

The WHY of the Christian Church



A SERMON BY
REV. A. B. KENDALL, D. D.
Pastor of the Christian Church
BURLINGTON, N. C.



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HERE should be a "why" to the Christian church, or it should not be. A being, or an institution, without a mission to the world, has no right to exist in the world. If the Christian church has not a distinctive service to render the human family, a work that is not being done by any other organization, then I say let us nail up our doors and get in harness with some other organization and save all this waste of energy and property. But, brethren, if there be a "why," then let us find out what that "why" is, and, making it our goal, push steadily toward it.

I believe that we have a "why," and that it is big enough to engage all of our powers, and divine enough that it should command our loyalty. Let us see if this is not true.

As I study the Christian church and that for which it stands, I find underneath its splendid principles a basal principle. Our principles are the outgrowth of this Divine principle. These are the golden fruit that is the parent tree. What is that principle? Let me take you to that hour, one of the most solemn in the life of Jesus, when he gathered his little band of disciples together, for that last heart to heart talk, and his last prayer for them. In a few moments underneath the shadows of the gnarled old olive trees, he is to pass through the terrible soul agony as he accepts at the Father's hand the bitter cup. Then the betrayal and after that the shameful trial with its mockings and scourgings, and then the nails and the spear

and the cursed cross. He saw it all that night. But that was not all that he saw. He was looking beyond that cross and thinking of his followers and what was to happen to his church in the years to be after his death and resurrection; and up through the darkness of that solemn hour he sends to the throne of God that wonderful prayer that we find in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel according to John. Surely in a time such as that, in that solemn hour, we would expect only the most important things to fill his mind. We would expect that the petitions of this prayer would embody and convey his deepest soul-desires concerning the things most vitally connected with the growth and development of his church in the earth. Now, as we study this wonderful prayer with that thought in mind, what do we discern to be the most prominent thought in his mind? The first eight verses have to do with his glory. The next petition, which has to do with his disciples, we find in the last sentence of the eleventh verse. When his mind turns to the church, the first petition that rises to his lips is this one: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one, as we are.*" When he thought of his disciples who were present with him, his first thought and petition was for their unity. Then with the eye of faith he looks adown the centuries and he sees his church growing in numbers and power. He also sees the deadly foes that would arise to try to destroy her and first and foremost among them he sees the same danger which threatened his little band; and

the first petition for his followers of all ages, times and climes we find in the twenty-first, twenty-second and twenty-third verses of this same chapter. What is it? "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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that *they may be one*, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that *they may be made perfect in one*; and *that the world may know* that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

There are only nine distinct petitions in this portion of his prayer which has to do directly with his followers and his church. What are they? "Keep them from the evil of the world." "Sanctify them through thy truth." "That they may be with me where I am." "That they may behold my glory." What are the other five? "*That they may be one.*" Is there any question as to what lay heaviest on the heart of Jesus on that night of nights? I am sure to any honest, candid reader there can be none.

I most firmly believe that the Christian church was raised up by God for the distinctive purpose of answering that five-fold petition in this prayer of the great head of the church.

I do not know how clearly the founders of the Christian church saw this great purpose, or how keenly they realized this great, basal principle underneath the organization: but this

I do know, that every principle of the Christian church is a perfect strand in the golden cord of this great purpose.

God was guiding, whether they saw clearly, dimly, or not at all, for the ultimate answering of his Son's great prayer.

In the beginning, the church in the earth was united. They were "all with one accord in one place." Acts. 2:1 l. c. It was not long, however, before divisions began to arise, and we hear Paul saying to the church at Corinth: "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." 1 Cor. 1:13. "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" 1 Cor. 3:3-4. "I hear that there be divisions among you." 1 Cor. 11:18. Later, in writing to the church at Rome, he says: "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions, and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 16:17-18 f. c.

So we see that very early in the history of the church sectism sprang up and attempted to throttle the life of the infant church.

