

THE ORDER IN THE NEW CREATION

*A compilation of the writings of Pastor Russell on
The Order IN The New Creation.*

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To the King of Kings and Lord of Lords

IN THE INTEREST OF
HIS CONSECRATED SAINTS, WAITING
FOR THE ADOPTION

This Work is Dedicated

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”
-1 Cor. 14:40

FOREWORD

When we apply our thoughts to the matter of ORDER, we call to mind the scripture penned by the Apostle Paul to the challenging church at Corinth. Yes! We are referring to I Corinthians 14:33 and we quote from the Bible in Basic English (BBE) -

“For God is not a God whose warp are without order, but a God of peace: as in all the churches of the saints.”

Ah! Yes! The God of the Universe and all the life, (Job 12:10) and the Abba Father of the new creation, we realize is a God of ORDER! And this order is seen in all creation, the various works of God, the divine plan of God for man, to name, but a few! This order is the manifestation of the HOLY SPIRIT of God – the mind of God, which we are told by the beloved Apostle Paul imparts to all who receive of this “spirit” - a sound mind!

Now while the whole world in the fallen condition (Romans 5:12) are “STRANGERS” and unaware of this order, we see that the NEW CREATION of the gospel age, the “kind of first fruits” (James 1:18) to receive salvation and like, by the begetting of that “spirit” are introduced and guided into this principle of ORDER. It is such a vital feature of all God’s perfected creations.

But this ORDER does NOT come naturally to the fallen and depraved nature of our fallen estate. In fact it is the reverse – DISORDER and chaos! Thus it will take much study and meditation on these principles of God and a SINCERE DESIRE to submit oneself to it that will bring that transformation into that divine “image” and “likeness.” This book and the purpose of its compilation was to provide that “food for the thought”!

We offer it to you all with sincere prayer and thanksgiving to Our Father and Our Master whose grace made it possible. We end with a scripture telling us of the EFFECTS of this ORDER when it is accomplished in each of the new creation. We read from the Bible in Basic English (BBE) I Timothy 1:5 –

“But the effect of the order is love coming from a clean heart, and a knowledge of what is right, and true faith.”

Oh! Yes! May God bless this fruitage in our hearts and lives.

Amen!

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Part-1

THE CHURCH AND ITS ORDER

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The article in a back issue of the TOWER (Vol. 4, No. 4), entitled "*The Ecclesia*," furnishes our understanding of what constitutes the Church of Christ and the spirit of love and truth which binds and unites the saints of all ages. But we have inquiries from a number of ministers and others who are coming back from sectarianism to the original and only true church which includes all SANCTIFIED *believers in the ransom*, asking whether we recognize local *organizations* such as the Apostles established in every city (*Titus 1:5*), having elders and deacons, etc.; and if we do not have such, Why? Is such organization not as proper now as in the Apostles' days? And if there are no such organizations, how is the work of the ministry and teaching conducted *successfully*?

We reply, that the circumstances now differ from those of the Apostles' day in that their work was more to organize and lay the foundation for an age of work just beginning, while our work is the reverse almost of this; it is the ending or harvesting of this age; and the *methods* of then and now might be as different as are the methods of a farmer and the implements he uses in sowing seed and in reaping his harvest.

The methods of Jesus, in *harvesting* the Jewish age, furnish a better guide to present work. It is with us much as it was with him: His mission was not to bring peace but a sword--*division* (*Matt. 10:34*.) In some respects, dividing and tearing down are not as agreeable employment as building up; but if we are anxious to do the Master's will we have no other wish, and especially if he has shown us the necessity of the separation in order to the glorifying of the saints and the bringing in through them of an age of blessing to the world in general. Seeing this, harvesting becomes the most enjoyable work in the vineyard.

For the same reasons that Jesus did not *organize* congregations while *present* with his disciples in the Jewish harvest, we do not consider expedient or necessary organizations even simple and unsectarian as those established by the Apostles. Our Lord is again *present*, not again in the "form of a servant," in the flesh, but a spiritual being; and he, being present, is in all things the guide and director of every laborer.

But, though no earthly organization is attempted, yet we are as *one*--all united to the one head and following the leadings of his Word and Spirit. If we see any among us turn aside and "err from the truth," each other member will feel a loving duty to do what he can to restore such a one to the truth; yet we feel that the further responsibility of disciplining, etc., is with our *present* Lord, who also will do it. We labor to do his will and leave *results* to him.

Our ministers, if assembled, would contrast nearly as strongly with those of the nominal "church" as did Jesus' followers at the first advent contrast with the Scribes and Pharisees.

The ministers of the nominal Church seek for and receive the popular approval; and for their labor they have their reward, being abundantly supported and honored. In fact, a young man of talent finds no easier or more direct road to the honors, ease and comforts of life than to enter the ministry of the Nominal Church. But far different is it with those who, for the love of the truth and the glory of God, go forth to declare the whole counsel of God whether men will hear or forbear. These are by no means salaried lords of God's heritage, but, like their Master, they are despised and rejected of men; but they esteem it a privilege to receive the wages of persecution, hardship, and trial of the present time, while joyfully looking forward to the glory to be revealed. They use whatever talents they possess to the best advantage, whether they be many or few. [R537 : page 2] Some, through the columns of the "TOWER," are stirring up the gift that is in them; and some, who have the opportunity, travel from place to place preaching by word and printed matter, while others, whose field is not so wide, are thus engaged in their own immediate neighborhood. Few can give *all* their time directly in the Gospel work: the mass of them, in order to "provide things *honest* in the sight of all men," are obliged to "labor, working with their hands."

The majority of these ministers [servants] of Christ do their work by searching out the "*saints*," for whom *present truths* are meat in due season, and by conversation on these subjects and the loaning of a paper containing some article which they have marked, they endeavor to build them up in the most holy faith, helping them to understand the word of God more perfectly, as did Aquilla and Priscilla with Apollos (*Acts 18:26*), and each doing with his might what his hand finds to do, using whatever talents he possesses, seeks thus to glorify God in body and spirit which are his. It is the mistake of very many Christians, however, and one which all should guard against, to suppose that they are serving the Lord's cause when they are indiscriminately distributing anything which claims to be a religious tract or paper. The careful servant will be judicious and discriminating in this and in everything he undertakes. Such are the simple methods of the majority, and their work, under God's direction, is mighty in the pulling down of strongholds. Here a little and there a little, Babylon and her wall of errors is crumbling before the truth. Another question in connection with this subject is:

WHAT CONSTITUTES "A CALL TO THE MINISTRY?"

All who consecrate are *led* of the Spirit (if they will *follow*) into more and more of an appreciation of God's goodness and loving plans; and as they become filled with the spirit of love and see those about them *needing* the precious truth which they so freely received of God, and which so blessed and helped them, they realize that this very condition of things is a call from God to declare it to them, using their best talents in their heart-work, and letting their light so *shine* as to glorify their Father in heaven.

Of *every member* of the anointed body it is true as of the *Head*--"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto THE MEEK." (*Isa. 61:1*.) The Master is saying even now to every consecrated one: Go ye also into my vineyard--why stand ye idle?

R1889

DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

"Let all things be done decently and in order."--*1 Corinthians 14:40*.

RECENTLY, by various circumstances among the companies of the saints, our attention has been drawn to the subject of *order* in the Church. As the numbers of those separated from "Babylon" by the sickle of harvest truth increase, and in small or larger groups assemble themselves together as the Lord directed (*Heb. 10:25*), we find new difficulties and see new dangers arising, particularly on account of the great activity of our ever-vigilant adversary. These have led us again to a very careful consideration of the subject in the light of the Scriptures.

The apostles had much to say to the early Church concerning *order* in the assemblies of the saints; and apparently we have been rather negligent of this wise counsel, feeling it to be of rather minor importance, because the Church is so near the end of her course and the harvest is a time of separating. But it is safe to continue to heed very carefully "the things written aforetime for our admonition." Though the time is short to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, the issues in the battle with the principalities and powers of darkness become more and more critical, and the contest in every individual case is becoming more sharp and decisive.

While it is true that harvest is a time for separating, it is also a time for gathering. Should the farmer be content to thresh out his grain and leave it scattered on the ground? No; he knows that unless he afterward gathers and stores it his labor will be lost: it will decay on the ground, or the

birds will come and devour it. Now the Lord is a wise husbandman, and he indicates that both the separating and the gathering are parts of the harvest work, saying, "Come out of her, my people [separate yourselves from Babylon];" and again, "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

We, therefore, that are separated from Babylon are not to stand alone and separate from each other; but we are to gather together in Christian fellowship and communion around the table of the Lord--the harvest table, so richly and bountifully spread for us. "Wheresoever the carcass [the food] is, there will the eagles [the hungry and farsighted eagle class, who discern the food from afar off] be *gathered together*." (*Matt. 24:27,28.*) We are to assemble ourselves together and to strengthen the bonds of love and fellowship, and "so much the more as we see the day approaching." And in so doing it is a matter of special importance that we carefully consider what the Scriptures present as profitable for the various companies of the saints thus assembled.

ORDER IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In the days of the early Church the printing press was not yet at the service of the truth, and even the manuscript copies of the Word of God were not in the hands of the people; nor had the masses the ability to read for themselves. The New Testament Scriptures, too, were only in process of construction. In course of time the Apostles' letters were exchanged among the congregations and copied for reconsideration and instruction.

Their lack, however, of the things we now possess, was, according to their necessities, made up to them by the great Head of the Church in the various gifts--of tongues, of interpretation, of prophecy, etc., many of which have now passed away, as Paul declared they would (*1 Cor. 13:8*), being superseded by the richer blessings of later times--the complete and compact Word of God in the hands of the people, among whom education has become general; and all the wonderful helps to its understanding afforded by Concordances, Bible Dictionaries, etc., etc.

In order that the meetings of the Church should be profitable in those early days an orderly arrangement of their affairs was enjoined by the apostles, and acted upon by the various companies of believers. Those who had the gifts of tongues, or interpretation of tongues, or prophecy, were not all to speak at once; the unlearned and illiterate women of those days (especially in Corinth--see our issue of July, '93, page 201) were not to interrupt and confuse the meetings, etc., etc. And the whole service was to be characterized becoming dignity, sobriety and solemnity; yet with the greatest simplicity, all, in an orderly way, from time to time, according to their several ability, taking part in the work of edifying and building up the body of Christ. Some had the ability to instruct the Church in sound doctrine; some had the gifts of tongues or of interpretation; some were able to exhort and encourage; and all were able to unite their hearts in prayer and to lift their voices in praise, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. (*1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.*) And thus becoming acquainted with each other, they were able to bear one another's burdens, and together to advance in Christian growth and development, their means of edification being supplied by the Lord, and their orderly methods through the advice of the apostles.

While this order in the exercises of their meetings was thus indicated, and was acted upon by the Church, there was also an order in the leadership and various duties of the Church. Thus, for instance, Paul and Barnabas, when they had gathered companies of believers in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, "ordained them elders in every church;" and then, commending them to the Lord, they took their departure. (*Acts 14:21-23.*) Paul also commissioned Titus to go from city to city, and in every place to ordain (appoint) elders, whose duty it was to take the oversight of the Lord's flock in their vicinity, to feed them with the truth, to guard them against the wolves in sheep's clothing, and, in a general way, to act as their representatives. (*Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; 1 Pet. 5:1,2; Acts 15:6,23-28.*) The qualifications of these elders were also clearly set forth by the Apostle--*1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11.*

ORDER NECESSARY TO-DAY

If this order was necessary to the spiritual prosperity of the early Church, and, because necessary, was so authoritatively enjoined and so universally adopted, so that there were no exceptions to the rule in any place, it is certainly a question worthy of consideration whether the same necessity does not exist among the companies of believers to-day.

We believe that the same necessity for order and for the appointment of elders does exist to-day, and for the same good reasons that it existed then, which reasons are as follows:--

(1) Because in the Church, as in a family, there are various degrees of spiritual development. Some are babes, and need the sincere milk of the Word, while others require the strong meat; and it is necessary therefore that some one "apt to teach" should be in a position to do so. There are also various temptations, trials, difficulties and dangers which all are not equally prepared to meet. Hence the necessity of wise and discreet overseers, men of some experience and ability, deeply interested in looking out for the spiritual welfare of all, and capable of instructing them in the truth.

(2) Because now, as then amongst the early Church, there are wolves in sheep's clothing who would "privily bring in damnable heresies," against which the chosen elders should be able to defend the flock; and against which they should be able to arm them by leading them to a very thorough knowledge of the truth. Then, too, as the Apostle forewarned us, "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" and the faithful elders will be quick to discern and prompt to warn and defend the flock against all such influences. --Acts 20:28-30; Titus 1:10,11; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

(3) Because if no such arrangements and appointments had been made in the legitimate way indicated by the Apostles, some one will *take* the leadership and hold it indefinitely; and almost imperceptibly a whole company will find itself more or less in bondage to that one. Such cases have frequently arisen, and brethren have written to us for some suggestions as to how they might be released without offending or hurting the brother who had taken the leading position.

This taking the leadership has really been a necessity in many cases, and has been undertaken generally with the purest of motives, and with good results up to a certain point; for instance, it sometimes happens on this wise: A brother full of love for the truth and of zeal for the Lord's cause gathers about him a few who receive the truth with gladness, and who desire and need further instruction, which he, being more advanced, is able to give; and together they grow in the knowledge of the truth, and through their united zeal the company increases, until finally it is deemed advisable to remove the meetings from private parlors to a hall. By this time some other brother in the company proves more capable for the larger and more public work, but all fear to suggest that the more capable brother take the lead, for fear of offending the one of less ability, though long recognized and still beloved. In some cases even a hint of such a thing manifests a little feeling of resentment, and it is plain that the brother has come to feel a sort of proprietorship in the company, and he feels and speaks of them as his people, etc., etc., instead of as the Lord's people. But this is not always the case, we are happy to say; for sometimes the grace of meekness continues to grow, and self is lost sight of in zeal for the Lord's work.

Again it sometimes happens that some one who is the most lacking in the grace of humility, and therefore the least adapted to the situation, is forward to take it and anxious to hold it; and if he be not sound in the faith, the company is soon afflicted with speculations or false doctrine whereby many may be stumbled.

(4) If no orderly arrangement exist in the Church, those who are most solicitous for her welfare, and anxious to spend and be spent in her service, may sometimes find themselves in a most embarrassing situation. Faithfulness to the truth often causes division. And some who dislike that faithfulness may strongly intimate that the services of the faithful are not desired, though such might not be the sentiment of all, nor even of the majority of the company. Such a one would therefore lack

the support which a full expression would give, and must therefore fight the battle in defence of the flock almost single-handed and alone, or else leave them to the mercy of the adversary.

The fact that things are running smoothly in any locality without any systematic order having been agreed upon, or the duties, rights and liberties of the congregation thought of, is no guarantee that they will always run so. Our ever vigilant adversary will be sure at some time to take advantage of every unguarded place or principle in the Church collectively, as well as in the individual members of it. Therefore as a Church, as well as in individual cases, we should

"Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul, [but]
Take every virtue, every grace, and fortify the whole."

The seasons of peace and rest are the times for preparing for the emergencies of storm and tempest, which, both collectively and individually, we must meet. That would be a very short-sighted captain and crew that would put out to sea in a vessel prepared only for fair weather. Wisdom counsels that no matter how fair the weather, how calm the sea and how balmy the breezes on starting, the arrangements for battling with the storms must all be on board--the provisions for life-boats, life-preservers, for battening down the hatches, etc., must all be on board. In these testing times especially, when Satan is most active and subtle in his opposition, we need to look well to all the precautionary provisions that the Lord, through the apostles, has counselled for our protection.

THE APOSTOLIC COUNSEL COMMENDED

In view of all these contingencies we have no hesitation in commending to the Churches in every place, whether their numbers be large or small, the Apostolic counsel, that, in every company, elders be chosen from among their number to "feed" and "take the oversight" of the flock. And in accordance with the teaching of the Apostle (*1 Cor. 12:28,29*), that God hath set some in the Church to be special helpers, teachers, etc., and that all are not so qualified, we should expect that the Lord will provide some such in every company, and should therefore seek to find them there as in the early Churches. While brethren from outside congregations may help to start the work, and, by their occasional visits, be a fresh stimulant to them, each company should furnish its own elders and carry forward its own share of the Lord's work as the way may open before them. The special field of labor for each company is their own locality, as far as they can extend their influence; and fervent piety and burning zeal among them will not be fruitless. If but little wheat can be garnered, abundant *testimony to the truth* can at least be borne. This Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached "for a witness," as well as for the gathering out of "a people for his name." Tract distribution, personal visits, personal letters and personal conversation (wise and discreet) --in the workshops and stores, on the streets, and by the firesides--and backed by noble and consistent Christian characters and kindly neighborly ministries, are all effective means in the interests of the truth, which fervent zeal will not overlook. In these various ways all can preach the gospel; for all the consecrated are anointed to preach, and they need no other authority to do so than that which the Lord gives in their anointing with his holy spirit. For this purpose our Lord and Head was anointed; and this same anointing extends to all the members of his body, the Church.--*Isa. 61:1-3*; *Luke 4:16-21*; *1 John 2:27*.

THE OCCASION OF CHOOSING ELDERS

We suggest that in the matter of choosing elders the mind of the Lord may best be determined through the agency of his consecrated people. Let the Church (*i.e.*, those only who trust for salvation in the precious blood of the Redeemer, and who are fully consecrated to him) express their judgment of the Lord's will by vote; and if this be done periodically--say yearly--the liberties of the congregations will be conserved, and the elders will be spared much unnecessary embarrassment. If it still be deemed expedient, and so manifestly the Lord's will, there would be no barrier to the

reelection of the same elders year by year; and if a change be deemed expedient, the change could then be made without any friction or unpleasant feelings on the part of any.

A vote of the Church merely affords the opportunity to every justified and fully consecrated believer to express his convictions of the Lord's will in the matter--not his own will; for if he be fully the Lord's, he reckons his own will dead, and he realizes that he must act and speak as the Lord would have him do. This method secures to all equal rights and privileges. It was probably the method of Titus and others who looked after the matter in the early Church; for we cannot think they *arbitrarily* appointed the elders without any consultation with the people, who were of necessity better acquainted than they, comparative strangers, could be. This is also the method mentioned in **Acts 6:3-5**. Remember too that you are choosing servants (ministers) and not rulers or masters. This is very different from the methods in vogue in the various sects, many of which limit most of the privileges to a "clerical" class, who lord it over the people; and even in those things in which the congregations have a voice, the matter is not in the hands of God's fully consecrated, unfettered and spirit-led children, but in the hands of such only as have submitted to a sectarian bondage, respecting doctrines as well as order, not one-third of whom would claim to be fully consecrated to God. But in order to be sure that we have the mind of the Lord we should make sure that we recognize in the vote only such as profess to be justified through faith in the vicarious (substitutionary) sacrifice of Christ, and to be fully consecrated to him. It might be well, therefore, to identify this class before the vote is taken, either by asking such to raise their hands or to occupy seats in another part of the room. This would help some, too, by keeping prominently before the minds of all that faith and consecration without which none can hope to be of the Church triumphant; and the witnessing of this good confession always brings a blessing to the consecrated.

True, one or a few might not be consistent with their profession, but the *majority vote* would undoubtedly be under the Lord's direction, and the expression of his will; and, in full faith, it should be so regarded. But it might still be urged by some that, notwithstanding their carefulness to have the vote of the Church only, the majority vote of the Church might still be in error, not expressing the mind of the Lord; and the case of the selection of Matthias by the eleven apostles to fill the place of Judas might be cited as an instance of such failure, together with the fact that the Lord simply ignored their choice and subsequently made his own choice of Paul.

This, however, was not a selection by the Church under the direction of the holy spirit; for this was before Pentecost, the holy spirit had not yet been given (**John 7:39**), and the disciples were not yet recognized of God as the Church. Besides, none of the apostles were chosen in the same way as the elders of the various congregations, nor could they be: the Church, the body of Christ, was not yet in existence. Only the Head of the Church had yet been recognized, and he had not yet been glorified. All of the twelve were chosen *directly* by the Lord, and in due time qualified for their special service to the whole body. The appointing of "elders in every place" enjoined by the apostles is entirely separate and distinct from the appointment of the twelve apostles *directly* by the Lord, in which matter the Church had no voice whatever, and could have none.

As to the number of elders to be chosen in each congregation: that might depend on the number of brethren in the company qualified for the service. If two or three seem capable, the service of the company alternating among them would serve to develop the talents of each, which might, as opportunity offers, be extended beyond the limits of your local group; and the company would also in this way be favored with the varied talents of all. Or there might be one or two whose qualifications might be recognized as preeminent, and such parts of the service might be accorded to them as they would be deemed best qualified for.

The occasion of choosing elders should always be a solemn one. It is the Lord's business, and should be done with thoughtful consideration, as in his sight. The brother who acts as chairman of the meeting should endeavor to impress this upon all. If each one in the company seeks to know and do the will of God only, and, in harmony with his consecration, expresses what he believes to be the will of the Lord in the matter, then, on the strength of the promise, "The meek will he guide in

judgment" (*Psa. 25:9*), the result of such deliberations should be accepted by all as the mind of the Lord, the holy spirit thus speaking through his consecrated people. Generally the result of such deliberations will be a unanimous agreement.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

In *1 Tim. 3:1-7* [See *Diaglott*] the Apostle describes the qualifications of an elder or overseer, and in *verses 8 to 13* the qualifications of an assistant elder are described. These verses should be read before the vote is taken, and the elder or elders for the chief service should be selected first, and then, if assistants are needed, they should be chosen later. Among these assistants might properly be some sisters; for some of the services can best be performed by females, especially visiting of the female sick. Many suppose that *verse 11* above refers to these female assistants, as also *Rom. 16:1*; and it seems very evident that in the early Church many sisters did service. The choice or vote should be in full view of the qualifications mentioned according to the judgment by each of the will of the Lord. We quote,--

"If a man desires an overseer's office [service], he desires a good work. [Any service we can render to the body of Christ is a blessed service.] An overseer, then, must be irreproachable [of good character], the husband of one wife [not necessarily a married man; for both the Lord and the Apostle recommend the celibate state as preferable (*Matt. 19:12*; *1 Cor. 7:32,33*)], but he must not have more than one wife, an injunction more pertinent in those days than at the present time], vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not a wine drinker, no striker, but gentle; not quarrelsome, not a lover of money; presiding well over his own family, having his children in subjection with all dignity; (for if a man know not how to preside over his own family, how shall he take care of a congregation of God?)"

The idea is not, as the common version seems to suggest, that these servants of the Church are to rule the Church,--to legislate for it and hold it in subjection to their will,--but that, with loving interest, they should *preside* over it, looking out for its interests and affairs and counseling and assisting as faithful stewards of God. (See *Emphatic Diaglott*.) The Lord Jesus is the only Lord the Church needs; and no synods, or councils, or clergy, or elders are authorized to assume the prerogatives of the only Lord and Head. Brethren in the Church may advise and counsel; but in so doing they should endeavor always to speak, not their own opinions, but as the oracles of God. --"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." (*1 Pet. 4:10,11*.) Their counsel should be of weight with the Church only as it is backed by the Word and spirit of the Lord, of which all are to judge individually. But when such counsel is founded on the Word of God, calling attention to its precepts and commandments, it should have the careful consideration of all, in the spirit of meekness. And if, in pride of heart, any despise such instruction, through disrespecting or lightly esteeming the human instrumentality which God has chosen for calling attention to it, the opposition is against the Lord and his way.

It is for this reason that the Apostle urges that we "look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (*Heb. 12:15*); for the grace of God, the favor of God, in manifesting his will by making it plain from his Word, comes to the Church *mainly* through his chosen human instruments. And if any man, through strife or vain glory or from any other motive, seeks to unsettle the confidence of the Lord's flock, and to plant a root of bitterness in their hearts against such servants as the Lord has set for the presentation and defense of the truth, he thereby hinders the grace of God to them, and the result is almost certain to be the defiling of many. Any who pursue such a course are in the Lord's hands for judgment; and, whatever their professions, they will sooner or later be brought to naught, with all who follow their pernicious way. If brethren who are true to the Lord and to each other and the interests of the flock differ in their judgment of the Lord's will, they should differ in love, and should

endeavor by prayer and careful study and by earnest endeavor to so purify their hearts from every disposition that would render them unworthy of the truth, to come speedily to the *unity* of the faith.-- "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [in heart, will], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."--*Phil. 3:15,16.*

"Not a novice [an inexperienced or untried person], lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil [*i.e.*, lest like Satan--*Isa. 14:13,14; Phil. 2:5-9*Diaglott--he become ambitious to be some great one, thereby necessitating his abasement; for 'pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall']."

"Moreover, he must have a good report [for honesty and general uprightness of character] of them which are without [the world], lest he fall into reproach [the reproach of hypocrisy] and the snare of the devil."

"Assistants in like manner ought to be serious, not deceitful in speech, not being addicted to much wine, not eager for base gain, holding the secret of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also be proved first; then serve, being unblameable. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let assistants be husbands of one wife, presiding well over their own families."

In his letter to Titus Paul adds to these qualifications the following,--"*Holding fast the faithful word*, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by *sound doctrine*, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers; for there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers,... whose mouths must be stopped." How necessary to the prosperity of the flock are these qualifications in their chosen elders! Above all things they should choose those "sound in the faith," "holding fast the faithful Word," and avoid most carefully those who deal in human speculations and vain philosophies. This caution indicates also that the Church should know positively what its faith is, and be able to judge of the soundness of the faith of its elders. The faith once delivered to the saints ("That Christ died for *our sins*") must test every item of subsequent, advanced truth. And all fanciful speculations and philosophies should be disesteemed and discouraged as saith the Apostle.--*1 Tim. 6:20.*

APOSTOLIC CHARGES TO THE ELDERS

Then, when the elders have been chosen and have accepted the service, the charges of Paul to Timothy (*2 Tim. 3:16,17; 4:1-5*) and to *Titus (2:1,7,8,11-15)*, and of Peter in his general epistle (*1 Pet. 5:1-11*), might be read to them in presence of the company, followed by prayer that God would add his blessing upon the chosen elders, and upon all the company as they shall cooperate together in the service of the Lord.

These words of the Apostles are most solemnly impressive. Hear Paul:--"All scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work."

"I charge thee therefore [Timothy], before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season [when it suits your own convenience, and when it does not]; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; for the time will come *when they will not endure sound doctrine*; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears [for something new and strange--for human speculations and vain philosophies]. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things [against these evil influences and tendencies], endure afflictions [for they are sure to come to all who are faithful in the service: such are sure to incur the wrath of the adversary who will actively oppose them]; do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

To Titus he says, "But speak thou the things which become *sound doctrine*,...in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, *sound speech that cannot be condemned*, so that he who is of the opposition may be ashamed, having no

evil thing to say of you....For the grace of God that bringeth salvation is manifested for all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ....These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority [the authority of God's Word, not his own]."

Hear Peter also:--"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint [requiring urging], but willingly [willing to assume the labors and responsibilities of the service]; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind [which loves to serve the Lord, the sheep and the truth]. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom **resist**, steadfast in the faith....The God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion forever. Amen."

THE EXERCISE OF LIBERTY A SAFEGUARD AGAINST BONDAGE

Some are so glad to be free from Babylon's bondage that they need caution against an opposite extreme--lack of order. Some so fear the enslavement of sectarian earthly organizations that they fear to use their individual liberty to designate which of their number they believe would be the Lord's choice for particular services. They thus risk the very bondage they wish to avoid. The tendency in all is like a pendulum to go to extremes; but the tendency of the Word and spirit of the truth is to "establish, strengthen, settle you." The spiritual interests of the Lord's flock in any place are matters too serious and important to be left to hap-hazard conditions which Satan is very sure to take advantage of some time.

The fact that we have escaped from the bondage of Babylon, is no reason why we should discard all order and system in our affairs: the early Church might have had similar fears; for they had just escaped from the bondage of Judaism, and they were also instructed not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Gal. 5:1.) The yoke of bondage, however, was not the idea of system and order, but the bondage of the old Jewish faith--the Law-Covenant. From that they were to remain free; for Christ, by his sacrifice, had made them free. Evidently the systematic order enjoined upon the Churches and adopted by all was not considered a bondage; order was established and elders were appointed in every place; and the work of the Lord accordingly prospered.

The principle of order and of recognizing elders duly appointed and qualified by the spirit of the Lord--not in so-called theological seminaries--and sustaining them in their work by the approval and cooperation of the company they serve is right, otherwise the Apostles were wrong in enjoining it upon the early Church; and the early Christians were wrong in not resisting the arrangement. But evidently the Apostles and the early Church were not wrong. The simple order and arrangement of their affairs proved a blessing; and the Lord himself established a precedent in acknowledging the arrangement, when, in his revelation to the seven churches of Asia, he addressed his messages through their representative elders, "angels," messengers or servants.--Rev. 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14.

We have no controversy with the nominal churches on the subject of order, excepting in so far as they have over-reached the *simplicity* that is in Christ, and the order which he enjoined through his holy apostles, and have *multiplied* the forms of godliness to the extent that they have lost its power. We should not reject anything merely because the nominal churches have it, but we should

reject all that is wrong, all that is out of harmony with the Word and spirit of God. Had we been guided by a mere blind antagonism to the various sects, we might have gone to the extreme of discarding some old and valuable truths which the nominal Christian systems still hold in a way, tho now with less and less tenacity. We might, for instance, have discarded the doctrines of the vicarious atonement, or of baptism, or the Lord's supper, merely because they hold them. But, taught by the Word of God, we have learned to hold fast that which is good; and among the good things is that of doing all that we do in the Lord's cause, as in everything else, "decently and in order;" but let it be the Scriptural order, and not the order of Babylon, which exalts a class of lords over God's heritage and ignores the true Head of the Church, which is the only rightful authority over it. Forget not that "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; but he that would be greatest among you shall be your servant." "Let all things be done decently and in order," and with a view to the building up of the body of Christ.-- 1 Cor. 14:40,26.

THE PREROGATIVES OF THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

It is a mistake to presume that the true Church has no bounden responsibilities, that we are all free to do as we please --to forsake the assembling of the saints if we please, or to associate ourselves with others if we please, or to go here and there and gather a morsel of food from all tables, good, bad and indifferent. If we truly belong to Christ, the only liberty we enjoy is liberty from the bondage of sin and death and all the yokes that Satan would impose upon us. Our freedom consists in the fact that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; we have passed from death unto life, and are no more the servants of the taskmaster Sin. The old things that pertained to that bondage have passed away, and all things have become new. This is the blessed liberty of the sons of God. It is realized now by faith, and in a measure actually; but by and by it will be fully realized when this mortal (blemished and imperfect through the fall) shall have put on immortality.

