

3/22/76

Organization

Another point at which balance is necessary is the relation between individuals and organized ~~gum~~ groups. The Bible clearly teaches that each individual stands alone before God. No one can be saved by ~~someone else's faith~~ of the faith of someone else. No one can exercise the gifts that God has given to another person. Each of us has a responsibility before God, and each of us every Chn° must utilize his ~~ability~~ abilities the best way he can to serve the Lord and to grow in grace.

There is also an emphasis in the Scripture on organizations of people working together. The NT° commands Chns° not to forsake gathering themselves together. It speaks of the church as the ground and basis of the truth. It ~~was~~ speaks of the body of Christ as an organism ^h in /which all the parts are knit together related ~~was~~ to each other and to the Head. This of course refers to ~~the~~ the invisible church which /is composed of all who truly believe in Christ and which does not ~~is~~ include any who merely state words do not really know Him. a visible

We cannot form/~~an~~ organization that will exactly represent the invisible church of Christ. Only the Lord knows who are His own. We are often deceived

~~an~~ mistaken. God wishes us to unite together in organizations to serve Him.

These organizations may be called local churches or denominations. Neither of them has any God-given power over the individual, since each individual is responsible to God alone. Yet it is desirable and necessary that members of such organizations cooperate in an effective ~~ay~~ way, and to do so they must have means of dropping from their/~~membership~~ ^{membership} those who prove not to be in sympathy with their objectives. The phrase "the autonomy of the local church" is a rather meaningless phrase, /~~although~~ ^{although} meaning can be put into it. If it means that no higher body has a right to exercise autocratic control over a local church, this of course is true, just as it is true that no ϕ local church has a right to exercise autocratic control over those who belong to it. The Scripture does not give us any definite rule how large/~~our~~ ^{our} churches or denominations should be. ~~they~~