There may have been a time when denominationalism, and sectarianism, if not right, were at least excusable. When after many years the church had grown and become rich and powerful it headed up in a mass of corruption, the Roman Catholic church. Then from this corrupt mass there began a breaking away, a

breaking toward the light. That German monk toiling on his knees up Pilate's staircase at Rome saw the marvellous light and heard a wonderful message in his soul and broke away from the darkness and corruption, following the golden gleam of divine truth "justification by faith," and out of this breaking toward the light came the Lutheran denomination. Calvin caught a gleam and he broke away along the line of the sovereignty of God, and the Presbyterian denomination was the result. John Wesley saw the light and he broke away along the line of "free moral agency" and "free grace," and we have the Methodist denomination. *But these were all breaking toward the light.*

Today we have twenty different kinds of Lutherans, seventeen brands of Methodists and twelve varieties of Presbyterians; to say nothing of the one hundred and one other "ringed, streaked and speckled" varieties of sectarian bodies. I ask you in all candor, Is this the great ideal Christ had in mind when he founded his church? Is this the great brotherhood? Is this what he prayed for on that night of sorrows? No, *no, NO.* A thousand times, No!

What is the church of Christ? His body. Eph. 1:22-23. Paul with this truth concerning the church as the body of Christ, asks this searching question of the sectarian factionists at Corinth, "Was Christ divided?" No, not a bone of his body was broken and his most bitter enemies who crucified him did not presume to divide his garments. It remained for his professed followers in later years to proceed

to cut not his garments only, but his real body, his church, into sectarian pieces.

“And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands?” Then he shall answer, “Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” Zech. 13:6. War in the body; arm against foot; hand against limbs. If this were taking place in the physical body of a man we would cry out insanity, suicide. And, sirs, this is the insanely suicidal policy the church has been following for two thousand years. Is it any wonder that we have made so little progress and have made so little impression on the world of darkness about us?

If there ever was an excuse for denomination-ism and sectarianism with the slightest semblance of validity and legitimacy, it certainly does not exist now.

The great denominations have proven the truths for which they stood years and years ago, and the thing for these different denominations to do is to get together and with these great truths fused in the white heat of love into an unbroken weapon of offense and defence move in one solid, undivided army against the hosts of sin and darkness. I take my Bible and I turn to Phil. 2:12 and read these words, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” and I have the very essence of Armenianism. Wesley himself would unqualifiedly put his seal of approval on that. And then I read on through the thirteenth verse of this same chapter, “For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” And here we have the quintessence of Calvinism of the pure Calvin-

istic brand. But they are both in the Bible,—the obverse sides of the shield. God hath joined them together, let us not longer be guilty of keeping them asunder.

Some good brother may say, “You are fighting a man of straw, the days of denominational hatred and sectarian strife are over.” I wish that were true, but it isn’t. And while it may be true that we have done away with the hand-saw and the meat-ax as instruments of division and have substituted the most modern, razor-edged and sterilized instruments, the sectarian cutting and slashing still takes place.

I know that we have gotten away from the crude, unrefined manifestation of that sectarian spirit as it used to reveal itself, but it is still alive.

We could hardly imagine the incident which I am about to relate taking place today. This incident occurred in the days of my mother’s girlhood, and I have heard her repeat it more than once. A minister of a certain denomination was forced to be away from his pulpit over Sunday, and in his absence a minister of a sister denomination was asked to take his place and preach to his people. When the good brother returned and learned the awful fact that this heretic had occupied the sacred desk from which he was wont to proclaim the message of divine love and grace, he refused to preach from that pulpit until it was torn down, placed in the opposite end of the church, and the pewing torn loose and made to conform therewith. I say we could not imagine this taking place in the glorious dawn-light of the

twentieth century, but refined, covered, the same sectarian spirit is still here.

The Christian church was organized for the purpose of doing away, not only with this spirit, but with the sects and denominations which gave birth to and perpetuates this spirit. The Christian church was never intended to be a sect or denomination. If it is one it is because it has been forced to be one.

I am sure that the *aim* of the Christian church is right. Christ's prayer and the great apostle's exhortations and warnings are proof positive that our aim is right.

Sad to say, there are two different ideas with regard to what is meant by this aim. Some contend that what is needed is organic union, that having this, all will be well. But this is not the great essential. We may have union without the faintest shadow of unity. I have known a man and a woman to enter into a union as husband and wife, but there was everything but unity as a result. I know more than one local church whose members have entered into an organic union, but the spirit of unity is as "far from them as the east is from the west." Union without unity, and that unity the unity of the Spirit would prove a curse, beside which the curse of sectarianism and denominationalism would fade into utter insignificance.

