UNITY OF ACTION IN THE CHURCH
The Spirit of Contention Condemned By Paul as Carnal
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Written for "The Examiner" by Bishop Elias H. Hershey
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And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou are the Christ, the
Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him,
Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed
it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee,
that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and
the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. - Matt. xiv, 16-18

The social nature is one of our strong attributes. The use of it
brings progression. The child develops according to the degree of
association. The artisan, the student, the statesman, and the
Christian,— all owe much to association. We all assent to one
Central Power governing the Universe, displaying the law of
harmony. Harmony is in all our functions of mind and body
regulating the system and making our inherent forces effective.

Expression is given to this fact when God according to the
Scripture record ordered chaos into unity. He sanctioned the
worship of one Creator, obedience to one authority, which being
forsaken, brought disorder and sorrow at an early age, and has
continued. Hope was given in the promise of a Redeemer which was
recognized in the different ages. Job mentions the promise in his
book written before any other book of the Bible, and it is the oldest
literary production in the world. Its time is placed 29 years before
the Exodus from Egypt, 1520 years before Christ, 530 years before
Homer, 1000 years before Confucius and Solon. David refers to the
promise in his Psalm about 1000 years before Christ, Isaiah about
700 years B.C., and other prophets speak of the same promise.

Moses foretold him and impressed the importance of hearing
him. He is called the Restorer of paths to dwell in.

The term church is not used in the Old Testament. Our
Saviour said he will build it. To build a structure requires a
foundation. His doctrine of regeneration is the basis, which means
the subjugation of our carnal nature, and the gift of the Holy Spirit
to endow us with the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Where
God’s love is there is peace. Consequently about 5000 persons in the
beginning church, when they had received the Holy Ghost, "were of
one heart and one soul." The Saviour says, "That if two of you shall
agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be
done for them of my Father which is in heaven; that by this shall all
men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
He prays for His disciples, "that they may be made perfect in one,
that the world may know that thou hast sent me." He calls His
followers a kingdom and says, "Every kingdom divided against itself
is brought to desolation." Testimonies of this kind are many.
Membership in the church will not save us, for to be saved requires
a spiritual birth produced by desire; but the church is a system of
help. It is said, "Then they that gladly received his word were
baptized and the same day there were added unto them about 3000
souls."

Baptism is a confession of faith and a ceremony of admission
into the fellowship of the church, and implies agreement with every
member of the church in all duties resting on that sacred relation for
which Christ gave himself. It means submission to the Head of
the church in all things, co-operation with the members, the
upholding of the spiritual and natural wants of the church, the
maintenance of discipline to provoke to love and good works, the reproof of such as
become lax in duty, that the "Body of Christ," may work out all the
deeds promotive of righteousness. Neither edification nor purity can
be maintained without unity of action. A united ministry is necessary
to enforce discipline, and the deference from the members to their
authority is necessary. The tendency in human nature is strongly
selfish, or there would be no division among professing Christians.
When the spirit of contention arose in the church at Corinth, Paul
called it carnal and condemned it. We read that Paul went through
Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches; that he had the care of all

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