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Miscellanea

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Miscellanea

Theological Liberalism Rethinks Itself

We are sure that our readers will be glad to read what the *Calvin Forum* (February, 1947) has to offer under this heading. Briefly it is this: Modernism, though still held to by its advocates, has proved itself a vain philosophy, and Liberalists are therefore looking for new foundations. Manifestly they do not care for the sure foundations of the divine Word; but is not their perplexity our opportunity for making known everywhere the everlasting truth of God which alone can satisfy the human heart? We read:

"A few months ago Dean Loomer of the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago gave a significant talk to a group of alumni of his institution. He pointed out that the men who had been his own teachers at the Chicago Divinity School and the teachers of many of the men he was addressing, were retiring fast from the scene to be displaced by an entirely new group of younger men. Of such retiring theologians he mentioned by name: Aubrey, Baker, Bower, Case, Garrison, Goodspeed, Graham, Haydon, McNeill, Riddle, and Spinka. He observed that in a short time the Federated Faculty would probably be the youngest graduate faculty in the country. All this is interesting, but not particularly significant. However, toward the close of this talk the new Dean, who himself is a recent youthful successor to Dean Colwell, made this illuminating statement:

"'But I would be less than just to you if I did not communicate to you the underlying conviction of the faculty that the day of a merely tolerant and negative sort of liberalism is dead. The liberalism which can be described as anti-fundamentalism or anti-traditionalism or anti-something-else and which lacks a positive content itself is no longer adequate. A liberalism which assumes that tolerance is the fundamental virtue and which lacks a criterion of true and false, better and worse, is deadening, thin, and academic in the worst sense. Believing this, we question the advisability, yes, the fundamental honesty, of giving a man a Ph. D., regardless of his basis for determining what is evidence in matters religious. One of the faculty's greatest concerns is to discover a Protestant conception of authority which is constructive, democratic, disciplined, and adequate. It is this problem which makes us see that the intellectual struggle is a necessary aspect of the religious quest.'

"Every sentence in this paragraph is loaded with meaning. We may be permitted to make a few observations:

"1. Apparently the days of the glorification of 'the open mind,' of pursuing the theological study without any 'prepossessions,' are past at the U. of C. Divinity School. This appears to be a repudiation of the pragmatistic spirit and methods that have

prevailed for some years in every department of the University of the Midway, the Divinity School not excepted.

"2. Is this an admission of the inherent weakness of the theological liberalism that stands for nothing positive and has entrenched itself for attack on the conservative position without having a solution of its own? Is this the effect, however indirect, of the new spirit that is abroad which recognizes strength in the assertions of 'Neo-Orthodoxy,' Neo-Thomism, and possibly even of certain forms of Fundamentalism? Is this the further permeation of the new spirit of Chancellor Hutchins and President Colwell—the former Divinity Dean—into the theological precincts of the institution where such theological pragmatism as that of Mathews, Haydon, and Baker once held sway? And does this also mean a turning away from the theological pragmatism of such a man as Wieman?

"3. It is heartening to hear that it is one of the faculty's greatest concerns 'to discover a Protestant conception of authority.' This is a tremendous admission as coming from the Dean of the Divinity School on the Midway. William Cleaver Wilkenson, the author of *Paul and the Revolt Against Him*, a man who was teaching in the Baptist Seminary, which through the millions of John D. Rockefeller was incorporated into the then new University, would be deeply interested to hear of this today if he were still living. The 'Baptist' members of the present Federated Faculty may or may not remember that this Baptist, who soon was shelved by the liberals after the merger, in his book advanced the authority of the Word of God as expressed in Christ and His Apostles and then, speaking of the present-day revolt against this authority, included a chapter entitled significantly: 'Is the University of Chicago Such a Voice of Revolt?'

"4. If Dean Loomer and the Faculty for which he claimed to be speaking are in real earnest about discovering a Protestant conception of authority, may we be permitted to suggest that such a conception does not need to be discovered any more, though no doubt it needs to be rediscovered at the University of Chicago. We suggest that he make a careful study of the work of Abraham Kuyper entitled *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles*. Perhaps Dean Loomer also recalls an address in his presence, and—for that matter—in the presence of Professor Wieman and many other scholars, last May under the title: 'Calvinism and American Theology Today.' If he does, he will remember the plea for the restoration of God-centered thinking and the revival of Theological Science with which that address closed. Now that the scholars of Dean Loomer's faculty are ready to consider a 'Protestant conception of authority,' we know no better source material for their study and research than the classic works of the great Reformed theologians.

"5. Dean Loomer is very much to the point when he observes that 'it is this problem which makes us see that the intellectual

struggle is a necessary aspect of the religious quest.' This is a recognition of the fact that liberal theology has lost contact with the pulpit and the pew. It is an admission that personal piety and the fear of God are—or should be—inseparable from the theological study. It is a confession that a philosophy of religion does not touch the real needs of the human heart and, likewise, that a theology must be vital, touching life, must be preachable and that no great preaching can be carried on without the authority of God and His Word behind it. Dean Loomer will not accept all these inferences. If he did, he would become a Reformed theologian and would devoutly bow before the authority of the Word of God. But we may be pardoned for pointing out that the admissions made in the Dean's address confirm the correctness of these great historic positions and are an indictment of the pragmatistic, humanistic assumptions that have held sway at the University of Chicago for the last three decades. For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

J. T. M.

Doors of Utterance

II

Open Doors in India

The doors have been open to us in India for over fifty years, and we have entered by some of those doors. Our readers will probably be familiar with the manner in which our Synod began work in India. After having contributed for some years to missionary efforts in India by European mission societies, and with a widespread feeling that our Synod ought to undertake work of her own on a foreign mission field, it so happened that several missionaries who had left a European mission society for reasons of conscience were found to be in full accord with our Synod in matters of doctrine and were ready to undertake mission work in India under a commission from our Church. These first missionaries began in an entirely new field, in Krishnagiri and neighboring cities, in the North Arcot District of South India. It was very difficult going, since they were pioneers in that field in the fullest sense of the word. Nevertheless, by and by some doors were open to them in that area, and at the present time we have a rather sizable group of congregations in the so-called Ambur Conference District. While in this instance the missionaries looked for an entirely untouched field, our later mission effort in India seemed to follow in the main a somewhat different pattern. Some open doors were found because people asked us to come and teach them, and so it frequently was not so much a matter of our searching for open doors as rather of others coming to us and petitioning us to serve them. Usually the beginnings were small, but the Gospel being a living word, there would be fruits in the course of time and so our Church has seen some steady progress during these years. There probably never was a spectacular development, but

we were also free from those devastating setbacks from which our China mission suffered (flood, Communistic uprising, Japanese invasion and bombing). In spite of the wilting effect of the climate, the poverty, the superstition and ignorance of the people, the many unpleasant and selfish traits encountered, the many measures resorted to by unfriendly governments, and the difficulty of recruiting sufficient manpower and finding sufficient financial support for the work, our work in India has found open doors and has made commendable progress. Appreciable progress has been made towards building an indigenous Church. Some thirty-five Indian pastors have been trained by us and are now serving congregations. Some five hundred teachers and catechists and other church workers have also been trained by us and have been put to work. Our system of training teachers and native pastors is functioning quite well. More and more the people are learning to assume responsibility, and gradually leadership is emerging out of the native Church.