There are many misguided spirits abroad in the land today who are so anxious for union at any cost that they would be willing to throw away Christ, God, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, heaven, everything dear to the devout Christian heart, if only we have union. That might

be union, but it never, never can be Christian union. It never can be that union for which Christ agonized.

If we are to get rid of the sectarian friction in the machinery of the church it must never be done by filing off the cogs. The moment you do that you have robbed the church of its power. What ever else we do we must hold the truth; but adjust the cogs in love. "Holding the truth," never forsaking that, but holding it "in love."

Then there is the other class of people who say all that Christ or Paul ever meant was unity of the spirit and not organic union. I cannot accept this unless they are willing to grant that unity of the Spirit will of necessity do one of two things,—either bring about at once the organic union of all the believers in Christ, which seems to me reasonable, or do away with all church organization thus eliminating the visible church as an organized body.

Now let us consider briefly some of the things which separate the church of Christ today. They are: Human Leaders, Human Creeds, Human Names, Human Tests for Membership.

Let us take these one by one and see how the Christian church through the very genius of its organization eliminates these separating walls and at the same time provides solid foundation for the union of all true believers in Christ.

I. OUR LEADER. "One is your Master, even Christ." Matt. 23:8, 10. Not Paul, nor Apollos; not Cephas, nor Calvin, nor Campbell, nor Luther, nor Wesley, nor O'Kelley, nor Stone,

nor Jones, nor any other human being; but Christ. The church in the beginning had no popes nor pontiffs; the perfect Christ was their peerless leader. He alone knows the pathway perfectly, for he alone has trodden all the dark way and then left a guidebook by which we are to follow. He alone knows our needs on the journey of life and has made provision for each of us. He alone is the infallible leader. He never has made, he never can make a mistake. He alone is the "good Shepherd" who gave his life for the sheep. Others may have given their lives *with* the sheep: he alone *for* them. He alone can go with us through the valley of the shadow of death and bring us in safety to the other side. Christ our only leader. Don't you like that? I do. Let us give these noble, godly men their rightful place, but do not let them take the place of Christ, not in the least degree in the direction of our spiritual lives, or of his church.

II. THE BIBLE OUR ONLY CREED. As a body we have no other, we ask no one to subscribe to any other. As an individual one may formulate a creed from the Bible. We must do this if we are to be of any force in Christ's work. I would not give much for the creedless man or woman in any walk of life. We need men and women who believe something and believe it with all their might; positive beliefs, not negative. As a church we just give you the Bible and ask you to believe in and obey that. Human creeds have bred hatred, strife, murder. Human creeds burned a Latimer, a Huss, a Ridley. Creed was the inventor, the manufacturer and the operator of

the instruments of torture of the Inquisition. Creeds are among the most potent causes of division in the body of Christ.

We know our creed is Biblical, for it is the Bible itself; the word of God and not any man's interpretation of it. This creed is the only absolutely true one. I think all will agree that the nearer the Bible a creed is the nearer true it is. Our creed is the Bible, nothing more, nothing less: therefore it is absolutely true. What more does the church need? What less dare she adopt? God knew what his church needed for a creed and he formulated a perfect one. How dare we substitute another? By taking this Bible as our creed we avoid the Charybdis of adding to, and the Scylla of taking away from, this Word.

We have all the truth of all the denominations. Is there truth in the Calvinistic creed? We have it all. Is there truth in Arminianism? Then it belongs to us. For every truth in all creeds came from the Bible. Have they errors? We do not have them, for the Bible is the word of God and there is no error in his word. Surely this creed ought to be broad enough to make a platform on which we can all stand. If we cannot unite on this platform, I know not where we shall find one on which we shall be able to unite.

III. OUR NAME. "Christian." This name was never taken in any denominational sense. Neither was it taken in any exclusive sense, but on the contrary it was taken because it was an inclusive name. It is a name common to all the followers of Christ. I go to a Baptist brother and I say, "Are you a Methodist?" "No, sir,

I am a Baptist." "Are you a Christian?" "Yes, sir." I approach a Methodist and I say, "Are you a Presbyterian?" "No, sir." "Are you a Christian?" "Yes, sir." And so I go to a member of any of the denominations that claim Christ as their Lord and they will not own the divisive name claimed by any other denomination; but they will, all of them, own the one name, Christian. Therefore the name was chosen because it was the name for union. But that was not the only reason. There are many other reasons which mark this as the name for all the true followers of Christ.