But having been thus emancipated by Christ from the bondage of Sin, we have since come into covenant relations with him to do his will, which is also the will of our Heavenly Father, even as he also covenanted with God, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God;" "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." So, as our Lord expressed it, we whom he made free from Satan's grievous yoke have taken upon us the yoke and burden of Christ--which is a joyous service. (Matt. 11:29,30.) This, then, is the extent of our liberty if we are true to our covenant; and also the extent of our bondage. Praise his dear name! we find the yoke of our Lord and Redeemer easy, and his burden light, because of his love to us and our love to him.

The true Church, "whose names are written in heaven," is undoubtedly an organization, even in the present time, while it is subject to many vicissitudes--its membership constantly changing, etc; but it is a heavenly organization, not an earthly one. There are two senses in which the true Church of Christ may be considered: (1) The whole company of consecrated believers from the beginning of the Gospel age to its close constitute *one* body, *one* Church, not many; for the Lord established but *one* Church. And over that *one* Church he himself is the only "Lord" and "Head," the great "Chief Shepherd," and "Teacher," and the only authority. This is "the Church of the firstborn," whose names are "written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23); and those whose names continue there to the end of their course, and are not blotted out because of unfaithfulness (Rev. 3:5), will be admitted to full membership in the Church triumphant at the appearing and kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.--2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:7; 5:4.

The Lord himself keeps the Church books--the records of our names, and the individual accounts of each member: we have nothing to do with that. He enrolls all the truly consecrated believers, and no power on earth can pluck them out of his hand, or blot their names from the records in heaven. (John 10:28,29; Rom. 8:35-39; Rev. 3:5.) His unerring wisdom alone is sufficient for that, and for all the duties of the office of the Head. It is therefore most unbecoming and reprehensible in any member of the body of Christ to become heady--to assume the authority of the

Head of the Church. And such a one, if not speedily recovered by the discipline of the Lord, he will eventually cut off and cast out as unworthy of any place in his body.--**2 Thes. 2:11.**

(2) Another sense in which the Church may be considered --which also is a Scriptural sense (**Philemon 2; Rev. 2:1**, etc.)--is that of counting a part as though it were the whole. Thus all the living saints may be spoken of as the Church of to-day. Or again, any number of the living Church assembled together in any place may properly be called the Church of that place (e.g., **Philemon 2; Rev. 1:4; 2:1; 2 Cor. 11:28**); for wherever even two or three are assembled, the Lord, the Head, has promised to be in their midst. (**Matt. 18:20.**) The general assembly will be when all the members are glorified with and united to the Head.

If any inquire how we know the members of the true Church, we answer, We know them by their profession of faith in Christ, and by the spirit of Christ manifested in them. It is his truth, and his spirit, and his presence manifested among them, that impels them to assemble together, that unites their hearts in the bonds of Christian love and fellowship, that inspires them with the same hope, animates them with the same joy, and leads them to cooperate together in the work of the Lord. If it be asked, How shall we deal with one who walks disorderly in our midst since we cannot drop his name from a list of membership? we answer, We have very explicit directions on this point. Now, as in the early Church, there are various degrees of advancement among the members, and Paul says (**1 Thes. 5:14**), Some are feeble-minded, comfort them; some are weak, support them; but while patient toward all, warn the disorderly. Do not mistake the disorderly for the weak, and comfort them; but patiently, lovingly, *warn* the disorderly. But after you have faithfully warned such a one, if still he obeys not the truth, "note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Not until it becomes manifest that the Lord has cut him off, may we cease to feel a brother's interest in him.

The Lord also gives explicit directions in cases where difficulties arise between brethren.--**Matt. 18:15,17.**

The great Head of the Church also furnishes abundant means for the edification of his people--for their building up in the most holy faith and their development in Christian character. Then we have his constant supervision and leading throughout our earthly pilgrimage. He is our Head, we are his body; he is our Shepherd, we are his sheep; he is our Captain, we are his soldiers. Now we are the Church on probation, on trial; now we are the Church militant, in the midst of our warfare, hoping by and by to be approved as faithful soldiers and worthy to be admitted into full membership in the Church triumphant, in power and great glory.

Thus we see how thoroughly the true Church of Christ is organized, under Christ, its Head, even in this probationary state, as we journey through the wilderness to our promised Canaan. We are all under the orders of our great Commander whom all must obey and follow who would reach the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Oh, no, we are not our own, and have absolutely no liberty to do our own will in any matter. All is subjected, even our very thoughts, to the will of God in Christ; and our membership in his Church is made dependent upon our faithfulness in recognizing this and in rendering cheerful, loving obedience. We cannot do as *we* please in any matter: we are strictly under law to Christ, whose holy spirit must rule our every deed and word and thought; and our constant effort must be thus to bring our every power and talent into subjection to him.

In this blessed bondage to Christ, a bondage of love, there is the highest sense of liberty, as, one after another, the shackles of sin drop from us. The world and its ideas and vain ambitions, and follies, and pride, and its superstitions and fears cease longer to fetter us, and the windows of our minds and hearts are thrown wide open that the glorious light of divine grace may stream in, and our hearts rejoice and sing.

THE APOSTOLIC ORDER THE LORD'S ORDER

Thus the great Head of the Church has marked out our course for us. He has said, "This is the way; walk ye in it." He has prescribed all the conditions and arrangements, etc., and it is our part to

faithfully follow his directions. It is to him that the Apostle Paul ascribes the orderly arrangement of the affairs of the Church, saying:--

"And *He* gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (*Eph. 4:11-16.*) Here, as in *1 Cor. 12:12-20* the Apostle illustrates the relationship of the Church to each other and to the Lord by the parts of a human body: and he intimates that every member is to be nourished and exercised, that the body may be symmetrical, perfect. Again the same apostle tells us, "God hath set the members, *every one of them*, in the body, as it hath pleased him. [Each should seek to recognize the Lord's appointments in his own case, as well as in that of others: and each should endeavor to serve according to the Lord's recognized arrangement, only.]...For the body is not one member, but many....And God hath set some in the Church; first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, etc., etc." We believe that the Lord has faithfully performed his part, all along during the age providing servants in his Church; but evidently his people have not always looked for those of his qualifying and appointing; and undoubtedly they have missed considerable by this failure, and by accepting instead a self-appointed, self-exalted, self-instructed and self-perpetuated "clergy."

There were but twelve apostles, and their inspired ministry has been to the whole Church, even to the end of the age. They had no successors, but the Lord has from time to time raised up teachers and pastors with varying degrees of ability, able in measure to instruct and care for the interests of the flock.

The term "elder" seems to be applicable to any or all of these servants whom the Lord sets in his Church for its edification, some of them having a principal service while others are assistants. Thus the Apostles classed themselves as elders. (*1 Pet. 5:1.*) The term "elder" would signify an elder brother, not necessarily an elder in years, but matured in Christian character. Timothy and probably Titus were young.--*1 Tim. 4:11,12; Titus 1:4; 2:15.*

If in any company one or more seem to have marked talent for the public presentation of the truth, such ability should be recognized by all, and all should cooperate in making use of it; and special meetings ought to be appointed to this end. Such meetings seem to have been rare in the early Church, as there were not many gifted speakers like Paul or Apollos or Peter. But such talents, when found, were used, and were of good service. So it should be among us. The talent for public speaking may be ordinary or extraordinary, and in either case edifying. The congregations should be the judges of that; and if no such talent be found public preaching services would best not be held, but instead, such other services as would edify more, and for which suitable talent is found in the company.

THE OBJECTS TO BE SOUGHT IN THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE SAINTS

Note also the objects to be sought in the assemblies of the saints and the ministry of elders, etc. It was not merely social enjoyment, nor to go through a formal routine of service; but it was (1) "For the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministry." These assemblies were to be training-schools, in which all the saints might become the more fully equipped for the service ["ministry"] of the Lord--not only the glorious service of the future, but also the essential service of the Church in the present age, by which the bride is to make "herself ready" for the future service. To this end all the saints should be diligent students, and the instruction should be as systematic and orderly as possible, and with a view to thoroughness of development, rather than entertainment. We remember that Paul upbraided some who were not sufficiently advanced and established for their opportunities, saying, "When for the time [in which you have had these privileges] ye ought to be *teachers*, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God [the doctrine of Christ], and...have need of milk, and not of strong meat."--*Heb. 5:12.*

(2) It was for the edifying of the body of Christ,-- for the knitting of all together in the unity of the faith and of the spirit and in love and devotion to God, that as one body they might advance in the development of Christian character and grace and knowledge toward the stature of the fulness of Christ.

In this view of the object of our assembling together we see that we have a most important work to accomplish. Let us therefore study to show ourselves workmen approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth. It is also in this view of the subject that we have commended the plan of the "Dawn Circles for Bible Study" mentioned in our issue of Sept. 15, as an aid to thoroughness and system in our preparation for service, and as *one* of the means of grace; tho *not the only one*.

We advise that one meeting each week be held for such purpose, either on the Lord's day, or on some evening during the week. If we really believe that the plan of the ages is the divine plan, the meat in season in this harvest time, and that its times and seasons are of divine appointment, then the value of thoroughness in the study of it, that we may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us, cannot be overestimated. It is just what all need to arm them for the conflicts of this "evil day"-- these "perilous times;" and for this purpose undoubtedly it was given us of God. In such meetings as these the stronger can be of great service to the weaker in assisting them to put on the whole armor of God and in showing how every scripture that may be brought forward fits into its proper niche in the divine plan, which is one grand, harmonious whole. These and all meetings should always be introduced and closed with worship and praise.

We recommend also a mid-week meeting (devotional and social in character, not doctrinal), consisting of prayer, praise and testimony; the special object of these being the cultivation of the devotional spirit and of Christian fellowship, love and communion. Thus we may exhort one another and provoke one another to good works. A good feature in both of these meetings is the opportunities they offer for all to participate freely and to edify one another.

ORDER IN THE ALLEGHENY CHURCH

It may be a matter of interest and profit to many to know of the *order* of the Church here in Allegheny. Of course, we have no list of membership, for we leave the keeping of the books entirely to the Lord: He knoweth all them that are his; and we recognize them by his spirit manifested in them. We have preaching, prayer and praise in the German language from 1.30 to 2.30 o'clock P.M., and in English at 3 P.M. every Lord's day, and a general Bible Study in the evening, beginning at 7.30 and preceded by a half hour's praise service.

As we are too widely scattered for a general mid-week meeting, we have seven cottage meetings, in different parts of the two cities, on Wednesday evenings; and several "Dawn circles" are being started on Friday evenings. A number of competent brethren have been chosen by vote of the congregation to take charge of these meetings, and at the end of each quarter they exchange so as to give variety to the companies, and the better to acquaint the leaders with the spiritual condition of the whole church of this place. A few also go out occasionally to adjacent towns to extend a helping hand to other little groups. Our effort being to draw out and develop as much talent as possible in the Church, sometimes one or two names are dropped from the list at the end of the quarter and new ones supplied, and afterwards those names may be picked up again and voted into service.

In addition to these leaders the company has appointed a number of sisters (ten in all), who cooperate with the brethren in visiting and general pastoral service. These sisters are specially chosen with a view to fitness and to opportunities of time, etc., for the service. Their work is chiefly among the sisters, while the brethren who lead the evening meetings look chiefly after the brethren.

This, of course, does not interfere with the duty and privilege of all in caring one for another, but it insures a systematic care over all, which might otherwise be to some extent neglected, as all are not so situated as to have time, etc., at their command, and as our time is occupied in a variety of ways which make it impossible to properly attend to these pastoral duties without such aids.

At the end of each quarter we meet together with these representative brethren and sisters and consult concerning the spiritual conditions and needs of the Church here. We are happy to say, also, that no note of discord or manifestation of strife or vain glory has ever been observed among these co-laborers. The work is undertaken and accomplished in the spirit of love and meekness, and the desire to do good, and is greatly blessed to the edification of the dear flock of this place.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONGREGATIONS AND ELDERS

To those in position as elders in the Church the Lord says, "Be not ye called Rabbi [a great man, a master]; for one is your Master, even Christ, and *all* ye are brethren;" while to the congregation of his people he also says, "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye [any of you] called masters [*i.e.*, neither give nor receive titles of any kind], for one is your Master, even Christ."--**Matt. 23:9,10.**

No marks or badges of distinction or flattering homage of any kind may be tolerated in the body of Christ. No brother, however efficient or useful, should desire it or receive it from the church without protest and rebuke; and none should so far forget the admonition of the Lord as to bestow it. All ye are brethren--brethren of like passions and all subject to infirmities; and let each take heed that "no man put a stumbling block [to pride or vanity or any other evil thing], or any occasion to fall, in his brother's way." (**Rom. 14:13**) Many indeed have been the prominent ones in the Church who have been overcome by flatteries--undue praise, worshipful reverence--arising mainly from the unwarranted presumption on the part of the flock that the elder brethren who minister to them in spiritual things are beyond the reach of temptation or the possibility of stumbling. It is this lack of consideration of the Lord's command that often makes the position of a leading brother one of peculiar peril. It was flattery of the leaders of the Great Reformation that stayed the progress of that good work and caused many of them of understanding to fall from their steadfastness. (**Dan. 11:34,35.**) But let it not be so among us: let each strive to shield the other from temptation, and to edify and build up in every principle of righteousness and truth, and in soberness of mind and watchfulness against all the intoxicating influences of the spirit of the world.

There is a vast difference, however, between a healthful, cordial brotherly love and sympathy and warm and grateful appreciation of faithful service, and that unwholesome sentimentalism which savors of the spirit of the world, and which is always as fickle as it is false. The manly Christian will always discountenance everything that savors of worshipful reverence and flattery; and when offered, will say, in manner if not in word, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant....Worship God" (**Rev. 22:9**); but the less mature will often court and receive flattery to their own injury. It is for this reason that the Apostle counsels the choosing of elder brethren of established character for leadership, rather than a "novice." While the Lord arranged that the Church should have some apostles, elders, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc., he would not have us use any of these names as titles of honor; and therefore, while recognizing these positions of service in the Church, we should always continue to address and [**R1895 : page 267**] to speak of these brethren merely as brethren--brethren beloved in the Lord.

While the Church is thus guarded on the one hand against the worldly spirit of vain glory, she is equally guarded on the other hand against that cold, unappreciative, cynical disposition which in that envious, pharisaical spirit plainly says, "Give God the glory, we know that this man is a sinner." "We beseech you, brethren," says the Apostle, "to *acknowledge* them which labor among you, presiding over you in the Lord, and admonishing you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."--**1 Thes. 5:12,13.**

Again he says, "Have confidence in your leaders, and submit yourselves [*i.e.*, if you, according to the Lord's methods, have chosen the right kind, or rather if you have permitted the Lord to choose them for you in the way he has indicated, as shown above]; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief."--**Heb. 13:17.**

Thus, while the elders are cautioned against assuming to be lords over God's heritage, the flock is also cautioned not to defy the elders, nor to blindly and worshipfully follow them without proving their teachings by the Word of God, but all, in humility and meekness, are to harmoniously cooperate together as *one body* for the upbuilding of itself in love and in all the Christian graces, and for the general advancement of the work of the Lord.--*1 Pet. 5:1-11*.

THE ONENESS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Before leaving this many-sided subject of order in the Church, we would also briefly call attention to the Lord's design that the whole (living) Church, however widely scattered over the world, should be knit together as one. It was so in the Apostle's days, and it should be so still. It is a pleasant observation that, even with their limited means of communication, whenever there was opportunity the churches in one place were prompt to send Christian greetings and benedictions to those in other places (*Acts 15:23*; *1 Cor. 16:19*; *2 Cor. 13:13*; *Phil. 4:21-23*; *Col. 4:14,15*; *1 Pet. 5:13*; *Titus 3:15*; *3 John 14*); and all were subject to the same regulations instituted by the apostles, having the "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." Their earnest endeavor was to keep "the unity of the faith in the bonds of peace," and to avoid any schism in the body of Christ.--*Eph. 4:3-13*; *1 Cor. 12:25*.

It is noticeable, too, what a beautiful unity of spirit and of faith, and what steady cooperation, there was among the apostles and elders of the early Church. They were all zealously endeavoring to preach "the same things," the "sound doctrine," of the truth of which they were fully persuaded. One was not endeavoring to eclipse another by getting up some brand new patented theories of his own. Apollos was not endeavoring to discount the teachings of Paul; nor were the elders of the various little companies endeavoring to lead the sheep under their care into by-paths of speculation and vain philosophies. No, it was not so, though from time to time false teachers came among them with the evil spirit of vain glory attempting these things, to draw away disciples after them; but the true ones, on the contrary, were faithful to one another, as they were also to the Lord. Paul planted, and Apollos watered, and God gave the increase.

We are glad to say that to a large extent this spirit prevails to-day, and we trust it will more and more prevail, till we all come in the unity of the faith to the stature of the fulness of Christ, as one body under the one Head, Christ Jesus, harmoniously cooperating together in the doing of his will under the direction of his Word, being knit together in love and full of zeal in the Lord's service --the great harvest work.

THE HEAVENLY VS. THE EARTHLY CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Foregoing we have seen the beauty, simplicity and completeness of the organization of the Church whose names are "written in heaven." Its only ruler and Head, the Lord Jesus, is infallible; God has centralized the authority in his hands, and every one of its members is required to render loving, loyal and prompt obedience to him, not only in their words and conduct, but even in their very thoughts. He admits to membership, and, when needful, he excommunicates the disloyal, and "blots out" their names.

Its members, firmly united to its Head, and thus to each other, according to their degree of development in the Master's spirit of love, are required to recognize as "brethren" all who have this spirit of love and consecration, with "the faith once delivered unto the saints"--that Christ died for *our sins* according to the Scriptures, and that he ever liveth to make intercession for us. They are required to meet together and to edify one another, and to conduct their meetings with decorum and order and to look out among themselves such as the Lord's Word and providence seem to indicate as suitable elders and to give to them their *public recognition* (as by vote for instance) and their cooperation in the service. This Church does not need to organize; for it has been organized since

Pentecost; and if a new meeting is started it is only necessary for such to recognize the organization and its Head and his laws, and to obey them.

But how great the contrast between this and an earthly church, organized according to various human traditions! with a self-constituted "clergy" who lord it over the "laity" and divide amongst themselves the spoils taken from the laity--the filthy lucre, honors, reverence, titles, etc.,--from those of the claimed infallible pope down to the "inferior orders of ministers;" only exceptional ones being ministers indeed (servants of God's flock); the majority lording it over God's heritage to the extent that *their* flocks will permit. Read carefully *Jer. 23:1-4; Ezek. 34:1-16.*

The bond of love in the heavenly Church is, in the earthly organization, replaced by a selfish bond of sectarian pride and a fear that to die outside an earthly church would incur eternal woe. For the simple but forcible confession of faith in the heavenly Church, they substitute elaborate schism-making confessions and tests. Verily the strength of the earthly churches is in their carnality, and their "laity's" ignorance of the Lord's Word and their individual liberties. The individual faith, judgment and liberty of their members are surrendered to the congregation when they bind themselves with sectarian names, obligations and confessions of faith; and the faith, judgment and liberties of the congregation are in turn surrendered to ruling Presbyteries and Conferences, or to an earthly pope. In the heavenly organization anyone may advise and point out the Word of the Lord; but none can do more without violating the rules and risking his own excommunication by the great and infallible Head of this Church.

The individual liberty of each member of the heavenly Church toward each other member, and the complete subserviency of each to the Lord only are characteristics of the Lord's organization which contrast sharply with those of human organizations.

R1883 [sel]

The Church of Christ has probably suffered more from pride and ambition for leadership than from any other one cause. The disciples were reprov'd time and again for disputing which should be considered greatest, until finally our Lord told them plainly that such a spirit of self-exaltation would be sure to keep all who possessed it out of the promised Kingdom. He said, also, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."-- *Matt. 20:25-28.*

The highest position in Christ's Church was to be "servant," and he declared himself the chief servant or minister of the Church. And surely--if "*all ye are brethren,*" then all the brethren should have an *equal right* to express their judgment of the Lord's will respecting the leadership of meetings, and all other matters related to the welfare of the Lord's cause. There should be no rulership, lordship or masteries amongst those whom the one Master, even Christ, has put upon a common level. The division of the Church in the dark ages into "clergy" and "laity" came not from the Lord and the Apostles, but from ambition, fostered by the great enemy, Satan.

We trust that the brethren and sisters who rejoice in the present truth will be on guard against conditions which have done so much in the past to injure the Lord's cause, and which grow from almost imperceptible beginnings, until *custom* becomes a chain which perverts God's order and hinders the development of the talents of many of his children and permits one or two in the congregation to exercise lordship over God's heritage, without so much as recognizing the right of the Church to decide for themselves (under the guidance of the holy spirit) who are those who possess the qualifications for the service specified in God's Word.

We urge upon all the brethren, in every place, possessed of zeal and qualifications for the service of God's flock, that they carefully avoid trenching upon the liberties wherewith the Lord has made free his people. We commend that modesty which in honor prefers one another, and seeks to help forward into active service every other one in proportion as he seems to have requisite talents; and which would refuse to lead even a small group except with the expressed desire that he do so, by at least a majority of those professing faith in the ransom and full consecration to the Lord's service. And this choice should not be perpetual: an opportunity to know the mind of God's people should be sought at least yearly, and oftener if there be reason to believe that a change would be desirable to the majority. Protect the liberties of the flock, because they are not yours but the liberties of Christ's cause. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

R1521

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

THEIR CALLING, OFFICE AND AUTHORITY.

"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve?"--John 6:70.

RECOGNIZING our Lord Jesus as the divinely appointed and worthy head of the Church, which is his body, let us mark with what deep concern and wise forethought he considered all the interests of that body, even to the end of the Gospel age--the period of the Church's probation.

Immediately after his forty days of meditation and peculiar temptation in the wilderness, we find our Lord preaching the gospel of the coming kingdom; and from among those who heard him gladly, with hearing of faith, and who became his disciples, he made choice of twelve men to be the apostles of the new dispensation. These were men from the humbler walks of life: Four were fishermen; one was of the despised publicans; the callings of the others are not mentioned.

Concerning this choice of the twelve, we learn that, while under various circumstances the Lord called each individually to forsake all and follow him, which they promptly did, (See Matt. 4:17-22; Mark 1:16-20; 3:13-19; Luke 5:9-11.) there was also a special occasion upon which he dedicated them to their office as apostles. Of this Luke gives an account, saying that prior to this event our Lord withdrew to a mountain to pray--evidently to take counsel of God with reference to the interests of the prospective Church; and that he continued all night in prayer--"And when it was day, he called unto him his *disciples* [Greek, *mathetas*, learners or pupils]; and of *them* he chose *twelve*, whom also he named *apostles* [*apostolos*--ones sent forth]."--Luke 6:12,13. Thus the twelve were marked as a distinct and separate class among the Lord's disciples. *Verse 17* also makes the distinction very clear between these twelve and the other disciples.

The other disciples, not so chosen, were also beloved of the Lord, and were doubtless in full sympathy with this appointment, recognizing it as in the interests of the work in general. And in making the choice the Lord doubtless took cognizance, not only of the willingness of heart on the part of these twelve, but also of the circumstances and fitness of the individuals for the pioneer work that was before them. Thus, for instance, when he called the sons of Zebedee to leave all and follow him, he did not call their father. The following was to be, not merely a mental following of his doctrines, etc., but the leaving of business, home, friends, and earthly plans and prospects, etc., to go about with him or under his direction in the work of the Lord.

That our Lord at that time revealed much of the great importance attaching to his solemn setting apart of the twelve, is not at all probable, as it would have been impossible for them to comprehend it then; but these dear brethren, chosen from the humbler walks of life to be the Lord's

special ambassadors, appreciated their privilege, notwithstanding the facts that privation and persecution would certainly be their immediate reward, and that the reward of the future could not then be clearly discerned.

Our Lord's object in selecting the twelve at that time was that he might begin with them a course of instruction and training which would fit them for their future work as apostles; for they did not fully enter upon that work until after the day of Pentecost. After their ordination the twelve were fully under the Lord's direction and much in his company; and they were careful students of his character, his gospel and his methods.

THE COMMISSION OF THE APOSTLES

The commission of the apostles was, in the main, the same as the commission of the Lord and of the whole Church. It was to preach the gospel of the Kingdom. (Compare Isaiah 61:1,2; Luke 4:17-21; Matt. 10:5-8; Mark 3:14,15; Luke 10:1-17.) And to this work they zealously devoted themselves during the time of the Lord's presence with them, as well as subsequently; though we are not informed that their success in the work was any more marked during that time than was that of the seventy whom the Lord also appointed to this ministry, though not to the apostleship. (Luke 10:17.) But in addition to this general commission to preach the gospel of the kingdom, the Lord by and by showed the twelve that he was preparing them for a special work in the future --that they were to be *his witnesses* to bear testimony of him after his death. They must be witnesses, too, upon whom the people could rely as having been with him from the beginning of his ministry, and therefore manifestly acquainted with his doctrine and purpose. (John 15:27; Luke 24:48.) And not only so, but these twelve were also chosen to become, under divine providence, the founders and special teachers of the gospel Church, when in due time they should be endued with power from on high.

In other words, our Lord's object in selecting or ordaining these twelve was to so train and empower them, and to so establish their testimony concerning the truth of God, that, through them, such as hunger and thirst after righteousness might be convinced of the truth, and that from among such "a people for his name" (a bride for Christ--a Church) might be selected, trained and prepared for their exaltation as "joint-heirs with Christ" in his kingdom. This purpose in the selection of the twelve was implied in the prayer of our Lord just prior to his crucifixion (See John 17:6-9,20,21) --"I have manifested thy name unto the men [the apostles] which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee; for I have given unto them the words [the doctrine] which thou gavest me, and they have received them....I pray for them: I pray not for world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine....Neither pray I for these [apostles] alone, but for them also which *shall believe* on me *through their word* [the entire gospel Church--to the end of the age]: that *they all* may be one [in heart and purpose and love], as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one in us* [and then he shows the ultimate purpose of this selection, both of the apostles and of the entire body of Christ, in the following words]-- that *the world* [that 'God so loved, even while they were yet sinners'] *may believe* that thou hast sent me"--to redeem and restore them.

The number of the apostles corresponded to the number of the sons of Jacob, the representatives and founders of the tribes of Israel, which in one phase of their typical character stood for the entire gospel Church, and in another for the whole world. (See Tabernacle Shadows.) And in the Book of Revelation these apostles are designated as the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, the glorious Church. (Rev. 21:14; Eph. 2:20,21.) Just so the foundation which sustains the Church is designed ultimately to sustain the whole world. But if these foundation stones were laid in the sand, the building reared upon them would be very insecure, and could not stand forever. (Matt. 7:25-27.) But they were not laid in the sand, but upon the sure and steadfast rock, Christ Jesus.--Matt. 16:16-18; 1 Pet. 2:4-8.

While all of the twelve were chosen early in the Lord's ministry that they might be his witnesses, because they had been with him from the beginning, when one of them (Judas) dropped out, having proved a traitor to his trust, the Lord supplied his place with Paul, who was made a witness of his glory after his resurrection and ascension. (Acts 26:13; 1 Cor. 15:8.) And thus the testimony, of the eleven eye and ear witnesses of the Lord's ministry, death and resurrection, and of the twelfth as to his glorious exaltation, is a firm foundation for the faith of the whole Church, to the end of the age. The election of Matthias by the eleven, to fill the place of Judas (Acts 1:23-26), was simply a human error--an over-officiousness on their part to attend to the Lord's business without his direction. It was done previous to the day of Pentecost and the descent of the holy Spirit. The eleven chose two, and asked the Lord to take his choice of them, and indicate the same by directing upon which the lot should fall. Of course the lot must fall upon one of them; but that was no indication of the Lord's will; and the Lord simply ignored their choice and in due time indicated his own in the election of Paul. And in his subsequent Revelation he describes *twelve* foundation stones in the New Jerusalem, *not thirteen*. Matthias was probably a very excellent brother; but he was not an apostle.

But, we inquire, What evidence is there that these twelve ordinary men were ordained to fill the important office of apostles in the Church? True, we see that, after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, the apostles were the strength and consolation of the infant Church. Having been the constant companions and disciples of the Lord, and eye-witnesses of his miraculous power, and having proved their loyalty and faithfulness to him by bearing his reproach with him, very naturally the saints of their day found in them props for their faith; and they rested upon their teaching, took courage from their example and wisely heeded their counsel. But were they ever intended to be more than such helps?--were they ever intended to be authoritative teachers whose words, more than those of others, would express the divine mind?

We answer, Yes; and the Lord clearly indicates that he would have the Church so regard them, and the helpful service he purposed to have them perform for the entire body of the Anointed. Let us hear the testimony:--

(1) As already noted, we have seen that these men were specially called and solemnly ordained, as a class distinct and separate from the other disciples, and given a particular and significant name--the apostles--to distinguish them from the others.

(2) We have also noticed that, although during our Lord's earthly ministry the work of the apostles differed nothing from that of "the seventy," nor were their labors any more signally blessed (Luke 9:6; 10:17), yet they were more directly and continually under his training, and that either some or all of them were the chosen witnesses of every remarkable feature and event of his course during the three and a half years of his ministry. They were the witnesses of his teachings and of his personal character and manner of life; and of his miracles and the effects of his teachings and work in his day. They were the only ones invited to partake with him of the last Passover Supper, and to receive the instructions of that solemn hour with regard to its typical significance and with regard to the changed features of that institution which would make it commemorative thenceforth of the real Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. They were the witnesses of the agonies of Gethsemane and of his betrayal and arrest, as well as of his calm submission to the fate which he knew awaited him. They were the witnesses, too, of all the circumstances of his crucifixion, death and burial; and also of the fact of his resurrection.