But now we need to look for other open doors. We should search for open doors and not merely sit back and wait for people to find us and beg us to serve them. We need to follow the system employed by St. Paul of getting into strategic centers and letting the work spread out from there in concentric circles. We need to branch out into new neighborhoods not yet touched by us. We need to create and expand our India literature. We need to give growing attention to the task of making the native Church members undertake personal mission work and to have them effectively reach out for others. We need, then, to think of many new sections in India which have not yet been touched by us and where, no doubt, a conscientious search would lead us to many an open door of utterance.

Open Doors in the Philippines

In a miraculous manner the Lord has directed our attention to the Philippine Islands. A lonesome young man, who hailed from those distant shores and now very much a stranger in St. Louis, listened to the Lutheran broadcasts and was thus brought into contact with our Church. This led to his becoming a member of our Church, attending our schools, and graduating from our seminary. Through him our attention was directed in a particular manner to the Philippine Islands. The Board of Foreign Missions sent their Executive Secretary with this young man to make a tour of investigation of mission possibilities in that country, and this survey resulted in the conclusion that Lutheran church work should be undertaken also in that nation. The war postponed the actual initiation of this move. But with the close of the war it was possible to get a start. Under the circumstances it was deemed best to seek an opening through a service center operated by the Army and Navy Commission in Manila, and Pastor Theodore D. Martens was given a leave of absence for one year by his congregation in Pittsburgh in order that he might serve in Manila. While his first

efforts naturally were centered on the spiritual care of members of the armed forces, it was inevitable that as active a missionary as Pastor Martens should also come into contact with Filipino or American civilians. Then, from the summer of 1946 on, Rev. Alvaro Carino was in Manila and was followed a little later also by the Rev. Herman Mayer. The Executive Secretary of the Board then spent a month in Manila and its environments, and it was then possible to formulate plans for the future conduct of the work. After Pastor Martens returned to his home church in Pittsburgh, both Pastors Carino and Mayer continued in Manila and are now in full activity. A service center is maintained jointly by the Army and Navy Commission and the Board of Foreign Missions at 1312 General Luna, Manila, where services are conducted every Sunday morning and other church activities have their center. Pastor Mayer also conducts instruction classes in a private home some two miles farther down this section of Manila, in the home of a captain of the police force. Carino conducts services and instructions in a neat little chapel built in the Santa Cruz section, north of the Pasig River, in a thickly populated, better than middle class, Filipino sector. He also conducts instruction classes in a private home about a mile from the site of this chapel, while he and his family live in a Quonset hut in a newer suburb of Manila. Think of it; within a few months regular services are held at two places and regular instructions at two additional places, with chances for still more work if we but had the places and the men!

Among the significant facts of the work in Manila, let us recall that God led a group of men to our missionaries, men who had been connected with other church groups but long felt a dissatisfaction with the unionistic and un-Scriptural practices of those bodies, men who for a number of months received daily instruction in the Word of God, and men who, under God, might serve very well as members of the teaching force of our Church. Quite a number of other contacts have been established with Filipino people. The regular broadcasts of the Lutheran Hour twice each Sunday have also contributed very substantially to the spreading of information, the breaking down of prejudices, and the building of appreciation for the fact that the Lutheran Church intends to preach the Word of God in all its truth and power.

While some Christian church work has been carried on in the Philippine Islands for many years, a careful investigation will reveal the presence of a great many people who either are altogether unchurched or who have only the most superficial and merely nominal connection with any church body. And this is a new nation, just assuming the status of independence, with a great awakening, a stirring up of the mind, a reaching out for truth, a desire to find something truly satisfying and utterly dependable. Especially our Lutheran Church can therefore be in a position to render outstanding service to many such people if we establish contact with them, in other words, if we search for open doors and

then with courageous determination endeavor to enter by those open doors.

Open doors in the Philippine Islands seem to be offered also by the opportunity to carry on Christian mission work through the agency of Christian schools. Our Board has resolved to initiate such measures and hopes to establish schools during the course of this year. The Filipino people are accustomed to sending their children to private schools if they can afford it. Furthermore, the general custom of accepting children in school only after they are nine years old offers us a tremendous number of possible recruits for the lower grades.

According to our mission policy, we should, then, also begin quite soon to train native young men for the ministry. All our effort in the Philippines ought to be directed toward building up an indigenous Church. While at the present time quite a group of mission workers is to be sent to the Philippine Islands, in all probability there should be few additional men sent over from here, but henceforth determined efforts should be made to build up a native ministry. This native ministry, however, should consist of people very carefully chosen and very thoroughly indoctrinated. With the help of a very carefully trained native ministry, no doubt, many new open doors will present themselves to us.

What About Japan?

When the Apostle Paul speaks of himself as a debtor to all men, and when we today repeat this humble acknowledgment of our obligation to bring the Gospel to all our fellow men, it will be felt that this applies with particular force also to the Japanese people. It is true that thus far we have not found an open door. There might have been an open door ten years ago, twenty years ago, forty years ago, but at present we can but hope for the opening of a door. We indeed expect that quite soon it will be possible to undertake a survey of mission opportunities in Japan, and we fervently hope that not long after this survey has been made it will be possible to send out mission workers to Japan. As soon as the door is open, there will be people ready and willing to go. And we do not doubt the willingness of Synod's constituency to support such missionary undertakings with their prayers and contributions. A very encouraging feature in the minds of those concerned is the fact that usually when a new mission venture is undertaken in a new country, so much interest is generated among our membership that the increased contributions are sufficient to take care of the additional mission expenditure.

There may be open doors for us also in other countries which have not yet been touched by us. For instance, in connection with possible work among Moslems we may be able to reach into fields that have not yet been cultivated by our representatives, and there may be other nations and other parts of the world in which open doors may be found. Let us pray the Lord to grant us doors of utterance!

Why Enter the Open Door?

