many folds, as are seen in the world to-day.

In John 15:5 we read, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Does He mean here that He is the vine, and the different religious bodies are the branches? If so, why did he address these words to the apostles individually instead of to the Jewish bodies as they then existed? As the word branches was applicable to individuals then, it is equally applicable to individuals to-day.

Christ spoke of the church as a unit. He said, "I will build my church (Mat. 16:18)—not churches. Paul said that "Christ loved the church"—not churches—and "gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25), not them.

Jesus prayed for the unity of God's people. "Holy Father, keep, though Thine own name, those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 15:11). This prayer was answered, as we read, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32). He prayed also "for them that believe on Me through their word"—the word of the apostles—"that they all may be one, as thou art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Why? "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21). This prayer will be answered.

Paul compared the church to a building and its foundation—"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I. Cor. 3:11), "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21).

It is represented by a body and its members, "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ" I. Cor. 12:12).

He uses also the figure of a husband and wife, representing the Lord and the church. As the husband has one wife, so the Lord has one church (see Eph. 5:23-32).

Dr. John A. Broadus, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, says the book of Ephesians is an essay on unity, and the fourth chapter is the heart of the book. He says Paul seemed to make seven arguments, as follows: There is one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all.

In I. Cor. 1:10-13, Paul gave a sharp rebuke to the Corinthian brethren. They were divided up in regard to preachers; some liked

Paul best, others Cephas or Peter, others Apollos, while still others exalted Christ above all preachers. He said, "That there be no divisions among you . . . Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? How applicable these questions are to modern conditions.

If we return to the Apostolic Church, we will see examples of unity.

The members of the church in Jerusalem were one, "and all that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts 2:44), "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32).

Paul was a success as a harmonizer. The Jewish and Gentile believers were at variance with each other, as we notice in Acts 15, in regard to circumcision. This was satisfactorily settled by Paul and others. Later a famine occurred in the region about Jerusalem. Paul hearing of this urged the brethren in Macedonia to contribute to their relief. Here was a chance for the Gentile brethren to retaliate upon their Jewish brethren; but no, the Spirit of Christ has taken possession of their hearts, and in response to Paul's appeal the churches in Macedonia, and especially the one at Corinth, sent an offering of love, and the spirit of unity prevailed.

These are only a few of the teachings and examples which show us what the will of the Father is in regard to His people, that they should be one even as the Son and the Father are one.

HOW TO SECURE SUCCESS.

R. W. STEVENSON.

To hear of a steady growth in all the churches of Christ throughout the Maritime Provinces would be most encouraging. There is life where there is growth. To be satisfied with merely holding our own is a sickly condition of things. To allow the cause of Christ to lay on our hands is reprehensible. The cause of Christ has all the elements of success. If there is not a constant growth there is something wrong somewhere. We should not be afraid of over-much enthusiasm. There must be an expenditure of vital force. But religious force, like electric force, must be generated. God gives what is necessary to begin life, and we must increase the amount. We must be fully charged with spiritual power, but this power will not continue to exist if the churches become inactive. It is impossible for one man, or even a few men, to maintain success. The whole church must respond to the work. There must be a united effort in each congregation. The congregations can not grow larger and increase in power unless they are well fed with the bread of life, and they must have plenty of it. It must be fresh. Stale bread may be very healthy once in a while, but it is not always palatable. If the congregation is in a good healthy condition, they will feed well, and there will be no grumbling. It is when people are weakly and sick that they are hard to please. It becomes a minister of the gos-

pel to preach the Word—and preach it in the very best manner possible.

Success requires the members to be in their places at all the services. Their absence in the house of worship is very discouraging and decidedly injurious, resulting in the decay of spiritual strength. There is no laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven. There will be nothing for us in heaven unless we work for it. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." There are some who are ever faithful to the work of the gospel. But there are those who do not seem to care whether the cause of Christ lives or dies. They remain at home for months—will not help to bear the burdens of the work. There are too many who are of no practical benefit to the church. All the men and women who neglect to do their duty toward God are not outside of the church. It is very little use for people to be baptized and never make an honest effort to do something afterwards for Christ. They might as well have remained in the world. Every man who belongs to Christ should not only be constant in his attendance at worship, but help bring some one else there. No good work can be maintained without sacrifice. We are called upon to present our bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. May God help us to do this, and the cause of Christ shall most surely succeed in the Maritime Provinces. Let us help one another. Let us co-operate.

OUR PLEA.

H. MURRAY.

What is it? The one Divine confession of faith, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God; the one Divine Book, the Bible, as an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice; the one Divine name, Christian, by which the whole family on earth and in heaven is named; the union of all of God's children upon an admitted, undisputed and scriptural ground. This plea is what is giving the Christian Church such unprecedented success; and, as the *New York Independent* says, "the only body of people that are not divided."

Why say our plea? Because we are the only body of people who plead for Christian union upon a common, undisputed doctrine, and have, therefore, the only possible ground of union. We do not have to ask others to come to our standard of faith, because they are already there. We present no doctrine to the world, as essential to salvation and Christian union, that is not already believed by others. The person who believes with all his heart in Christ as the Son of God, and heartily repents of his sins, confessing the name of Christ, and is buried with Him in baptism, is acknowledged by the religious world to be a Christian, a child of God. When such a one invites others to stand with him as only a Christian, he is not asking them to accept his views, but to unite with him upon what they already accept and what is not in dispute, but universally acknowledged.

Please don't misunderstand us. We do not say that we have no principles or views or religious ideas that are not in dispute.