The church is the body of Christ and he is the head. What right has the body to take any other name than that of the head? Supposing we should do that in the affairs of this life, and a man whose head bore the name of Jones should decide to call his body by the name of Brown or White, what confusion worse confounded would result? And the world has been full of confusion, and sinners have been confused and lost, because "the body of Christ has borne another name than that of the head."

The church is the bride of Christ. What business has the bride with any other name than that of the bridegroom? I am sure no man who cared aught for his wife would feel at all pleased, or complimented, if some day his wife should say, "I am tired of your name. It is not high sounding enough for me. Smith is altogether too common. I like the name of Vanderbilt, so from this time on I am going to take the name of Vanderbilt and drop the name Smith." How would the husband receive such a proposition? Not very kindly, I am sure.

He would feel, and he would have a right to feel, that she was dishonoring her head, her bridegroom. So by taking any other name than that of the bridegroom of the church, we dishonor Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom. Then again such procedure would cause confusion in the family relation and such a procedure on the part of the church has caused, and is causing, confusion in the religious world and division in the family of God, thus hindering the answer to Christ's prayer, "That they all may be one, that the world may believe."

But there are many who persist that there is nothing in a name, anyhow, and they paraphrase the words of the immortal Shakespeare and say, "A church by any other name is just as sweet." Let us see if this is true.

Names are very important things in this world. I knew of a man a few days ago who signed another man's name to a check and now he is languishing in durance vile. There surely was something in a name that time. I knew a man who strove for many years to obtain possession of a valuable estate in Texas and the one thing which stood in his way, was that the name of one of his ancestors did not tally right. The name was exceedingly important in that case and kept him out of a fortune.

If a name is of such import in the affairs of earthly government, I am sure it must be of equal importance in the affairs of the heavenly kingdom.

Then it is a God-given name. I turn over to Isaiah 62:2 and I read, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name,

which the mouth of the Lord shall name.”

When was that new name to be given? When the Gentiles should see the light. When was that new name given? “And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” Acts 11:26. Why at this time and place? Because here first the Gentiles were received into the church. Isaiah’s prophecy must be fulfilled in the coming of the Gentiles before that new name could be given and as soon as that occurred the new name promised so long before was bestowed.

Furthermore, the Greek word *chrematizo*, translated “called,” means literally “to be declared by an oracle,” and is invariably used in the New Testament in connection with an act performed by God himself.

Luther wished to have his followers take the name Christian, but they did not do so. John Wesley wished his followers to be called Christians, but they were not so called.

It is related that once John Wesley, in the visions of the night, found himself, as he thought, at the gates of hell. He knocked and asked who were within. “Are there any Roman Catholics here” he asked. “Yes,” was the answer, “a great many.” “Any Church of England men?” “Yes, a great many.” “Any Independents?” “Yes, a great many.” “Any Presbyterians?” “Yes, a great many.” “Any Baptists?” “Yes, a great many.” “Any Wesleyans?” “Yes, a great many.” Disappointed and dismayed, especially at the last reply, he turned his steps upward, and found himself at the gates of Paradise, and there he repeated the same questions. “Any Wesleyans here?”

“No.” “Any Presbyterians?” “No.” “Any Church of England men?” “No.” “Any Roman Catholics?” “No.” “Whom have you here, then?” he asked in astonishment. “We know nothing here,” was the reply, “of any of those names you have mentioned. The only name of which we know anything here is ‘Christian.’ We are all Christians here, and of these we have a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues.”

No Christians in hell; nothing but Christians in heaven. That suits me. Does it not suit you? I do not of course wish to be understood here as using the name Christian in any denominational sense, but just to emphasize the fact that the name “Christian” is the only one that will get in through the pearly gates.

Is there any name so precious to any child of God? I do not believe there is.

When Ptolemy built Pharos, he would have his name upon it; but Sostratus, the architect, did not think that the king, who only paid the money, should get all the credit, while he had none: so he put the king's name on the front, in plaster; but underneath, in the eternal granite, he cut, deeply enough, “Sostratus.” The sea dashed against the plaster, and chipped off bit by bit. I dare say it lasted out the time of Ptolemy; but by and by the plaster was all chipped off, and there stood the name “Sostratus.” So the waves of time will chip from the church the human, party names, and bright in the light of the eternal glory will shine the name, “Christian.”