But what is to be our purpose when we have found an open door and entered into some field of foreign mission activity? It may be profitable to spend some time discussing this question. Every once in a while you will read someone's effusive assertion that in days gone by missionaries went out with a purpose of preaching the Gospel, but nowadays the world has learned to look for a different kind of mission activity. What is needed today, it is said, is not so much a missionary whose strength would lie in his ability to preach the Word of God but rather someone who is trained in methods of improving the productivity of the soil or in improving the breed of cattle and chickens or someone who will work for an uplifting of the standards of education and who will instill democratic ideals and teach people to observe the rules of American or European etiquette, and, in general, to transplant the culture to be found in Great Britain or New England to a nation that might not take at all to that kind of culture. St. Paul very distinctly says, when he prays for a door of utterance, that he might speak the mystery of Christ. That's the real purpose of missionary work, to teach the mystery of Christ, to unfold the plan of God for the redemption of the world through the sacrificial death of His Son, λαλῆσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. This is indeed a mystery to man. That it is such a mystery will strike you with tremendous force as you look at the ceremonies and religious practices of the heathen nations. You will be made to see that every heathen religion is a religion of fear. They all end in the everlasting No, no matter how finely spun and intricately contrived. They are all barren of life and hope. They are all aimed at averting evil, of placating an angry deity, of earning merit and acquiring favor for oneself. You, therefore, find the devotees of these heathen religions surrendered with a frozen apathy and dull resignation to fate with a complete lack of initiative and a spineless subservience to the vagaries of cruel fortune, with a shrug of the shoulder and the resigned sigh, "that's karma," that's your fate, "maiyo fadze," there is no other way. Or there is a set look of fanatic frenzy with which these poor dupes of the prince of darkness devote themselves to their religious observances and torture themselves in their effort to atone for their sins and to build up some merit.

In the midst of this appalling darkness and utter absence of light and hope, oh, what a wonderful task it is to come in with the mystery of Christ, to proclaim the love and grace of God in Christ Jesus, to set before these people the prospect of forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb and of the hope of everlasting life, to lift up the individual and give him dignity and worth, to make him see that he means something to a gracious God, to give him the assurance that a benign and omnipotent God watches over him and guides his destinies! No wonder Saint Paul, from out of his prison confines and with the chains clinking upon his wrists as he

writes, is impelled to this impassioned plea, "Pray for us that God may give us a door of utterance," that St. Paul wants the prison doors open so that he may be free for more of his missionary journeys, so that he under the drive and urge of this missionary desire can continue to catapult himself into ever new missionary projects, to speak the mystery of Christ, λαλήσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

We have just called attention to the bonds of St. Paul. He speaks of these bonds in this very connection, but that does not deter him from wishing for doors of utterance. Thus we, too, may run into danger, may encounter difficulty, may even suffer bonds because of our proclamation of the Gospel. Was this not literally fulfilled when some of our missionaries were confined in concentration camps during the late war? But what of it if the missionary enterprise calls for sacrifice, confronts you with danger, and leads you into the seething maelstrom of national ambitions which may break forth in bloody revolution at any moment without warning or reason? Christians will say, even as Christ said: We must do this, we ought to speak. We have this definite task under divine compulsion. We have that inescapable obligation to those who do not know Christ: We ought to speak, ὡς δεῖ με λαλήσαι.

We ought to speak. In all the wide world there probably is not another church body as well equipped to do this speaking of the mystery of Christ as just we are. God has preserved to us purity of doctrine and a clear conception of the principles of Christian mission work. We have grown to great size and strength. Surely we ought to use this tremendous manpower and these great resources for a most comprehensive, sweeping, far-visioned, courageous missionary program; we, of all people on the earth, ought to speak this mystery of Christ.

And there still is time. Doors still are open. How long they may be open, how long we may have a chance to enter by those open doors is something hidden in the councils of God. Let us work while it is day, before the night cometh when no man can work!

O. H. SCHMIDT

The Church and Caste

The question we propose to consider is whether Christians of the same locality, if they would be true Christians, must necessarily unite as one congregation with complete disregard for differences of caste. First, we shall endeavor to show by a few examples the practice generally followed by Protestant missionaries in India. Secondly, we shall try to ascertain what according to Scripture is the attitude the Christian Church should adopt. Finally, we shall deal with a few objections.

1

The first example has to do with a village of considerable size, the bulk of whose population is divided into three castes, which, according to general custom, are segregated in so many different sections of the village. In the midst of one of these

castes there is a Christian congregation, whose members constitute only a minority of their caste in the village. In the caste system the caste of these Christians ranks between the other two.

This was the situation when the missionary whose narrative we, in the main, here follow accepted charge of the Christian congregation at this place. It pained him to observe that only one caste was represented in the congregation, and he determined to make every effort to gain souls for Christ also from the other castes in the village. To this end he not only himself frequently visited these castes, but also diligently instructed the Christians in his charge concerning their Christian duty in this respect. Nor were his efforts altogether in vain. Some of the Christians gladly accepted his instructions and began to put into practice what they learned. They made it a practice to speak about the Christian way, as opportunity offered, to individuals of the other castes.

In one detail, however, these Christians did not dare to follow the advice of their teacher. They had not the courage to invite those of other castes to their church for worship. Instead they advised the missionary, and pleaded with him, to deal with each caste in its own section and, should any embrace Christianity, to baptize such in the midst of their respective caste and so to establish a Christian congregation in each. Said they: "If those of higher caste join our congregation, they will be persecuted by their fellow castemen; if those of lower caste join, we will be persecuted by our fellow castemen." But the missionary held that under no circumstances could he agree to the establishment of two or even more congregations in the same village on caste lines. He continued in his efforts to bring individuals from the other castes into the church of the Christians. Though these castes also told him about the difficulties involved, they did not resent his persistent urging, for most of them had taken a liking to him.

The missionary had already begun to doubt that his efforts would succeed, when on a Sunday morning as worship was about to begin he recognized among those assembled several individuals of the higher caste, and he rejoiced greatly when these men continued to attend the services, even though somewhat irregularly. He saw in this a sign that the power of caste was declining. But his joy soon turned to grief. The men gradually came less often and finally ceased to come at all.

It is not contrary to caste law for males of different castes to assemble. The difficult thing for them is to organize as one congregation and to bring their womenfolk to the meetings. Conditions in the cities have in this respect changed in a measure. But even in the cities these conditions still obtain. In some cases a Christian congregation in the city would bring difficulties upon itself by receiving into membership individuals from certain castes. Far greater is the power of caste in the villages. However much the men referred to above may have desired to embrace Christianity, they could join the Christian congregation of the other caste only at the cost of separating from their own caste and in

most cases from their own families, whereas they might have been tolerated as a Christian congregation in their own caste.

