

Leadership.

TEXT : One is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren. **MATT. 23 : 8.**

JESUS addressed these words to the twelve, in the hearing of the multitude. And while they were a rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees, they were also designed to impress the disciples with the great truth, that should be felt in all coming times, that Christ is the only head of the church.

The prophetic eye of the Son of God could look forward to the close of the Christian age, and take in at a glance the errors and dangers of the church. And we may look back over her sad history and see that strict adherence to the principle set forth in the text has been important to the purity of the church, while departure from it has marked the progress of different forms of corrupted Christianity. The most prominent among these is the Roman church, which has set one man over the church whose claims to infallibility are sustained by that corrupt body.

In the discussion of the subject of leadership, we propose to bring out evidence from the words of Christ, and from the teaching and practices of the early Apostles, that Christ is the only authorized leader of his people. At the very commencement, in laying the foundation of the Christian church, as Jesus was walking by the sea of Galilee he saw "two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." **Matt. 4 : 18, 19.** And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he saith unto him, Follow me." **Chap. 9 : 9.** "And after these things he went forth, and

saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he said unto him, Follow me." Luke 5 : 27. "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. 19 : 27, 28.

Was Moses the visible leader of the Jewish church? Christ is the leader of the Christian church. Moses speaks of Christ in these words, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Deut. 18 : 15. And Peter in preaching Christ to the people on the occasion of healing the lame man at the gate of the temple, endorses the words of Moses thus : "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." Acts. 3 : 22.

The transfiguration was designed, not only to illustrate the future kingdom of glory after the resurrection and change to immortality, but to impress the church with the glory of Christ as her head and leader. No part of that grand scene could be more impressive than the bright cloud that overshadowed them, and the "voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." Matt. 17 : 5.

And at no time during his public ministry does Christ intimate that any one of his disciples should be designated as their leader. He does say, how-

ever, that "he that is greatest among you shall be your serrant." Matt. 23 : 11. And on the occasion of submitting the great commission to his first ministers, to be perpetuated in the Christian ministry to the close of the age, Christ gives the pledge that ever has been and ever will be the supporting staff of every true minister, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Matt. 28 : 20.

Christ's ministers have ever had a world-wide message. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." And wherever their foot prints may be seen upon the mountains, or in the valleys, there Christ has been by the ministration of his holy angels, and the teachings of the Holy Ghost. "I am with you" is the soul-inspiring promise to every true minister, Christ proposes to lead his seryants, and it is their privilege to approach the throne of grace, and receive from their sovereign Leader fresh rations, and orders direct from headquarters.

And there is no intimation that the Apostles of Christ designated one of their number above another as their leader. Paul would have the Corinthians follow him only as he followed Christ. He says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in sll things, and keep the ordinauces as I delivered them to you." 1 Cor. 11 : 12. Paul, so far from claiming to be the head of the church at Coriuth, and securing their obedience, sympathy, and benevolence on this ground, would shake them off from seeking to be directed by him. He exalts Christ as their leader in the first sentence of the very next verse. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ." Thank Heaven, the

Christian church has no use for the pope.

The Apostle compares two faithful leaders in his epistle to the Hebrews. One was a servant in the Jewish church ; the other is a Son over the Christian church. Who are these two leaders ? Are they Moses and Peter ? or Moses and Paul ? or Moses and Luther ? or Moses and Wesley ? or Moses and Miller ? We need not say that they are Moses and Christ. As a servant in the Jewish church, Moses was their visible leader. As a Son over his own church, Christ is an invisible leader. Moses lead the Hebrews in the wilderness, not by his own wisdom, however superior, but by direct communications from Christ, who was the angel that was with Moses in the church in the wilderness. Acts. 7 : 37, 38. And Christ leads the Christian church through the ministration of angels, attended by the Holy Spirit, in harmony with the written word.