(3) After his resurrection we find our Lord promptly taking up his work just where it had been broken off by his death--the work of still further preparing the apostles, his chosen witnesses, to bear reliable testimony to the whole Church. We find that while he appeared to many other disciples besides the apostles, and to upwards of five hundred at one time (1 Cor. 15:5-8), he was specially careful to very clearly establish the fact of his resurrection to the apostles. We find him carefully looking up each one of "the eleven"--sending the women who were first at the sepulcher to communicate the fact of his resurrection to each of them, and specially mentioning Peter, lest he should be overcome with discouragement on account of his previous unfaithfulness (Mark 16:7);

opening the understanding of the two (Luke 24:27,32) on the way to Emmaus; satisfying doubting Thomas with tangible evidence; specially re-affirming Peter's commission; and fully convincing all and sending them out into the work again.--John 20:26-28; 21:15-17; Acts 1:1,2; Luke 24:52.

(4) We find further that "the eleven" were the chosen witnesses of the Lord's ascension, and that there is no evidence of the presence of any others on that occasion. Compare Acts 1:1-13, specially noticing *verses 2,4,9,11*. The expression, "Ye men of Galilee" signified "the eleven," all of whom were Galilaeans. See also Luke 24:48-51 and Matt. 28:16-19.

The apostles were thus the special witnesses of the Lord's resurrection, although he was seen by others; and thus the Lord made sure of having in them competent witnesses, that our faith in their testimony might be clearly established. Peter says, "And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly, *not to all the people*, but UNTO WITNESSES CHOSEN BEFORE OF GOD, even TO US, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people," etc.--Acts 10:39-43. See also Acts 13:31; 1 Cor. 15:3-8.

(5) We see that, while the testimony of the apostles was at first restricted to the Jews, the Lord, after his resurrection, taught them that repentance and remission of sins must be "preached in his name *among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*." And then he added, "And *ye are witnesses of these things;...but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high*."..."Ye shall receive power after that the holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, *both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH*." (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8.) Since "the uttermost part of the earth"--America, for instance--could not be reached and thus ministered to during the life-time of the apostles, it is manifest that the major part of this witnessing was to be done *through their writings* and after their death. Thus they testify to us, and we consider this commission from the Lord to them to do so, and the particular training they received from him, as the best possible endorsement of their testimony and guarantee of its reliability.

(6) In obedience to the command to wait for the promised power, the apostles and the other disciples, about a hundred and twenty in number, tarried in Jerusalem, assembling together in an upper room, and waiting in prayerful expectancy from day to day until the day of Pentecost brought the promised blessing--the "power from on high," the baptism of the holy spirit. (Acts 1:14.) In this great blessing, specially promised to the apostles, apparently all of the faithful souls present with them shared. "They were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." However, from Acts 2:7 it would appear that "the eleven" (all of whom were Galilaeans) were the public speakers. It evidently brought to their minds clearer visions of divine truth, filling their hearts with joy and praise; so that out of the abundance of their hearts they spoke the wonderful words of life as the Spirit miraculously gave them utterance in the various languages of the peoples represented there. And as a result of that power three thousand souls were converted that day. While all of the faithful waiting ones shared the special outpouring of the Spirit that day, and the same Spirit was also poured out upon the Gentiles later (Acts 10:44-47), and has continued with all the consecrated and faithful ever since, we are particularly assured that all of "the eleven" were there, and that not one of them failed to receive this gift of the Spirit without which their apostleship could not be recognized.--See Acts 1:13,14; 2:1.

(7) Although it may seem remarkable that the Lord permitted a Judas to appear among the apostles, while Saul of Tarsus verily thought he was doing God service as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and was permitted to remain in ignorance of the truths of the new dispensation until all the privileges of the Lord's presence and personal instruction, etc., and even the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which the others enjoyed, were entirely past, there was in this also, as we are now privileged to view it, another master-stroke of wise policy; for Paul was made a witness of the Lord's glory--"as one born out of due time"--as one "born from the dead" before the time--before the

time for the Church's exaltation and glory, when, being made like the Lord, they shall see him as he is. (1 Cor. 15:8; 1 John 3:2.) And in visions and revelations the Lord more than made up to Paul what he lacked to make him a competent and reliable witness to us.--2 Cor. 12:1-4,7; Gal. 1:11,12; 2:2.

And when the Lord himself testifies to us (Acts 9:15), "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel," that is all the endorsement Paul needed to put him on at least an equal footing with the others, as one of the chosen twelve. In addition to this testimony of the Lord and to the worthy zeal of Paul in bearing witness to the truth, and to the manifestation of the power of the holy Spirit in him, we have also Paul's own testimony concerning himself. He says, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11,12.) And again he says, "He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision [the Jews], the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."--Gal. 2:8.

Paul was pre-eminently the apostle to the Gentiles, and the others more particularly to the Jews. Hence Paul has by far the more to say *to us* through his numerous epistles; but in their day "the eleven" were more prominent in the Church than he--Peter, James and John, as Paul says, being regarded as pillars among them. (Gal. 2:9.) Paul was the pushing pioneer, and his work among the Gentiles of his day was by no means a light, nor an honorable task, in the estimation of men. It exposed him to all sorts of danger, persecution and humiliation. And even in the Church his zeal was not fully understood and appreciated; for he had occasionally to produce the evidences of his apostleship, and to remind them, and thus prove to them that he was "not a whit behind" the others in authority and power.--1 Cor. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:5.

But let us inquire further as to the office of the apostles in the Church: Is it merely their historic testimony of the Lord and his teachings upon which we are to depend? or was their witnessing to include more than this?

Evidently they were to bear witness to all they knew, and to all they learned under the special guidance of the holy Spirit. Only thus would they be faithful stewards of that which was intrusted to them. "Let a man so account of us as...stewards of the mysteries of God," said Paul. (1 Cor. 4:1.) And the same intent was expressed by the Lord when he said, "I will make you fishers of men," and again, "Feed my sheep" and "lambs." Again, Paul says that "the mystery [the deep truths of the gospel concerning the high calling of the Church--the Christ] *hidden in other ages*, is now revealed unto his holy [justified and consecrated, and so reckoned 'holy'] apostles and prophets, by the Spirit," and that the object of its being revealed to them was "*to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery* [upon what terms they may have the privilege of fellowship in this mystery--of joint-heirship with Christ], which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." (Eph. 3:3-11.) And, again, after speaking of how the Church was to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20-22), he says, "For *this cause* [viz., *the building up of the Church*, the temple of God] I, Paul, [am] the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." --Eph. 3:1.

Thus we see that the apostles were not only to bear historic testimony of Christ, but they were also specially prepared and empowered, through the influences of the holy Spirit, both to discern and teach *the deep things of God*, which they did as wise and faithful stewards of the blessings intrusted to them for the good and edification and building up of the whole Church. "Freely ye have received, freely give," said the Master; and they were careful to obey the injunction, and through them the same blessings have come down to us--even "to the uttermost part of the earth."

But still we would reverently press our reasonable investigation a step further and inquire, Are these apostles to be regarded as in any sense *lords* in the Church? or, in other words, When the Lord and Head of the Church departed, did any of them take the place of the head? or did they together constitute a composite head, to take his place and assume the reins of government? Or were

they, or any of them, what the popes of Rome claim to be as their successors --the vicars or substitutes of Christ to the Church, which is his body?

Against such a hypothesis we have the plain statement of Paul--Eph. 4:4,5--"There is one body" and "*one Lord*"; and therefore among the various members of that body, no matter what may be the relative importance of some, only the *one Lord* and Head is to be recognized. This the Lord also clearly taught when, addressing the multitudes and his disciples, he said, "The Scribes and Pharisees...love... to be called Rabbi; but be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, and all ye are brethren." (Matt. 23:1,2,6-8.) And again, addressing the apostles, Jesus said, "Ye know that those presuming to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them, *but it shall not be so among you*; but whosoever will be great among you shall be your servant, and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all; for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."--Mark 10:42-45.

Nor have we any evidence that the early Church ever regarded the apostles as lords in the Church; or that the apostles ever assumed such authority or dignity. Their course was very far indeed from the papal idea of lordship. For instance, Peter never styled himself "the prince of the apostles," as papists style him; nor did they ever title each other, or receive such homage from the Church. They addressed or referred to one another simply as Peter, John, Paul, etc., or else as Brother Peter, John or Paul; and all the Church were similarly greeted --as brothers and sisters in Christ. (See Acts 9:17; 21:20; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 7:15; 8:11; 2 Cor. 8:18; 2 Thes. 3:6,15; Philemon 7,16.) And it is written that even the Lord himself was not ashamed to call them all brethren (Heb. 2:11), so far is he from any domineering attitude in the exercise of his lordship or authority.

True, there were "bishops" (those who, like the apostles, had a general supervision and oversight of the work at home and abroad); and "elders" (those older and more advanced in the knowledge of the truth, etc., who took the general oversight and supervision of local congregations --Acts 14:23); and "deacons" (those specially charged with the temporal business matters of the various congregations--Acts 6:1-3); and "evangelists" (or traveling preachers of the Word); but they never used these terms as honorary titles. The conditions of fitness for these services in the Church are clearly set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 2 Tim. 4:1-5.

Nor did any of these leading servants in the early Church go about in priestly robes, or with cross and rosary, etc., courting the reverence and homage of the people; for, as the Lord taught them, the chiefest among them were those who served most. Thus, for instance, when persecution scattered the Church and drove them out of Jerusalem, the eleven bravely stood their ground, willing to do whatever might come, because in this trying time the Church abroad would look to them at Jerusalem for encouragement and help; and had they fled the whole Church would have felt dismayed and panic-stricken. And we find James perishing by the sword of Herod, Peter with a similar fate in view, thrust into prison and chained to two soldiers (Acts 12:1-6), and Paul and Silas beaten with many stripes, and then cast into prison and their feet made fast in the stocks, and Paul enduring "a great fight of afflictions." (Acts 16:23,24; 2 Cor. 11:23-33.) Did they look like lords or act like lords? We think not.

Peter was very explicit in this matter, when counseling the elders to "feed *the flock of God*" (He did not say your flock, your people, your church, as many ministers to-day speak, but *the flock of God.*), *not as lords* of the heritage, but being patterns to the flock--patterns of humility, faithfulness, zeal and godliness. (1 Pet. 5:1-3.) And Paul says, "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake,...we are despised; ...we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place, and labor working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things." (1 Cor. 4:9-13.) Not much like lords in all this, were they? And in opposing the idea of some of the brethren who seemed to be aspiring to

lordship over God's heritage, Paul ironically says, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings *without us*;" but further along he counsels the only right way, which is that of humility, saying, "Be ye followers of me" in this respect. And again, Let a man so account of us as of the *ministers* [servants] of Christ, and *stewards* of the mysteries of God.--1 Cor. 4:8,1.

And, again, the same apostle adds: "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness: God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory--neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the Apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."--1 Thes. 2:4-7.

Nor did the apostles ever claim a monopoly of the teaching or of the pastoral work of the Church; nor did the Lord ever intimate that they should do so. Paul says, "He [Christ] gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man--unto the measure of the full stature of the Anointed one--that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, ...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."--Eph. 4:11-15.

God has raised up these various helps, and has abundantly blessed their labors, both in the early Church and all along throughout the Gospel age. But the *prominent* and *leading position* of the apostles, as those *specialy empowered* to minister to us in spiritual things, is clearly indicated. The Lord's personal supervision and appointment of the various orders or grades of teachers and helps is clearly indicated by the Apostle Paul's words--"*God hath set [placed] some in the Church--first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, directors and diversities of tongues.*" Then he inquires, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?" etc. (1 Cor. 12:28,29.) No: certainly not; and if we would be led of the Lord we must recognize this order of his appointment --those whom "*God hath set*" in the Church for its instruction and edification. And of these we must always remember that the apostles are *first*, though every member of the body may declare the unsearchable riches of Christ.-- See Heb. 5:12.

In recognizing this priority of the apostles we are not underrating or casting any discredit upon the ministry of the other helps and helpers which the Lord provided for the edification of the Church. Thus, for instance, the testimonies of the "evangelists" Mark and Luke and Stephen are as trustworthy as those of the apostles; for they all had "the same mind and spoke the same things." And to such faithful witnesses whom the Lord has raised up from time to time all through the Gospel age, we find the apostles committing their charge ere they were called to rest.--2 Tim. 4:1-6.

Thus, when the noble apostle to the Gentiles was about to finish his course, we find him committing the interests of the work to the "elders" of the Church (the faithful advanced and active ones); and his charge applied not only to such persons then living, but down even to our day. After declaring his own faithfulness as a servant of the Lord and the Church, and his solicitude for the great work, he said to them, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the *holy Spirit* hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he [Christ] hath purchased with his own blood; for I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall [ambitious] men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them....And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified....I have showed you all things how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"--Acts 20:17,28-35.

And Peter likewise exhorts the "elders," saying, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords of God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."--1 Pet. 5:1-3.

But in judging of such teachers whom we have reason to believe the holy Spirit has appointed in the Church, it is our duty always to see that their teachings are the same as those of the Lord and the apostles--of the Head of the Church and of those whom he has so clearly indicated as specially empowered to instruct us in the deep things of the divine plan, which were not due to be declared in the days of his personal presence, but which he made known subsequently to his holy apostles and prophets. (John 16:12; Eph. 3:5.) The truth, thus divinely inspired and first announced by the Lord's chosen agents, the apostles, even they themselves, had they fallen away, could not nullify. (But that none of them did fall away is manifest from Rev. 21:14.) This Paul distinctly states in Gal. 1:8-12.

The early Church rightly revered the piety and the superior spiritual knowledge and wisdom of the apostles, and, regarding them, as they really were, as the Lord's specially chosen ambassadors to them, they sat at their feet as learners; yet not with blank, unquestioning minds, but with a disposition to try the spirits and to prove the testimony. (1 John 4:1; 1 Thes. 5:21; Isa. 8:20.) And the apostles, in teaching them, enjoined this attitude of mind which required a reason for their hope, and they encouraged it, and were prepared to meet it--not with enticing words of man's wisdom (of human philosophy and theory), but *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, that the faith of the Church might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:4,5.) They did not cultivate a blind and superstitious reverence for themselves.

We read that the Bereans "were more noble than they of Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily [to see] whether those things were so." And it was the constant effort of the apostles to show that the gospel which they proclaimed was the very same gospel darkly expressed by the ancient prophets, "unto whom it was declared that not unto themselves, but *unto us* [the body of Christ] they did minister the things now reported unto you by them [the apostles] that have preached the gospel unto you with the holy Spirit sent down from heaven" (1 Pet. 1:10-12); that it was the very same gospel of life and immortality brought to light by the Lord himself; and that its greater amplification and all the particular details discovered to the Church by them, under the leading and direction of the holy Spirit-- whether by special revelations or by other and more natural means, both of which were used --were in fulfilment of the Lord's promise to the apostles, and through them to the whole Church--"I have yet *many things* to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you [the apostles first, and through them the whole Church] into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself [independently of me], but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak [*i.e.*, he will be *my messenger* to you]....He shall glorify me, for he shall receive *of mine*, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine [there is no conflict between us: his plan is my plan, and his way is my way]: therefore said I that he shall take *of mine*, and shall show it unto you."--John 16:12-15.

It was right, therefore, for the Bereans to search the Scriptures to see whether the testimony of the apostles agreed with that of the law and the prophets, and to compare them also with the teachings of the Lord. Our Lord also invited a similar proving of his testimony by the law and the prophets, saying, "Search the Scriptures,...for they are they that testify of me." The whole divine testimony must be in harmony, whether it be communicated by the law, the prophets, the Lord or the apostles. Their entire harmony is the proof of their divine inspiration. And, thank God, we find that harmony existing, so that the whole Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments constitute what the Lord himself terms "the harp of God." (Rev. 15:2.) And the various testimonies of the law and the prophets are the several chords of that harp, which, when tuned by the holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, and swept by the fingers of the devoted searchers after divine truth, yield the most enchanting strains that ever fell on mortal ears. Praise the Lord for the exquisite melody of the blessed "song of

Moses and the Lamb," which even we have learned through the testimony of his holy apostles and prophets, of whom the Lord Jesus is chief.

But although the testimony of the Lord and the apostles must harmonize with that of the law and the prophets, we should expect them to testify of things *new*, as well as *old*; for so the prophets have led us to expect. (Matt. 13:35; Psa. 78:2; Deut. 18:15,18; Dan. 12:9.) And so we find them not only expounding the hidden truths of ancient prophecy, but also disclosing new revelations of truth.

It may be well here to notice a further claim of that great antichristian organization, the church of Rome, viz., that Peter is the rock upon which the Gospel Church is built, and that to him and his successors, the popes, were confided the keys of the kingdom of heaven with power to open and to shut, to admit or exclude, whomsoever they will, and to bind or loose whomsoever and whatsoever they please.

The scripture upon which this doctrine is founded is Matt. 16:15-19. In reply to the Lord's question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the Lord replied, "And thou art Peter [*petros*--a stone]; and upon this rock [*petra*--a rock, a large stone] I will build my Church." Thus, in harmony with numerous Old Testament references, such as Isa. 8:14, the Lord is seen to be the great rock upon which the Church is built, while Peter is one of the living stones in the glorious temple of God built upon that rock, which he had just confessed as the rock of our salvation --the Christ. And Peter himself freely admits the relationship of all the living stones, himself included, to the great foundation stone-- the rock Christ Jesus--saying (1 Pet. 2:4,5), "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, *ye also as lively* [living] *stones* are built up a spiritual house," etc.

As shown in several of our Lord's parables, the Gospel Church is the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 13) in its incipient and preparatory state; and its privileges and powers were about to be opened to both Jews and Gentiles. It was really the Lord that opened the door into his Church: Peter was merely the agent chosen to do the work in the name of the Lord--opening the door to the Jews in his discourse on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14,40), and opening the same door to the Gentiles in his discourse to Cornelius and his household, three and a half years later. (Acts 10:33,46.) This honorable service is what is symbolically referred to as using the "keys of the kingdom." (Matt. 16:19.) But, the door once opened, neither Peter, nor any other man, can close it. Our Lord declares that he has "the key of David" (Rev. 3:7); and the door into his kingdom will not be shut until the last member of the chosen and faithful Church has entered into its glory--viz., at the close of the Gospel age. The key which Peter used was the dispensational truth then due, and first made clear to the mind of Peter, by the holy Spirit.

The ability to bind and loose on earth and in heaven, was granted not only to Peter but to all the apostles; and we believe signified that God would so guide the words of the apostles in their presentation of the truth to the Church, that all the faithful might have full confidence in their teachings. Whatever they bound upon the Church as duties, we may know are so recognized in heaven; and whatever they loosed as respecting the Mosaic Law, etc., we may know that they were supernaturally directed to do so, and that the same are loosed or set aside in heaven.

APOSTOLIC INSPIRATION

Having observed with what particularity the Lord chose, empowered and commissioned his twelve apostles to serve the Church, our next inquiry is whether we are to consider their teachings as verbally or otherwise inspired. In pursuing our inquiry we would call attention to the following observations:--

(1) We notice that the promise of the Comforter, the holy Spirit, though it was ultimately to reach the whole Church through the ministration of the apostles, was specially given to them. (John 16:13-15.) This was given to the eleven on the night of the last Supper, after Judas had gone out (John 13:31); and when Paul, the twelfth, was ordained, it applied to him also with equal force, and was so fulfilled. The promise reads, "But the Comforter, which is the holy Spirit, whom the Father

will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;... and he will show you things to come."-- John 14:26; 16:13.

Thus we learn that the apostolic inspiration was to be threefold in its character, consisting (a) of a guidance into all truth concerning the divine purposes and plan; (b) of such refreshment of the memory as would enable them to recall and reproduce all of the Lord's personal teaching while he was with them; and (c) of special subsequent revelations of things to come --of the "many things" the Lord had to tell them, which they were not able to bear until after his death and resurrection and the descent of the holy Spirit.--John 16:12.

(2) Beginning with the second of these propositions --the refreshment of the memory--we think it is manifest that the promise did not imply a dictation of the exact order and phraseology in which they should express those things. Nor do their writings give evidence of such dictation, although this promise is of itself a guarantee of the correctness of their accounts. In each of the four gospels we have a historic account of the Lord's earthly life and work, and in each the individuality of the writer appears. Each, in his own manner and style, records those items which seem to him most important; and, under the Lord's supervision, all together furnish as complete an account as is necessary to establish the faith of the Church (a) in the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the Messiah of the prophets; (b) in the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning him; and (c) in the facts of his life, and the divine inspiration of all his teachings. If the inspiration had been verbal (*i.e.*, by word for word dictation), it would not have been necessary for four men to rephrase the same events. But it is noteworthy that while each thus exercised his own individual freedom of expression, and his choice of the most important events worthy of record, the Lord so supervised the matter that among them nothing of importance was omitted, and that all that is needed is faithfully recorded and is thoroughly trustworthy, as evidenced both by the personal integrity of the writers, and also by the promise of the influence of the holy Spirit to refresh their memories. In this connection it is a noteworthy fact that the Apostle John's record supplements those of the other three--Matthew, Mark and Luke-- and that he mentions, chiefly, discourses, circumstances and incidents of importance omitted by the others. A glance at the Table of Gospel Harmonies in your Bagster or Oxford "Teachers' Bible" will show this.

(3) Another proposition of the promise was, "He will guide you into all truth" (or "teach you all things"--concerning the truth). Here we have the promise of just what we see evidenced in the writings of all the apostles; though they were plain and unlearned men, their Scriptural exegesis is most remarkable. They were able to confound the wisdom of the wisest theologians, not only of their own time, but ever since. No eloquence of error can stand before the logic of their deductions from the law and the prophets and the teachings of the Lord. The Jewish rulers and elders and scribes marked this, and "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus"--that they had learned his doctrine and caught his spirit.--Acts 4:5,6,13.

We notice that a large proportion of the apostolic epistles, particularly Paul's, consists of such logical arguments, based upon the inspired writings of the Old Testament and the teachings of the Lord. And those who have partaken of the same spirit, by following the lines of argument they thus present, are led by them to the same truthful conclusions; so that our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1,4,5.) But in this sort of teaching, as well as in the historic testimony, we see no evidence of word for word dictation, and that the apostles were mere mechanical amanuenses; but, rather, they clearly show that they were filled with a knowledge of the truth and with the spirit of the truth--with a holy enthusiasm to declare the good tidings, which burns and glows upon every page, and which kindles in the hearts of all of God's people the same sacred flame.

(4) The last proposition of this promise is that the spirit would show them (and by implication the whole Church through them) things to come. Thus they were also to be prophets or seers to the Church. Some of the things to come were evidently shown to the apostles by this superior

illumination of the mind or quickening of the mental forces--the guidance of judgment--in the interpretation of law and prophecy and the teachings of the Lord.

But more than this was necessary, and therefore, *special visions and revelations* by the holy Spirit were granted to instruct them concerning the things to come. Among these were--

(a) The vision of the coming glory of the kingdom with its earthly and heavenly phases, as seen on the mount of transfiguration-- Matt. 17:2-9. See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I., Chapter xiv.;

(b) Paul's vision of the third heavens or Millennial kingdom (Eph. 3:3-6; 2 Cor. 12:1-4), which so wonderfully influenced his life and writings, although not due and hence not permitted to be plainly expressed in his day;

(c) Paul's vision of the Macedonian desire and call for his services--Acts 16:9,10;

(d) Peter's vision of clean and unclean beasts, directing him to use the keys of the Kingdom (Matt. 16:19) in opening the door to the Gentiles, of whom Cornelius was the first convert (Acts 10); and

(e) The remarkable revelation to John on Patmos, which consisted of a series of visions, portraying in sign language all the prominent features of the course of Christianity until the end of the age. This partakes more of the character of the ancient prophecies; for though John saw and faithfully recorded these visions for the future benefit of the Church, he himself could not have fully understood them because the seals were not yet opened in his day, and the truths therein symbolized were not yet meat in due season for the Lord's household. But now as it does become meat for the household, the honor of the apostles and the importance of their service for the Church in connection with it will be more and more appreciated by all who partake of its refreshment and strength--other helps and servants being now used of the Spirit in setting forth those truths.

Thus the apostles were divinely instructed with reference to the deep and hitherto hidden things of God. When supernatural means were necessary such means were used, but when the natural means were sufficient, they were directed in the use of the natural means, the Lord always guiding them into *correct presentations of the truths* from which he designed to feed his Church, at the hands of other servants, during the entire Gospel age. Indeed we may rest assured that the divine Word, given or elaborated through the twelve apostles, will constitute the text book from which the world also will be instructed during the Millennial age.

APOSTOLIC FALLIBILITY

Five circumstances mentioned in the New Testament are usually considered as opposed to the thought of apostolic infallibility, which we have presented foregoing. These we will examine separately, as follows:

(1) Peter's denial of our Lord at the time of the crucifixion. It is not disputed that this was a serious wrong, and one for which Peter was sincerely penitent. But it was committed before he had received the Pentecostal blessing; and, besides, the infallibility claimed for the Apostles is that which applied to their *public teachings*--their writings--and not to all the acts of their lives, which were affected by the blemishes of their "earthen vessels," marred by the fall in which all of the children of Adam suffered --which blemishes are forgivable through the merit of Christ's righteousness. The Apostolic *office* for the service of the Lord and the Church was something apart from the mere weaknesses of the flesh. It did not come upon perfect but upon imperfect men. It did not make their thoughts and actions perfect, but over-ruled those thoughts and actions, so that the teachings of those twelve are infallible. And this is the kind of infallibility now claimed for the popes--that when a pope speaks *ex-cathedra*, or officially, he is over-ruled of God, and not permitted to err. This they claim as apostles --claiming that they possess apostolic office and authority. But all this is contradicted by various Scriptures: twelve alone were chosen, and not in succession, but at once (Luke 6:13-16); and when one failed and another took his office (Acts 1:26), there were still but twelve; and the last pages

of inspiration show us that only the teachings of the *twelve* are foundations for the faith of the Church, or will he be recognized as such in the New Jerusalem.

(2) The fact that Peter "dissembled" or acted in a two-faced manner on one occasion, in dealing with Jews and Gentiles, is pointed to as proof that the apostles were "men of like passions" as others, and were not infallible in conduct. Again we concede the charge, and find that the apostles conceded this (Acts 14:15); but we repeat that these human weaknesses were not permitted to mar their work and usefulness as apostles--as those who preached the gospel with the holy spirit sent down from heaven (1 Pet. 1:12; Gal. 1:11,12)--not with man's wisdom but with the wisdom from above. (1 Cor. 2:5-16.) And this error of Peter God at once corrected, through the Apostle Paul, who kindly but firmly "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." (Gal. 2:11.) And it is quite noticeable that Peter's two epistles show no trace of wavering on the subject of the equality of Jews and Gentiles in Christ, nor any fearfulness in acknowledging the Lord.

(3) The Lord left the apostles in uncertainty respecting the time of his second coming and kingdom--simply telling them and all to *watch*, that when due they might know and not be in darkness on the subject, as the world in general will be. It is manifest, too, that the apostles rather expected the second advent and kingdom within the first or second centuries; but their lack of knowledge on this subject has in no wise marred their writings, which, under divine direction, made no such statements, but on the contrary declared--"that day *cannot come, until* there come a great apostasy, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" --Antichrist.--2 Thes. 2:3.

(4) Paul, who wrote, "I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. 5:2), caused Timothy to be circumcised. (Acts 16:3.) And we are asked, Did he not thereby teach falsely, and in contradiction to his own testimony? We answer, No: Timothy was a Jew, because his mother was a Jewess (Acts 16:1); and circumcision was a national custom amongst the Jews, which began *before* the Law of Moses and which was continued after Christ had "made an end of the Law, nailing it to his cross." Circumcision was given to Abraham and his seed, four hundred and thirty years before the Law was given to Israel as a nation at Mount Sinai. Peter was designated the apostle to the circumcision (*i.e.*, to the Jews), and Paul, the apostle to the uncircumcision (*i.e.*, to the Gentiles). --Gal. 2:7,8.

Paul's argument of Gal. 5:2 was not addressed to Jews. He was addressing Gentiles, whose only reason for desiring or even thinking about circumcision was that certain false teachers were confusing them, by telling them that they must keep the Law Covenant, as well as accept Christ--thus leading them to ignore the new Covenant. In Gal. 5:2, Paul shows them that for them to be circumcised (*for any such reason*) would be a repudiation of the New Covenant, and hence of the entire work of Christ.

That Paul found no objection to Jews continuing their national custom of circumcision is evident from his words in 1 Cor. 7:18,19, as well as in his course with Timothy. Not that it was *necessary* for Timothy or any other Jew to be circumcised, but that it was not improper, and that, as he would be going amongst Jews to a considerable extent, it would be to his advantage, giving him the confidence of the Jews. But we see Paul's steadfast resistance, on this subject, when some who misconceived the matter sought to have Titus circumcised-- a full-blooded Greek.--Gal. 2:3.

(5) The account of Paul's course, recorded in Acts 21:20-26, is reflected upon as being contrary to his own teachings of the truth. It is claimed that it was because of wrong doing in this instance that Paul was permitted to suffer so much as a prisoner and was finally sent to Rome. But such a view is not borne out by Scripture-stated facts. The record shows that throughout this entire experience Paul had the sympathy and approval of all the other apostles, and, above all, the Lord's continued favor. His course was at the instance of the other apostles. It was testified to him by prophecy, before he went to Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14), that bonds and imprisonment awaited him; and it was in obedience to his convictions of duty that he braved all those predicted adversities. And when in the very midst of his trouble, we read, "The Lord stood by him and said, 'Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou *hast testified of me in Jerusalem*, so must thou bear witness also at Rome"; and

later we find the Lord again showing him favor, as we read, "There stood by me the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." (Acts 23:11; 27:23,24.) In view of these facts, we must seek an understanding of Paul's course in correspondence with his uniformly bold and noble course--esteeming very highly the work and testimony which God not only did not reprove, but on the contrary approved.

Coming then to the examination of Acts 21:21-27, we notice (*verse 21*) that Paul had not taught that *Jewish* converts should not circumcise their children; nor did he repudiate the Mosaic law--rather, he honored it, by pointing out the greater and grander realities which Moses' law so forcibly typified. So far, therefore, from repudiating Moses, he honored Moses and the Law, saying, The law is just and holy and good, and that by it the *knowledge* of the heinousness of sin had been increased; that the Law was so grand that no imperfect man could obey it fully, and that Christ, by keeping it, had won its rewards, and now under a New Covenant was offering everlasting life and blessings to those *unable to keep it*, who, by faith, accepted as the covering of their imperfections, his perfect obedience and sacrifice.