Somewhat later the missionary also succeeded in persuading some individuals of the lower caste to come to the church of the Christians. The lower caste people anticipated trouble. Said they: "We are not offended because the Christians have not invited us to their worship. If we attend, trouble will come to them and to us. We will be satisfied if you conduct services for us in our own midst." But the missionary remained firm. Finally some agreed, and the next Sunday morning they attended.

And that was fatal. There was no disturbance during worship. But after the service members of the congregation spoke to the missionary in effect as follows: "Whether this one incident will bring about a calamity, we do not know. But even if it does not, these people must not again come to our services. True, they also should become Christians and receive the salvation of their souls, and we ourselves have often urged them to embrace the Christian religion. We have also promised them our help. But such a thing as this is contrary to caste law. Our fellow castemen will not permit this in their midst. And even though no great harm should come to us, it will in future certainly prevent them from joining our congregation." But they could not convince the missionary. Nor did he change his mind when he was informed that the very next night the palm-leaf roofs of the lower caste people had been destroyed by fire. Though he suspected his own congregation members of the arson, he conceded that the culprits might have been some of their non-Christian fellow castemen. Finally he submitted to what he deemed the inevitable and took comfort in the thought that all we can do is to continue patiently in preaching the Gospel and meantime earnestly hope for the time when the power of caste will at last have been broken. And so, while elsewhere many converts have been won from this caste, none have been gained in this village to this day, simply because it is not deemed proper by the missionary to permit castes to worship separately in the same village.

Let us take another example. A group of people of a certain caste applied for Christian instruction. There was no Christian church near their village. Hence there was no need, for the first at least, to invite them to the church of another caste. The need rather was to avoid doing just that, else the matter would have ended at the very start. The missionary was not himself in a position to come to their village very often, so he told them of an able catechist of another caste who might instruct them. The catechist was personally known to them. Since there was no catechist of their own caste available, they accepted this man, though in caste rank he stood a little below them. It is noteworthy that the applicants included not only whole families, but also from numerous families only certain individuals, the husband, or the wife, or the father or mother with the children, or the young folk without their parents. Their occupation, too, was one that

requires the co-operation of many. Their instruction proceeded quietly and orderly right in their own village. Though they were subjected to scorn and ridicule by a few, nothing occurred to interfere with the lessons. In due time the missionary examined them and found most of them sufficiently prepared for the Sacrament of Baptism. The day for their Baptism was appointed.

Then a difficulty arose. The missionary deemed it necessary that either before or in connection with their Baptism these converts pass another test. To this end he asked them to come for their Baptism to the church of Christians belonging to a caste considered lower than their own.

They declined to do this, and at that the missionary was not surprised. But he felt confident that, having accepted Christian instruction for so long a time, even though at the first they should refuse, they would feel ashamed to return to their former way and finally consent. If they refused, he declared, it was certain they had no Christian love in their hearts. In reply they said: "The reason why we are unwilling to do as you ask is not an evil caste spirit. We do not, because of the difference in caste, hate these Christians. Nor will they think that we do so. They know that by going to their church we shall bring evil upon ourselves. We are fully persuaded that these Christians, having recommended the Gospel to us, and having time and again urged us to study the Gospel that our souls might be saved, will certainly not desire that for their sake we be deprived of our livelihood and many of us be separated from parents and even from wife and children." But all they could say was of no avail. Also the catechist who had instructed them, and some of the members of the Christian congregation, interceded on their behalf, but accomplished nothing. With one exception all of them returned to their former way, and that is where they are now. The one exception had to seek a new livelihood and with the missionary's help found it.

We may at this point also take note of the practice which was followed by Christian missionaries during approximately the first century and a quarter (1706—1832) of Protestant missionary work in India. Also the missionaries of that era generally held that Christians of different castes, if they happened to dwell in the same locality, must necessarily organize as one congregation and unite with each other in common worship. However, to make this possible, they adopted certain other measures. As far as necessary, they permitted the various castes to sit apart at worship and to approach the Lord's Table in the order of their caste rank.

The latter arrangement in particular often caused trouble. But it ought not to be asserted that the only reason for this was a sinful caste spirit on the part of those of higher caste. No doubt some of the Christians were possessed of such a spirit. But this was not true of all of them. Some of their own accord disregarded caste rank and partook of the Lord's Supper together with those of other castes. Especially among the mission workers and others

who had separated from their caste there were some who did so. But there were also such, no less humble in spirit, as had to face a serious difficulty. By failing to observe the order of caste rank at the Lord's Table they would expose themselves to persecution at the hands of their non-Christian fellow castemen. It cannot be denied that such as observed this order from a sinful caste spirit thereby became guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But against those who in submission to caste law and from fear of persecution refrained from mixing with other castes at the Lord's Table, we cannot raise the charge of an evil caste spirit.

It is also not proper to raise against the early missionaries the charge that by giving room to such differences in the church they made concessions to the sinful caste spirit. They themselves, in their correspondence with their home boards, time and again declared that whenever their Christians manifested this sinful attitude they rebuked them and admonished them to show true brotherly love toward one another. But the missionaries were also conscious of the fact that this sinful spirit cannot be removed from the hearts of men by force. In the spirit of Christ they aimed to avoid all legalism and coercion and to influence the hearts of men by the mercies of God alone.

In permitting such differences in the church the purpose of the early missionaries was to accommodate themselves to caste law in outward things, in so far as they could do so without sinning. For this we cannot fault them. But it is not out of place to ask whether there was not a better way of accommodation than the one selected by them. If to give room to such differences inside the church in deference to caste law is not contrary to Christian love, how is it possible to assert that the same Christians could not keep the unity of the Spirit by the bond of peace if they were divided into two or three congregations according to caste? Be that as it may, in a village inhabited by many castes would a place of worship for each not be a hundred times better than only one church in which only the Christians of one caste can worship?

There have been individual missionaries from time to time, though their number is not large, who have been glad to baptize converts in their own place, without insisting that they come to the church of another caste. Among them we think of one who in a number of places in his large circle permitted Christians of different castes in very close proximity to one another to organize as so many congregations and to worship separately. In some cases congregations of different castes were served by the same catechist or pastor. If all had labored in the spirit of this missionary, the Christian Church of India would have been immeasurably blessed. But even while this missionary was still among the living, his successors destroyed with one blow what he had built. Where places of worship for Christians of different castes had been established in close proximity to one another, these men took it upon themselves to shut down one of them, instructing the respective worshippers to go to the other church. Some of the Christians did so.

Some such congregations tried to maintain themselves. Most of them returned to their former way.

In this connection two questions occur to us. If it is thought that where there are two congregations in the same village, it is better that one return to the old way than that both remain, why should we not desert also the other? Again, if it is by all means necessary to desert one of the two, should it not be the stronger, who perchance may find it possible to stand alone, rather than the weaker, who stand so much more in need of our aid?

