

# A 20th Century Parable

Dub McClish

Behold, three prominent denominations of a certain city determined to conduct "union" services for three weeks during the summer months on Sunday evenings. Now a "union" service is "a service in which the agreed participants meet together as one at designated intervals." And it came to pass that when the three "pastors" of the said denominations met in holy concord to map plans for their separate sermons to be delivered at the services, behold, all was not holy concord. "Mr. Presbyterian" was planning to speak on the predestination of man, affirming that Christ had died for only a limited number of men. However, "Mr. Disciple of Christ" strongly objected, stating that people at "his" church did not believe this doctrine fully accorded with the New Testament teaching that Christ died for all men, and too, his people might be offended at such a controversial subject, so another subject was sought. At last, it was decided that "Mr. Presbyterian" was to speak on "The Beauties of Social Living as Observed in Our Community."

"Mr. Methodist" who was to be the second speaker was planning to preach on "The Sufficiency of the Scriptures for Salvation," but verily it came to pass that "Mr. Presbyterian" objected in the following words: "Mr. Methodist, I would deem it highly hypocritical of you to preach on such a subject. Indeed, your *Discipline* opens with the words. "Will you be subject to the *Discipline of the Church*, attend upon its ordinances, and support its institutions?" and no mention is made whatsoever of allegiance to the Scriptures to the candidate for membership. Too, does not your conference hold the right to "have full power to make rules and regulations" for your church, regardless of what the Scriptures say?" "Mr. Methodist," with head bowed, had to admit these truths. And, not willing to be made a laughingstock, he changed his subject to "Applications of the Golden Rule" which, after all, would hardly be offensive to the most sensitive hearer.

Now it was time for "Mr. Disciple" to choose his topic. He had determined to speak on "The Baptism of the New Testament," but after hearing the discussion on the two previous topics selected, he was somewhat discouraged from even a mention of it. He knew that "Mr. Presbyterian's" *Confession of Faith* allowed sprinkling or pouring and that "Mr. Methodist" allowed either of three ways to suffice for baptism. "Mr. Disciple", realizing that these doctrines did not agree with what he planned to say, and not being one to offend "a brother in Christ" began to think of other subjects. He suggested he might take "Mr. Methodist's" first selected

subject and preach on “The Authority of the New Testament”, but alas, at this suggestion, “Mr. Presbyterian” and “Mr. Methodist” burst forth in resounding guffaws. It was soon pointed, out to “Mr. Disciple” that this would hardly stand him in good stead with his audience since even he did not reverence the authority of Scripture as exemplified by instrumental music, numerous societies, the use of the title “Reverend,” which were all found in his church but not in the New Testament. Not being one to argue, “Mr. Disciple” finally decided to preach on “God’s Love for Little Children.”

Let the kind reader behold in what ways this was a “union” service:

1. **It was a union of compromise** – Each one cared more about pleasing men than pleasing God.
2. **It was a union of error** – Each man was so “creed bound” that he could not afford to preach simple New Testament Truths.
3. **It was a union of hypocrisy** – three sects assembled that had little or no agreement on the plan of salvation, items of worship, or church government, and that made no pretense of searching for Truth and uniting on it.

Yet it was hypocritically called a “union meeting.” Paul commanded, “...that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you...” (1 Cor. 1:10). Peter exhorted, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Pet. 4:11). Jesus warned, “Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15:13).

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