

From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

GOSPEL ARITHMETIC
(V Division)

IT IS NO LESS than marvelous how the Lord adds to His church. It is likewise a wonder to behold how the church can multiply and has multiplied. How well Jesus described it in the Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Parable of the Leaven.

Then comes division. The wonderful growth and beauty of the church suddenly terminates with a shock. Years of preaching and teaching and Christian cooperation are torn asunder in division, jealousy and strife. Frequently years of labor are destroyed by one small actor deed. Often in winning a soul to Christ, the work of months or even years of careful teaching, planning and praying for the soul of an unconverted sinner is destroyed by one wrong statement or a word said at a wrong time.

Jesus spent over three years in a concentrated ministry to preach of His Coming Kingdom--the Church. He suffered much agony and persecution throughout His ministry. It was finally climaxed with His agonizing death upon the cross. All this was done that the church might be established and that men might have eternal life. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection the apostles labored diligently to place the newly founded church on a firm footing. They, too, died in their labors. Yet, in spite of all this labor and suffering, division soon entered in and the work of Christ suffered severely.



REV. D. M. CLARK

FIRST OF ALL let us consider the prominence of division in the religious world today. In fact, division pervades nearly every phase of life in the entire world. Men are at odds with men, and nation stands against nation.

Considering the division in the world, one might begin with the home. The rate of juvenile crime is soaring upward and upward. The newspapers are filled with accounts of young children in criminal activities. The penitentiaries are filled to capacity with hardened criminals of teen age or in their early twenties. Why is this true? Investigation has shown that there is a definite relationship between the increased juvenile crime rate and the national divorce rate increase. Thousands of homes are divided each year over trivial disagreements or a flare of uncontrolled animal instinct that causes people to leave their mates and families seeking satisfaction in immorality.

Is it any wonder children turn to crime and worldly vices? Frustrated and unhappy, they are forced to make a choice between mother and father. With this unforgettable mental torture and without adequate parental love and guidance, the children are cast to the mercy of the world. Division in the home takes a deadly toll!

There are divisions in the educational systems. One group advocates a method of teaching which says in effect, teach the children what they need to know whether they like it or not. The other group insists that proper educational methods should simply let the children do as they please. The divisions in politics in the United States and throughout the entire world are well known to all. Let us bring our discussion to the subject about which we are primarily concerned just now, that of the divisions of Christendom. By Christendom, I refer to all groups who have even a semblance of Christianity.

CHRISTENDOM IS DIVIDED into a great number of denominations, nearly everyone of which came into existence because of some disagreements with the mother body. Then the denominations began to divide into still smaller groups. And the smaller groups subdivided some more. Today the number of denominations and sects is appalling! Is it any wonder that people outside the church are puzzled and dismayed

when they think of becoming Christians. They must ask, "Now which church shall I join?"

Just what are the causes of all these divisions in Christendom? The causes are many but we shall consider only a few. One cause for division is racial differences. Suppose a person of another race came in to worship with you? Would you accept him? In some places colored persons are not allowed in churches attended by white people. N. B. Madden, 50 year veteran missionary to Japan, said the racial barrier was his hardest problem to overcome in his work with the Japanese. The truth of the matter is that underneath the skin every person's soul is the same. There is no respecting of persons with God. Paul writes in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

ANOTHER CAUSE of division is social differences. Whether we like to admit it here in America or not, money produces a distinct class barrier. In a conversation with a minister of a faith different from my own in which we discussed the various differences between us, he made the remark that his church catered more to a better class of people.

A third cause of division is personal ambition. Too often preachers desire to be bosses and overlords of the congregations. In no place in God's Word are they given such authority. It is the business of the elders, or bishops of the local congregations to supervise but not "lording it over."

Other primary causes of division are jealousy hatred and envy. When men can't get along with one another in love, then the Christian Spirit is not within them and division results. If divisions are to be healed or prevented, it must be done on the basis of the Word of God.

DIVISION OF CHRISTIANITY must cease if God's Will is to be carried out. The sin of faction and division is frequently denounced in the New Testament. In several places it is listed with murders, idolatry, adultery, etc. Paul says in I Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Unity can only be achieved in Christ Jesus. It was Jesus' prayer in John 17, that "they (believers) 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." His prayer was that ALL BELIEVERS might be of the same Mind, and the same Spirit, and of the same Body. The Mind is the Mind of Christ; the Body is the Body of Christ of which He is the Head; the Spirit is the Divine Spirit which animates the Body.

IF SUCH PERFECT UNITY is to be realized, all must accept God as the Divine Creator and Sustainer, a wise and loving Father to all His children. All must accept the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God, taking it as the sole rule of faith and practice. All must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the divine Son of God, the Head of His Body, the Church. The name Christian can be worn by all the followers of Christ, which name is divinely given in Acts 11:26. The divine mission was to make Christians, to win souls to Jesus Christ, not to seek "joiners" for a particular denomination.

Let us strive therefore, with all the power that is within us to end all divisions and strifes and come to a divine unity in which we are all one in Christ Jesus.

St. James Annual Family Dinner Today

The St. James Baptist Church, 311 Madison Ave., is celebrating Thanksgiving today with its traditional Family Dinner, a Guest Speaker, and an unusual special attraction.

Robert Mullen, Clark County Probation Chief, will be the Guest Speaker at the Church's 16th annual Thanksgiving Family Dinner festivities which will include, as an extra "fun" feature, a colorful Zulu Wedding.

Rev. J. L. Simmons, Pastor of St. James, extends a cordial invitation to all members, relatives, as well as friends, to come to the Church this evening at 7:00 p.m. to eat all you want (or can); to hear Mr. Mullens; and enjoy the spectacle of the Zulu Wedding.

FOUR DAY PROGRAM HONORS LOCAL PASTOR

LOCAL CHURCHES OF MANY denominations joined The New Light Missionary Baptist Church membership last night, Wednesday, November 24 in the initial service of a scheduled four-day program designed as an expression of appreciation to the pastor of New Light Missionary Church, The Rev. J. Y. Earl and his wife.

The occasion, commemorating the third anniversary of Rev. Earl's pastorship of the Church, is programmed for three additional services, Thursday and Friday evenings at 7 p.m., and Sunday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. and are being held at the Carver Missionary Baptist Church of Four Mile Park.

Last night's program led off with Devotionals by guest churches; Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Calvary Baptist Church, New Morning Star Baptist Church, Zion Methodist Church, and Bethel Baptist Church. Brother Robert Washington delivered the Welcoming Address and Rev. J. Kemp, pastor of the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, the Sermon for the evening. Selections by Calvary Baptist and Pleasant Grove Choirs were heard.

Tonight's event will present the Victory Baptist, Pilgrim Rest Baptist, New Hope Baptist and St. James Baptist Churches as Guest Churches for the evening with Rev. J. L. Simmons of the latter church delivering the sermon.

SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY night's services are the Grace Emmanuel Baptist, Evergreen Baptist, New Jerusalem Baptist, and Light House Church of God in Christ Churches as Guest Churches. The Rev. F. N. Addison of the New Jerusalem Baptist Church will give the sermon.

On Sunday afternoon, the Rev. V. C. L. Coleman of the Second Baptist Church will preach while his Church, the St. Peter's Rock, Macedonia Baptist and Carver Baptist Churches will serve as Guest Churches for the day.

Every Service will feature musical selections rendered by the choirs of the respective Guest Churches. Sister Lucille James is secretary of Rev. Earl's New Light Missionary Church, and the program committee for the four-day tribute are Brother Poole, Brother Jimmie Washington, and Sister Delores Earl Johnson.

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