We see, then, on what principle the accepted practice is based, namely, on the principle that Christians of the same village, if they would be true Christians, must under all circumstances worship in the same church.

2

We now examine this position in the light of Scripture. First we will remind ourselves of certain general principles that need to be taken into account in this connection.

We shall begin with a fundamental rule stated in 1 Cor. 7:24. It reads thus: "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." Scripture neither here nor in any other place refers to caste as we have it in India. Nevertheless, reading through the whole chapter, one can easily see that this constitutes a general rule made clear by a number of examples, and that the rule is applicable also to situations not mentioned by the Holy Spirit. By the examples given in the chapter it becomes clear that this general rule is applicable also to caste. What does it imply? We may state it thus: "Dear Christian, abide in caste if you can do so with God, that is, without compromising with sin; but if you can separate from caste without committing sin, you may do so." The Christian's first thought is neither that he will by all means remain in caste nor that he will by all means leave caste; the supreme question for him is: "What is it that I may do with God? How must I conduct myself so that I commit no sin?" Nor does the Christian undertake to decide the question by himself. He lets the Word of God decide it for him. Let us do that.

First of all we have to take note of a false notion that some people combine with caste. It is the idea that one is born high caste because of his good merits acquired in previous existences, and that another is born low caste because of the demerits earned by him in previous births. According to this tenet, then, the high caste man has the right to consider himself better in the sight of God than the low caste man. The Christian believes none of these things. He believes what St. Paul says Rom. 3: 23-24: "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." In spite of all outward differences among men, whether they be Jews or Greeks, bondmen or freemen, male or female, high caste or low caste, all without distinction are by nature equally lost and condemned sinners and for all there is only one way of salvation, the way of free grace

in Christ Jesus, without any kind of human merit. That is the faith of the Christian. He will therefore never give room to the thought that because of his caste he is more pleasing to God than another. By nature every human being is inclined to deem himself better than others. That is the sin of pride and envy. We all have need to resist this sin in ourselves. Also the Christians of any caste have reason to beware of this sin, for according to Scripture it utterly contradicts their Christian faith.

One who has the Christian faith in his heart will also *walk* according to this faith. If he fails to do so, he is not a Christian at all, even though he call himself one. Before he became a Christian, either he worshiped idols or he did not at all concern himself about any god. But now he worships the true God as He has revealed Himself to him by the Word of Scripture. Formerly he lived in sin or at best, if he lived honorably in the sight of men, he did so from the fear of punishment or in the hope of temporal or eternal gain or both. But now, if he is a sincere Christian, it is his love to God that makes him desire with all his heart to do what is pleasing to God and to shun what is displeasing to Him. Nor does he himself decide, or permit other men to decide for him, what is sin and what is not sin. He remembers the admonition of St. Paul which reminds the Christians that they are bought with the price of Christ's blood to be His servants and to obey His Word, and which warns them not to become again the servants of men by obeying the commandments of men. (1 Cor. 7:23.)

This the Christian remembers also in connection with caste. Concerning many caste customs he needs to ask himself whether he may keep them or whether he must renounce them. Let us take a few examples. The cord worn by certain castes is to some nothing more than an outward caste mark, without any religious significance, while others wear it as a religious duty and as the mark of a kind of second birth. May also a Christian wear the cord? What is the answer that Scripture gives? From Scripture it is clear that the Jews upon becoming Christians continued to observe their Jewish customs. Many of these were observed by the Jews as religious customs, as, for instance, the rite of circumcision. For the Jews of the Old Testament this rite was a divine institution. For the Christians of the New Testament circumcision is not a divine institution and therefore not necessary for salvation. The Jewish Christians were therefore forbidden to observe it in this sense. (Gal. 2:3-5.) But there was no reason why they should not view circumcision as a Jewish national custom and accordingly circumcise their male children, as also Paul had Timothy circumcised. The matter of wearing the cord is analogous. Christians must indeed renounce the false notions that some connect with the wearing of the cord. Nor may they observe non-Christian religious ceremonies in connection with its investiture. But a Christian may wear the cord as a caste custom and invest his baptized sons with it. And if he is determined that in future it shall remind him of the true birth by water and the Spirit, so much

the better. Another example: In many villages taxes are levied for village purposes, including the temple tax. May the Christian render this tax? The commandment of God is that also the Christians should pay the village taxes levied by those in authority. (Rom. 13:7.) God's Word does not say that when the Christian knows the money will be used for improper purposes, he should refuse to render the tax. Though the money be used for such purposes by those in authority, the Christian is not responsible. There are many such things concerning which the Christian must ask himself whether or not by doing them he sins. Moreover, he must realize that he sins also when he deems sinful a thing or a custom that God has not forbidden. He may discard the cord if he likes; but he sins if he discards it with the idea that to wear it would be sinful. (Rom. 14:14, 20, 23.)

An important part of a Christian's conduct is to *confess* his faith before men. If he endeavors to avoid sin and to lead a godly life, his fellow castemen will in time come to realize that a change has taken place in him. They will begin to remark about it and on occasion also question him whether he has become a Christian. What must a Christian then do? He should remember the solemn words of His Savior recorded in Matt. 10:32-33: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." A Christian must always be ready to confess his faith. He must never think: "I will so speak and do that the people may not discover that I am a Christian."

To illustrate: A Christian may be tempted to receive Baptism in secret in order that he may continue to dwell unmolested among his fellow castemen. One who with this intention has himself secretly baptized thereby becomes guilty of denying his Savior. Any attempt of this nature to abide in caste is sin. Another example: There is no commandment of God that adults must change their names when they receive Baptism. The name is no matter. It is best, if possible, to retain the names by which they are already known and to make these names honorable by holy living. Here also the rule in 1 Cor. 7:24 applies. But if a Christian retains his old name with the intention of using it on occasion to hide his Christian faith, he sins. Such an occasion arises, for instance, when a Christian has reason to believe that, if he becomes known as a Christian, he will be dismissed by his employer and have difficulty in finding another livelihood. Another instance is the case of one who is receiving Baptism far from his home village and has reason to think that, should he at some future time visit his own people, he would be persecuted by them if it became known that he is a Christian. One who for such eventualities refrains from changing his name evidently does so with the intention of denying his Savior. That is sin. Also in keeping the cord and in rendering the temple tax a Christian must have no such inten-

tions. We will tell him he should much rather submit to persecution. Or, if he can, he may flee, as did the Christians at Jerusalem when the great persecution came upon them. In any case it is far better for him to suffer all and even death than to deny his Redeemer and to forfeit eternal life.