Certain ceremonies of the Jewish dispensation were typical of spiritual truths belonging to the Gospel age, such as the fasts, the celebration of new moons and Sabbath days and feasts. The apostle clearly shows that the Gospel of the New Covenant neither enjoins nor forbids these (the Lord's Supper and Baptism being the only injunctions of a symbolic character commanded us, and they, new ones).-- Col. 2:16,17; Luke 22:19; Matt. 28:19.

One of these Jewish symbolic rites was that observed by Paul and the four Jews, which we are now examining, termed "purifying." Being Jews, they had a right, if they chose, not only to consecrate themselves to God, in Christ, but also to perform the symbol of this *purification*. And this is what they did--the men who were with Paul having made, additionally, a vow to humiliate themselves, before the Lord and the people, by having their heads shaven. These symbolic ceremonies cost something; and the charges presumably made up the "*offering*" of money--so much for each, to defray the expenses of the Temple.

Paul never taught the Jews that they were *free* from the Law,--but, on the contrary, that the Law had dominion over each of them so long as he lived. He showed, however, that if a Jew accepted Christ, and became "*dead with him*," it settled the claims of the Law Covenant upon such, and made them God's *freemen* in Christ. (Rom. 7:1-4.) But he did teach the Gentile converts that they had never been under the Jewish Law Covenant, and that for them to attempt the practice of Jewish Law ceremonies and rites would imply that they were trusting in those symbols for their salvation, and not relying wholly upon the merit of Christ's sacrifice. And to this all of the apostles assented. See Acts 21:25; 15:20,23-29.

Our conclusion is that God did most wonderfully use the twelve apostles, making them very able ministers of his truth, and guiding them supernaturally in the subjects upon which they wrote--so that nothing profitable to the man of God has been omitted--and in the very words of the original manifested a care and wisdom beyond what even the apostles themselves comprehended. Praise God for this sure foundation.

R5587 [Sel]

THE CHURCH'S ORDINATION **MATTHEW 28:16-20; LUKE 24:36-49.**—

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."--Matthew 28:20.

TODAY'S Study relates to the commission, or authorization of service, which Jesus appointed to His Church in His discourses during the forty days following His resurrection. First we

have the Master's words on the evening after His journey with two of His disciples to the village of Emmaus, near Jerusalem. Then we have a part of the general commission which Jesus gave just before He parted from His disciples and was received up into Heaven.

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS"

St. Matthew's account of our Lord's benediction upon His disciples and His commissioning of them to declare His Message, is full of interest to us. By His appointment the Eleven met Him in a mountain in Galilee. For a few moments only He appeared to them. They worshiped, some fully convinced, others wavering. It was for the convincing of such waverers that Jesus remained during the forty days. And we are sure that He fully accomplished His work of convincing the Eleven; for they were all of one heart and one mind when they waited in the upper room for the Pentecostal blessing.

Jesus came near to them, and declared that full authority had been given unto Him in respect to both Heavenly things and earthly things. Unless they could realize this, it would be impossible for them properly to represent Him before the world. He had not this power and authority previously, during His earthly ministry. He was then in process of trial as respects His faithful loyalty even unto death, even unto the death of the cross. But after He had demonstrated His loyalty, the Father had raised Him from the dead to a glorious fulness of power. He was thus declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead. He wished His disciples to know that He was no longer under the human limitations or under the limitations of the Death Covenant. That work He had finished. He had entered into the blessing, the reward. He had experienced His change and now had all power, not only in respect to earthly things, but also in respect to Heavenly things.

Prophecy had declared that unto Him all would bow, both those in Heaven and those on earth. He had entered into the condition where this prophecy would soon begin to be fulfilled. He had ascended up on High, where all the angels worshiped, gave heed to Him as the Father's exalted One. Not yet is the latter part of the promise fulfilled--that all on earth should bow to Him. The time for such a recognition will be during His Messianic Kingdom of a thousand years. As now, all who come to a true knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God gladly bow their knee to Him as the Father's Representative, so gladly the world will come to recognize the Only Begotten and render obedience to Him.

Eventually every knee shall bow and every tongue confess; for, according to the Divine arrangement all who fail to appreciate the glorified Son of God at that time will be destroyed--counted unworthy of any further blessings and favor of God, who has bestowed upon Christ all the blessings which He designs for the fallen race. [R5588 : page 364]

"GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH"

Here is the commission. Primarily it belonged to the eleven Apostles, but subsequently it included St. Paul, who took the place of Judas and who was "not one whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles." (2 Corinthians 11:5.) The Apostles, and they alone, are authorized as mouthpieces of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church to the world. All that has been told us of Apostolic Bishops being successors of The Twelve is false, unscriptural. They had no successors; they are with us yet. The Master's Message through them is given us in the New Testament, of which one of them wrote, "The Word of God is sufficient, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished." (2 Timothy 3:16,17.) To the Apostles was given the great work of inaugurating the Church. They were endued with the power at Pentecost.

But while Jesus appointed especially the Twelve Apostles to be His mouthpieces to the Church, and declared that whatsoever they would bind on earth we might know was bound in Heaven, and that whatsoever they would declare was not bound on earth was not bound in the sight of Heaven, nevertheless the Lord arranged that each member of the Church should be His

representative, and that each in proportion to his opportunity and ability might have a share in proclaiming the Gospel Message. Whoever receives the Spirit of begetting, the anointing, is included in the statement of *Isa. 61:1-3* as a member of the Body of Christ, under the anointed Head, Jesus.

Thus we read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath appointed Me to bind up the broken-hearted," etc. Everyone who receives the Holy Spirit is thus ordained, or authorized, to preach, according to his or her opportunity or limitation of circumstances or conditions. One limitation of the Apostle is that the sisters are not to teach in public. (*1 Tim. 2:12.*) Nevertheless there are plenty of opportunities for all.

Evidently, therefore, a great mistake has been made in the arrangement of a clergy class, who declare themselves to be the only ones who are ordained, or authorized, to preach or to teach God's Message. Jesus and the Apostles knew nothing of a clergy class or of a laity class. On the contrary, our Lord declared, "All ye are brethren; and One is your Master, even Christ." And the Master and His twelve Apostles especially forbade anything approaching a lordship amongst His followers, anything like a clerical class.

[R664 / R295]

THE ECCLESIA

This is a Greek word which is translated church. It signifies a company, assembly, or body of people bound or compacted together.

To-day there are many organizations claiming to be the church, and having various bonds of union; but we wish to know, upon the authority of God's Word, what *ekklesia*, body, or church, Jesus established, and what are its bonds of union; secondly, we wish to show that every Christian should belong to that church; thirdly, the injurious effects of joining the wrong *ekklesia* or church; and fourthly, having joined the right church, what are the results of losing our membership.

First, then, the church which Jesus began to gather during his ministry, and which was recognized by the Father at Pentecost after their ransom price was paid, was the little company of disciples who had consecrated earthly time, talents and life, a sacrifice to God. They were organized and bound together as members of one society, and as such had laws and government, and consequently a head or recognized ruling authority. The bonds, were *bonds of love* and common interest. Since all were enlisted under the captaincy of Jesus, the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, and aims of one were those of the other; and thus they had a far more perfect union of heart than could possibly be had from a union on the basis of any man-made creed. Thus their organization was of the Spirit; their law for the government of each was love, and all as a whole were put under obedience to the "law of the Spirit" as it was expressed in the life, actions, and words of their Lord. Their government was the *will* of him who said, "If ye love me keep my commandments."

Thus we see the early church organized, governed, and in perfect unity and harmony under the rulership or *headship* of Jesus. Contrast this *church organization* with what now affects to be a continuance of the same--viz.: the various denominational organizations, each of which binds its members to a mental union on the basis of some creed or dogma of its own (many of them anything but *love-ly*) and each having its own laws.

These laws emanate from their heads, and rulers or law-givers; so it is clearly seen that these present day churches, have and recognize as heads, or directing, ruling powers over them, the ancient founders of their various creeds, each contradicting the other, while their clergy, in conferences, councils, synods, and presbyteries, variously interpret and enforce the "traditions of the elders" which "make void the Word of God." These take the place of the true head of the church--Jesus--and the true teacher and guide into all truth, the Holy Spirit. Hear the prophet Isaiah express it. (*chap. 9:15.*) "The *ancient and honorable, he is the head, and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is*

the *tail*." And the whole nominal system is described in the Revelation as "Babylon"--confusion--Papal mother and Protestant daughters.

Will they own this to be so? No, for the lukewarm nominal church of to-day believes herself to be rich and increased with goods, having need of nothing; not knowing that she is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. (Rev. 3:17.)

These are "hard sayings, who can receive them?" But these are not our sayings: it is the warning voice of the "sure word of prophecy...whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." And it is a loving voice, for again our Lord declares: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

There are two senses in which the *true church* of Christ may be considered: All who, like the early church, were fully consecrated to the doing of our Father's will, amenable only to His will and government, recognizing and obeying none other--these saints, from the beginning of the Gospel Age down to its close, when all of this class are sealed, constitute the "CHURCH OF THE FIRST BORN," whose names are written in heaven. These are all one in aim, hope, and suffering, and in due time will be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ to the great inheritance --heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised for them that love him.

The other sense in which this same class is recognized, is by counting a part for the whole; thus all the living of this class may be spoken of as *the church*; or, again, any part of this class of living followers who may meet together may properly be called the church; for, by the word of Jesus we know that wherever two or three are assembled he will be among them, consequently that would be a church meeting--an assembly of the "church of the First Born." The *general* assembly will be, when all the church are made like, and glorified with, their head--Jesus.

Such, then, is our definition of the church of Christ; it is perfectly illustrated by Paul (Rom. 12:4,5) when he compares the church to a human body. In this figure Jesus represents the head, and all who are his constitute the body, over and through which the head rules. Jesus has been and always will be the head over his church as a whole; he is likewise the head and ruler of the entire living church, and in every assembly where two or three meet *in his name* he is the head, ruler, and teacher.

Is it asked, in what sense does he teach? We answer, by exercising the qualities of the head, or teacher; by using one or more of those present as his mouth-pieces in unfolding truth, strengthening faith, encouraging hope, inspiring zeal, etc., just as the head of your body can call upon one member to minister to another. But here a word of caution: If one becomes a useful instrument as a *right hand*, he should take care that he aspire not to become the head. Be not puffed up; pride will paralyze and render useless. "Be not ye called Rabbi, (master, teacher,) for one is your master, (head,) even Christ, and all ye are brethren." And let not the least member despise his office, "for if all were one member, where were the body?" "Nay, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary"-- "God hath set the members *every one of them*, in the body *as it hath pleased him*."

How simple, beautiful and effectual is God's plan of organization!

This brings us to our second proposition, viz.: that all Christians should be joined to this organization. In the light of what has just been said as to the class constituting the Church which Jesus organized, it is evident that if you have given up all your will, talent, time, etc., you are recognized by Jesus as a follower, and member of the *ekklesia*, or body of which he is the head, whose names are written in heaven. Thus we join Jesus' Church and have our names recorded as members by consecration. But, says one, must I not join some organization on earth, assent to some creed, and have my name written on earth? No; remember that Jesus is your pattern and teacher, and neither in his words nor acts will you find any authority for binding yourselves with creeds and traditions of the elders, which all tend to make the word of God of none effect, and bring you under a bondage which will hinder your growth in grace and knowledge, and against which Paul warned you, saying, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5:1.)

But some say: If it is not proper to unite with any of the present nominal churches, would it not be well to form a visible organization of our own? Yes, this is what we have--an organization modeled after that of the early church. We think we have come back to primitive simplicity. The Lord Jesus alone is our head or lawgiver; the Holy Spirit is our interpreter and guide into truth; our names are all written in heaven; we are bound together by love and common interest.

Do you inquire--how shall we know one another? We reply, how could we help knowing one another when the Spirit of our Master is made manifest in word and act and manner and look? Yes, the living faith, the unfeigned love, the long-suffering meekness, the child-like simplicity, coupled with the constancy and zeal of maturity, make manifest the sons of God, and we need no earthly record, for the names of all such are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Do the sick need visiting or assistance? --these stand ready with consecrated time. Does the Lord's work require money?--these stand ready with consecrated means. Does His work bring the reproach of the world, and of a degenerate *nominal church*-- these have also sacrificed reputation--all--all to God.

But again, do you inquire how shall we deal with one who walks disorderly in our midst; if we have no organization such as we see about us, how can we free ourselves from such, as the Lord requires us to do? We answer, Do just as Jesus and Paul directed.

Now, as in the early church, there are various degrees of advancement among the individual members; and Paul says, (*1 Thes. 5:14*), some are feeble-minded, comfort them; some are weak, support them; but while you should be patient toward all, you should warn the disorderly, (those who are drifting away from the true spirit of Christ). Don't mistake the disorderly for the weak, and *comfort them*; nor for the feeble-minded, and *support them*; but patiently, lovingly, *warn* the disorderly. Whom does he call disorderly? Doubtless there are many ways of walking disorderly, but in *2 Thes. 3:11*, he speaks of some who work not at all, but are busy-bodies, these he says should do as he did-- work, that they be not chargeable to any; and if any will not work, neither should he eat. Thus he said he did, that he might be an example to others. He warns us also against immoral and unjust persons, and those who wrest (twist) the Scriptures, and thus turn the truth of God into a lie. Then again, *vs. 14*: After you have warned such a one, if he "obey not,...note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet, count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

Again Jesus gives explicit directions where there is a matter of offense between two brethren, (*Matt. 18:15,17*): "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, (the company of brethren who assemble together,) but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." If, under the organization of our Head, we heed his commands, which we will do if we love him, how few will be the misunderstandings and difficulties among the brethren.

This organization has its evangelists, pastors and teachers appointed and directed by the Lord. They need no laying on of hands by the *so-called* "Apostolic succession"; for the "Spirit of the Lord" hath anointed all the members of the body "to preach," (*Isa. 61:1*), and it is the duty of every member of the body to exercise his office for the edification of the other members. How complete is the organization of the Church of Christ with its heaven-written, love-bound and Spirit-ruled membership, and how sad the error of mistaking the nominal for the real Church!

The importance of our fourth proposition need not be urged. It would, indeed, be a dreadful calamity to lose our membership in the true Church or body of Christ. And no member is out of this danger except when keeping a vigilant watch over the old nature, counted dead, lest it come to life again, and assert itself in the form of pride, selfishness, envy, evil-speaking--or what not? But if *filled* with love (the love that prompts to sacrifice) and clothed with humility, and under cover of

the redeeming blood, we are safe in the Church (body), having the assurance that it is our "Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom."

Yes, the kingdom is the glorious destiny of the true Church--the "little flock"--*now* treading the pathway of humiliation and drinking the bitter cup of death. The glory that shall be revealed in us, doth not yet appear except to the eye of faith, but the temptations and trials are very apparent on every hand. "Let us, therefore, fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (*Heb. 4:1.*)

Thus Paul warned others, and thus he feared, lest (even after) having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. (*1 Cor. 9:27.*) We may have our names cast out as evil by those of the nominal Church, and yet "rejoice and be exceeding glad because our names are written in heaven." They may frown upon you and despitefully use you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, or they may seek to win you back by flattery, saying they cannot afford to lose your influence-- you could do so much good by remaining among them. Oh, how necessary in this "evil day" is the faith—

"That bears unmoved the world's dread frown,
Nor heeds its flattering smile;
That seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile."

Dearly beloved, let us again repeat the warning: "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage"--not even in the slightest degree. Make sure that you are of the Church which alone is recognized in Scripture and cut loose completely from all the Babylon systems which it condemns--"Come out of her my people."

R5809 / R5186

DECORUM IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil."--Ecclesiastes 5:1.

THE WISE MAN was undoubtedly not talking about literal feet or literal steps, but giving some wise counsel, which his hearers might appropriate, just as we do. They understood him to mean that they must be circumspect in their daily lives.

"Keep thy foot." Notice where you are going. Do not go to the House of God as you would go to the market-place or to some place of amusement. Go as to the place where God will meet with His people. The wise man goes on to assume what would be heard in the House of God. Be not ready *"to give the sacrifice of fools,"* he says. This would seem to refer to laughter, levity, foolish talk and jesting.

This Scripture is one which may very properly be taken to heart by all of God's people at the present time. Reverence is very becoming. We have lost the fear that God will cast us into eternal torment. We know our Heavenly Father better than to suppose that He would have any such evil intention toward any of His creatures. But we should not go to the House of God as we would go to the market-place. Many of the Lord's people do not appreciate the fact that decorum is necessary in every place where God is worshiped.

It is for us to realize that we have God in the Church today in a sense that He never was in the typical temple. Wherever there is a meeting of the members of the Church, the Lord has declared that

He will be there. The living stones constituting the Temple of God should be as fully revered as temples made of literal stones.

Whether we meet in a parlor or in a church or in an opera house, the fact that God's people are there makes that building, whatever it may be, a holy place. Therefore whoever approaches it should do so with a watchfulness of his feet. When he arrives, he should be appreciative of the place where he is, and should be ready to "hear"--listen--not full of mirth. All conversation should be of a kind that would edify--build up--along spiritual lines. If we cannot talk along such lines, it would be better for us to hear the discourse, join in the singing, and then withdraw.

Whatever conversation be carried on, it should be with reverence, not merely for the place, but for the occasion. There should be no turning about and saying, "Here comes Brother So-and-so, Sister So-and-so. We shall hear them sing." Such conduct is very improper.

We do not know any lesson the Lord's people need to learn more than that of *reverence*. The Lord will not *call* any one devoid of reverence, and He wants that quality to *grow strong*. But when *fear* is banished, the tendency is to *less reverence*. Special care in this respect is to be observed when we go to the House of God, or to any place where Divine service is to be held. [R5809 : page 361]

CONSIDERATION OF RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Not only should we watch our *feet* in going to the House of God, but we should watch what we take with us. We should see that we go there clean; that we take no vermin in our clothing; that we have no bad odors about us. We should also see that we do not take children who are not properly trained. Thus we shall not be in danger of annoying others.

There may be occasions when children may be left alone at home. When this is impossible, it would be better for the parents to take turns in coming to the meetings. No one has a right to take children to the meeting, when their presence would be detrimental to the spiritual interests of others. We believe, however, that a way could be devised whereby the child could be left at home until of such an age as not to disturb the Class. The majority of parents become so accustomed to the ways of their children that they do not realize that others are being annoyed-- when probably every motion of the child is disturbing others. The others have their own trials to tax their patience without additional ones from us.

PUNCTUALITY A MARK OF CHARACTER

It would seem that some need to watch, not only their feet, but also their *watches*. To come into the meeting late is out of harmony with the principles of both justice and love. All who attend ought, in justice to others, to see that they arrive in time. They ought so to arrange their affairs that they can be at the meeting promptly at the hour appointed.

Doubtless the Lord would view our efforts to be punctual and not to annoy others as marks of Christian character-development, which would have His approval, and which would help to prepare us for the Kingdom. He who is indifferent to the rights of others manifests that he is lacking in the spirit of love, the spirit of Christ. And whoever has not the spirit of Christ, well developed, will not have a place in the Kingdom.

Hence these matters--unruly children, tardiness at meeting, etc.--will have to do with our fitness for a place in the Kingdom. By this we do not mean that we are being judged according to our work, or that we have any right to judge others according to their work. The Lord said, "Judge not." We should show that our *endeavors to do the Lord's will* are equal to the *desires of our hearts*. If we exercise determination in trying to live up to these, we shall be glad when we experience our change in the Resurrection.

THINGS WORTH STRIVING FOR

The **PATIENT PERSEVERANCE** which cannot discourage nor discouragement defeat.

The **IMPARTIALITY** which delights as much in the great work another has done as if he had done it himself

The **SPIRIT** which finds more ready excuse for your brother than for yourself.

The **RIGHTEOUSNESS** which would rather right a wrong than to conceal your share in it.

The **CHARITY** which always looks for some good intention even where a slight or an injury was seemingly intended.

The **LOYALTY** which even your stumblings and failures cannot dishearten.

The **LOWLINESS** which will sorrow when your enemy fails and rejoice when you are humbled.

The **WISDOM** which knows when to speak and when to **KEEP SILENT**

The **ZEAL** which can never do enough and yet seeks no credit, and encourages no compliments.

The **FORGIVENESS** which not only pardons in word but proves its sincerity by never referring to the matter again.

The **HUMILITY** which would choose the meaner and more undesirable part of service, to leave the nobler and more honourable part for another brother

The **CHRISTIANITY** which is as careful how we live in our homes as how we act before the Brethren.

- BR. BENJAMIN. H. BARTON.

Part-2

HUMILITY A PRIME REQUISITE

LOVE AS BRETHREN; BE SYMPATHETIC; BE COURTEOUS

"Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and showeth favor to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."--1 PETER 3:8; 5:5,6

THE APOSTLE has been addressing the elders of the Church, exhorting them to give attention to the feeding of God's flock, and pointing out what should be the constraining influence to such a service. That they may feel his sympathy with them he points out that he also is an elder, and then warns them against a tendency, natural to all fallen humanity in any place of influence, to misconstrue their position, and to think of themselves as lords of God's heritage rather than as servants of the flock.

In our day, the natural tendency in this direction is greatly accentuated by the long established custom of all denominations of Christians to regard the ministers or servants of the Church as of a different class from the others of the flock,--a class vested with authority from God, and not amenable to the same regulations which govern all the members of the body. But how great a mistake this is! The Apostle distinctly points out that a servant is not a ruler, that a servant has no authority. Indeed, so far as the true Church is concerned, the only authority in it is the Lord, the Head of the Church, and his Word, and the words of those whom he specially chose to be his mouth-pieces, the apostles.

Where these speak, all of the body of Christ are to give attention to hear. Where these are silent, no one has authority to speak. And while an Elder should be chosen to the position of serving and feeding the flock because of special aptness to teach (to point out the instructions of our Lord and the apostles upon any subject), and while such an Elder should, therefore, in this way be specially helpful to the body of Christ in drawing the attention of all to the inspired authority of the Word, nevertheless any member of the body of Christ has the same privilege--not of exercising authority, but of calling the attention of his fellows to the Word of authority. The Apostle exhorts the Elders that so far from in any manner or degree exercising a lordly or authoritative position in the Church, they should rather be "*ensamples* to the flock." They should be examples in the matter of meekness, in the matter of patience, in the matter of brotherly kindness, in the matter of courtesy, so that the more any of the brethren would copy these Elders the more would the spirit of the Lord prevail in the flock, and the fruits and graces of the spirit be manifested. On the contrary, we know that if the Elder or leader of a little company of the Lord's people be self-assertive, dogmatic, imperious in manner, tone or look, the effect upon the company under his influence is to produce bickerings, rivalries, ambitions, strifes as to who is greatest, etc.

Manifestly, whoever occupies the position of an Elder amongst the Lord's people, however small the group may be, occupies a position fraught with responsibilities to the Lord and to the flock, as well as with besetments to himself. Great care should therefore be exercised by every company of the Lord's people, to so far as possible select for the position of leaders or Elders in the Church such persons as would not be likely to be injured by the privilege of service--such as occupying this post would indeed be ensamples of the flock in humility and in all of the graces of the Lord's spirit. It would seem to be with reference to the special trial of such as occupy this position of service in the Church that the Apostle speaks, saying, "Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that we [occupying such a position] shall receive the severer testing."--*James 3:1*.

It may not be amiss that here we notice the fact that altho the word "Elder" has the significance of "older," yet amongst the Lord's brethren it is not merely years of natural life that is to be taken into consideration; in the Lord's family we sometimes see "babes" with gray hairs. Nor can we even count eldership according to the number of years that have elapsed since the begetting of the

spirit, for some grow rapidly and mature quickly; others who receive the truth permit the "thorns" of cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches to choke the word, and hence never get beyond the position of "babes,"--never bring forth the ripe fruits of the spirit.

Nor can we reckon this matter of relationship merely according to the degree of knowledge of the divine plan attained; for, as the Apostle assures us, it is possible for some to have much knowledge and yet be but "tinkling cymbals" according to the Lord's standpoint of estimation. While therefore an Elder, in order to be "apt to teach," must have attained to some considerable degree of knowledge of the divine plan, nevertheless the real evidence of his fitness for the service of an elder must not be determined by his knowledge *merely*, but additionally must be measured by his growth in grace. So then such of the brethren in any place as possess clear knowledge of the divine plan and are "apt to teach," and who additionally give unmistakable evidence that they have grown in grace and are bearing in daily life the fruits of the spirit of the Lord, in considerable measure of maturity, may be considered qualified to be elders;--and such may properly be chosen to the eldership by their brethren, regardless of their age according to the flesh.

According to the flesh Peter and several others of the apostles of our Lord were his elders, but according to the spirit our Lord is the Elder Brother of all accepted to the family of God. According to the flesh both Timothy and Titus were young men--young in years--so that the Apostle needed to write to one of them, "Let no man despise thy youth." (*1 Tim. 4:12.*) And yet these young men the Apostle recognized as Elders in the Church, who, because of their *spiritual development and knowledge* of the divine plan, *and aptness to teach*, were well qualified to feed the flock of God and to be overseers in it--but not lords, not rulers, not masters, and not vested with any *authority* --merely privileged to call to the attention of the flock the voice of the great Shepherd and his twelve chosen assistants, and to lead them to the green pastures and still waters of divine truth.

It was after specially enjoining modesty and humility upon the ones most advanced and most capable of the flock that the Apostle, in the language of our text, urges that each one of the Lord's sheep, so far from seeking to be a leader in the sense of a ruler or lord or master, should seek to be subject one to another --to hear gladly from the humblest of the flock, and to be willing to yield his own preference, so far as his judgment and conscience would permit. A Church operating under this spirit would not be likely to be rent with contention, for each would be so anxious for the interests of the cause and so willing to condescend to the wishes of others, that even the will of the majority would not be considered satisfactory, but rather all would seek, if possible, to reach such a modified conclusion as would meet with nearly or quite unanimous approval.

The Apostle most distinctly points out that the quality essential to such proper conduct on the part of Elders and on the part of all, is humility. How beautiful is his exhortation, "Be clothed with humility." The thought would seem to be that outside of every other adornment of character, and covering all others, should be this robe of humble-mindedness, the opposite disposition to pride.

By way of clinching his argument, the Apostle reminds us of the principle upon which our Lord deals with his flock and with all;--that he disapproves of pride, and that all who are actuated by pride may be sure that the Lord, so far from receiving them, fellowshiping them, leading them, blessing them, will resist them, push them from him. The natural inference is that thus resisted of the Lord, the tendency of such as come under the influence of a spirit of pride and ambition will be not toward the truth nor toward any of the fruits and graces of the spirit, but further and further from these. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but supplies his favor to the humble." Come then, dear brethren, says the Apostle, let us cultivate this humility which the Lord so loves and appreciates and promises to reward. Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time.

The Lord's mighty hand has not yet been stretched out to take hold of mankind in general and its affairs, to bring order out of confusion; but it is stretched out over his Church, his flock. He has called us to be his "sheep," and we have responded and have put ourselves under his care, under his powerful hand for guidance, for direction, etc., that he may ultimately make us "meet for the

inheritance of the saints in light," "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Seeing that we are under this mighty hand of God, and that too by our own volition, how shall we act? Shall we yield ourselves to his will, and permit him to "work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure" and our ultimate exaltation, or shall we resist the Lord's power, resist his Word of instruction, resist the example set us in the meek and lowly Lamb of God, and seek to exalt ourselves and to be somebodies, either in the world or in the Church? Nay, let us remember that it would be folly to attempt to work against the divine arrangement; we might indeed to some extent seemingly succeed, and bring upon ourselves, and perhaps upon others also, more or less of separation from God through such resisting, on account of a wrong spirit; but in the end we should utterly fail of God's favors, both as respects the fellowship of the spirit now and the fellowship of glory by and by, for these he assures us will be bestowed only upon the humble. Every proper incentive and inducement speaks to us, saying,--Humble yourself: become more like a little child, forgetful of self, devoid of selfish ambition: be actuated merely by a desire to serve the Lord, to serve his flock, and to serve his cause, the truth; forget self entirely.

Perhaps, as a result, the Lord may increase our opportunities and responsibilities in service in the present life, and perhaps he may not; but no matter for this. It is not for the present life that we are seeking and striving, but for the glory, honor and immortality which the Lord has promised to them that love him;--that love him so much that they hearken to his Word and seek to develop those elements of character which are pleasing in his sight, seeking to become more and more copies of God's dear Son.

The Apostle adds, "Casting all your care upon him." All true saints of God are care-full. They have an interest in the Lord's work; they have a care in respect to it. They cannot be indifferent to the interests of Zion. Altho their hearts and affections and cares have been lifted from a sectarian channel, it is only that they should be placed upon true people of spiritual Zion, whose names are written in heaven. Of course, therefore, every Elder in the Church must feel such a care, especially for the flock in connection with which he has been appointed to service, "to feed the flock of Christ:"--not to shear them, not to frighten them, not to club them, not to exercise authority and lordship over them, but to *feed* them.

This care, affecting the chosen Elders (and all the elders or advanced ones in the Church), altho it is a right sentiment in itself, might easily be so perverted as to be dangerous. The Elders, either individually or collectively, might become so nervously careful of the flock as to destroy their own peace and joy in the holy spirit; and it might also lead them to take various improper steps, as in their over-zealous judgment necessary for the welfare of the flock. Many in times past have been led, under the influence of such a care, to in various ways take away the liberties of the flock in this or that or another matter: fearful that these liberties would be injurious to the cause. We see such a spirit of carefulness and over-solicitude marked prominently in the past by the various creeds and regulations and restraints put upon the Lord's flock, contrary to the Scriptures and to the liberty wherewith Christ makes free his people. The motive undoubtedly was in some respects a good one; the difficulty was that some Elders, some advanced sheep, caring for the interests of the flock, forgot that they were only *its servants*, and that they were not authorized to make any laws or restraints whatsoever for the flock. They forgot that the Lord himself is the Good Shepherd of his flock still, that he has not given over his care of it, nor his authority to anyone, to permit such to exercise lordship or to make laws of any kind for it, he having made all the laws and regulations necessary, and desiring that his sheep shall be free, with the liberty wherewith he made them free, in the fullest sense of the word.