IV. CHRISTIAN CHARACTER THE ONLY TEST OF FELLOWSHIP. The one requisite for admission into the eternal glory and a place in the church triumphant will not be the mode of your baptism, your attitude toward the Heidelberg Confession, the Westminster Confession, the Methodist Discipline, or any other ordinance or creed; but have you so taken Christ into your life by faith that you "have been made partaker of the Divine nature" and your life been revealing the fact of that life as the spring of your very being? This will be the "shibboleth" when we come to cross the Jordan.

And so we believe to gain access into the church visible and militant that we should have exactly the same test, nothing more and nothing less.

It should be *Christian* character. That means character according to God's and not human standards. "Except a man be born again, (born from above, born of the Spirit) he can not enter, he cannot see, the kingdom of God." This is Christ's ultimatum on this subject. And the man or woman who has not given evidence, in the life, of the new birth revealing itself in character, ought not to be admitted into the fellowship of the church. Putting a goat in with the sheep never made a sheep out of the goat. And if the requisite for admission into the invisible kingdom be by a new birth then admission into the visible church should be the same. The church should be the church of the re-born and fellowship all who have been born again. Any broader doorway into the church is too broad for the sanction of God; and any

narrower way is uncharitable, bigoted, sectarian. There is an inconsistency in the test of fellowship as applied in some of our churches today that to the unprejudiced must be ludicrous in the extreme.

Let us, for example, take a church which makes a particular mode of baptism a test of fellowship. Here is a member of another denomination who may, or may not, have been baptized by that particular mode. Every member of the aforesaid church with its baptismal test may believe most sincerely in the piety and Christian character of this man, but he seeks membership in this church and is told that he must be re-baptized by a minister of that church before he can enjoy its fellowship. They do not doubt but that he has met the divine requirements sufficiently, that God has received him and given him the seal of his Spirit and enrolled him as a member of the church above, but they are just a little more particular on earth than they are in heaven. They will even invite ministers of the other denominations into their pulpits to preach to them and pray for them, so sure are they that they have been accepted of God, but when it comes to uniting with their church there is something minus. Surely this is inconsistent.

“Ah, we make God’s love too narrow by false limits of our own;
And we magnify his strictness with a zeal he will not own.”

If a man has sufficiently complied with God’s requirements that God has accepted him and made him one of his children, there ought not

to be a company of his children anywhere on earth that would withhold fellowship from such a one. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." No sects in heaven. The only test of fellowship there, "Have you been born of the Spirit"; is "Christ in you the hope of glory"? There should be no other test on earth. We believe in *Christian* character as the only test of fellowship.

How about these principles for Christian union? No human name. The only name a divinely-given one and one universally claimed by the followers of Christ. No man-made creed with its imperfections and limitations to follow; just God's word. Not "cribbed, confined, cabined and confined" by human doctrines. No human leader to follow; just Christ. What less can we have and have Christian union? What more is required as a platform for such a union? Is there anything better? Produce it and I will take my stand upon it any time. I believe with all my heart that no better basis for Christian union can be found. There may be other bases for union, many of them, but they will not be *Christian* union. Here, I believe, is the great danger; that the churches will unite upon a basis God will not own.

THE OUTLOOK FOR UNION. It is coming, I most assuredly believe. The great words today are co-operation, unity, amalgamation, get together, efficiency and conservation. We see the movement in our city electric light plants, gas plants and reservoirs, instead of each family having to provide one of its own. Our great department stores, the doing away with the district country school and building, instead of

a number of these in a township, one fine, big, township high school manned by the best corps of teachers procurable, and equipped with the latest and best school equipment. Impracticable, do you say? The bud of a right ideal of today bursts into the full blossom of glorious realities tomorrow. But, some one objects, men are of different temperaments; therefore we must have different denominations to suit these different temperaments. There are men of feeling and men of doing; men of emotion and men of intellect, and you must have different denominations. But it has been wisely said by a writer on this subject that "Men can unite on the great religious universalities. The ten commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, are no more denominational than the alphabet or the multiplication table. The principles of duty to God and our fellowman are not Presbyterian, nor Methodist, nor Baptist. The simplicities and the universalities appeal to all men. The essentials are the things of God and Christ, the non-essentials the things of Wesley and Calvin and Luther. Temperamentals belong to the family and the parent; universals to the church and Christ."