So much in general. We now turn to the matter we wish to discuss in particular, namely, whether Christians of different castes in the same village, if they would be true Christians, must unite as one congregation and worship together regardless of caste law. Also in this connection numerous points need to be considered. The first is the caste law concerning social intercourse between the castes. May a Christian submit to this caste law, or must he oppose it? Certainly also in this matter he must walk as becomes a Christian and confess his faith before men, and this implies that he love and acknowledge his fellow believers of other castes. How according to God's Word must he do this?

All castes prohibit intermarriage. Some Christian missionaries in the past went so far as to instruct and urge their Christians to marry persons of other castes to whom they had taken a liking. In this respect most missionaries exercise greater wisdom. The reason for this, however, is in many cases not so much the conviction that there is no warrant in God's Word for so instructing the Christians, as the realization that such marriages usually lead to confusion and disorder and result in much suffering and hardship for both those who have contracted such marriages and their children. But that Christians must defy caste law to practice interdining and to assemble for common worship with Christians of other castes, is to this day the accepted policy among Christian missionaries. What shall be our attitude?

In this connection we have to point to two things clearly commanded by God's Word. If Christians are eager to live the Christian way and ready to confess their faith before men, they cannot fail to hear about and learn to know one another. This is so especially when they dwell in the same place and speak the same language. When such come to realize that the unity of the Spirit exists between them, that is, that they have the same faith and the same doctrine according to God's Word, then God demands two things of them. The first is that they regularly come together to hear the Word of God, to make use of the Sacraments, and to unite in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving to God. Heb. 10:25 we read: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another." Concerning the earliest Christians it is said: "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers." In other words, the Christians are to organize local congregations. And though they be prevented from joining together in one congregation, and this is the second thing, they must not let caste hinder them from endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. By faith in Jesus Christ they have

become the one spiritual body of Christ, of which He is the Head and they are the members. Now, the members of the body are not against but for one another. When Christians have recognized one another as such and therefore as members of Christ's spiritual body, if they are true Christians, they will love not only their one Lord but also His members. And as they must not deny their Lord, so they must also not deny His disciples, their spiritual brethren. They must acknowledge them as brethren of the faith and in Christian love be prepared to serve them according to need.

These two things are clearly demanded by God's Word, and the position of many Christians is that from this it follows that Christians must never in deference to caste custom refrain from interdining or from uniting in the worship of God in the same church. Does God's Word teach this? The Jews, upon becoming Christians, were not commanded to interdine with Gentile Christians. To do so was neither forbidden nor commanded. They were instructed to see to it that, whether or not they interdined, they gave offense neither to the Jews nor to the Greeks nor to the Church of God. From Scripture we learn another thing. Among the converted slaves of St. Paul's time there were some who began to say among themselves: "Having become Christians, there is now equality between our masters and ourselves; we will therefore no longer observe the distinction between master and slave, but show our masters that we are their equals." In one respect there had indeed never been any inequality between their masters and them, both they and their masters being by nature equally lost and condemned sinners and equally dependent upon the free grace of God in Christ for salvation. Nor were the masters to act as if this were not true. Nevertheless the Holy Spirit by the Apostle addresses to servants and slaves these words: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as menpleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God." (Col. 3:22.) "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren; but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." (1 Tim. 6:1-2.) "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." (1 Pet. 2:18-19.) On the other hand, the masters also ought to treat their servants with proper Christian charity. "And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him." (Eph. 6:9.) Though the well-being of the lower classes, because they are servants and for other reasons, is in a measure dependent upon the good will of the higher classes, this does not

make them slaves. Nevertheless it can be seen from these words of the Apostles how Christians of different castes should treat one another. On the one hand, Christians have no right to ask those belonging to some caste to renounce outward caste distinctions. On the other hand, each according to his station should love and think well of the other. They should not deny or despise but acknowledge one another as brethren of the faith and do one to the other what according to each one's station is his duty.

Now, if the Christians of different castes in a place are one in faith and doctrine and can in all quietness and peace unite as one congregation, this certainly is a fine and God-pleasing way to keep the unity of the Spirit and to manifest it before the world. But is it a way that must necessarily be carried through under all circumstances? In other words, does God's Word say that Christians must unite organically in spite of caste custom and public sentiment? Such a commandment is not to be found in Scripture. Scripture does say that Christians are to organize local congregations and practice common worship. But Scripture does not say that all the Christians in the world, or in a country, or in a city, or even in a small village, must unite as one congregation. Christians should not deny but love and acknowledge one another by word and deed as brethren of the faith. But this they can do, and are to do, no matter whether they belong to the same congregation or to different congregations. Insistence upon uniting in some circumstances directly contradicts that very love which Christians owe one to another. The cause for remaining apart must certainly never be mutual hatred or enmity. But there may be legitimate reasons for remaining apart. This may be the only way in which all can in peace enjoy the use of the means of grace in congregational worship. It may be that by joining together contrary to caste custom they will bring upon all or some of their number the hatred and persecution of others or make the Gospel and the Christian Church odious to the public. If in such circumstances Christians of different castes, without malice toward one another, organize as so many different congregations, this would only cause joy and delight to our Savior and His angels in heaven. Thus these Christians would also be acting fully in accordance with Heb. 10:25.

But what about a group in whose case no such reasons actually exist or at least to us do not appear to exist, or who perhaps merely for the sake of prejudiced members in their midst or for no apparent reason at all prefer to remain separate? Then we should remember that true Christian love seeketh not its own but the good of the brethren to their edification. We should not contend with them or possibly even drive them away again from Christ and His Gospel by a legalistic attitude on our part. We should rather let them have their way in order to give room to the Holy Spirit to perform His work in them through the regular preaching of the Word in their midst.

What a good thing it would be if Christians would only recognize these things more and more and act accordingly! Would not thus the way be opened to some at least to obtain the benefits of the Gospel? Oh, what great harm has been brought to the Christian Church in India by this unwarranted commandment of men that Christians must disregard caste custom and, no matter what the consequences, unite as one congregation and worship in the same church! This commandment savors not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. (Mark 8:33.)

In practice, to be sure, there will be no lack of sin, because all Christians are in this life afflicted with the sinful flesh. There are among them at all times also many who are weak in Christian knowledge and faith, not to speak of the hypocrites who are Christians in name only. On both sides there will therefore be much sinning. On both sides there will be much temptation to cultivate the sinful caste spirit. Pride, envy, and hatred will manifest themselves on either side in one way or another. What shall we do about this? Ignore it? By no means. But we will begin by remembering that such things are not overcome by compelling people to unite organically. How much pride, envy, quarreling, fighting, do we not often find among the members of the same congregation, even in congregations whose members all belong to the same caste! Next we will seek to behold the beams in our own eyes and in the eyes of our own caste, rather than the motes in the eyes of others. Indeed, we must above all things realize ever better how much we ourselves are in need of divine pardon; and if we desire God's mercy and pardon for ourselves, we will also be merciful toward others. We will have patience with them and deal with them in the spirit of Christ. Bearing with the weak itself constitutes an important feature of keeping the unity of the Spirit. "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." (Eph. 4:1-3.) "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Col. 3:12-13.) May we, then, bear with our weak brethren, sincerely forgive their faults, and pray God that He would by the preaching of His Word increase their faith and Christian knowledge. Above all, may we also ask God to give grace that we ourselves learn ever more to overcome our self-love, envy, love of honor, and all evil inclinations and that true Christian love may increase in us. May our one desire be not our own good and honor but rather that God be glorified and many souls be rescued!