Christ's ministers are shepherds of the flock, and leaders of the people in a subordinate sense. Peter exhorts the under shepherds in these words, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

The Apostle not only shows the relation which ministers sustain to the flock in the foregoing, but he also plainly states in the following, the relation which they sustain to one another. Mutual submission is demanded of all in the spirit of humility, in all their labors and councils, while age and experience are regarded as worthy of especial respect by the younger. Peter continues : "Like-

wise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

Paul enjoins obedience and submission in his epistle to the Hebrews. But he does not require this in particular for himself, or for any other one who may be regarded as the chosen leader of the church. He pleads in behalf of all faithful ministers in these words: "Remember them which have the rule over you; who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end [object or subject] of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Chsp. 13:7. Again he says in verse 17 of the same chapter. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you."

The apostle exalts Christ as the great head of the church, and the only one to whom she should look for leadership, in Hebrews, 12:1, 2. He would have the church benefitted by the experiences of the heroes of faith, mentioned in the eleventh chapter, called in the first verse of the twelfth a cloud of witnesses. But he faithfully guards the church against looking back to them with a spirit of idolatry, or accepting any man as their leader, or pattern of the Christian life, in these three words: "Look unto Jesus." Paul says: "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set

before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

All true ministers are Christ's ambassadors.* "Now then we are ambassadors [ambassadors] for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" 2 Cor. 5:20. In their ministry they are to represent the doctrine of Christ, and the interests of his cause in this world. They surrender their own judgment and will to Him who has sent them. No man can be Christ's ambassador until he has made a complete surrender of his right to private judgment to Christ. Neither can any man properly represent Christ who surrenders his judgment to his fellow man.

The foregoing expresses our solemn convictions relative to the leadership of Christ, and the relation which his ministers sustain to their great Leader, to one another, and to the church. But too many have left the great question of leadership here, with the truth expressed only in part. They have passed over the teachings of Christ and his apostles, relative to discipline, and the proper means of securing unity in the ministry and in the church, and do not let them have their proper qualifying bearing upon the subject. This has opened a wide door for men to enter the ministry who had not submitted their judgment and will to Christ as their leader, while at the same time they take the broadest ground, and exercise the greatest freedom relative to the right of private judgment. Creed power has been

*An ambassador is "a minister of the highest rank, employed by one prince or State at the Court of another, to manage the public concerns of his own prince or State, and representing the power and dignity of his sovereign.— Webster.

called to the rescue in vain. It has been truly said that "The American people are a nation of lords." In a land of boasted freedom of thought and of conscience, like ours, church force cannot produce unity; but has caused divisions, and has given rise to religious sects and parties almost innumerable. And there are not a few professing Christians, some of them very good persons, who reject church organization on account of the use that has been made of creed and church power. Some of these, however, in their mistaken zeal, in the advocacy of religious freedom, are disposed to trample on the rights of others, and use their boasted "liberty for a cloak of maliciousness."

(To be Continued.)

LAST week, we gave proof from the New Testament that Christ was the leader of his people. We also showed the relation which true ministers sustain to their Head, to one another, and to the church. The position taken was that, as Christ's ambassador, speaking in Christ's stead, the true minister must surrender his will and judgment to Christ, and that he cannot, consistently with his high position and holy calling, yield these to any other but Christ. "One is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren," is a declaration too plain to be misunderstood.

But the subject must not be left here, with

the truth partly expressed. The words of Christ and his apostles relative to unity and the ordained means to secure it, and proper discipline must have a qualifying bearing upon the subject, lest unsanctified men, who neither submit their will and judgment to Christ, or to church authority, assume the gospel ministry, and divide and scatter the flock of God.

The remedy, however, for this deplorable evil is found in the proper use of the simple organization, and church order set forth in the New Testament Scriptures, and in the means God has ordained for the unity and perfection of the church. That God has appointed officers, and also other means for the good order, purity, and unity of the church is abundantly proved by such texts as 1 Cor. 12 : 28—30 ; Eph. 4 : 11—13. And no man can show proof that these have been removed from the church by the authority that placed them there, or give any good reasons why they should be removed.

But here we wish it distinctly understood that officers were not ordained in the Christian church to order, or to command the church, and “to lord it over God’s heritage.” In the case of difference of opinion that arose in some of the primitive churches relative to circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, the apostles and elders at Jerusalem acted as counselors, in a manner to give room

for the Holy Ghost to act as Judge. The report of that blessed meeting at Jerusalem to settle a festering difficulty, commences on this wise: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." And the brethren which were from among the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria and Celicia, "rejoiced for the consolation." Differences settled in this way frequently seem more than settled, and generally remain settled; while those disposed of by the exercise of mere church authority are seldom really settled at all.