The remedy for all such unauthorized over-carefulness for the interests of Zion is pointed out by the Apostle, saying,--"Casting all your care upon him [the Shepherd of the flock], for he careth for you [all]." Each sheep is to remember that the Shepherd's mighty hand (mighty power) is still in the midst of his people, and that because of his care we do not need to *overburden* ourselves with

care, nor to feel that we must make *changes in his plans* and arrangements to meet what we might fancy to be new exigencies in the case. All such over-carefulness leads to fear, and fear indicates a lack of faith, a lack of confidence in the Shepherd; and is generally used by the great Adversary as one of his most powerful levers to lead the Lord's people into a wrong course.

Let us all, then (all of the advanced or elder class), have a care for the flock; yea, a deep solicitude; but let us cast the weight of this care upon the Lord, and let our faith trust him that he who has been working out so grand and glorious a plan as his Word reveals to us now, "the plan of the ages," has made full provision for every feature, every circumstance, every condition; and let us thus be ready to cooperate with him in harmony with his Word, but not to run where we are not sent, nor in any manner to take our Lord's place, nor attempt to do his work. But only the humble-minded are likely to receive any lasting blessing, present or future, at the hands of our Lord; for he resisteth the proud and showeth favor to the humble.

R5793

PROPER BASIS OF HONOR IN THE CHURCH

QUESTION.--Matthew 20:27 reads, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Is it a proper desire to be chief among the Lord's people, and are we to understand that the positions in the Kingdom of Heaven will be assigned entirely on the basis of the amount of service we render here?

*Answer.--*The Lord had been pointing out to His disciples a certain weakness on their part--a desire to be the greatest--a desire that is general in the human family--an ambitious spirit. The context says that amongst the Gentiles there are some who exercise a lordship and have others to serve them in a menial way, but that this was not to be the case amongst the disciples of Jesus. They were to be actuated by a different spirit. With the followers of Christ there is not to be a spirit to dominate, to rule others, but a spirit of love, which seeks to serve others, to do for others, a spirit which is willing to sacrifice personal interest in the service of others.

On this basis we consider further the words of this text. There will be some among the Lord's people who will be chief. It is necessarily so in any company or class or association where people are not all equal in talents-- where some are born with more talents and some with less. Some one is bound to be chief. An absolute equality is not possible.

It is advisable, too, that there be some among the saints of God to guide the Church. What, then, is to be the standard as to who is to be chief? Shall it be the one who would browbeat the others? No; this is not the standard. Shall it be one who will have a masterful influence and pleasant words, who will dominate *merely* because of some talent, or because of superior education or wealth--something of this kind? No; this could not be the standard. What, then, will be the standard as to those who will be recognized as chief ones in the Church?

HAVE NO AMBITION FOR PERSONAL GLORY

We reply, We should look for those who have most of the spirit of service. He who renders the greatest amount of service and brings the greatest spiritual blessing to the Class--the one who tries most to *truly serve*-- consider him your chief. While our Lord's words were addressed to all the Apostles, and not merely to one individual, yet they are applicable also to the individual. The thought should come home to each of our hearts, that if any of us have ambition for service in some special capacity, we are not to do like worldly people. We should take the opposite track, and leave any honor of men out of the question entirely. We should leave God to attend to that matter as shall seem

to Him best, and be content merely to be a servant to the brethren. Let the Lord see how willing you are to serve in any manner.

The person without any ambition never amounts to anything. We need to have ambition if we are sowing or plowing or whatever we are doing--we need ambition to spur us on to do whatever we do in a satisfactory manner. And so if we have the opportunity of serving the Truth, we should seek to serve it in the most capable manner possible. Otherwise we should not be capable servants of the Lord.

But we are to lay aside any desire to be chief so far as ambition for personal glory is concerned. We are to seek to serve *the Lord* the best we know how. If you can serve the Lord in some respects better than I, and I can learn something from you, well and good. And if afterwards you can learn something from me, so be it. True, we should be patterning after that which is especially commendable and doing all we can to further the Lord's Cause. And this service should be prompted by love. Any service not prompted by love is not acceptable in the sight of the Lord.

HUMILITY A PRIME REQUISITE

The Apostle Paul says that those who desire the office of a bishop are desiring a good thing. It is a noble service. This office in the Apostles' day was not the exalted official position it is understood to be in the nominal church systems of today. A bishop then was a humble, untitled servant of the Church, caring for the interests of the sheep. Every servant of the Church should seek to be efficient, should love to be, as far as he is able, a caretaker over the flock of God. Amongst these Elder brethren, pastors of the congregation, there will be those of different natural abilities. Each should seek to use his talents, his opportunities, in the service of the Lord, of the brethren and of the Truth.

It is a pity that any of the Lord's people today forget the standard which the Master is here setting up. These seem to think that the office of Elder has become theirs by right, instead of realizing that the appointment to this office is by *vote* of the Ecclesia, the company of the Lord's people, and is to be the *voice of the Church*. We believe that the attitude of each one should be to be willing to accept the voice of the Ecclesia, the Church, implicitly. If he has become a member of the congregation by casting in his lot with the others, he has thus become subject to the rules that represent the *controlling majority*, whether it be a majority of *one* or of a larger per cent. Having done this, he should seek to continue in this attitude, whether chosen an Elder or whether another is chosen.

Very frequently a congregation makes the mistake of selecting for Elder a brother who does not have the proper qualifications. This sometimes means dissatisfaction on the part of some of the Class, and leads to the breaking away of some to form another Class. We think this is not the wise course. We think that if the Class made a mistake, the Lord is able to overrule it for good; and that therefore those who withdraw lose some experiences which would be valuable to them.

We are not always sure, however, that the Class made a mistake. How can we know but that the Lord has some lesson in this matter? If we have asked the Lord's blessing on whoever would be the choice, we should abide by that choice. If the one not chosen has ability for properly presenting the Truth and knows a number of places where he can be used and useful, we think that the brother should take advantage of whatever opportunities may present themselves. He need not leave the Class, however. He could perform whatever service came to his hand. Perhaps he could use his time and talent in Class Extension work--not feeling restricted in this direction because he was not elected Elder. He might go out and find opportunities for service. So the change in Elders might mean to the brother not elected or not reelected that the Lord was indicating to him another field of usefulness. The Lord's providences might be leading out for wider influence and usefulness for him.

We should not be influenced by what men of the world shall say or think of us. This is immaterial; and it is immaterial what the Church shall think. We should seek to please the Lord. We should not esteem ourselves too highly, but rather give a preference to others in our estimation.

Positions in the Kingdom of Heaven, we understand, will be awarded according to the degree of the development of the fruits of the Holy Spirit; and this means a love which will lead to zeal in the Lord's service.

SELECTION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Numerous inquiries have come to us indicating that some of the brethren have difficulty in applying the suggestions given in Vol. VI. on the subject of election of servants for the Classes. It was not our thought there to lay down an invariable rule on the subject. The Bible gives none, and no one else has a right to establish such a rule. Our suggestion was that whenever possible the election should be unanimous, and unless seventy-five per cent. of the Class, or more, favored a brother's election, it would be rather unwise for him to accept the office--the service. We did not by this mean that a minority of twenty-five or thirty per cent. should be encouraged to obstruct the Class and hinder an election.

Strictly speaking, a majority of *one* in a Class would decide any matter except as *love* might come in to urge a consideration of the sentiments of others. If for instance, a Class numbered one hundred, fifty-one would have a *right* to decide respecting who should be the servants of the Church, and the other forty-nine should very quietly acquiesce, recognizing the fact that they constitute only a minority, and should loyally strive to support the will of the majority.

Only the spirit of love and the best interests of all in the Class suggests more than fifty-one per cent. Love should strive for a unanimous vote. But how might this be obtained? We will offer a suggestion.

Suppose that in a Class of one hundred, six Elders were considered as necessary for the service. A, B, C, D, E, F, would represent available candidates of more or less ability. A might have a hundred votes; B, ninety; C, eighty; D, seventy; E, sixty; F, fifty. Under a strict voting on the lines of preference only two would be selected on a ninety per cent. basis; but our thought would be that the entire six might be unanimously elected, if they were on the average as good material as the Class possessed, and if nothing were known derogatory to their moral character.

It is a mistake to think that the standards established by St. Paul are to be taken literally, for no one would be found fully up to all the requirements. The Apostle has stated what the ideal Elder would be. Each voter should have this ideal before his mind in thinking of the will of the Lord; but the Class is not to be left without an Elder unless there are serious blemishes.

Our Lord similarly set a perfect example before us when He said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." (*Matt. 5:48.*) Who is perfect in the sense that God is perfect? "There is none righteous; no, not one." (*Romans 3:10.*) The Master evidently meant that we should not measure ourselves by a low standard, but by the perfect standard, that thus we would be assisting ourselves up to the grandest ideals in respect to our own lives and characters and in respect to those chosen to be Elders and examples to the Flock.

Be it always remembered that none are to vote except those professing full consecration, manifested by the usual symbol--immersion in water. Such as have not symbolized their consecration, are not to be disowned as brethren, but should be considered so immature as not to be competent to express an opinion in respect to who would be qualified to serve the Church, and, of course, would not be qualified to be servants themselves.

RE THE VOW

Another question which here and there is obtruding itself is, Should any one be chosen as a servant of the Church who has not taken the special Vow which so many of us have found very helpful, and which has been recommended to all?

We cannot make this simple Vow a test of brotherhood; for, even though we believe that the Lord has especially brought it forth at this time and that to a certain extent He intends it to serve as a

test amongst the consecrated, nevertheless the Bible does not authorize us to make this a test of brotherhood. It is a matter of judgment rather than of Divine direction, just as the candidate's misuse of the English language, or uncouthness of manner might properly enough be taken into consideration, although not mentioned in the Bible amongst the qualifications for eldership.

It would rejoice us greatly to know that all the dear Elders and Deacons amongst the Lord's people everywhere could see eye to eye with respect to the reasonableness of the Vow, and its harmony with the Divine Word and with our consecration Vow, to which it is, as it were, a blue fringe, or border and finish. One can scarcely refrain from wondering what objection any Christian brother or sister could have to that Vow. To some of us it seems as though it would imply either something wrong as respects their heart intentions or something defective in their reasoning faculties. However, we are not competent to judge so closely. The Master said, "Judge not."

Our thought is that in selecting Elders or Deacons a preference might well be given to those who have taken the Vow and who see eye to eye on this subject. Nevertheless, if the brethren who are competent to lead Classes are acceptable in every other way and are not *opposers* of the Vow, they might be chosen. This would be especially true of those who declare that they are living up to all the requirements of the Vow to the best of their ability, and merely decline to take it because of fear that somehow or other the taking of this simple Vow might injure *them* while helping *others*. We may not understand the processes of their reasoning nor the attitude of their hearts, but we may under such circumstances pass over what we cannot understand nor appreciate.

R4033

FIGHTING AGAINST GOD

GAMALIEL gave evidence of his wisdom in the advice he proffered to his Jewish friends of the Sanhedrin when they were about to deal harshly with the early disciples. His wise words were, "Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men....Refrain from these men, let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men it will come to naught: but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest ye be found to be fighting against God." (Acts 5:35-39.) Alas that so many who have named the name of Christ, and to some extent become partakers of the holy Spirit, and to some extent been taught in the school of Christ, and to some extent possess the wisdom that cometh from above--alas that so many of these seem to have less wisdom than is expressed in Gamaliel's words just quoted.

Some people by nature have so little combativeness that they lack strength of character, are too pliable, "wishy-washy": they lack the qualities of an overcomer, and need continually to seek grace and help from on high to take a stand for the truth and for righteousness. Otherwise they surely cannot be expected to come off more than conquerors. The Lord is seeking for his little flock those who have character, firmness, strength, as well as gentleness, meekness, patience, love. The happy combination which the Lord seeks is not found anywhere, however. All who come to him need to be refashioned in some respects to make them acceptable. Consequently on the other side of the question we find that some who have strong characters naturally have such strong combativeness that it is continually bringing them into trouble and needs to be curbed, brought under restraint.

It is difficult to say which of the two classes referred to has the advantage over the other. The one class must cultivate what the other class must restrain, and probably, all things considered, their chances are about equal in the matter of winning the race. However, those who have large combativeness, who are aggressive, forceful, usually attract more attention in the Church by reason of these qualities, and usually awaken more opposition even though they do not make enemies amongst those who love one another. The too pliable and docile are apt to think of themselves too

favorably, and are very likely to be too favorably thought of by others as respects their qualifications for the Kingdom. Those who are strong and forceful are apt to be too roundly censured by others and to be too blind to the fact themselves. Oh, that we all could have sound minds! but since this is impossible, Oh, that we all could have a large measure of the spirit of a sound mind, and the ability to weigh ourselves according to the divine standard!

These words are specially intended to assist the dear brethren and sisters troubled with too large a degree of combativeness, disposed to be too aggressive. The Lord certainly showed markedly, particularly, his love for the strong characters when from amongst the twelve he selected Peter, James and John, the three most radical and aggressive of the apostles, as in some respects his favorites. So, then, those who have the aggressive quality by nature must not feel that it is a bar to their attainment of the Lord's "Well done," but rather that it is a good quality of itself if only it can be restrained and brought within proper bounds. They should see, as Gamaliel did, the danger of using their combativeness and aggressiveness against the Lord, against the Truth, against the brethren.

Our Lord says, "His servants ye are to whom ye render service." (*Rom. 6:16.*) The question is not, To whom do we *profess* to render service? nor, To whom do we *think* we are rendering service? but, Whose cause do we *actually* serve? From this standpoint, looking out over Christendom today, we ask ourselves, How many are serving God? and How many imagine they are serving him while they are really serving the Adversary? --really "fighting against God"? Serving Christendom we find hundreds of thousands of professed ministers of the Gospel, and millions of professed Christians fighting under various banners, Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, etc.,--but whom are they fighting? Satan? Error? Like Saul of Tarsus many of them will shortly have their eyes opened to the fact that, so far from being soldiers of the cross, they are fighting against God, against the real soldiers of the cross, the followers of the Lamb. What a bitter disappointment will be theirs! how we wish that we could awaken them now to an examination of the commands of the great Chief Captain, that they might see that they are working and fighting under orders and directions not from him, but from human leaders and captains, some of these from the "dark ages," dead and buried.

We are glad to hope that if the Truth could be flashed from heaven many of these strong characters that are now fighting for sectarianism, and some of them for Antichrist, would fall astonished, humiliated, at the Master's feet, crying, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

Let us remember the Lord's words through the Apostle: "The Lord resisteth the proud but showeth favor to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." These verses, we believe, are a key to much of the error along the lines we have indicated. A strong character affected by a measure of pride is apt to take a wrong course from which it is almost impossible for him to recede. But if humility be there the strength, the combativeness, will be under proportionate control, and that much easier will it be for the individual to receive the proper instructions from the Lord, and to follow them, and to be fitted, polished and prepared for a place in the Kingdom. This same principle applies amongst those who have already received as a blessing from the Lord the light of Present Truth. We still need the humility that will enable us, if too lacking in character, strength, to acknowledge the same and seek it from the Lord. And we still need the humility which will keep close watch upon every word and act and thought, even with a view to having all in complete subjection to the will of the Lord that we be found not fighting against the Lord or against the Truth or against the brethren. How careful we should be to watch for the leadings of the Lord's providences, not only in our own experiences, but also in the words and experiences of others, and particularly to measure everything by the divine standards and not by our own opinions and preferences!

GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM

MATTHEW 18:1-14

Probably the disciples who were not with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration felt a little envy of those who had seen the vision and who subsequently told them. Could this mean that Peter, James and John, who were with the Lord on the Mount, would be more highly favored than the remainder of the discipleship when the Kingdom should be established? As they journeyed, following Jesus at a little distance, the dispute grew quite warm with arguments on the one side and on the other respecting which should be the greatest in the coming Kingdom. Our Lord doubtless knew at the time their arguments in the dispute, but instead of administering a personal rebuke to those most at fault, he chose rather to make of the matter a general lesson, profitable, helpful, strengthening to them all. And is not his example valuable to all of his followers? Is it not wise on our part so far as possible to avoid personalities and the holding up of any individual to special criticism? All mankind have faults and blemishes, some in one particular and some in another, and it is very rarely wise to single out an individual in the body of Christ for a special reprimand; it is generally better to do as our Master did in this instance --to give a general lesson on the subject which will be helpful to all, not only to those who are taking the wrong course, but also to those who are more nearly right in their views and conclusions.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that it is the Kingdom of heaven that the Lord is discussing and not the world. This was the same thought the apostles had, not which of them would get into the Kingdom of heaven and which would not get into the Kingdom, but--supposing that all were going to be in the Kingdom--which would be the greatest? The Lord's reply to this question is along this line, namely, that the one of them who would be the most childlike, most humble, most unpretentious, most willing to be taught and guided, would be the one who would be greatest. This thought applies to the Church both in its present and in its future conditions. At the present time, the Church, the Kingdom, is in an embryo condition, not glorified, not recognized even by the world, but recognized by each other and by the Lord. Humility and childlikeness amongst the brethren now should be esteemed as a mark of true greatness from the Lord's standpoint. Such as are of this childlike class we may know assuredly will be proportionately highly honored in the future, when the Kingdom shall be established in power and great glory as God's agency for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

In harmony with this thought that the humble, the teachable, the simple, the unpretentious should be esteemed the greatest, we should expect to find in all the ecclesias, in all the companies of the Lord's people, that those chosen to the place of eldership and prominence in the Church would be amongst the most humble of mind and of conduct in the whole company. Any other condition than this would imply that the congregation had not rightly understood and appreciated and obeyed our Lord's sentiments expressed in connection with the incidents of our lesson.

This does not mean, however, that the brother possessing five talents should be entirely unconscious and neglect to use them. It does not mean that he should be blind to the fact that some others of the brethren have fewer talents, but it does mean that he should have such love, such humility, that his only desire in connection with his talents would be to use them for the good of the Lord's cause--that he would be so humble minded, so zealous for the Lord, that he would not for a moment think of using his talents to serve personal ambitions, to vaunt himself or to in any measure or degree seek to suppress the talents, opportunities and privileges of others that his own talents might alone be recognized. It does mean that if he have five talents, and if of the right, childlike, humble spirit, he will have such interest in the dear brethren that he will do all reasonably within his power for the good of the whole cause, for the exercise of the various talents of the different brothers and sisters in such manner as will be to their upbuilding, strengthening and mutual edification, that

the whole body of Christ may thus minister to its wants and necessities and comforts in faith and hope and love.

R4163 / R2449 [sel]

All who are truly the Lord's followers should heed carefully and follow exactly the true example of the Master's spirit of meekness, humility and service to the members of his Body. The whole thought is contained in his words, "The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things [if you appreciate these principles applicable to all the affairs of life], happy are ye if ye do them [if you live according to this rule, loving and serving one another]."--*Vs. 16,17.*

Feelings of emulation, strife and vain-glory seem to specially beset those of the Lord's people who are possessed of any degree of talent or ability or honorable situation in life, and especially those who are in influential places in the Church. These, therefore, need to be specially on guard against these besetments of the flesh, remembering that, as some one has said, "There is a pride that looks *up* with envy, as well as a pride that looks *down* with scorn." The Lord's followers are to remember that pride in any person, in any station, respecting any matter, is highly reprehensible in God's sight and displeasing to him. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but showeth his favor to the humble." Hence, all who would abide in the Lord's love have need to be very careful along this line--to keep very humble, very lowly in conduct, and particularly in mind.--*Jas. 4:6; I Pet. 5:5.*

R5321

THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE THE SPIRIT OF DISCIPLESHIP

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."--*Matt. 20:27.*

PROPER aspirations are very beneficial, both to the person himself and to those with whom he comes in contact. Our Lord had an aspiration. We read of Him that He "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame." (*Heb. 12:2.*) There are worthy incentives; otherwise the Father would not have set one before His Son. The thought which should inspire us is that if we are faithful in the things of this present time, the Lord will make us ruler over many things. So the ardent desire to obtain these things which God has reserved for those who love Him, is laudable; for these blessings are of God.

Every New Creature has high aspirations. In fact, every one should have an ideal toward which he is striving; and having this wish to attain it indicates that there is a *motive* behind the desire. It is altogether proper to have incentives before the mind, and it is proper to know what kind are worthy of our efforts; otherwise wrong ones might lead us astray. In our text a most laudable aspiration is placed before us.

The Church, which is the representative of Christ, is the Body of our Lord in the flesh. And the Apostle Paul, speaking of ambitions, advised the Church that they should have the more profitable aspirations, that they might be teachers, instructors of the flock; for this is the most useful office in the Church. It is known that one gift of St. Paul's time was speaking in an unknown tongue. It was a very remarkable gift. But the Apostle pointed out that to speak in an unknown tongue was not so much to be sought after as some gift that would be useful in the Church.

We do not have these miraculous gifts in the present time, but we have the Word of God, and the desire to be able to make known the Truth of the Lord. Therefore the gift of oratory is still a

desirable one. The Apostle proceeded to point out that we should desire to have the fruits of the Spirit--that they may have a controlling influence upon us.

RESPONSIBILITY UPON EACH ECCLESIA

As respects positions in the Church, the Lord indicated that *He* would do the setting. "Now God hath set the various members in the Body as it hath pleased Him." God ordained that there should be in the Body this setting; for instance, the service of the eye. As the eye member assists the human body, so the eye member in the Church may be very assistful to the Body of Christ. Also there are ear members, foot members, hand members and tongue members. These different members have unlike services to perform for the welfare of the whole body. The hand is not to say to the foot, "I have no need of thee," or vice versa.--*I Corinthians 12:14-31.*

If the body tries to walk on the *hands*, it is not the Divine order. The body should walk on the *feet*. So it is in a congregation. But if the congregation lays too much on the feet members, it is depriving the hand members of their use. The various members should be in the positions where they can render the most efficient service. In other words, the congregation should seek to know the service God has evidently prepared each individual to perform. They are to seek to use their best judgment, to place the right person in the right position.

We see congregations occasionally where they try to make *all* walk on the hands and not on the feet. That congregation loses in not putting every member into the place for which Divine Providence has especially qualified him. To do so is the responsibility of the congregation. However, if it tries to make the Body walk on the hands instead of the feet, it will learn in time, probably, to get the hands to exercise themselves in their own position, and likewise the feet in theirs; and each member will finally do the service for which he is fitted.

HUMILITY INDISPENSABLE TO GOD'S SERVICE

Not only is it to the disadvantage of the congregation for the members to be in the wrong positions, but it is also wrong for the members to try to do other services than those which they *should be* doing. It is not in our power to change ourselves from what we are by nature. Only Divine Power could prepare us for service in another part of the Body. Our proper attitude should be to really *serve* the Body of Christ, to *serve* the Lord. We should notice wherever there is a service to be rendered which we *can* do. "Do with thy might what thy hands find to do."

The difficulty with many in the Church is that they desire to do what somebody else is doing--something that they admire. They are not looking around to see what they *can always* do--do good unto all men, as they have opportunity, but especially unto those who are of the household of faith. They have not the proper spirit of discipleship. Therefore the injunction of our text should lead them to say to themselves, My highest ambition should be to *serve* the Lord *acceptably*, and let Him take care of the *place* where I may serve. Here is a little place; there is a little corner. I will try to do the thing which is needful in my position. If the Lord shall open the way, and show me something else which seems to be more important, I will take that. But I will do with my might what it is my duty to do--whether it is sweeping, or engaging a hall for a meeting. Whatever comes as an opportunity to me, that I will do.

This does not mean that we have no aspirations. The controlling impulse is to serve the Church. Here we have a laudable motive, a proper desire. But it seems that some are *ambitious*--seek to be *chief*. Our own ambition (and we believe it would also be the Spirit of the Lord) is not to *help* one who aspires to the chief place, into the position which he seeks. To assist him in such a course would do injury both to him and the cause. But if we find any one seeking to do with his might what his hands find to do, we may be sure that this will be approved of the Lord; and perhaps the Lord will later give him some more important work in recognition of his faithful service to Him.

SELF-SEEKING TO BE DEPRECATED

Each is to be content with what the Lord's Providence opens up to him. He is not to be self-seeking. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (*Luke 18:14*.) He that exalteth *himself* is not to be exalted by the *Church*; for he will not be exalted by the Lord. He that humbleth himself will be exalted, either by the vote of the congregation, or by the Lord's will.

As the matter is stated in our text, we think the Lord meant this: There will be some of you who necessarily will be recognized as chief. There are various kinds of service, and it is necessary to have a chief in connection with the services of each congregation. God has recognized this Himself. He made Jesus a Chief. He passed by Satan, who was self-seeking. He chose Jesus, and made the road very narrow to Him! But after Jesus had proved His humility, then the Father gave Him the high exaltation, gave Him the great reward promised.

The Father is seeking now those who will have the same spirit of *humility*, the same spirit of *service*, that the Lord Jesus manifested. We look at Him, and we see that, while the Father held out the condition of being *chief*, He also held out the condition of being *servant*. Jesus, we see, was the Servant of all. Therefore God exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name.

So it should be with each little congregation of the Church. It is the Lord's will that not every one who would be its chief servant should be recognized as the chief. But the Lord will recognize the one who will show himself humble-minded, as He has shown Himself to be, in doing *anything* for the brethren. Let such be your servant. Each should consider that the chief honor amongst you, amongst the Lord's brethren, is to be servant. And the one who is most faithful should be given the opportunity to serve. In that sense he would be your chief.

R2995 [sel]

NOTING DISPENSATIONAL CHANGES

ACTS 11:4-15

THE CHARGES AGAINST PETER

It is rather peculiar, that the charges made against Peter were not that he had recognized Cornelius as a Christian and baptized him and his household, but that he had gone into their house and had eaten bread with them--proceedings which were contrary to Jewish custom entirely--the recognition of the Gentiles as being on an equality with the Jews-- a matter which had been settled to the contrary with them, from time immemorial. Singularly, too, the Apostle Peter in his defense entirely ignored their charges and proceeded to acquit himself as though they had charged him in the way we would have expected --with receiving a Gentile into Christian brotherhood. Yet Peter's course was just the proper one, and, undoubtedly, he was guided thereto. There is a lesson in this for the Lord's people to the effect that it is always better to discuss fundamental principles and divine laws than to dispute over traditions of men and mere technical observances, customs, etc. When Peter got the fundamental features straight before the minds of all, the question of social customs was settled; whereas, if he had discussed the proprieties of the social custom, the larger question would still have been unsettled.

Peter's simple, humble, unvarnished explanation was a rehearsal of the facts in the case. He considered that the evidence which had convinced him that he was right, would similarly convince the others; and he was correct in this. He might on the contrary have "stood on his dignity" and have insisted that what he did was none of the business of the others-- that he was an apostle and the eldest of them, and specially guided of the Lord; and that the Lord had even declared in advance that he

should have and use the keys of the Kingdom; and that as he had used the first of these in announcing the divine favor on the day of Pentecost, so now he had used the other in opening the door of favor to the Gentiles. Such a course while it would have had a great deal of truth in it, would have been an unwise one to say the least; --the humbler, kinder, more brotherly course he did take speaks well to us of his heart condition, his humility, his love to the brethren, his desire to make matters so simple, so clear, so explicit, that none could have any occasion for stumbling over his action. Had he been arrogantly disposed, a great breach in the church might have resulted;--but no; the Lord was at the helm, and had Peter been out of proper condition of heart would not have used him, but some humbler brother for this service. There is a good lesson in this for us all--especially for such as are chosen leaders of the various little companies of the Lord's people: the lesson is, humility, brotherly kindness, love. Any appearance of haughtiness, anything dictatorial in manner or tone would be unbecoming in any of the Lord's people, but especially so in any seeking to serve him: leaders manifesting a haughty spirit should be considered, in that respect and degree, unsuited to the position they fill,--while those who manifest the humbler manner and spirit of Peter on this occasion, should be proportionately the more esteemed by all.

R5315 [sel]

A GOOD MAN'S SIN
NUMBERS 20:1-13

LESSONS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

If "the meekest man in all the earth," after long years of training and experience, made such a failure, even typically, the lesson to all spiritual leaders should be an impressive one. It says to us in inspired words, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The Lord declares (v. 12) that the sin of Moses and Aaron was one of unbelief, "because ye believed Me not--to sanctify Me in the eyes of Israel."

It *did* require faith in God for Moses to smite the rock. Apparently his lack of faith was in the people. Apparently he wished to produce a dramatic effect--to impress upon them a lasting lesson, "Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of the rock by a blow from this rod?" The effect may have been dramatic. The people may have stood in awe of Moses, but all the same, that was not the best way for dealing with the matter; for it was not God's way. Better would it have been for Moses to have hidden himself--humbled himself--and to have asked water from the rock in Jehovah's name.

Class leaders, Elders, ministers in the Church of Christ, will do well to remember that the blessings which God has arranged shall flow to His people from the smitten Jesus and will come for the asking; and that they are not authorized either to smite the "rock" or to pose dramatically before the people of God as necessary to the supply of the streams of grace and Truth.

On the other hand, the Lord's people, Spiritual Israel, thirsting for grace and Truth now due, are to feel a great deal of sympathy for those who occupy teaching positions. There never was a time surely when the honesty and the faithfulness of the Lord's servants were more severely tested than now. What all need is meekness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love--loyalty to God--faithfulness to their Covenant.

STORIES TWICE TOLD

Washing Away the Scars in the Sand Dr. J. F. Carson has a message for the penitent. God's mercy is like the tireless patience of the sea. The children dig deep wounds in the sand with their spades, leaving scars on the golden surface. Then quietly the old sea turns, and every trace of scar is obliterated, and the shining surface of the sand is smooth as ever. Day after day the scene is repeated, and the sea is never tired of putting things to rights....It is an emblem of the everlasting God who fainteth not, neither is weary.

-- John F. Cowan.
'5000 Best Modern Illustrations' -- page 459

Part-3

PRIDE A GREAT EVIL

DANGER IN SPIRITUAL PRIDE

PRIDE in any form and in anybody is a dangerous thing. In a worldly way the proverb is well attested, "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall"; and surely very, very few people have anything of which they might justly be proud! Some who hold their heads high with the pride of a haughty spirit, as though they were especially created out of some preferable "dust of the earth," have really nothing to boast of as to ancestry. A very few generations back are generally sufficient for any boaster.

The world is learning that it is not wise to boast of riches, lest thereby some one ask how were the riches accumulated and by whom, and whether they were honestly obtained. Pride of education is not appropriate, either; for education in general signifies the learning of what other people have found out or have written as history. And in our day those who would boast of great education have need of humility lest it be found that the very thing that they are boasting about has been disproven by later researches. Scientific books of the year 1900 will not pass muster today, nor their theories stand in the light of present knowledge. So if it were right to boast of knowledge, the boaster would need to be very careful to keep up to date.