The demand for conservation of the money of our King is going to be a mighty factor in bringing about the union of the followers of Christ. Think of the awful waste in supporting four churches in a town of one thousand population. Four church buildings to be erected. Four pastors to be paid. The running expenses of four plants to keep up, when one plant and one minister could take care of the work splendidly. Four congregations scrimp-

ing, scheming, burdened to raise the amount necessary to keep their pastors on a starvation salary, when the town could splendidly care for one church and give their pastor a princely salary. Or, better yet, loose three of their ministers for the foreign field and support them in their work. Then take the money put into denominational schools, occupying often the same territory. How much better the money could be expended, and how much better the work could be done, if there were but one church directing the Christian educational work. Or think of the saving that might be done through the publishing houses of the denominations if there were but one church.

Dr. McCosh tells of a town of six thousand inhabitants which united in one church and every man, woman and child in that town is cared for religiously and there are not twelve in that town who do not attend church. I would like to have some one find me a town of equal population where the place is divided into sects with a record that could come anywhere near that.

Thoughtful, Christian business men who are constantly studying how to make their own business more efficient and at the same time run it more economically are going to demand union in the interest of efficiency and conservation.

I believe one reason why many of our big business men are staying outside the church is because they are disgusted with the awful waste caused by our little sectarian prejudice, narrowness, selfishness.

This notable article by the Rev. Edward Tal-

madge Root, taken from the *Christian Endeavor World* and copied by them from *Zion's Herald* is a mighty plea for union :

TOO MANY SMALL CHURCHES

Mr. Root has taken one hundred Massachusetts townships of the smallest populations and studied them, in order to get an idea of the effect of multiplying churches in such communities. His figures are startling.

In towns that have but one church (their average population being 441) the average church-membership is 71; in two-church towns (average population 710) the average church-membership is 64; in three-church towns (population 784) the average church-membership is 52; in four-church towns (population 886) the average church-membership falls to 43.

It is perfectly plain that the result of multiplying churches is a sad decrease in the membership of the churches, and that in spite of the fact that the churches are multiplied in towns that have a larger population.

There is also a decrease in the amounts given for the support of each church. The average for the one-church towns is \$687; for the two-church town, \$751; for the three-church town, \$614; and for the four-church town, \$504.

There is also an increase in the amount of aid received from home-missionary societies. The average for the one-church town is \$67; for the two-church town, \$24; for the three-church town, \$140; for the four-church town, \$164. Multiplying churches is costly business, as well as depressing.

A comparison still more striking is one that

took towns of equal population—ten being one-church towns, ten two-church towns, and ten three-church towns. The average population was 725.

Here are the church membership figures: one-church town, 110; two-church town, 71.4; three-church town, 51.

Here are the average church incomes: one-church town, \$1.102; two-church town, \$781; three-church town, \$472.

Here are the average salaries paid the pastors: one-church town, \$874; two-church town, \$687; three-church town, \$473.

Here are the average amounts received by these towns from the home-missionary societies: one-church town, \$15; two-church town, \$50; three-church town, \$155.

These are eloquent figures. They fairly shout their lesson: "Get together!" They plead for a broader fellowship and a wiser administration.

Are denominational differences worth this loss to the Kingdom of God?

In the face of these facts, who dare deny that sectarianism is the crime of the churches in this century?

SIGNS OF UNION. The air is full of signs and sounds of union. The Methodist Protestant and the United Brethren are negotiating at the present time with regard to an amalgamation of these two bodies. In Canada the Methodist Episcopal, Congregationalist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches are in a Federation.

The churches of New Zealand and Australia are federated. In England all of the Protest-

ant churches, except the Episcopal, are federated in one great Non-Conformist Union.

Some of the Episcopal Bishops are urging in sermon and tract Christian Union.

This last year (1913) I attended the North Carolina State Sunday School Convention, and the two addresses which called forth the most vociferous applause were, one by a Presbyterian layman, and one by a Methodist Episcopal presiding-elder, both pleading most eloquently for Christian Union.