But when we say that the ambassador for Christ cannot yield his judgment to any but Christ, we do not mean that a young minister, or any one whose ministry has been marked with serious imperfections, and even grave mistakes, should exalt his opinion above his brethren, and turn away his ear from their entreaties and admonitions, under the plea that Christ is his leader. And, on the other hand, the minister who submits his ministry to a superior, the bishop, the president, or one in authority in the church, to be sent out and directed in his ministry, cannot in the fullest sense, be Christ's ambassador. Again we repeat the golden text: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

Between the two extremes we find the grand secret of unity and efficiency in the ministry and in the church of God. Our attention is called to this in a most solemn ap-

peal from the venerable apostle Peter to the elders of his time. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." 1 Pet. 5 : 1—6.

In painful contrast with the foregoing are those ecclesiastical conferences and assemblies of our time, where ministers distinguish themselves by a spirit of strife and debate, and in the use of language which would be regarded as ungentlemanly, not to say unchristian, in all other respectable associations.

We affirm that there is not a single apology in all the book of God for disharmony of sentiment or spirit in the church of God. The means are ample to secure the high standard of unity expressed in these words of

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

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Leadership.

THE positions taken in previous numbers of the SIGNS upon the subject of leadership, are—

1. That Christ is the head and leader of his people. "One is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matt. 23 : 8. "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ." I Cor. 11 : 3.

2. That the simple organization suggested in the New Testament is not designed, by any means, to take the leadership of the church out of the hands of Christ, to be used as a church power to press members to submission and obedience.

3. That we have in the council held with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, Acts 15, an example of order, authority, humility, subordination, and also that state of freedom of the will and conscience that the Holy Ghost could come in and decide in the case. Hence, the cheering report of the final adjustment of the threatening difficulty opens with these words : "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." There were apostles and elders in the church who performed their official duties as wise counselors in a manner to give room for the Holy Ghost to act as judge.

4. That ample means have been ordained in the church to establish and maintain the highest state of perfection and unity expressed in the New Testament. And,

5. That there is not an apology in all the New Testament for disharmony of sentiment, or of spirit, in the church of God.

The high standard of New Testament unity in the church is expressed in the touching prayer of Christ for his disciples just before his betrayal. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." John 17 : 11. In these emphatic words of petition we are carried up to the very throne of Heaven, to the Father and the Son, for an example of unity.

In the previous chapter, Christ had cited the disciples forward to the day of pentecost, when the Spirit of truth, his representative in his absence, should come upon them to guide them into all truth. "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16 : 13. "He will show you things to come." But in his prayer for his disciples, he honors the Word, as the great standard of genuine sanctification, and of divine guidance. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." Chap. 17 : 17.

And this earnest prayer of the Son of God embraces others beside the eleven. In its yearningsympathy for the church it reaches forward to all coming time. "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 ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Verses 20, 21.

Here again the oneness of the Father and the Son is mentioned as the rule of Christian unity for all time. And the reason why it should exist is given in words which may be repeated again, and again—"That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Had the church come up to the standard of unity given in this prayer of our Lord; the world would have believed. But her discord and confusion have been her weakness, and the greatest cause of infidelity; while unity might have been her strength in bringing men to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle takes up the subject right here where the prayer of Christ leaves it. "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God." Rom. 15 : 5, 6. Paul does not lower the standard of unity given by "Christ Jesus," in his prayer for the church; but in his epistle to the brethren of Rome, he holds it up as the only true and safe one. As the Father and the Son are one, so should the church be one.

And in his epistle to the brethren at Corinth, the apostle uses the language of an anxious father beseeching his dear children in Christ, to press to the true standard of Christian unity. "Now 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. 1 : 10.

And in his tender, and yet powerful, appeal to the brethren at Philippi, the apostle urges by all that is high and holy, consoling and merciful,

joyful, and lovely, that they seek the highest standard of unity. "If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Phil. 2 : 1, 2. "Finally," says Paul, "brethren, farewell. Be perfect; be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Cor. 13 : 11, 12. And in perfect accord with this is a most hearty finally from the apostle Peter. He says : "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." 1 Pet. 3 : 8.