So we have seen how Christians of different castes ought to treat one another, and with that we might conclude the chapter.

However, it will not be superfluous to show in this connection also how Christians ought to have regard to their own fellow castemen. We will note three things in particular.

A Christian should have regard especially to his nearest relatives. God has given him special duties to perform toward them. A Christian may not deliberately neglect these duties. Note, for instance, what God has to say to the Christian husbands and wives of unbelievers. He says: "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God hath called us to peace." (1 Cor. 7:12-13, 15.) If the unbelieving wife has no mind to remain with the Christian husband, the latter should not quarrel with her or lodge a complaint against her in court in order to constrain her to remain. If he cannot persuade her by kind words, he should let her depart. But if she be willing to remain, the Christian husband must not think of sending her away because she does not want to become a Christian. He is to dwell with her even though she does not become a Christian. Also toward others in his caste, his children, his parents, his brothers and sisters, and others, the Christian has certain divinely imposed obligations. He may perhaps for many reasons desire to separate from his caste, but if parents, wife, and others, refuse to separate with him, then it is his duty, if possible, to remain in his caste for their sake.

A Christian cannot be indifferent to the spiritual needs of his relatives and his fellow castemen in general. So long as he can hope that many or a few souls among them may be brought to Christ, he should be willing to remain in his caste if circumstances permit. Let him take St. Paul as his model. When Paul was converted from the Jewish religion to Christianity, God called him to be an Apostle to the Gentiles, and so in his case God Himself made it impossible for him to dwell permanently among his own people, the Jews. Nevertheless Paul did not renounce his love for his own people but continued to do for their good what he could. To whatever place he came to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles according to the call he had received from God, it was his custom first of all to seek out the Jews in that place to bring to them the good news of salvation. And this was pleasing to God. So should all Christians, so much as in them lies, witness among their own people by word and deed to the Gospel of their Redeemer. To this end they should also, if possible, remain in their caste. It is not a good sign when applicants for Christian instruction boldly declare that they care nothing for caste and are prepared to renounce even their own family.

If a Christian remains in his caste, it is his duty to observe its ways and customs, so far as he can without compromising with

sin. Often a Christian may be persecuted for no other reason than that he no longer goes to the temples of idols, but worships the true God and leads a godly life. "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." (1 Pet. 4:4.) Such Christians suffer with Christ and, together with Him, will also be glorified. But when Christians suffer merely because they renounce caste customs which according to God's Word they might well keep, they neither suffer with Christ nor glorify His name, but sin against God and His Church. They are not only for themselves the cause of their sufferings, but at the same time also make Jesus Christ and His Gospel odious and despised in the sight of their fellow castemen and others. Again they should take St. Paul as their model. Whenever Paul dwelt among his own people, he was careful to be a Jew to the Jews, that is, he kept the ways and customs of the Jews. (1 Cor. 9:20-23.) Why, for instance, did he have Timothy, the half-Jew, circumcised when he decided to send him to preach the Gospel to the Jews? Because circumcision was a custom of the Jews, and they would not tolerate an uncircumcised Jew in their midst. Similarly also Christians who have not separated from their caste ought to observe the customs of their caste. This they should do for the Gospel's sake, that they might by all means save some and be partakers with them of the Gospel. That is the God-pleasing way.

3

We now examine certain objections. One is that by practicing according to the principles herein presented we uphold caste law and caste distinctions and bring them into the Christian Church. This is not a reasonable objection. As clearly appears from what has been said, we neither uphold nor destroy caste. We have to concede to the Christian the liberty to hold, for instance, the view that his country would be greatly benefited if all caste distinctions were removed; and the Christian Church has no right to forbid Christians to join together with others, if they wish, to work for the abolition of caste, provided they do so in an orderly way and without causing confusion and disorder. Only let them not imagine that thereby they are doing something to help men become Christians or better Christians. When our aim is to make Christians and to help them become better Christians, we will certainly tell them that they must renounce every evil caste spirit, pride, envy, hatred, and every sin. If on occasion by the weakness of their flesh Christians should give room to the evil caste spirit, they must be quick to recognize this as sin, to repent of it, and to fight against this evil thing in their hearts. To this end they ought again and again admonish and assist one another. But for this purpose we may no more ask Christians to renounce their caste than we may ask them to retain caste. As long, therefore, as caste will exist in this world, there will also be caste differences in the Church, just as we find in the Church Jews and Greeks, bondmen and free-

men, masters and servants, men and women. And like the latter distinctions so also the former are to be observed in the Church on earth, as long as they exist. They are indeed not to be observed in a sinful manner. But the sinful kind of observance is already plentiful in the Christian Church, also among those who claim that they make no caste distinctions. It is not reasonable, therefore, to accuse us of bringing caste into the Church.

We oppose the evil caste spirit no less than those who object to our position. But there is an important difference. While some try to destroy that evil spirit by employing the commandments of men and legalistic coercion, we aim to overcome it in the evangelical way. By this we mean that we aim by the Gospel of God's mercies to change the hearts of men and cause them to grow in sanctification. This is the one and only method our Lord wants us to use in His Church. There is no need to determine by human wisdom which is the right way. God Himself has revealed it to us in His Word. But even if He had not done so, there is no reason why we should be faulted if, having lost confidence in the method employed with much zeal for the past hundred years and more, we would now like to try a different method. Has the evil caste spirit been reduced in the Church by the accepted method in the past? With respect to outward caste distinctions there has been some change. Can the same be asserted with respect to the evil caste spirit? On the contrary, even a greater evil has arisen, namely, that pride with which many Christians boast that they do not keep caste. This pharisaical pride, far from being driven out, is only confirmed and strengthened in the hearts of men if we instruct them that they are not good Christians so long as they accommodate themselves to caste rule and observe caste customs. Instead of rejecting the evangelical way and faulting those who put it to practice, it would be better to give it a fair trial by faithfully applying it.

