

## BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN.

"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." – Gal. 5:1.

Few get truly free from errors and superstitions, because few seek earnestly enough the voluntary enslavement to Christ, referred to above. Stepping out of one error and bondage of superstition, they step into another because of their own weaknesses. As we have already shown, none are strong enough to stand alone, and there is but the one we can lean on, and not be taken advantage of and deceived, enslaved and bound again, all our present surroundings being imperfect or evil.

All such enslaving, binding entanglements are deceptive; they all appear harmless or even beneficial, else few would be thus entangled. One of the very deceptive entanglements of our day, which hinders more than all others together, perhaps, that fullness and closeness of heart-fellowship with Christ, the only Master, is the prevalent idea that in joining the *one* church, whose names are written in heaven, we should also join some one of the numerous earthly organizations which each claim to represent that one true church, and whose creeds each claim to represent the "one faith" – "*the* faith once delivered unto the saints."

The impression is freely given, and is generally received, that to fail to become bound to some earthly sect, is to fail of membership in the one true church. The innocent soul, freed from Satan's service through Christ, is told truly that it cannot stand free alone, but instead of being pointed to Christ as the *only* Master and to the Word of God as the *only* rule for faith and service, they are pointed to the various sects as representing Christ, as appointed by him to receive their services, and they are pointed to the doctrines of these sects as taking the place and showing the *real meaning* of God's Word.

To become a probationary member of [R1067 : page 5] the one true church, "whose names are written in heaven," the conditions are first, a realization of our own imperfection and condemnation as sinners; secondly, of Christ's full atonement for our sins; thirdly, implicit faith in his love and goodness and in all his exceeding great and precious promises, however beyond the range of human skill or thought; and fourthly, a full consecration to him as our Lord and Master. These are the only conditions of our *acceptance* in the true church and they imply fullness of consecration, to do and be whatever our Master may desire, as we shall continually seek to grow in his grace and in the knowledge of his will. But to become a member of one of the earthly organizations, (churches), means to bind one's self beforehand, to believe and do neither more nor less than is stated in their creed and "covenant."

This leaves no room for the spirit of the truth to guide into all truth, and to show us things to come (John 16:13); no room for growth in grace and knowledge; and as a consequence, the new member, if he shall remain faithful to his covenant with the sect he has joined, can get no nearer to a full understanding of the truth, and no nearer to a full consecration, than the other faithful members of the same sect. He is bound by a creed seldom understood, and by a supposed interpretation of the Bible, framed by fallible men in a time of great ignorance and superstitious fog, which originated in Papacy in the dark ages.

When thus bound they are led to believe that every service rendered to such organizations, composed for most part of "tares," is service to the true church, the "little flock" of overcoming and fully consecrated believers. They suppose that money spent in cultivating sectarian pride, is sacrificed to the Lord; that fairs, suppers, and many worldly and questionable schemes to get money, are work for the Lord, and for the truth; they suppose that time and energy spent in getting repentant souls, and many others not repentant but merely alarmed, into these sects, where they will be blinded to a higher consecration, and bound and held back from growth in grace, knowledge and love, – this

they are deluded into supposing is "working for Jesus!" Alas! how sadly some are thus, in the name of the Master and in the name of the true church, entangled, misled, yoked up to error, and hindered from hearing his Word, and from following in his footsteps. A fellowship with the world, and the spirit of the world, and worldly follies, extravagancies, manners, customs and views, is thus substituted for fellowship of saints under the deceiving titles of Church and Christian.

Whoever has gotten free from such entanglements and has found the Master and submitted all to him, should take heed indeed that *nothing* – neither Protestant nor Catholic, church or priest, shall come between his heart and the true Lord and Teacher, Christ Jesus. And it should be the chief and most enjoyable service to the free, to lead others out of bondage of Sin and into the service of Christ. But, touch them gently as you seek to set them free! Remember that they have learned to love the galling yoke and chain; and some at least wear it lovingly and patiently, supposing that the Master placed it on them. Apply the oil and wine, to strengthen and molify, and touch their weak sore-spots as gently as possible. The true ones are deceived, enveigled sheep belonging to our own one fold, and the Master seeketh to lead them into it, and you are his messenger. Be wise for his sake and theirs.

Then, too, there are other bonds of error, outside the pale of the great organizations which claim to be the living church but are dead. There are forms of error purporting to be the light of advanced truth, which only the elect will probably escape, in this evil day. Their full consecration, and faithfulness to the Master, will keep them so near to him that no such plague shall come nigh their dwelling. Being filled with the truth and with the spirit of the truth they will quickly discern error, so that it will have no power to entrap and enslave them.

To all, therefore, who have separated themselves from former entanglements and who desire to continue to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, we would say, Let us live very near the fountain-head of truth; imbibe its spirit freely; take a firm and

positive stand for truth and be faithful at any cost. The Master we would thus obey, our sure and safe Guide, will be with us to the end. He will never leave us nor forsake us, nor suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but with each temptation provide also a way of escape.

"A thousand may fall at my side,  
Ten thousand at my right hand;  
Above me his wings are spread wide,  
Beneath them in safety I stand.

"His truth is my buckler and shield,  
His love he hath set upon me;  
His name in my heart he hath sealed  
E'en now his salvation I see."

[In our October issue we hope to examine the question of THE TRUE CHURCH, and the liberties and restraints of its members.]

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