The history of the last quoted apostle, viewed in the light of Christian experience, and Christian oneness, is truly wonderful. At one time you see the ardent Peter drawing the sword and cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest. At another time he is denying his Lord, and even cursing. Jesus pitied his weakness, and at the last supper said to him, "Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22 : 31, 32.

Peter is now converted. And the companionship of the beloved John has had a softening, refining influence. He is now a true Christian gentleman. And his exhortation to have "compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous," comes from his heart and pen, all aglow with sanctified arder, with triple power. If it be said that persons, widely differing in temperament and taste, cannot by the

grace of God be brought to a condition of unity of sentiment and spirit, we reply, 'The word of God, and Peter and John.

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Leadership.

THE various forms of government existing in the different religious bodies in our time, is evidence that church government and discipline is a subject upon which learned and good men have differed. In no one chapter, or book, has Paul, or Peter, or John, or James, or Jude, written out a system of Christian discipline, giving the position and duties of the several callings, gifts and officers. But that there should be order in the church of God is evident, not only from the declarations of the apostles, and the record of their acts gathered from the New Testament, but from the great facts relative to system and order, found in the Old Testament. God is the same in all ages. And the freedom of the gospel of Christ does not consist in laxity and confusion.

The epistles of Paul and of Peter distinctly speak of officers of the church, and of their duties. The New Testament clearly defines the relation which Christ sustains to the ministry and to the church; and also the proper relation of the ministry to the church, and to one another. But the system of Christian organization is not given as fully in the New Testament, as the system of Jewish organization was given in the Old Testament. Having, however, the benefit of both the record of the system of the former and the declarations and acts of the first apostles of the latter, we have all that In-

finite Wisdom saw necessary for the Christian church.

The relation which Christ sustains to the ministry and to the church, is stated in these texts: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matt. 23 : 8. "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ." 1 Cor. 11 : 3. Christ is the Great Shepherd of all, while his ministers are under shepherds. Peter charges the elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." 1 Pet. 5 : 2-4.

And Paul would impress the church with her duty to the ministry in these words: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God." Heb. 13 : 7. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." Verse 17. And yet it was not the design of God that any system of organization should exist in the Christian church that would take the leadership from Christ.

Organization was designed to secure unity of action, and as a protection from imposture. It was never intended as a scourge to compel obedience, but, rather, for the protection of the people of God. Christ does not drive his people. He calls them. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Our living Head leads the way, and calls his people to follow.

Human creeds cannot produce unity. Church force cannot press the church into one body. This has been tried, and has proved a failure. Christ never designed that human minds should be moulded for Heaven by the influence merely of other human minds. "The head of every man is Christ." His part is to lead, and to mould, and to stamp his own image upon the heirs of eternal glory. However important organization may be for the protection of the church, and to secure harmony of action, it must not come in to take the disciple from the hands of the great Teacher.

Christ designs that his people may be one. He prays : "That they all may be one, as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." John 17 : 21. The ordained means for the unity of the church are ample, and will accomplish the design of Heaven on all those who walk worthy of Christ, and humbly cultivate the spirit of love and unity. Paul appeals to the church of the Ephesians upon the subject, and urges unity on the grounds of the oneness of the Christians hope, faith, baptism, Lord, and God and Father of all. Instead of a plurality of spirits, leading many bodies to Christ to Heaven by different routes. Paul declares : "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

We can find no better words to close our remarks upon the subject this week, than the triumphant appeal of the great apostle. Hear him, as he sets forth the disciple's proper condition of mind, and the oneness and efficiency of the

ample means to secure the unity and perfection of the church of Christ.

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is, above all and through all and in you all.” Eph. 5 : 1-6.

The mere definite means ordained in the church of God for her perfection and unity, should by no means be overlooked. Let the reader bear in mind that these were all given at the same time, for the same purpose, and all to cease at the same time. Have a part ceased? all have ceased. Do a portion continue? then all continue. Paul speaks of Christ's endowment of the church thus: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Verses, 11-13.

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Elder James White, Editor and Proprietor.

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