Another objection may be stated as follows: How dare you sanction separate worship on caste lines just at a time when temple entry has been granted among the Hindus to all castes? If Christians do this, will they not be ridiculed by the Hindus? This will to many appear to be a legitimate objection. But there are certain things that need to be noted in this connection. The question of temple entry is really, or at least primarily, not a matter of caste. The reason why till recently certain castes were not permitted to enter into the temples was not at all a difference of caste. How great is not the number of castes who had access to the temples before temple entry came! The true reason was that by some Hindus certain castes were considered unclean and their presence defiling to the temple. By granting temple entry to the non-Christian Hindus of these castes, the stigma of untouchability has been removed from them. We have not yet met with Christians who excluded those of another caste from their church because they considered their presence defiling. And though there should be such, they would not be true Christians but proud Pharisees.

Though temple entry has come, the outward caste distinctions still obtain among the Hindus. Temple entry has not brought intermarriage nor even interdining. True, the castes formerly considered untouchables are now in many restaurants permitted to dine like any other caste. But that is by no means interdining. Also in connection with temple worship caste distinctions have not ceased with temple entry.

It is very necessary to note some important differences between the Hindus and the Christians. The Christian churches are in most cases not public property, but the property of the local Christians and in this sense may be called village churches. Also the Hindus have what in this sense may be called village temples. But at these village temples even now usually only the people of one caste in the village and possibly in some few cases the people of two or three castes are permitted to worship. Usually each caste in a village has its own shrine. Though persons of the same caste from another village might occasionally be permitted to worship at such a place, this privilege is even now not granted indiscriminately to all castes. Different from these village temples and shrines are those common to all castes. They are *public* property. In them all castes except those formerly deemed untouchables have been worshiping for many centuries, and they have done so without giving up caste distinctions. With the legal abolition of untouchability caste distinctions and caste hatred have by no means been abolished.

What needs to be noted especially, however, is this: Even after the arrival of temple entry the worshipers at Hindu temples cannot do what should at least outwardly correspond to the custom of the Christians. The temple worship of the Hindus is almost exclusively an affair of the individual or the family, while the Christians practice not only private and family worship, but also congregational worship. The Christians have the custom of meeting together as congregations for common worship, not only occasionally but regularly, at least once a week; and in these meetings they frequently partake of the Holy Supper of their Lord. To this end they organize as Christian congregations, call pastors, and elect congregation officers, concern themselves about, and deal with, one another. Not only their men, but also their women enter into this union. There is no union of this nature in connection with the Hindu temples, and any attempt at such union between those of different castes is at present unthinkable.

We have, therefore, no reason to suppose that unprejudiced Hindus will ridicule the Christians because the latter do not legalistically compel Christians of different castes to unite contrary to caste law as Christian congregations. How can they fault the Christians for not doing what they themselves are not doing? But Hindus have in the past, often with reason, ridiculed the Christians because not a few Christians have much to say against

caste though they themselves are far from being free of caste. There has been sufficient cause for ridicule in the past. But that cause for ridicule will have been removed if the Christians frankly and openly declare that, while, on the one hand, they refrain from every unnecessary opposition to caste law in order to avoid causing confusion and disorder, they, on the other hand, condemn with the Word all pride, hatred, and envy, and beseech the Christians continually by the mercies of God to renounce these sins.

We may consider two objections based on the argument of expediency. The first is implied in the question where all the funds are to come from that will be needed for buildings and salaries if we begin to practice according to the principles presented here. This is a question about which we really need not worry at all. The Christians of the first three centuries possessed very few buildings constructed as places of worship. The common thing for them was to meet as small groups in their homes, in the shade of trees, at riversides, and in times of persecution even in caves and other hidden places. Nevertheless, or probably as a result of this, the great majority of them were genuine Christians, who in poverty and persecution eagerly heard the preaching of the Word and were diligent in doing the works of love. It is enough if we see to it that we make Christians by the Gospel. That we will do if we give them the Gospel freely, without demanding from them anything that God Himself does not demand.

The other objection may be stated thus: If we practice according to these principles, when will the great and powerful union of all churches materialize for which we so fervently hope? To this we put the counterquestion: When is the Church of Christ great and powerful? This is a question that Christians in India especially at the present time should consider with all diligence. By bringing together all who call themselves Christians into one great united Church we make the Church of Christ neither great nor powerful but weak and small. In this way a great organization bearing the name of the Christian Church and able to make its influence felt in politics might perhaps come into being. But thereby the Church of Christ would not be benefited, but rather greatly harmed. The Church of Christ is powerful when its members observe all things that He has commanded them. Christ says to the Christians: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.) "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32.) When the Christians do as Christ here commands, then the Church of Christ is powerful, so powerful that neither the very gates of hell shall prevail against it nor the powers of earth shall do it any harm. Though His Church be but a little flock, it is powerful, for God Himself is its power. He says: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." (Luke

12:32.) And when is it a great Church? Not when many who call themselves Christians unite as one great body, but when the number of those Christians is great who continue in His Word.

Now, when many local congregations made up of such Christians unite organically, this may indeed result in great benefit to the kingdom of Christ. But in some circumstances such a union may become an obstacle and a hindrance to His kingdom. As we have seen before, there may be circumstances when it would be good and God-pleasing for a congregation or several of them together to remain organically independent of other congregations. It is not accidental that neither Christ nor His Apostles have anywhere commanded local congregations to unite organically. Had this been His will, He would have told us so in His Word. Since He has not commanded it, we also are free not to do so. What is more, the union that so many in our time try to bring about is one that is expressly forbidden in Scripture. They want organic union without unity in faith and doctrine. Such a church union is opposed to God's Word. Organic union, however, between local congregations one in faith and doctrine is not forbidden, but neither is it commanded.

That is a thing we in India have special reason to keep in mind. We ought not to take it for granted that such as embrace the Christian religion must "join the mission." That is neither necessary and certainly not always desirable. In the case of at least some may the reason for not embracing the Christian religion not be the mistaken notion that if they become Christians, they must by all means become members of some Christian mission or church body and so come under the authority of bodies ruled by foreigners or made up largely of people belonging to castes other than their own? We should be careful in our practice not to confirm people in this wrong idea, but make it a point to disabuse them of it. It is not contrary to the Word of God for a local congregation to remain organically independent of the mission, and in some cases, owing to circumstances, it is best to remain so. Certainly the right to remain independent must be conceded to every local congregation. The Christian congregations at the time of the Apostles did not unite organically. Nevertheless they were united by the bond of perfectness, which is love. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love — if they do this, nothing more can be demanded of Christian congregations.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," says St. Paul. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world. It is the spiritual kingdom which He establishes and maintains in the hearts of men by His Word. Rather than worry about the future with respect to caste distinctions and church union, we should see to it that we give room to Christ now to enter into the hearts of men by the preaching of the Gospel. May God give us the grace to do so.

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