Pride of one's beauty or physical perfection is scarcely to be excused; for the beauty of form and feature came by heredity, and the parent rather than the child might have some reason for pride. Pride as respects clothing, adornments is also foolish. The *maker* of the fabrics or the ornaments might have some reason for pride in the handiwork, but surely the *wearer* has not! He is merely appropriating to himself the skill and labor of others.

SPIRITUAL PRIDE WORST OF ALL

But our theme is spiritual pride! We would divide it into two classes: first, the spiritual pride of the merely nominal or professing Christian; and second, the spiritual pride affecting true Christians. The spiritual pride of the nominal church-goer is not all hypocrisy. He sees spiritual forms and ceremonies, hears spiritual songs and sermons, and in many instances is not aware but that he himself is a true Christian, as much so as any. Does he not go regularly to meeting? Is he not a regular contributor, not only to the expenses of the house of worship, but in general to the forwarding of the Lord's cause--charities, etc., as these are presented to him from time to time?

However they have lived during the week, however they have dealt with the butcher and the baker, most church-goers take a pleasurable pride in joining some of the showy groups moving toward church buildings. The spiritually proud usually prefer the showiest and most aristocratic and high-toned temples of worship. At the conclusion of the services they feel a self-satisfaction. Have they not worshiped God? Ought not all people to worship Him? How many others have not done so! They feel a spiritual pride or superiority when comparing themselves with non-attendants.

They went not for spiritual instruction; or even if any were given in the places visited, they were not themselves in condition to receive such--not being spirit-begotten. They had no real hunger for righteousness, for truth. They had merely satisfied a feeling of duty. They had in a sense done penance, and hoped that somehow, sometime it would inure to their advantage--perhaps saving them from some of the worst degrees of purgatorial sufferings-- perhaps even making them acceptable for Heaven. Why should not God feel grateful to them for having denied themselves and wasted a few of their precious hours to go worship Him?

Although they would not put it so, they feel in a measure that God would be very unjust if He would pass by such a matter and not reward it handsomely. They feel spiritually proud and self-satisfied, and so long as in that condition are not in a particle of danger of getting hold of the Truth. Nor need we suppose that the Great Adversary would especially give his attention to them, for they are very safely under his influence. Was he not the first to manifest pride and to say in his heart, "I

will ascend above the sons of God [I will take a higher position than others]; I will be as the Most High"? Spiritual pride was evidently Satan's great mistake, which led to his complete downfall.

Some who make no pretense of belief in God or in the Lord Jesus Christ or in the Bible have what might be termed a sort of spiritual pride. They pride themselves on living a moral life, on being able to conduct themselves honorably and decently in life--never getting drunk, never doing some of the seriously immoral and perverse things that many others do. In pride and boastfulness they will say: "I feel myself just as good as any church member, and I never go to church." And by this they mean, "I feel myself to be *better* than any church member." They are merely mixing modesty of statement with pride of thought in the proportion which they think will best influence the hearer.

Press the inquiry a little further--as to what good works they especially rejoice in--and they will tell how as "Odd Fellows," "Masons," etc., they sat up one night with a brother of the Order who was not very sick, who did not need very much attention and who had a trained nurse anyway to take care of him; but they felt as though they had been doing a noble work of charity. In general, their pride is that they have not violated the laws; that they have lived decent, respectable lives. Is there really anything in this that is an occasion for pride, for special self-congratulation? What man or woman should not keep the laws and should not be ashamed if he failed to keep the laws--especially when we would remember that those laws were made--not for good people, but for evil-doers?

SPIRITUAL PRIDE IN THE TRUE CHURCH

Now we come down to the most serious thing of all! The pride which is merely foolish or semi-hypocritical in the world and in the nominal Christians becomes a very serious matter indeed if it invades the heart and the life of the child of God. But why do we make such a difference? Why say that spiritual pride would be so very dangerous in one of the Lord's saints, whereas it would be little more than foolishness in the world? Ah! the difference is that these are God's special representatives in the world, who must become copies of God's dear Son if they would ever attain to the glory, honor and immortality to which they have been invited by the Lord.

When they gave themselves entirely to the Lord and were justified from sin through the imputation of the Redeemer's sacrifice, and were thus introduced into the family of God and begotten of the Holy Spirit, it meant a great change for these. Old things passed away; all things became new. These, and these alone, are on trial during this Gospel Age for eternal life or eternal death. And of all their temptations and beguilements, the sin of spiritual pride is probably one of the most dangerous of all. In proportion as it comes in, the Spirit of the Lord departs, and the spirituality of the individual ceases. This spiritual sickness, unless curbed, would surely lead on to the Second Death, for "the Lord resisteth the proud and showeth His favor to the humble."--*James 4:6*.

The Apostle Peter evidently had this besetting danger of spiritual pride in mind when he wrote to the Church: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (*1 Peter 5:6*.) "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted," said the Master.

ONE SYMPTOM OF THIS SOUL-SICKNESS

How may we know spiritual pride? some one may inquire. One of the most serious things in this connection is that those who have spiritual pride very rarely are aware of it. They sometimes have forms of godliness which not only deceive others, but deceive themselves and hinder them from seeing the spiritual pride which is working and which others may more readily see.

When you feel that your attendance at meetings, your reading of so many pages of SCRIPTURE STUDIES per day, your distribution of so many tracts, or your circulation or loaning of so many books, are matters to be boasted of--then take care! That disposition to boast is an indication that you would be in danger of catching spiritual pride if circumstances were favorable. These are all good and laudable things, all proper things; and you should feel a proper degree of self-

congratulation that you find yourself able and willing to turn from the daily newspaper or novel, the reading of chitchat, or the writing of chitchat, to do things so reasonable, so proper, so much in harmony with the Divine will. But any disposition to boast of the matter should lead you to a careful scrutiny of thought--of the motives lying behind these activities in the Lord's service.

We are not meaning to say that it would be improper to give a testimony in which all of these things might be brought forward as an encouragement to others or as a proof that we love the Lord and are anxious to serve Him. What we are cautioning against is a spirit, or disposition, to boast of anything that we might be or do as the Lord's children. We have nothing whereof to boast. If we gave all of our goods to feed the spiritually poor, all our time to circulating the Truth, and all of our energy to the honoring of the Lord's name, we should feel that, having done all, we had not really profited our Lord, but merely found an opportunity of showing Him a little of the devotion of our hearts in acknowledgment of the numberless blessings already received at His hand, and the still more wonderful favors which He has promised shall be ours, if faithful. Well did the poet write:

"I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or fond desire!"

STILL FURTHER SYMPTOMS

Another form of this disease of spiritual pride manifests itself in a hypercritical attitude of mind. When one attends a testimony meeting, or a Berean class, and hears no real good testimony but his own, hears no proper answer except his own to any of the questions, never sees an Elder in the chair who knows how to lead a meeting anyway--these should be considered dangerous symptoms of spiritual pride.

Not that all these things might not *possibly* occur, but they are surely not likely to occur continually. It would be perfectly proper for us to give such attention, and to be so well informed, that we would be able to see quickly any unscriptural proceeding or any instance of very poor judgment that would be a hindrance to the effectiveness of the services. It would be proper, too, if ever we saw that the best interests of the class were not being served--and if, after waiting patiently for a while, we found that they were not likely to be corrected--it would be entirely proper for us, in a meek and quiet spirit, to call attention to the fault, either in the Class or to an elder, or whatever would be the most effective and least demonstrative way. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory," but everything for the glory of God.

And right there we need to be careful, too, lest we get into the way of thinking that everything that harmonizes with our ideas is to the glory of God, and that whatever would not harmonize with our ideas could not be pleasing to Him. Well did the Apostle write: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools." (*Ephesians 5:15.*) Well do we see the meaning of this word "circumspectly"-- that it signifies with close scrutiny on every hand, especially as respects thoughts, motives, intentions.

BE NOT MANY OF YOU TEACHERS

Well did St. James write, "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that a man shall receive the severer trial." (*James 3:1.*) While, as we have pointed out, all of the Lord's people are specially susceptible along the line of spiritual pride, there seems to be a special danger surrounding all who become in any manner identified with the promulgation of His Truth.

It is a special privilege, indeed, to tell out the Message of God's grace to all who have a hearing ear. How thankful we are that it is not--as it was once supposed-- the exclusive privilege of the clergy, but that the Lord declares that all who are His consecrated people and who receive the begetting of the holy Spirit have, through it, the anointing to preach the Good Tidings to the meek and to bind up the broken-hearted! (*Isaiah 61:1.*) We are glad of this privilege, which includes our private conversations with neighbors and friends. But what a privilege to be God's ambassadors, and

in His name to tell of the coming Kingdom, of the great provision God has already made through the death of Jesus, of the grand outcome, and of how the kings and priests of that Kingdom are now being called out of the world, experiencing a change of nature in preparation for their future work!

Old as the Message is, it is so new and wonderful, if rightly presented, as to awaken astonishment in the honest-hearted who hear. They wonder, how did this ordinary man (or woman) ever come to understand and be able so beautifully to portray these wonderful things? Perhaps they give a hint of their surprise. Then comes a danger-moment for taking the disease of spiritual pride. Just a little swing of the mind; and you think that it *is* wonderful that even you should know about such things when the great mass of mankind have not the remotest conception of them, and that even some of the ablest and most talented ministers of the Word of God are ignorant respecting these things in the Bible.

If you are taking the disease of spiritual pride you will doubtless feel a straightening of your back. You are beginning to feel more important, and to look more dignified and to feel that, after all, you are somebody great. Your voice indicates this, too; and your hearer notices it. Then he begins to feel that it is not the Word of the Lord, but that, as you seem to admit, it is something that you made up--something that you are responsible for, and he thinks less of it on that account.

The proper attitude, as all will agree, is that the Lord's people should feel greatly *humbled* instead of greatly *exalted* and heady in respect to these opportunities for telling the Truth to others. We should feel our unworthiness. We should realize that the Plan is not ours; that we have merely heard of it ourselves; that it is really God's Plan; that we are honored as His servants to tell it out. But if we allow any impression to go out that it is by any wisdom on our part, or any skill, that the beauty is seen in the Message, then to that extent we are taking glory to ourselves which belongs to the Lord, and doing injury to ourselves proportionately by failing to demonstrate our worthiness to be used by the Lord in the present and in the future. The wonderful privilege of speaking as ambassadors for the Lord, to tell of His greatness and Plan should humble us with the thought that He has privileged *us*, whereas He has angels, who excel in strength and whom He might have used in communicating this most wonderful Message.

SPECIAL TEST UPON ELDERS AND DEACONS

But the dear brethren chosen by the Classes to be their Elders and Deacons have a still further test to their humility. Apparently no one could occupy such a position without great danger of infection from the disease called spiritual pride. Sometimes the Lord's people seem entirely to forget the caution which St. Paul gave, saying that a novice, a beginner, one young in the Truth, no matter how bright, no matter how educated, should not be chosen to the service of Elder or Deacon because, as the Apostle remarked, he would be especially susceptible to this foe of the children of God--spiritual pride.--1 Timothy 3:6.

But not merely are the novices in danger. Everyone appointed to serve the Lord's people is thereby put into the place of great temptation, which might mean a spiritual fall and ruin in the Second Death. Perhaps the Lord's people have not been sufficiently considerate of these things as respects those whom they elect to be their servants. Perhaps those accepting these positions of service under the votes of the brethren scarcely realize what danger they do run in accepting. If they realized, doubtless that realization would make them hesitate about accepting at all; and humility would certainly lead them not to attempt to serve unless they were most explicitly appointed to the service.

But what do we find? Alas! in some a tendency to seek the eldership or deaconship. In some, even a tendency to "wire-pull" and bargain that they might be elected; in some a tendency to feel offended if they were not chosen; in some a tendency to feel angry with anybody who would vote against them in such an election. Alas! alas! if the dear brethren realized what was gnawing in their minds and urging them on to these things-- oh, what a different course they would take! In all meekness and humility they should feel a timidity even about taking a position where there would be

such a responsibility. The admonition on this is that although all of the Church should, according to their knowledge of the Truth, be qualified to be teachers, nevertheless the safer place is not to be a teacher, knowing that such shall have the severer trial. Only a sense of responsibility to the Lord and to the brethren should make one willing to serve in such capacity, much as all ought to love to be the Lord's representatives in the Church.

Everything in the nature of pride, fond desire to be Elders or to be great, is not only dangerous to the person himself, but dangerous to the entire Class with which he is associated. The spirit is catching, just as is every disease. Strife, vain-glory, ambition, all contrary to the spirit of the Lord, soon appear. Next come anger, malice, envy, hatred, evil-speaking, evil-surmising. These, St. Paul tells us, are "works of the flesh and of the Devil." All this harm, all this spirit of the Adversary, is apt to be introduced into the class either by one or more of its Elders or Leaders, or by one or more who desire to be Elders or Leaders.

We are sorry that this is true, yet we know of a number of Classes containing many dear children of God, many of whom are otherwise exemplary, but who have gotten into this condition. Instead of the spirit of the *Lord* being fully in control, the *evil*spirit, or disposition, is frequently manifest in various ways in the meetings. The class fails to make progress, either numerically or spiritually. These are the bitter fruits of this noxious thing known as spiritual pride.

If we had but the power of language to hold it up before the readers of THE WATCH TOWER, that they might see it in its true shape and terrible color, the effect would surely be to cause an alarm in Zion! Fain would we ring the alarm bell from the "Watch Tower," for be it noted that these dear ones who are becoming thus involved are often grand characters, truly spirit-begotten children of God. Of some of them we know that in the past they ran the race splendidly. How sorry we feel to see signs that their characters are being transformed in a wrong direction! Let us heed Him who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."--Matthew 7:16.

GUARDING AGAINST SPIRITUAL PRIDE

As already indicated, one of the serious things connected with this malady of spiritual pride is that those who have it are *rarely aware of it*. Another difficulty is that it is almost impossible to correct them and to cause them to know that they have the disease. If spoken to on the subject they seem to think at once that their benefactor is their enemy; that he is jealous of them; that he would like to get their position, etc. Hence the disease is nearly *incurable*, except as either the Class may assist or the Lord's providence may interpose.

If the Class notices the growth of such a disposition, it should quickly, and with love and good intention, merely fail to elect for any service to the Class the individual who seems to be getting top-heavy--spiritually proud. If this were resented, it should be considered all the more a necessity to leave the self-conscious one to cool off quietly and get his bearing--for his own good and that of the Class. Where the Class fails to help in this matter, apparently nothing remains except for the Lord to chasten the individual for his good, either with business reverses or losses or with physical disease, or in whatever way may seem best to Him. And we have confidence that the Lord will do this for everyone who is truly His child and who gets into such a condition as to need such correction in righteousness. Is it not written, "The Lord will judge [punish] His people"?--Deuteronomy 32:36.

A BIBLE ILLUSTRATION OF THIS SIN

The Bible gives many illustrations of this sin, but we choose the most conspicuous one. There was a holy man of old, beloved of the Lord, noble, self-sacrificing, a Prophet of the Lord. He served the Lord and His people faithfully--wonderfully--for forty years; but finally he was guilty of this sin of self-assurance--spiritual pride. And, strangest of all, this man is noted to us in the Bible as having been at the beginning of his career the "meekest man in all the earth."--Numbers 12:3.

Yes; it was the glorious Moses, who at the beginning of his experience as a servant of the Lord was so very meek, so very humble, but who, at the conclusion of his career, was hindered from entering the promised land as a punishment for spiritual pride or self-assurance, where he should have given the Lord the glory. We recall the circumstances: Moses, as the Lord's special servant, had led Israel out of Egypt across the Red Sea into the wilderness, en route for Canaan. He performed, by the Lord's direction, several miracles on the journey. One of them was the smiting of the rock when the people were famished for water. God directed him to smite the rock; and from that rock flowed an abundant stream of water for the refreshment of the people.

According to the Bible, that rock was a picture of Christ--the "Rock of Ages." (*1 Corinthians 10:4*.) It was by the Lord's arrangement that this "Rock of Ages" was smitten, that the water of life might flow from Jesus for all of Adam's race who would become Israelites indeed and come out of Egypt--out of the world--out of sin-- out of the kingdom of the Adversary into obedience and fellowship with the Lord.

Forty years after this time of the smiting of the rock, when Israel had been journeying to and fro, waiting for the time to come that they might be permitted to enter Canaan, their wandering led again into this district, so barren and devoid of water. The people cried to Moses and Moses cried to the Lord on their behalf as to what should be done. The Lord's answer was that Moses should *speak* to the rock which previously he had smitten, and that water would come forth. But during these forty years in which Moses had dealt with the Israelites as a father with his children, he had naturally gained a great deal of self-assurance. He could hardly pass through such experiences and still be the meekest man in all the earth.

So now, neglecting the command of the Lord, Moses went to the rock and smote it a second time with his rod, shouting to the people: "Ye rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" (*Numbers 20:1-12*.) Alas, poor Moses! He was taking the glory to himself instead of ascribing it all to the Lord. Soon Moses realized the great mistake he had made. It might be said to have been his only mistake, and yet the Lord on this account denied him the privilege of going into the land of Canaan, granting him instead merely the opportunity of seeing it from across the River Jordan, and burying him there.

Shall we not from this illustration esteem that spiritual pride and self-assurance are very displeasing in the sight of the Lord? Could we draw any other conclusion from this great lesson written for our admonition?

A WORD OF CONSOLATION

For the comfort of those who may feel that they have done much worse than Moses, or been much more self-assertive, been much less careful to honor the Lord, have manifested much more spiritual pride--for their comfort let us notice that the punishment here was severe because it was part of a type. As the first smiting of the rock typified the crucifixion of our Lord, so the second smiting of the rock typified the crucifying of the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame; as described by St. Paul in *Hebrews 6:6*. As the smiting of the rock represented this public, open repudiation of Jesus and His teaching and His cause, so the preventing of Moses from crossing Jordan into Canaan typified the Second Death. We are not to think that Moses will never come into Canaan; nor that he has died the Second Death, but merely that this type was shown in his experiences.

Neither are we to think that brethren who have manifested spiritual pride and done things in their own name, rather than in the name of the Lord and the name of the Class, have thereby committed the sin unto death. We are, however, to realize that a terrible danger goes with spiritual pride, and that, persisted in, it would surely result in Second Death. Realizing this, how anxious, how zealous we should be, not only in the eradication of every symptom of it we might find in ourselves, but also in being careful lest we should take the contagion or in any manner come under its influence or have any of its symptoms!

SPIRITUAL PRIDE--PREVENTION AND CURE

We have already intimated the difficulty in connection with the treatment of this disease when once it gets hold. The chief feature of the difficulty seems to be that the disease has a *destroying* effect upon the *conscience*. The mind becomes more or less obtuse to the simple principles of the Golden Rule--not to mention the still higher law of our Lord's New Commandment to the brethren. The ignoring of the Golden Rule is manifested every time an attempt is made to coerce the Class, either in the election of its servants or in the ordering of its meetings.

The regulations of the Lord's Word are known; the residing of the authority in the Class is recognized, and when an Elder attempts to twist or turn or alter this he is not doing to the others as he would be done by. He has a right, as *one of the Class*, to his own opinion of the Lord's will on any matter. He has the right to express his judgment. But he has no right to hinder others from the expression of their judgment; and every such interference is a violation of the Golden Rule as well as a violation of the Law of Love and a violation of the First Commandment--to honor God; for it is setting aside the Divine arrangement provided for such matters.

But where the Elder progresses along such lines, in defiance of the Golden Rule principle, to the ruling of the Class, the coercing or cajoling of them to the doing his way, his will, the effect is the perversion of his own mind. His conscience becomes obtuse. Whoever *violates* his conscience repeatedly, by ignoring the principles of righting a wrong which he clearly sees, that person is *undermining* his conscience.

Conscience is the scale by which we weigh the various things presented to our judgment to ascertain the right or the wrong, the justice or the injustice, the truth or the falsity of a thing. This scale may be a very coarse one or a very fine one. It may be capable of very fine discriminations; or it may see things only in a rude, crude way. The Christian, especially if he has been long in the School of Christ, should have a very sensitive conscience; and from the Word of God he should be able to draw the weights by which he would balance all the questions of the affairs of life, and determine with almost absolute accuracy their right or their wrong--to what extent they would be pleasing or displeasing to the Lord. The *impairment of that scale* is the great danger in every sin, and it seems to us especially so in respect to the sin of spiritual pride. Nothing much can be done until the scale be rectified.

How important all of the Lord's people should feel it to be to keep their consciences thoroughly just; to be unwilling to take advantage of a brother, or of anybody, either in business or in an argument or in a Church election! The thought of the slightest infraction of justice on his own part should ring the loudest bells of alarm in the heart and the head of every true child of God: "Could it be that I who have enlisted in this cause of justice should be found sympathetic with injustice? Could it be that I could close my eyes to anything in my own conduct in the nature of injustice? Can it be that I am vitiating my own conscience and shall be liable to all the terrible results?"

To rectify a wrong course would therefore mean the reestablishment of the principles of justice in the hearts and the minds with a carefulness proportionate to the results involved--life or death everlasting. As justice shall begin to be reestablished in our minds, it will begin to regulate our words and acts. Gradually, then, the wrong-doer would begin to see how grossly he had violated the principle, how spiritual pride had almost destroyed his future prospects in the Kingdom. To such an one would surely come hearty repentance and thorough resolutions for the future.

THE GREAT NECESSITY FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

But how shall we safeguard ourselves against this spiritual pride, knowing as we do its insidious character and evil influence? How may we know that we are keeping ourselves in the love of God and not straying away toward spiritual pride?

Our advice is the same that we have already given in THE WATCH TOWER; viz.--that the Lord's people not only go to Him at the opening of each day and ask for Divine wisdom and

supervision, and then through the day seek to live in accordance with that prayer, but additionally at the close of the day we have recommended a special self-inspection as respects the things done, the things neglected that should have been done, and the things done that should not have been done, in accordance with our vows of consecration to the Lord. If these reckonings and balancings every night with the Lord continue, and if they are done honestly, by a conscience that is not perverted, but that balances truly, we may surely expect that such, in harmony with the Lord's Word, will be keeping themselves in the love of God. They will be growing in grace, growing in knowledge, growing in love; and "the Wicked One will not touch them."

But let us not forget that while we are to exercise great leniency in viewing the words and deeds of others, ascribing only good intentions where they are professed, we are to scrutinize with all of our might our own hearts, our own intentions. We are to inquire why we did this thing or left undone the other thing; why we did this thing this way; why we spoke in such a tone, etc. Such a careful examination, weighing of thoughts, words and deeds, would be very unsatisfactory to a person who was not wishing to be in accord with the Lord. But those who have made a covenant with the Lord and are faithful to that covenant will find such a course to be a great blessing, comforting their hearts at the time, strengthening them for the future, and in connection with the Lord's providences it will be fitting and preparing them for places in the Heavenly Kingdom.

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NOT HOLDING THE HEAD *COLOSSIANS 2:18*

THE APOSTLE warns us all against a wrong attitude which at all times has more or less threatened the body of Christ, in its larger gatherings as well as in its little handfuls;--he warns us against the danger of looking too much to ourselves or to other men in the Church and not enough toward the Lord, who is indeed "the Head of the Church, which is his body." Some members he represents as taking a head position, forgetful of the fact that "one is the Head of the Church, even Christ," and inclined in consequence of this forgetfulness to think too highly of themselves, to imagine that the whole weight and importance of the Lord's cause devolves upon them, and to assume too much leadership.

The Apostle warns other less prominent members of the Church against a recognition and support of such a wrong position, assuring them that their condescension is extreme, prejudicial to themselves and to the interests they would serve; that the angels, that is the messengers, the representatives of the Church (*Rev. 1:20; 2:1*) are not to be worshipped, though they are to be highly esteemed in proportion to their faithfulness, good works and humility. He warns other members that such a humiliation as would ignore themselves entirely and cast all the weight and responsibility and influence upon these angels or elders would be improper, would indicate an unfaithfulness to Christ and a failure to rightly appreciate his arrangements.

DANGERS IN OPPOSITE EXTREMES

Thus, reproofing two classes because of taking opposite extremes, the Apostle proceeds to explain that the difficulty with both parties is a failure to hold the Head in proper esteem--Christ, the only true Head of the Church. Whether by exalting ourselves, usurping our Lord's place in the Church, and ignoring his words and arrangements and being puffed up as his servants, or whether on the other hand quietly submitting to such things and doing reverence to those who usurp the Lord's place in his body, in either case the difficulty is the same--a failure to rightly recognize the true Head.

If we accept the fact that Christ is the Head of the Church, let us rest every argument on that basis; let us not feel for a moment that everything will go to pieces unless we steady the ark--that we are main spokes in the divine program in any little quarter of Zion. (1 Chron. 13:10.) All such self-conceited ideas are traitorous as respects the Captain of our Salvation, for he has told us--and we believe his word--"Without me ye can do nothing." Every member of the body of Christ, whom the Lord has in any sense of the word set in the Church to serve his cause, should realize that he is not at all essential to the development of the divine plan, that it is favor pure and simple that he has been granted a share in connection with it, that his blessings day by day more than compensate any little service and sacrifice he may be able to render. So far from feeling heady he should feel humbled by the thought that he is permitted to have any part in the great plan of God as a servant amongst his brethren, and he should realize distinctly that, so surely as the Lord is the Head of his Church, any who cease to occupy positions of trust in a humble manner will be debased, will lose the privileges and opportunities, perhaps with injury to themselves and to others.

Those humble brothers and sisters who quietly permit a brother to exalt himself amongst them and to speak of the gathering, large or small, as "my Church," "my followers," etc., are not only doing the brother an injury and encouraging him in a wrong course, but they are disloyal to the real Head of the Church. He who submits to such conditions and language demonstrates that he does not properly appreciate "the liberty wherewith Christ makes free"--demonstrates either that he is but a "babe in Christ" or that he has gone to sleep as respects a proper watchfulness for the honor of the Church and of the Head of the Church. It matters not that such things can be explained away as not having meant anything serious. The fact is that such language and claims indicate that something serious has already taken place, for no truly humble Elder of the Church of Christ, loyal to the Head, would think of speaking of himself as instead of the Head of the Church, nor think of speaking of the Lord's people as his Church.

Such public offenses should be publicly apologized for, otherwise such leaders should be relegated to the back seats. No matter if they had all the oratory imaginable, no matter if none of the others had any talent for public service. The poorest and weakest and most insignificant member of the body is, in the Lord's estimation, better qualified to teach than is one who vaunteth and puffeth up himself and affects to take in the Church the position of the Head. Mark the Apostle's words, "Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God."--Col. 2:19.

SELF FIRST, GOD SECOND

In 2 Timothy 2:3 the Apostle assures us that, In the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents [and higher authority in general], unthankful, unholy...traducers, heady, high-minded...having a form of godliness, but ignoring the power thereof.

This picture certainly fits well to our day throughout nominal Christendom, and it is not strange therefore that something of the same general spirit at times seeks to invade the camp of the saints--the little companies of the consecrated who are striving to be overcomers of the world and its spirit. The fact that the Apostle writes thus forcefully on this question does not prove any lack of sympathy on his part, and assuredly our reference to his words indicate no lack of sympathy on our part. But the trouble is a grievous one and especially injurious to the brethren who may yield to such headiness: nothing is surer to sap spiritual vitality and to lead us into darkness, both doctrinal and spiritual.

On the contrary the Apostle James warns us against this danger which besets the more talented of the Lord's people. He writes, Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that a man shall receive the stronger testings. (Jas. 3:1.) It is because of our love for the brethren, because of our

high esteem for them, and because we appreciate their services and desire that they may be continued in the service of the Lord, not only now but also in the everlasting future, that we feel it necessary to press this point, not personally, not individually, but generally.

We urge upon all whom the Lord hath set in the body, either in a humble position or in a conspicuous place, that the Apostle's words be remembered--that as our Lord humbled himself and was subsequently exalted, it demonstrates a principle at work in the Father's program under which all of his Royal Priesthood must humble themselves if they would in due time be exalted; also the Apostle's concluding argument is, "Humble yourselves, therefore, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Now is not the proper time for exaltation; to elevate ourselves or others under present conditions is to incur the greater danger of a fall. Hence all who are earnest and of humble heart should both watch and pray lest they enter into temptation along this line, which from the very beginning of the Gospel age has been the most serious stumbling block in the pathway of this class. We remember that it was amongst the apostles themselves that the argument took place as to which would be greatest in the Kingdom. Let us also remember our Lord's words of reproof to them, "Except ye humble yourselves and become as little children ye can in no wise enter into the Kingdom."

ONLY THE HUMBLE ARE SAFE

Thus our Lord marks humility as one of the prime essentials of a place in the Kingdom. And we can see the importance, the reason for this. To exalt to the glory, honor and immortality of the Kingdom and divine nature one who had not thoroughly demonstrated his humility of spirit would be to place him in a position where he might become another Satan, another adversary, who in time under one delusion or another might wish to divide the divine honors even beyond the munificence of our heavenly Father's provision for all those who are truly his consecrated ones.

It will not be very long, dear brethren--let us have patience. Let us have faith, too, not be doubters. Much of the endeavor to grasp and wield authority in the Church is at first undertaken with the best of intentions, with the desire to do and be in the highest interests of the Church. In such cases faith is not strong enough to realize how unnecessary we are to the divine plan and how able the Lord is to overrule every incident and circumstance according to the divine will. More faith in the Lord's power to regulate the affairs of the Church will counteract largely the efforts of some of his people to run the Church's interests along lines of their own wisdom and ability. Let us remember that he is able, he is willing, to work all things according to the counsel of his own will. Let us remember that our highest place is lying low, that the greatest mastery is self-mastery, and that whatever success we might have in usurping the place and authority of our Lord and his Word would undoubtedly react unfavorably to us in the end. Hence in self-preservation as well as in the interest of the Church and in honor of the Lord, we need to keep self under. Let us remember the words of the poet and apply them daily:

"O! to be nothing, nothing,
Painful the humbling may be;
Yet low in the dust I'd lay me
That the world my Savior might see.
Rather be nothing, nothing--
To him let their voices be raised;
He is the fountain of blessing,
Yes, worthy is he to be praised."

Let us keep ever in memory the Apostle's example and words: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." 2 Cor. 4:5.