The following extracts were taken from the editorial columns of the *Missionary Review of the World*, issue of July, 1913.

“God alone knows what answer some of his foolish children have to render that last day for the hindrances they have put in the way of his servants, the missionaries, and the offense they have given to the very ones they have pretended to evangelize. Had the field not been divided by rival sects and progress retarded by wrong methods, today there would have been a self-supporting church, self-respecting people, and far greater progress would have been made toward the evangelization of Mohammedans all about us. May we not hope that the church at home may yet awake and realize the great mistake of such work.” (Rev. Frederick G. Coan, Missionary of the Presbyterian Board, Urumia, Persia.)

“A Union Christian College is planned for Manila, to be under the direction of seven Protestant Missionary Societies. A union church is also advocated for the members of the Annual Filipino Conference of the United Brethren in Christ, who have recently memorialized

the Executive Committee of the Evangelical Union to learn the opinion of the various Protestant churches and missions with regard to forming one United Protestant church in the Philippine Islands. The various Protestant conferences, presbyteries or associations are asked to elect two representatives each and the missions two representatives each. The Executive Committee of the Evangelical Union is asked to convene these representatives to discuss difficulties, advantages and methods involved in forming one United Protestant Church. Experience with the Filipino people in the provincial centres indicates that they would gladly welcome such a move. They are tired of the divisions that now exist among them."

"Word comes of another movement for the union of the churches of Central India. The Jubbulpore Conference on Federation representing seven of the leading missionary societies working in Central and Western India has declared in favor of a federation of all churches that believe in God through Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord and Savior, and that accept the word of God as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the supreme *rule of faith and practice*. The object of the federation shall be to obtain a more perfect manifestation of the unity of his disciples, for which the Redeemer prayed."

"John R. Mott conducted a national missionary conference in Shanghai, China, March 11 to 14 of the year 1913. Delegates were present from the churches of the whole nation, two-thirds of the delegates were foreigners and one-

third Chinese. The Conferences spoke with confidence in favor of a single missionary church in China, eliminating all Western denominational lines. Even pending organic union, it was urgently recommended that all churches should discard every distinctive name and assume only the single title, the Christian Church in China. Churches which already enjoy inter-communion were urged to combine at once, while federation local and provincial was recommended where churches felt unable to surrender denominational peculiarities."

In Japan the missionaries learned some time ago that it was inexpedient to use any other name for the church than the Christian Church of Japan.

In Japan today there are no Methodist, or Baptist, or Congregational, or any other Protestant evangelical churches bearing denominational names. They are simply known as the Christian Church of Japan.

When the missionaries in the early days of their work in Japan were confronted with remarks like this, from the heathen Japanese whom they would win to Christ, "You have thirty Christs; go home and decide which is the right one and then come to us and we will listen," and as they realized that this was the result of sectarianism, they saw that if they were ever to win these people they must drop their sectarian names; and the only name, of course, that they could get together on was the name Christian.

So it begins to look as though the heathen would have to teach us the great necessity of

the unity of the church "That the world may believe."

Brethren of the Protestant churches of America, there is another tremendously important reason why we should unite. Not only is it necessary that we become a united church if we are to do efficient offensive work for Christ, but it is now of equal moment that we unite for defense. The Roman Hierarchy, if I read the signs of the times aright, has no less an objective than the making of this nation a Roman Catholic country, and at the opportune moment she is going to fling the Romish church with its solidarity against the divided forces of the Protestant church, and we will wake up too late to find ourselves in "the land of the free and the home of the brave" underneath the iron heel of Rome.

For the conquest of the world for Christ, for the salvation of the lost everywhere, for the protection of our free and noble institutions, for the guarding of our religious liberty, I urge, I beg, I plead, let us get together in Christian unity and union that we may present one solid united body four-square to every enemy of Christ and his cause. God grant that his prayer for the unity of his church be soon answered.

O Christian church, the little flock with a big mission, I charge you be true to your God-given principles. Do not truckle, do not compromise, do not lower the standard of your great principles even for the sake of union.

Brethren of the Christian church, I call upon you for loyalty to the church with which God has entrusted these divine truths, and some

glad day, having "finished the work" the Master has given us to do, we shall receive the approval of our divine Leader, Redeemer, Master, Jesus Christ.