GREATER IS HE THAT IS ON OUR PART

DANIEL 6:10-23

Flattery and vanity have been the tools of the Adversary for the injury of the Lord's people and cause many a time, and all who recognize this fact should be specially on guard accordingly. True, none of the Lord's consecrated ones are likely to be placed on a pinnacle of fame or of power as was Darius, nor are they likely to be offered literal worship; yet there are little worlds, little empires, so to speak, little circles of acquaintance, in which the same principles may more or less operate.

In every little group of the Lord's people there may be one or more who, because of talents or other providential circumstances, may properly have a prominent place in the love and esteem of the company, and the Word of the Lord indicates that this may not only be reasonable but just. If they are faithful stewards they should be loved and honored for their works' sake. But it should be remembered that they are still brethren, and that in no sense should they be given the honor or reverence which belongs to the Lord only. No confederation of Church or State can interfere with this principle, that God should be recognized as in every way the Chief, the one alone worthy of worship. The brothers and sisters of the Church, while esteeming faithful leaders very highly, should see to it that they do not flatter or puff up or in any other manner excite the vanity and thus lead to the undoing of those whom they may properly appreciate as servants of the Lord and of his flock. Likewise every leader in any capacity in the families of God should be on guard against the insidious influences of pride and fond desire and ambition, and against accepting to himself the credit which is due to God for the Truth and the knowledge of it and for some ability in presenting it to others. Humility is undoubtedly one of the most important of our lessons--those who in any degree neglect it will surely find trouble as a result.

Another thought connected with this is the propriety and necessity for prayer. We have been surprised occasionally to hear of some professed follower of Christ urging the impropriety of prayer--that all of life should be a prayer, and that there should be no formal kneeling before the Lord in worship and thanksgiving. Such a proposition is astounding to us--the logic of it is incomprehensible. True, indeed, we are to pray without ceasing. Our entire lives are to be so devoted to the Lord and to his cause, and our minds are to be so filled with appreciation of his goodness, and our faith in him is to be so constant and so bright, that we will always have in mind his will in every matter, and thus be in the praying attitude of heart continually; but we hold that no Christian can maintain this heart attitude without going to the Lord in a more particular and formal manner, and preferably upon the knees, and if possible sometimes at least in solitude--"Enter into thy closet and pray to thy Father who is in secret."

Nothing in this, however, would interfere with the thought of family prayers, nor with the still further thought of prayers in the Church, which is the Lord's family circle. Our Lord gave his sanction to this, not only by going aside for private prayer but also at times by praying with and for the disciples. For instance, the prayer recorded in *John 17* and the words of the apostles commend praying in the Church, and even call attention to the propriety of praying in such a tone and voice as could be understood by the others present. Those who contend to the contrary, the Apostle intimates, are doing so about matters which they do not understand. However capable such may be they should be given no place of prominence in the gatherings of the Lord's people. First, let them learn before calling upon them to be leaders in the flock. The same principles apply to those who contend against the observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They should be kindly treated, for even our enemies should be kindly treated, but none should be selected as servants in the Lord's flock who have not a respect for and a knowledge of the faith once delivered to the saints, and a respect for all the institutions established by the Lord and his apostles.

TO PURIFY THE SONS OF LEVI

*"Who shall abide the day of his coming? Who shall stand when he inspects?
For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver:
and he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, and they shall offer unto the
Lord an offering in righteousness."--Mal. 3:2,3.*

BLESSINGS have come to us through an appreciation of the teaching of the Scripture respecting the great day of trouble coming upon the whole world of mankind--especially upon Christendom. Truly the Scriptures teach a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation, because of which even now, as our Lord prophesied, "Men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things coming upon the earth." We do well that we rejoice that this day of trouble coming upon the world as a thief and a snare has not so come upon us, but that we already by faith see many of its details and the glorious outcome, the establishment of the Kingdom of God under the whole heavens. We fear, however, that this great trouble upon the world, which in some sense we hope to be "accounted worthy to escape," has so filled the mental horizon of some of the Lord's people that it has hidden from their attention another kind of trial which is especially for the Church, and which must reach us and test us and prove us before the world's day of trouble is ushered in. It is this day of trial upon the Church, this special testing of the elect, that is referred to in our text.

PRIESTS AND LEVITES

The house of Levi, the priestly tribe, typified the household of faith of this Gospel age. As the priests constituted the highest order or class amongst the Levites, so the Royal Priesthood, the Lord's consecrated, the saints of this Gospel age, constitute the highest class amongst the spiritual Levites, the household of faith. When, therefore, the Lord through the Prophet declares the testing and purging of the house of Levi it includes all of the "Household of Faith," the "Little Flock" and the "Great Company." The end of this age is the time for the Lord's inspection of the entire household of faith, and properly enough the inspection begins at the top of the house, begins with the saints, but will extend to every consecrated one. The two classes subjected to the fiery trials of the Refiner are represented by the gold and silver. The gold represents those whose loyalty to the Lord will specially demonstrate itself in their love and zeal to lay down their lives for him, for the truth, for the brethren. These are the gold class, whose portion as the Bride class shall be joint-heirship with the great King of kings and Lord of lords in his universal empire for the blessing of all the families of the earth. The other class, represented in our text as the silver, will be the class less precious in his sight, the great company of Revelation 7, also spoken of in Psalms 45 as "the virgins, her companions, that follow" the Bride into the presence of the King of glory.

If the words, "Who shall stand when he inspects?" bring to our hearts an anxious throb, relief comes to us again with the thought that although the inspection will be most critical, most searching--although the trying in the fire will separate the dross completely and purify both the gold and the silver--nevertheless he who thus inspects, who thus tries, who thus purifies, who thus refines, is our Lord and Master, who bought us with his precious blood, who has assured us of his love and sympathy, and has promised with the Apostle that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also provide a way of escape; and he has assured us that all things are working together for our good, because we love God and have been called according to his purpose.--1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:28.

TRIALS FROM UNEXPECTED QUARTERS

If we knew in advance just how each trial of faith and love and devotion to principle and loyalty to the Lord and to the brethren would come we might be prepared to meet it, and correspondingly it would be less severe, and our humility, patience and love be correspondingly less tested. But the Lord wishes to test us along these very lines, and hence our trials usually come from unexpected quarters. This makes the trial more severe and proves the better the real sentiments of our hearts. The Lord desires to purge out of us everything in the nature of dross--self-will, personal ambition, pride: he wishes to cultivate in us loyalty to himself and the principles of righteousness, represented in his character, and exhorts us through his Word.

Looking out at Christendom in general we hear the Prophet's declaration that "a thousand shall fall at thy side"--at the side of the body of Christ, the Church. And we see that falling in progress, falling from faith in Christ as the Redeemer, falling into Evolution, Higher Criticism, Christian Science, etc. But now we are looking closer at home to the members of the body, to see which of these will be able to stand the tests of our day--"Who shall be able to stand?" (*Rev. 6:17*) inquires the Apostle. "Who shall stand when he inspects?" is the inquiry of the Prophet in our text. The intimation evidently is that the inspection will be so crucial as to test all of the saints.

Because the WATCH TOWER, by the Lord's gracious arrangement, has such an outlook over the harvest field, such contact with all the little flock of the Lord's people through the mail, through the pilgrims, through the colporteurs, we perhaps better than others can discern that the great Refiner's fires are already burning and that the gold and silver are being tried. And O, what sorrow it gives us at times to behold some not standing well the testing of this hour. We love all of the Lord's dear ones who are now in the furnace of trial; we are sure that the Lord himself, the Refiner, loves them still more. If these have pain and sorrow, as we discern tendencies of weakness, disloyalty to the cause; ambition for name and fame or position, desire to be greatest, tendencies to lord it over God's heritage --if we are pained by these things, grieved, disappointed in some, shall we suppose that the great Refiner is indifferent? Nay, verily! It is written of him that having loved his own, he loved them to the end; and we see from the narrative that he was very patient and slow to cut off the self-seeking, ambitious, truth-selling and Lord-selling Judas. And the more we attain to the Master's character and likeness the more sympathy we will have with all who are out of the way, and who, unless recovered, will be surely cut off from membership in the body, as our Lord indicates--even though, as the Apostle declares, they may be saved so as by fire, as members of the "great company."--*1 Cor. 3:15*.

REBUKE WITH LONG-SUFFERING AND PATIENCE

It is impossible for us to write to all who seem to be in danger, for two reasons: (1) Time would not suffice; there are other duties of the hour; (2) If they will not hearken to the Word of the Lord, if they will not hear Jesus and the apostles and Moses and the prophets we need not expect that they would hearken to us. Hence the most proper course for us seems to be to occasionally give such words of warning as these foregoing, that although they may have a savor of death unto death to some yet we hope that they may have a savor of life unto life to others.

Strange as it may appear--yet in full accord with all the records of the past--these fiery trials, these siftings, seem to find in many cases the most dross amongst the leaders of the flock. Perhaps it is merely because they are more conspicuous, perhaps just as many who are not in so great prominence will really fall, be consumed, "suffer loss," and be "saved so as by fire." The Lord alone is able to read the heart and to discern the thoughts and intents, and it is his will that now every member of the household of Levi, the household of faith, should be purged, purified, refined; and the fiery trials of our day are his own arrangements, his own fannings, that he may accomplish the work in harmony with the divine arrangement.

DAWN, Vol. VI. we believe, like the other volumes of the series, came out in its due season, and no doubt the Lord is using it to some extent as the earthly bellows wherewith to kindle the refining fires of this time. In that volume as in the others we endeavored to set forth not our own thoughts but the teachings of the Word, and this in some instances seemed to arouse a spirit of anger and resentment in the hearts of some of the leaders where there should be only love out of pure hearts and appreciation of the glorious liberties of the Church. We did nothing more than our duty in calling the attention of the brethren to the fact that the leaders are not the lords of the flock, and that any leader who assumes a lordly position endangers his own standing in Christ as well as hinders the progress of the flock in the liberty wherewith Christ made us free. And any of the Lord's flock who co-operate with such ambitious leaders are doing them injury as well as rendering an unauthorized subserviency injurious to themselves and the others associated with them in the study of the Word.

TO ERR IS HUMAN, TO FORGIVE IS DIVINE

It is written, "To err is human," and we know that though begotten of the Spirit we all have the treasure of the new nature in earthen vessels, therefore are liable to err. Realizing this we should not deal harshly, unkindly, toward leaders who are inclined to usurp to themselves leadership in the Church of God without appointment by the Church; or inclined to override the right of others after they have been regularly chosen. Nevertheless, kindly, gently, firmly, the congregation should hold control of all of its affairs, and see that the leaders recognize that the voice of the congregation is the voice of the consecrated. This will be to the advantage of all: it will assist the leader in keeping humble, in remembering that he is merely a member of the Church, which is the body of Christ, and that in the Lord's providence he serves the Church because they desire him to do so and consider such to be the will of the Lord. This will help to keep the leader from being puffed up, haughty, from speaking arrogantly of the congregation as "my people," "my Church," "my class," "my work." It will help him to recognize that it is the "Lord's people," the "Lord's Church," the "Lord's class," the "Lord's work," and that it is a favor, an honor, to be its servant and not at all within his province to be its ruler, its "boss."

This course benefits the congregation also, teaching them their responsibility to the Lord and to his cause to be in proportion as they uphold and give approval to the one who as leader or servant of the congregation is their representative. Whatever the leader does that is wrong is the fault of the majority of that congregation, and the realization of their responsibility means the strengthening of their characters, the broadening of their minds and in general their preparation for the Lord's service here and hereafter. It should even grate upon our ears to hear an elder in a discourse address the congregation in the second person saying, for instance, "You ought not to do this." It should be considered by all elders, all recognized teachers in the Church, the leaders in any sense, that they do not speak of the congregation as of a different class from themselves, as in the nominal Church there is the usual style of recognizing the clergy as one class, the laity as another. On the contrary the better form, the humbler form, would be for the leader to address the congregation as including himself in the exhortation, as for instance to say, "We should not do" thus and so.

LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW

If the spirit of love were largely developed in all of our hearts it would require no discussion of this subject from either standpoint, but we are only partially developed in the fruits of the Spirit: hence our difficulty, and hence also the great importance of helping one another, so that our relationship together as fellow-members of the one body may be as helpful as possible to all. And when any feeling of criticism is aroused in our hearts in respect to the course of a leader, it would be the proper, loving course to say to ourselves--Well, perhaps if I were just in the leader's place I might do no better than he does in the matter of keeping my body under--in the matter of walking humbly

with the Lord and with the brethren--in the matter of exemplifying the perfection of love, which seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, is not puffed up, thinketh no evil.--*1 Cor. 13:5*.

When we realize that ambition was the cause of Satan's fall, that it was the cause of mother Eve's disobedience, that it has been the cause of the stumbling of many of the noblest ones of God's people in the past, the lesson should not be lost upon us, whatever our station. It should give us sympathy for the leaders and the greater trials and temptations to which they are exposed, and to the leaders it should give greater alertness, care, watchfulness, lest they should be in any measure overcome by this fault, which has harmed so many in the past and which evidently is so grievous a one in the sight of the Lord, for the Lord resisteth the proud but grants his favors to the humble.--*Jas. 4:6*.

Another point, we must never forget that as the will of the leader should not be taken as the mind of the congregation unless it has so expressed itself, so likewise we should not for a moment suppose that the will or judgment of any other member should be taken as the judgment of the entire congregation. If then any brother conscientiously esteems that the leader of a meeting is not following the wisest or best Scriptural course, he may indeed go to the leader privately, kindly, lovingly, and give him his opinion, but it does not follow that the leader must follow this opinion. He might say, "This is the opinion of one, and my own is the opinion of another no less worthy of credit," and he might properly enough hold to his own opinion or modify it slightly. It is the voice of the congregation as a whole that should be sought on any subject, and which should decide every subject in the Church according to the understanding of the consecrated ones respecting the divine will as heard from the Word of God.

A DANGER FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Neither should any one too hastily conclude that his view of matters is sounder or better than that of the leader. On the contrary, the fact that the leader has been chosen by the congregation as the one best fitted of its number to look after its interests should have weight, and the brother or sister who thinks he or she has reason for difference of judgment respecting certain matters should hesitate a little, reconsider the matter, weigh it carefully, try to see it from the standpoint of the leader, if he or she can so find it in the Scriptures. If after all he or she feels certain, it is not his or her duty nor his or her privilege to harass the whole company by trying to impress his or her views suddenly, hastily, vehemently. His or her moderation should be manifested, as the Apostle says, "Let your moderation be known to all men." (*Phil. 4:5*.) He or she should approve what could be approved of the leader, and in objecting to certain features of his course it should be done in all kindness, moderation and brotherly love, and surely with meekness.

The public acts of a public servant are subject to the examination and criticism of the public, and likewise the open teachings and open conduct of the leaders of the Church are open to criticism by their brethren, but the spirit of love and sympathy should always prevail, and nothing should be done through strife or vain glory, and any one criticizing an elder with the evident view of supplanting him should be viewed the more critically himself, and all should recognize that the selfish, self-seeking spirit is a dangerous one, inimical both to the interests of the individual and the interests of the congregation. The brother who is in the right condition of heart to be a leader amongst the Lord's humble followers should manifest humility in word and manner-- in everything. Others need not be frowned upon nor openly rebuked, but they should not be encouraged-- they should not be put into places of influence in the Church lest it injure them and others who would come under their influence.

LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK

Do not be too hasty in acting in connection with the Church's interests. Be sure first that your own motives are good, pure, loving toward the one you criticize; be sure that you have no sympathy

with evil speaking; be sure that you are seeking merely the liberties of the Church which the Lord proposed--that you are seeking merely the welfare of the Church in respect to the times, places and character of meetings and leaders; and be sure that you are as anxious that others should have liberty to express their sentiments as you are solicitous that your own liberties of expression be not overridden or ignored.

It is rarely advantageous to have one leader or elder only in a congregation for a number of years in succession, unless it be very small or otherwise unavoidable. Some who begin humbly enough with a desire to be servants of the Church and with feelings and expressions of their own unworthiness of the privilege and incompetency for the service, if continued in the position year after year come thereby into sore trial and testing, and are in danger by and by of coming to feel that they own the position, and that the selection of any one else for the service would be an insult. This of course is entirely wrong, yet we have an illustration in Scriptures along this line. We read, "Now Moses was the meekest man in all the earth." Doubtless this had to do with the Lord's choice of Moses as a leader for his people. For forty years the nation of Israel looked to him in every emergency, and it should not surprise us at all that at the close of that forty years the meekest man in all the earth was too arrogant to be allowed to go into the land of Canaan. Moses was deprived of the privilege of entering Canaan because he was not sufficiently meek--because, having lost so considerably of his original meekness, he smote the rock in the wilderness, saying, "Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of this rock?"

A LESSON FOR ALL LEADERS

If the meekest man in all the earth and one of the greatest men in the world's history was thus overcome by the circumstances of his position amongst the people, it should not surprise us if we find that in Spiritual Israel some who start out meek and humble become more or less arrogant, too, and talk about what they do and must do, and assume that the others are dependent upon them for the water of life. Whenever we look at this picture of Moses it should say to us all, especially to all leaders, "My soul, be on thy guard!" Only a frequent looking to the Lord and a realization of this danger and a continual strife against it can keep us safe at our Redeemer's side--at the side of him who was meek and lowly of heart--the great Teacher who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself (*Heb. 12:3*), and with such meekness--laying down his life in immersion, in loving service--seeking not his own welfare and honor, but humbling himself even unto death, even the death of the cross. The Apostle showing this exclaims, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Exaltation, influence, place, power, authority in the Church, now bring extra trials and extra sacrifices as well as extra dangers. The higher one is up the more careful he must be lest he miss his footing and fall.

Sometimes a congregation may have its patience sorely tried by an elder who, possessing good traits, good qualities, persists in "running" the Church according to his own conceptions and ignores the desires of the Church. If the objection to the elder, leader, be along the lines of immorality or along the lines of false doctrine as respects fundamentals laid down in the divine Word--for instance, the ransom--then steps should be promptly taken, as a congregation is responsible before God and men on these points. Laxity on these lines cannot be brooked; the matter should be firmly dealt with by the congregation. But if doctrinally, or at least on the fundamentals, the leader be found loyal to the Lord and his Word and to the harvest message, and if he be above reproach in the eyes of those of the congregation who know him most intimately, and if the difference merely be along the lines of his unwillingness to conduct services of a character or at a time or at places which the majority have requested, it might in the interest of peace be the wisest course to continue such an elder until the expiration of the term for which he was elected.

Then at that election, without becoming too personal or saying an unkind word to him, the congregation owe it to themselves, to the Lord and to the Truth not to elect him again to any such place of absolute control. This would not mean that the brother should be dropped from leadership

entirely, but that the particular meetings he desired to lead and the character of the meetings should be understood, and his election should be along those lines, so that there could be no misunderstanding in the future, and others possessing some qualifications for service in the company should be sought with the expectation that the Lord, who has the entire situation in his eye, probably has others in preparation to fill the breach.

BE YE KINDLY AFFECTIONED

If this kindly and gentle reproof of the brother's course leave him still self-willed and arrogant and indisposed to serve the congregation according to their ideas, it would be wise to drop him entirely from leadership for a time. But let nothing be done through strife or vain glory--let not an unkind word be expressed. Rather remember the services of the past; he should be esteemed for those services. Do not be afraid that matters will all go to wreck without some one human being having control. While esteeming every brother and servant in the Lord very highly and in proportion to their works as well as their characters, we should ever remember that the Lord himself is our Shepherd, our Bishop, our Pastor, our Leader, and that we are his sheep. If the congregation feels such a dependence upon any one person for its spiritual comfort and refreshment and edification there is something wrong, and the sooner matters in such a case come to a crisis the better it would probably be for all. Those who have gotten started in the Truth can build one another up in the most holy faith, edifying one another and assisting one another in various kinds of Berean Scripture studies, and they would probably make much more progress in so doing than if they continued to allow leaders to lord it over God's heritage and to manage the Church contrary to the wishes of the *majority*.

We emphasize the word majority because so frequently minorities attempt to rule. Our thought is that the loving consideration of the different members of the body for each other should so exercise their sympathies and loving co-operation that the majority would be quite willing to agree to some recognition of the desires and preferences of the minorities--with individuals even. In other words, majorities are not to be selfish, and to determine that because a majority gives the authority therefore it would be proper to exercise that power to the ignoring of their brethren of somewhat different views. Union of heart means that each and all will ignore some of his or their own natural tastes and preferences wherever principles of the Word of God are not involved.

We need not tell you, Beloved, that every word of this article is written with a heart full of brotherly love and a desire for the edification of the Lord's dear people, and without any personal animosity or other evil impetus or desire. We seek your good. We are in touch with the entire field, and know the sifting and testing that is going on, and desire to lend a helping hand to the injury of none and the blessing of many. Consider these things and note our further suggestions along the same lines in the sixth volume of the DAWN STUDIES.

Recurring to our text we remark that the very thought that we are in the presence of the great Refiner, the very thought that he is supervising the fiery trials through which all of the house of Levi must now pass, should quicken us, energize us, put us on guard. We are under his inspection. The intimation is that this is the final testing, and that those who are refined by present experiences, purged of pride, ambition, selfishness, meekness of heart, will surely be received into the Kingdom. There the humble will be exalted to glory, honor and immortality. Can we wait for this? Can we not afford to humble ourselves? Do we not desire so to do? Will we not all unite our hearts and minds and prayers and efforts to the intent that this work of humbling may progress in our own hearts, and that thus the spirit of humility may be shed abroad in the whole Church, from the humblest to the most prominent of its servants?

AN OFFERING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

The expression of our text, "an offering in righteousness" may be viewed from two different standpoints, both true. (1) We may understand it to signify a right offering, a proper offering, an

acceptable offering; or (2) we may also understand it to signify an offering in the interest of righteousness or justice, in the sense that the sin offerings of Israel, the Day of Atonement, were offerings in righteousness or to effect righteousness--to effect cancellation of sin.

Both thoughts are true: we have presented our bodies living sacrifices and God has accepted them in Christ, but with the understanding that we would be conformed to the image of his dear Son, that we would attain to the character likeness of Christ under his instruction and guidance and blessing and assistance. If now we fail to attain this, if pride or ambition or any other thing hinders our development in the likeness of the Lord, our offering will not be acceptable and we will not have a place in the highest glory to which we have been called. Likewise we have seen that the Church is filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ; that as the body of Christ whom the Head is guiding in sacrifice we were represented in the Atonement Day offerings by the Lord's goat of sin offering. The offering made by our Lord, of which we are granted a share, by which he justifies the world, shall ultimately bring in everlasting righteousness to all those who will come into accord with him. We are still in the time when we are expected to share in this sacrificing-- "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him," otherwise we shall not. We are very desirous, therefore, that we should be enabled to offer the acceptable sacrifice represented in the type, that we thus might have membership in the body of Christ in glory and in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth. Shall we not all conclude more earnestly than ever before that the matter at stake is of the greatest value? and shall we not all with fresh zeal allow the Lord in his providences and by his Word to purge our hearts from all dross and to fill us instead with his meek and quiet Spirit?

R4380 [sel]

THE TONGUE A POWER FOR GOOD OR EVIL

JAMES 3:1-12

*Golden Text:--"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue,
keepeth his soul from troubles."--Prov. 21:23.*

OUR lesson is generally acknowledged to be one of the most profound dissertations known in the world on the power of speech. St. James was evidently a very practical man. His remarks respecting the value of words as attestations of faith, noted in our last lesson, show this. To-day's lesson takes up the practical thought and applies it to the tongue in general, and especially to the power of speech in those recognized as Elders or Teachers in the Church. Thus our lesson opens with the exhortation, "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we (who are teachers) shall receive the heavier judgment," because in many things we all stumble. The thought is that whoever attempts to be a teacher, a "rabbi," takes a position which exposes him to more criticism than falls upon the ordinary member of the Ecclesia. And if he errs, he will be subjected to much more severe criticism and rebuke than if he made the same error in his own private judgment. More than this, from the Lord's standpoint, he assumes a great responsibility in becoming an ambassador of the Gospel and mouthpiece of the Lord. If faithfulness and care would bring him a great blessing and reward, unfaithfulness or carelessness would bring correspondingly heavy condemnation.

These words of the Apostle, in conjunction with our Lord's suggestion that if bidden to a feast we take not a high seat, but a low one, and that we seek not the title "rabbi," but be humble, as "little children"--these suggestions from so high authority in the Church, combined with St. Paul's exhortation, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time," should properly cause us to fear the responsibility of a teacher's position in the Church. If seemingly in the Lord's Providence we occupy such a position it should be held very humbly and with great

fearfulness and continual watching and praying lest we enter into temptation and ensnare ourselves and others in error.

PRIDE GOETH BEFORE A FALL

Of course, there is a reason for this danger. It lies in ambition, which sometimes takes the direction of pride and sometimes the love of praise. The first of these, pride, is always reprehensible, never excusable, for surely no member of our race has any reasonable, just ground for pride, even though in comparison with the remainder of the race he might be forced to the conclusion that he was less fallen than many. The second danger to ambition, namely, *love of approbation* of others, is proper enough if rightly directed--Godward-- but dangerous in proportion as it seeks human approbation, because those about us, likewise imperfect, might often approve and applaud things which our Lord would disapprove and reprobate. Hence, the only ambition allowable would be the desire to please God and to have his approval and ultimately his "Well done."

Of course, this would incidentally mean a desire and expectation of having the approval of such of the Lord's brethren as have the Spirit of the Lord--"The mind of Christ." It might properly also include an appreciation of the love and esteem of all men. But these must not become any part of our ambition, nor must we expect that mankind in general would be so impelled by righteousness and Truth and the spirit of these that they would approve and applaud the things most pleasing to the Lord. On the contrary, we must remember that if any man love the world and its approval and applause, the love of the Father is not in him. If he gets the approval of the world in general he should remember the Lord's words, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." It should be a sign to him that in an important sense and degree he was out of harmony with the Lord and his message--otherwise the world would hate him, as it did Christ, and cry out, "Crucify him."

ONE IS YOUR TEACHER, EVEN CHRIST

St. James is not warning us against service, nor seeking to hinder us from all good works one for the other, as members of the Body of Christ. His caution is against our attempting to be (school) masters or teachers. There is but the one Teacher or Schoolmaster for the entire Church of Christ for all this age. He is the "Head of the Church, which is his Body"--the Director, Supervisor, Caretaker, Instructor of the "members."

True, the Apostle does intimate that the Lord "Hath set the various members in the Body as it hath pleased Him." He intimates that the qualities of eye and ear and tongue are head qualities in comparison with the hand, the foot, etc., which are body qualities. Our absent Lord or Head promised to be with every little gathering of his people. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age," and thus with them he is pleased to exercise in some manner and through some agency the Chairmanship of such a meeting and to be the Teacher. But he will not force his Headship upon us. He waits to serve, to instruct, to guide so many as are in the right attitude of heart, desirous of knowing his will and doing it. Having instructed his people respecting his will, he expects them to follow his instructions, if they would have the blessing he is pleased to confer. If, therefore, when assembled in his name they follow the directions of his Word, hearken to his voice in the Scriptures and watch for the leadings of his Spirit, and approve it in each other where found, his blessing will be proportionate.

Thus a responsibility is upon each little group to approve as its leader none but the consecrated. No goat must be chosen as a leader of the sheep, nor any sheep whose outward conduct does not give evidence of his sincerity of heart and desire to walk in the footsteps of the Master. Pride, and self-seeking ambition to be a lord over the flock, should not be tolerated, because they would be injurious, not only to the Ecclesia of believers, but also to the heady ones seeking to lead them. Nevertheless, where need to be restrained from taking the highest seats in the spiritual feast presents itself, the restraint should be exercised in a kindly, loving manner, with the remembrance

that some have greater trials and temptations along these lines than have others, and, as the Apostle says, "Remembering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

St. James declares, "In many things we all stumble." He does not mean that we all fall into sin or grievous error, but he does mean that, so long as we are in the flesh and the Spirit of the Lord and his message are delivered through our imperfect powers, no one is infallible. Hence, those who do not aspire to leadership in the meetings of the "saints" should not be hypercritical of the brethren who seem to manifest humility of heart, and who endeavor to serve them, breaking to them the bread of life. They should be appreciated and loved for their work's sake, even if their every utterance cannot be accepted unqualifiedly. These sentiments attach not only to the oral teacher, but also to the printed page, by which another may be represented in the meeting.

STORIES TWICE TOLD

SAFELY ON YOUR KNEES

Some years ago an eminent preacher was climbing an Alpine summit with two guides. After much labor the top was reached, and forgetting the gale that was blowing, the preacher stood up to enjoy the view. Instantly the guide called to him and pulled him down, saying, 'On your knees; you are not safe except on your knees.' Even at the summit of Christian experience and privilege, we are not safe except on our knees. Prayer is as needful on the mountain tops, as in the valleys.

'Cyclopedia of Religious Anecdotes' -- The Cheltenham Examiner.

Part - 4
THE CONGREGATION AND
SERVANTS

LOVE--MAKING A DIFFERENCE

"Keep yourselves in the love of God...and of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."--Jude 21-23.

WITH OUR MINDS all unbalanced through the fall, resulting from original sin,--tho not all fallen exactly in the same direction,--it is not surprising that we frequently find ourselves and other brethren in Christ in more or less confusion respecting the application of certain principles laid down in the Word of God. For instance, we are instructed that love is the fulfilling of the divine law; and that love of the brethren is one of the evidences of our having passed from death unto life; and that if we love not our brother, whom we have seen, it is a sure evidence that we do not truly love our Heavenly Father, whom we have not seen. (*Rom. 13:10; I John 3:14; 4:20.*) In their endeavor to measure up to these requirements of the divine standard, some are in danger of erring in an opposite direction--in danger of manifesting a brotherly love where it should be withheld, and that in the interest of the brother. Let us note the different kinds, or degrees of love which the Heavenly Father exercises and manifests.

First, we have the love for the world. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" to die for us. (*John 3:16.*) Second, in a much higher and special sense, "The Father himself loveth you"--you who have accepted Jesus Christ as your Redeemer, and who, in his name and strength and merit have consecrated yourselves to him--you are seeking now to walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. (*John 16:27.*) But that this special love of God can be lost in part, or eventually wholly, is clearly set forth by the Apostle's statement, "Keep yourselves in the love of God". (*Jude 21.*) If any, after having tasted of the good Word of God, the powers of the world to come, and being made partakers of the holy spirit, etc., shall walk after the flesh and not after the spirit, we may be sure that such will proportionately lose the love of God;--and, if he persist in this course, as a result will ultimately be "none of his." For, instead of loving such, who through their knowledge and attainments and disobedient course have become wicked, the Lord declares that he is "angry with the wicked," and that "all the wicked will he destroy." --*Psa. 7:11; 145:20; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29.*

As sons of the Highest, who are seeking to be like unto our Father in heaven, and like unto the copy which he has set before us in his dear Son, our Lord, we are to have for the world in general that broad sympathetic pity and mercy-love which would delight in doing any and everything possible to be done for their uplifting, in accord with the divine program, in the divine time and order. Like our Father and our Elder Brother, we are to love the brethren "with a pure heart, fervently"--with sincerity. This love for the brethren is nothing like the love for the world. It is not the pity-love, nor mere generosity. It is far more; it is brotherly love. All of the children of God are brethren, as new creatures; all these brethren have hopes, ambitions, interests and promises linked together in the Lord Jesus and in the heavenly Kingdom in which they hope to share. All these brethren are joint-heirs, fellow-heirs one with the other and with the Lord. They are partners; their interests are mutual and co-ordinating.

Additionally, they have a special mutual sympathy of compassion; for while, as new creatures, they are rich in divine favor and promises, they all have serious weaknesses, according to the flesh-- draw-backs; altho the Lord is not reckoning with them according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, the intention, the heart desires, nevertheless, they each and all have besetments arising from these weaknesses and imperfections of the earthly tabernacle, which cause them to "groan," and to sympathize one with the other in their groanings. As the Apostle says, "We which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the deliverance of our *body*"--the complete Church. Thus the sons of God have a

further mutual sympathy and love and care for each other, an interest in each other, helpfulness toward each other, which is entirely beyond and above and outside of any feelings which could possibly be appreciated by the world or exercised toward it;--because the world has no such conflict between the old nature and the new; no such covenant of sacrifice; no such acceptance in the Beloved; no such union of heart and purpose and aim and spirit. Oh, yes! the exhortation to love as brethren, fervently, is one which appeals to us specially.

But now we come to another point. Our love for the brethren cannot be exactly of the same measure and exactly of the same intensity or fervency toward all. There is something which gauges or regulates it. What is it? It is that we love God and the glorious principles of righteousness, which are represented in his character; and we love our Lord Jesus from the same standpoint, as being the very exemplifications of all that is good, noble, true, just, generous, loving; and our love for the brethren must, of necessity, be in proportion as we find the brethren to be copies of our Lord. We do not mean copies in the flesh, but viewed from the Lord's standpoint; copies in spirit, copies in heart, copies in motive, copies in intention, copies in loving zeal for righteousness, truth, etc. Thus, as we grow in the love of God and in the love of Christ and in the love of the principles which they represent, we grow also in love toward all men and toward the brethren, but particularly toward those who are growing most in likeness to the Lord. This is not partiality; this is not doing to others different from what we should wish them to do to us. This is following the Lord Jesus' example; for we find that amongst his apostles, even, all of whom were chosen, there were three specially beloved; and of those three one is specially noted as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." He was specially loved, because he was specially lovable; and so with us and the brethren. We should love them all warmly, fervently, but of necessity with varying degrees of fervor, and the fervor should increase with each in proportion as we note his growth in heart-likeness to our Lord.

And if this be so, what shall we say of those who, after having come to a knowledge of the truth, and after having tasted and appreciated its goodness, fall away into sin?--of those who cease to walk after the spirit, and begin to walk after the flesh? Can our love for them burn with the same fervency as before? By no means; it should not do so. As the Apostle says in our text, we should make a *difference*. In doing so we are following the example of our Heavenly Father; for we have just noted that only by walking after the spirit can any of us keep ourselves in the love of God. Only by following the same course, therefore, should any be able to keep himself in the love of the brethren. Any deflection should bring corresponding loss of brotherly love and fellowship.

This making of a difference is really essential to the purity and progress of the Church. If we make no difference between those brethren who walk after the spirit and those who walk disorderly, or after the flesh, we are taking away the very premium and blessing which the Lord intended should go to those who walk after the spirit; and we are giving a premium, which the Lord did not intend should be given, to those who walk contrary to his Word, after the flesh. It is as much our duty to withdraw fellowship from those who are unworthy of it as it is our duty to grant fellowship, and that with fervency, to those whom we see to be walking in the footsteps of Jesus. We are not to think that it is love that is prompting us to take the wrong course of encouraging wrong-doers,--it is not love, but ignorance; and the remedy for ignorance is to learn of the Lord, from his Word and from his example.

The Apostle Paul calls our attention to our duty respecting the brethren, and how we should conduct ourselves toward them under varying circumstances, saying that faithful brethren should be esteemed very highly in love for their works' sake; that other brethren who are unruly should be warned; that those who are feeble in their mental comprehension of the truth should be strengthened; that those who are weak should be helped, supported; and that we should exercise patience toward all.--*1 Thess. 5:12-14*.

We are at present specially referring to the proper attitude to be observed toward unruly brethren --they are not to be treated as those who are esteemed very highly in love for their works; otherwise they would be encouraged in being unruly. On the contrary they are to be warned,

cautioned, --in love, truly, and with patience, but not with marks of the same love and esteem as tho they were walking orderly in the footsteps of Jesus and in harmony with the directions of his Word. The marks and evidences of our love and esteem must be sincere; and must be in proportion as we see in the brethren evidences of the right desires of heart,--to walk after the spirit of the truth. The Apostle Paul intimates how our disapproval ought to be shown, in cases which seem, in our judgment, to be of sufficient importance to demand a manifestation of disapproval.

Evidently the Apostle did not mean that the brethren should be watching each other for an occasion of fault-finding in every word and every act; but that, on the contrary, they should be so full of love one for the other that trivial matters would be entirely passed over, as merely of the weakness of the flesh, and not at all of intention, of the heart. The matters to be considered worthy of manifestations of disapproval and warning are, rather, those which are so open and manifest on the surface as to leave no room to question the fact that they are displeasing to the Lord, and injurious in their influence upon the brother or upon the household of faith. For instance, if the brother had been seen under the influence of liquor; if he had been heard to utter vile or otherwise improper language; if it were a matter of general knowledge that he was living in sin; these would be such grounds as we believe the Apostle had in mind. But evidently the Apostle had no intention of cultivating a spirit of fault-finding and judging one another as respects the heart and private affairs,--use of time or money, etc. These belong to our individual stewardship and none should endeavor to interfere with the proper liberties of conscience and conduct which the Lord has granted to each. The Apostle is very stringent in his condemnation of such judging of one another, which so often leads to roots of bitterness, misunderstanding, disfellowship, etc., and which, as the old leaven, should be purged out of our hearts and lives.--Rom. 14:10,13.

But now, for those who "obey not our word," the apostolic Scriptural directions in respect to their conduct, etc., is "note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Nevertheless, knowing the tendency of the fallen mind to go from one extreme to another, either of too great leniency or of too great severity, the apostle continues, "Yet count him not an enemy, but admonish as a brother." (2 Thess. 3:13-15.) To admonish as a brother does not mean to denounce roundly and severely; it means to admonish in a spirit of love, gentleness, meekness, patience, and with a sincere desire to help the brother to see the fault which we are certain exists, and which we are sure is not evil surmising on our part.

The Apostle John shows us that this matter of distinguishing as between brethren that are to be esteemed and brethren that are to be warned, appertains not merely to conduct but also to doctrinal matters. Yet we may be sure that he does not mean that we are to disfellowship a brother merely because of some differences of view on non-essential questions. We may be sure that he does mean his words to apply strictly and only to the fundamentals of the doctrine of Christ: for instance, faith in God; faith in Jesus as our Redeemer; faith in the promises of the divine Word. These will be marks of a "brother," if supported by Christian conduct, walking after the spirit of the truth;--even tho the brother might have other views which would differ from ours in respect to certain features of the plan of God not so clearly and specifically set forth in the Scriptures. But for those whom we recognize as being doctrinally astray from the foundation principles of Christ, the Apostle intimates that very drastic measures are appropriate;--not persecutions, nor railing; not bitter and acrimonious disputes; not hatred, either open or secret; but a proper showing of our disfellowship with the false doctrines held and taught by them; a proper protection, so that our influence shall not be in any manner or degree used to uphold his denial of the fundamentals of the Gospel. This drastic course is outlined by the Apostle in these words: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [confessing Christ to have come into the world, in the flesh, to redeem our race, etc.] receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." --2 *John 10,11.*

But, as our text intimates, we are to use discretion, judgment,--"and of some have compassion, making a difference." Some we may recognize as being merely entrapped of the

Adversary, either in sin or in false doctrine, as the case may be, and not wilfully, intelligently, of their own volition. Toward such, still maintaining an attitude of firmness, we are nevertheless to express freely our trust that they are only temporarily wrong; and to seek to restore them, either doctrinally or in respect to their perverse moral course, to the position of fellowship with the Lord and with all the brethren who are in fellowship with him. Others we are to "save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." We may be obliged to speak very plainly to them; we may be obliged to tear open and expose before their eyes the sores of their own immoral course, showing them, as the case may be, the grossness of the sin or the grossness of the error in which they are involved; and doing so perhaps in strong language, if we realize that nothing short of this has availed to arouse them from their lethargy. In pulling them out of sin we are "pulling them out of the fire"--out of the Second Death--as the Apostle James says, speaking of this same class: "Let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death"--a brother who is a sinner, a brother, he explains, who has "erred from the truth."--James 5:19,20.

Finally, we remark that the dealing of the brethren with the disorderly is not to be in the nature of a *punishment*; for it is not with us to punish. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Our warnings or reproofs or withdrawals of fellowship, are to be merely in the nature of correctives, with a view, as the Apostle says, to the restoring of such an one. "Ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted";--if not in the same manner, possibly in some other manner, in which you are weaker.--Gal. 6:1.

As to what would be a sufficiency of *evidence* of repentance and reformation, each will require great wisdom and grace to determine. The heart in which brotherly love dwells richly, the heart which loves righteousness and hates iniquity, the heart which realizes its own imperfections, and that it is acceptable only through the Beloved and the New Covenant--that heart will rejoice at the first evidences of contrition and repentance on the part of the disorderly brother. If very full of love, his heart may go out to him almost too quickly; he may need to restrain himself; especially if it be a second or a third offense of the kind, or the circumstances otherwise very grievous. It will be apparently his duty to look for works in harmony with the repentance, and to wait to see some demonstration, in the nature of restitution for wrong done, or such an open and radical change of conduct as will give evidence that the heart has returned to its loyalty to God, to the truth, and to righteousness.

The erring brother, truly repentant, will not be averse to giving such evidences, nor consider it unreasonable that his professed reformation shall be thus attested. Indeed, we may expect that such will feel so humbled in respect to his attitude, and the disgrace which he may have brought upon the cause, that he will feel disposed of himself, either to remain absent for a while from the company of the brethren, in penitence, or, if acceptable to their company, he will feel disposed to take a back seat-- a very humble position amongst the brethren. And if the repentant offender had occupied the position of a leader in the company, humility on his part, no less than discretion on the part of the brethren, would seem to indicate that he should not be restored to any official or leading position in the congregation for a considerable time,--until ample evidence had been given of the sincerity of his reformation.

But we close as we began, by urging that facts, evil deeds or evil doctrines, and not evil surmisings, knowledge, and not rumors, are the bases of Scriptural disfellowship. Hence the necessity for the observance of the Lord's rule. (Matt. 18:15.) While we are not to close our eyes to wrong in a brother, love will refuse to keep picking to find fault where none is openly apparent. And if fault is apparently discovered it is not to be "*discussed* among the brethren," but as the Lord directs should be taken direct to the offender by the discoverer and not so much as mentioned to others unless offender refuse to hear;--refuses to correct the fault. Oh, how much trouble would be saved, how many mistakes and heart-aches avoided if this rule were strictly followed!

INFALLIBILITY AND CHURCH ELDERSHIP

Question.--Brother Russell: I received not long since a letter which set forth that you could not be considered infallible, because the writer alleges that you have changed your views respecting the propriety of the various gatherings of the Lord's people choosing from amongst their number Elders for the oversight of the Lord's work. The writer of the letter I mention was at one time, I believe, an elder in the St. Louis Church, but being no longer elected by the congregation he disfellowships them as "Babylonish." In the letter I mention he purports to give an extract from an old WATCH TOWER, which makes it appear that at that time you considered the election of Elders unnecessary. He then quotes from more recent WATCH TOWERS and from MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. VI., your words recommending the choosing of Elders and offering suggestions respecting the Scriptural qualifications of such.

My question is, Is this true? Have you changed your view on this subject, and if so may I ask, Why?

Answer.--First of all I hasten to assure you that I have never laid claim to infallibility. I do not expect to be infallible until by the Lord's grace I shall share a part in the First Resurrection; then, that which is perfect having come, that which is in part shall be done away; we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known.

We accept the writings by the twelve apostles as being so supervised of the Lord as to be free from any error. He himself said of the writers, the apostles, Whatsoever ye shall bind, enforce, on earth will be that which is recognized as bound or enforced in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose or release from on earth shall be loosed or released from in heaven. Hence we may regard the presentations of those twelve men, intended of the Lord to be his special representatives under the holy Spirit's dispensation, as being infallible, true, inerrant. But there is no ground for believing that any others than the apostles have been so miraculously holden by the power of God as were those twelve, or that we have any authority in the Word of God for considering the words and writings of others as being above or beyond testing and proving by the Scriptures. This has invariably been our presentation. It has been our endeavor to present the Word of God faithfully as he has given us to understand it--to our own Master we stand or fall. Nevertheless we trust that our course has the approval also of such of the Lord's dear people as, led by his Spirit, are now walking in the light of present truth.

OUR VIEW IS DIFFERENT

We do not deny growing in knowledge, and that we now see in a slightly different light the will of the Lord respecting Elders or leaders in the various little groups of his people. Our error in judgment was in expecting too much of the dear brethren who, coming early into the Truth, became the natural leaders of these little companies. The ideal view of them which we fondly entertained was, that the knowledge of the Truth would have upon them a very humbling effect, causing them to appreciate their own insignificance, and that whatever they knew and were able to present to others was as mouthpieces of God and because used of him. Our ideal hopes were that these would in every sense of the word be examples to the flock; and that should the Lord's providence bring into the little company one or more equally competent, or more competent, to present the Truth, that the spirit of love would lead them in honor to prefer one another, and thus to help and urge one another to participation in the service of the Church, the body of Christ.

With this thought in mind we concluded that the larger measures of grace and truth now due and appreciated by the Lord's consecrated people would make it unnecessary for them to follow the course outlined by the apostles in the early Church. Our mistake was in failing to realize that the

arrangements outlined by the apostles under divine supervision are superior to anything that others could formulate, and that the Church as a whole will need to have the regulations instituted by the apostles until, by our change in the resurrection, we shall all be made complete and perfect and be directly in association with the Master.

Our mistake gradually dawned upon us as we beheld amongst dear brethren to some extent the spirit of rivalry, and on the part of many a desire to hold the leadership of meetings as an *office* instead of as a *service*, and to exclude and hinder from developing as leaders other brethren of equal ability naturally and of equal knowledge of the Truth and competency in wielding the sword of the Spirit. From various little groups of the Lord's people I received kindly worded inquiries as to what should be done in the case of a brother who wished to lord it over God's heritage--who wished to run the Church as though he were infallible and as though the brethren generally were of inferior cast. We uniformly advised moderation, especially that the offending brother should be judged leniently, reminding the friends of the Apostle's intimation that prominence in a teaching capacity is especially dangerous, and that they should in correcting such a brother remember their own weaknesses and dangers in the same direction. But with no uncertain sound we assured them that in the divine order as well as in the rational order the entire congregation of the consecrated was to seek and to determine the will of the Lord respecting its leadership, and should not permit any man to usurp this function of the Church and to decide for it that he was the one and only choice of the Lord for the service.

We advised on the contrary that the very evidence of a self-seeking spirit and desire to be greatest was an indication of unfitness for the position, and that to continue a "heady" one in leadership would not only be injurious to the congregation but injurious also to the leader, because we have the Scriptural assurance that God resisteth the proud, the self-seeking, and showeth his favors to the humble. And the Apostle's exhortation is, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time"--when the perfection of the new body in harmony with the new mind shall have fully taken the place of present imperfections of the flesh.

You have mentioned the St. Louis Church, and I recall that the little company there had difficulty on the score of leadership--and probably with the very writer of the letter you mention. He became offended with the whole company because he was not permitted to manage all the affairs of the Church. He wrote to me insisting that he knew that God had appointed him to that position, and intimating that the congregation had nothing whatever to do in the matter except to support him, and in supporting him to support the Lord and the Lord's will. He urged that he should not be elected, should not be voted for, but should be accepted by the congregation as of divine appointment. He wished me to urge this upon the congregation.

I demurred, and, in as gentle a manner as I could, pointed out to him that the voice of the Lord as respects our individual conduct is to be sought in our own minds through the aid of the Scriptures, and his voice in respect to the Church is to be sought through an expression of the sentiments of all the consecrated members, each seeking to express to the best of his or her ability the mind of the Spirit as secured from the Word.

The brother evidently felt hurt that I did not recognize his divine appointment, and now after several years the resentment, I presume, is showing itself through the letter you refer to, copies of which, I understand, have been sent to others as well as to you.

Such facts and experiences demonstrated to my mind not only the wisdom of the apostolic method in respect to "Elders in every city" (*Titus 1:5*) but also the necessity for such a course--that otherwise the Lord's people would not make the proper progress in knowledge and in the graces of the Spirit, nor come to fully appreciate the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, and the equality as brethren of one cast, one class, one company, one body, of all who are trusting in the precious blood of Christ and fully devoted to his service.

I am neither ashamed of the position I first took nor of my present position on this question. It does not surprise me that I did not grasp the full situation, that I did not make due allowance for the

ambitions and selfishness which still pertain to the flesh of the friends even after the begetting of the Spirit and the setting of affections on things above and the endeavor to be governed by the wisdom from above.

Without instituting a comparison as between myself or any one else at the present time as mouthpieces of the Lord and those twelve special mouthpieces so marvellously guided of the Lord at the beginning of this dispensation, I venture to call attention to the fact that even amongst the chiefest of those times was required to realize the mind of the Spirit on various subjects: for instance, the Apostle Peter needed a vision and subsequent experiences before he could learn the lessons that the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles had been broken down, so that now under the terms of this Gospel dispensation there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, who have any special prominence or preference in respect to the Lord's favors. Peter had a vision of one kind to show him the truth on that subject; I had a vision of another kind--a lesson of experience coming to me from the various little congregations of the Lord's people, which drove me to the apostolic method and convinced me that it is still necessary for the proper development and upbuilding and progress of the Church which is the body of Christ.

PRACTICALLY NO CHANGE

As I understand you, the brother's letter implies that the fact that the little churches choose their own leaders instead of the leaders choosing themselves proves that we have become sectarian, Babylonish. Well, it is difficult to tell how things will appear to those who begin to lose the spirit of the truth and who begin to go into darkness. As a matter of fact, we never did advocate that the Church should recognize a leader merely because he said he thought himself divinely appointed. Our thought was that the Lord's spirit prevailing amongst those possessing the Truth would so actuate them all that with one heart and one mind each would be glad to yield opportunities and render service to the others to the best of his ability, and that thus the Lord's will would be accomplished. The whole mistake was in expecting too much of fellow servants, neglecting to follow the apostolic method of selecting the latter by the "stretching forth of the hand," or using other means of ascertaining the opinion of the consecrated respecting the Lord's mind on the subject.

NO ORGANIZATION NOW

Those who declare that we have formed a sect or a denomination misrepresent the facts. A sect is a split off, and we split off from nothing. Our endeavor is to bring all of the people of God into heart-relationship and fellowship with the Lord and with each other. We accept all as brothers who trust in the precious blood as their redemption price and who profess and evidence a full consecration to the Lord's service. We bar no one from Christian fellowship along these lines, whatever may be his theories on outside and less essential subjects.

We are not a denomination either, for we accept no name but that of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are Christians, no more and no less. We accept all names given to the Church in the Scriptures, not even taking one of them as a distinctive title as do our friends of the Christian denomination. Each individual has his relationship to the Lord, and because related to the Lord is related to all others similarly related, because the body of Christ is one. This, our union with the Lord, is the union of the Scriptures, and the only one: and so far as we know no other company of the Lord's people take this position in its entirety nor stand upon it fully. By the Lord's grace we hope to thus stand until he shall say "Well done!" and shall receive us into his glorious Kingdom.

THE TERM "BABYLONISH"

The word Babylonish, as we have frequently pointed out, signifies confusion. Not confusion as respects organization, for the various departments of Babylon, its various denominations, have very strict organizations that permit of no confusion whatever. Babylon's confusion is in her

doctrines, which are unscriptural, confusing, contradictory, many of them erroneous. We fear that the brother whose letter you quote from is the one who is in danger of getting into a Babylonish condition--his ideas are certainly quite confused in respect to the question of Elders. In insisting that he and other Elders should rule the Church by divine appointment and without any human appointment he is getting to even a more extreme position than does the Pope of Rome, whom we think to be Babylonish enough; for even the Pope of Rome does not attain his position by a usurpation, but by an election by the Cardinals.

R3171

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERSHIP

--ACTS 20:28-38

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

THE Apostle Paul, on leaving Ephesus after the rioting there, determined to visit Jerusalem again, but first would visit the European churches--of Macedonia and Greece. It was while in Macedonia that he is supposed to have written his second letter to the Corinthians; and, on this tour, while in Corinth for about three months, he is supposed to have written his epistle to the Romans. At this time Nero, aged 21, was Emperor of Rome, and the Apostle Paul was about 56 years of age--in the full prime of his Christian life and experience.

Our lesson finds the Apostle en route to Jerusalem, on a trading vessel which was detained at the port of Miletus, about thirty miles distant from Ephesus. The number of days the vessel would be detained, changing cargo, etc., was uncertain; hence, the Apostle, instead of going to Ephesus, sent word to the elders of the Church there that they might come to him at Miletus--that thus he might have as long as possible with them, without missing his vessel when it would be ready to start. The elders came, and our lesson records the Apostle's address to them. They may have stayed several days in his company, and probably he said much more, but the final words evidently, in the mind of Luke, who chronicled them, were an epitome of the entire address, which is generally esteemed as both eloquent and touching. It is an address from a general overseer to local overseers, and to be appreciated must be viewed from this standpoint.

"Take heed unto yourselves": well did the Apostle realize that those who do not keep guard over their own hearts can not faithfully serve the interests of the Church in general. Piety, as well as charity, should begin at home. Along this line John Calvin said, "No one can successfully care for the salvation of others who neglects his own, since he himself is a part of the flock." This thought is brought out by the Apostle, also, saying, "And [take heed] to all the flock, over the which the holy spirit hath made you overseers" --more properly, "in the which," as in the Revised Version; for the overseers are not to be considered lords *over* the flock, but members in it who have a responsibility respecting fellow-members. The care of the overseer should not be confined to the well-favored members of the flock, financially, socially, educationally or otherwise; but as the Apostle declares, should be general "to *all* the flock"--including the poorest as well as the most uncouth naturally.

The elders were not necessarily aged men, according to the flesh; for in the Church of Christ the flesh is reckoned as dead;--their age, their maturity, their eldership, is as New Creatures. Although the chosen representatives of the Church, they were to esteem their responsibility as coming from on high;--however earthly influences had been associated with their appointment, their obligation was really as representatives of the Lord, through his holy spirit. The word "Elders" here is the same as Presbytery in *1 Tim. 4:14*; and the word "overseers" is the same elsewhere in the Scriptures rendered "bishop," signifying one charged with a duty respecting others. We thus see that

this word bishop, or overseer, has in modern times been divested of its original simplicity. The elders of the Church of Christ are its overseers, and should realize the responsibility of the position they have accepted. The Apostle Paul was an overseer in a general sense; as he himself expresses it, he had "the care of all the churches"--particularly of all those which, in the Lord's providence, he had been the means of establishing in the truth, or who accepted his ministry, either in person or by letter. While the holy spirit has the supervision of such matters, it, nevertheless, remains for the congregation of the Lord's people to note the leadings of the spirit in the appointment of overseers, and to accept such, and only such, and so much overseeing and supervision as they believe to be of the Lord's providence.

Mr. Thompson-Seton, the renowned student of wild animals, relates in his work, "*Lives of the Hunted*," that "the leaders of the flock gain and hold their position as leaders, not from any authority over the flock, but from the fact that they have shown themselves wisest in finding the best pastures and the most successful in guarding against enemies,--the flock having learned to trust them." This furnishes a good illustration of what the attitude of the Lord's people should be toward those whom they accept as superintendents, overseers, elders,--according to the Scriptures. But alas! we find in the church nominal many leaders who seem to be nearly devoid of the proper qualities of leadership here referred to by the Apostle: (1) to oversee, or look out for, the interests of the flock in general; and (2) to feed them. It should be observed that the position of a bishop gives no *authority* over the Church, except that which properly comes from great piety, wisdom and experience. The flock is to be guarded against errors of doctrine, and from false teachers, and to be guided into the richest pastures of the Word of God, and into the brightest Christian experiences, and into the fields of greatest usefulness.

A prominent writer on this subject says:--

"Mr. Ruskin, in his *Sesame and Lilies*, commenting on the strange phrase, 'blind mouths,' in Milton's *Lycidas*, says: 'Those two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character in the two great offices of the Church--those of bishop and pastor. A bishop means a person who sees; a pastor means one who feeds; the most unbishoply character a man can have is, therefore, to be blind; the most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed. Nearly all the evils of the Church have arisen from bishops desiring *power* more than *light*. They want authority, not outlook. It is the king's (Christ is our King) office to rule: the bishop's office is to *oversee* the flock, to number it sheep by sheep; to be ready always to give full account of it.'"

The Apostle states the grounds for so earnest an exhortation: (1) The Church which they were overseeing and feeding was to be recognized as God's Church, "purchased with the blood of his own [Son]."*

*This is not to be understood as conflicting with other Scriptural statements to the effect that our Lord Jesus "bought us with his own precious blood." Both thoughts are correct: though they view the subject from two different standpoints. From the larger standpoint, God is the originator of the entire plan of salvation--from start to finish he is thus the Savior. But he accomplishes the salvation through the Son: he laid help [for us] upon one who was mighty to save--fully qualified. (*Isa. 43:11; 1 Tim. 2:5; 4:10; Psa. 89:19.*) Thus every feature of our salvation is *of* the Father, though *by* the Son, as the Apostle clearly points out.--*1 Cor. 8:6*. That which God so highly valued, and purchased at so great a price, is to be esteemed very precious by all who would be his servants and his servants. (2) Because dangers and foes would arise; and while these could not come without divine permission, it is a part of the divine will that they shall serve as tests of faith and loyalty of the entire flock, including the elders, overseers, pastors. The energy necessary to such resistance of evil would tend to develop character which God desires each member of his flock to have. God would not suffer them to be tempted above that they were able, but would with every temptation, or trial, provide a way of escape; but he would have them learn to trust him, to exercise faith and obedience and vigilance and resistance of evil.

The Apostle evidently knew by inspiration of some kind that he would never see these dear brethren again --that his mission in this field was at a close, and as a true under-shepherd he was looking out for the interests of the flock. He knew, probably from the prophecy of Daniel, that a great falling away was to come;--that the Adversary was to be permitted to develop a great antichrist system,--as he subsequently wrote to the Church at Thessalonica; and he wished the local overseers to realize the responsibility of their position, and to be vigilant. "Grievous wolves shall enter in amongst you, not sparing the flock;"--ambitious for power, influence, etc., they would not hesitate to barter the interests of the flock for their own advancement. Another source of danger would be from within--"of your own selves" some would rise up--be puffed up with ambition, to have followers, adherents, and would lead them into false doctrines, to the injury of themselves and those misled by them.

The knowledge of these things was to keep them on guard continually, not only as against wolves from without, but against the rising of ambitious ones amongst their own number--not necessarily watching each other merely, but rather each specially watching and guarding his own heart against the insidious attacks of the Adversary along the lines indicated,--too great self-esteem or desire to be great. The Apostle, we may be sure, was glad to be able to point to his own course in their midst, as an example of proper humility of spirit, and of zeal for the interests of the flock. "Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn [admonish] everyone day and night with tears." The secret of the Apostle's zeal lay, evidently, in his appreciation of the fact that he was God's ambassador, and that the work of the Lord in which he was privileged to be a coworker, is a most important one--relating first to the salvation and perfecting of the saints, the elect, and ultimately through them to the blessing of all the families of the earth. Had the Apostle, during those three years, been neglecting the spiritual interests of the flock, he could not have made such an address as this to the elders. It would not have done to have said: Ye remember how many entertainments of a frivolous character I attended with you and helped to arrange; the oyster suppers and peach-and-cream festivals; the private theatricals, charades and tableaux, and general fun- and money-making schemes which we entered into. The Apostle's appreciation of the fact that he was an ambassador for the King of kings, was ever present with him and lent a force and earnestness to his entreaties on behalf of righteousness and spirituality, which, with his tears, were much better backing than frivolities of any kind.

Turning from the darker picture of coming trials and difficulties, the Apostle commended the brethren to the Lord, who loved his Church so as to purchase it, who watches over its interests, so that the Adversary cannot harm those who faithfully follow the Captain of their salvation,--assuring them that this grace of God might be expected to come to them through his Word. The Apostle had nothing to say against colleges and seminaries and worldly sciences of themselves; but when he would mention the power that is to keep the Lord's people against the wiles of the Adversary it was not to these that he pointed his colaborers, but to the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God. We of the present time may well lay this testimony to heart; for today we see foes assaulting the Lord's flock on every hand; wolves who, in the name of science, would not spare the flock, but dash to pieces the faith, the hope, the trust, of the Lord's people, giving them nothing substantial in return; "higher critics" vaunting themselves upon their superior learning and their ability to distinguish between inspiration and non-inspiration, and who offer to select for the sheep an occasional blade of grass from the Word of God, which, however, they assure the sheep, requires much scholastic learning to make nutritive.

Today, also, we see in every direction this same tendency on the part of some amongst ourselves to arise and to seek to draw away disciples after them; and we need to remember that the defense of the sheep is not to be found in worldly wisdom, but in the power of God, as represented in the Word and plan of God. As the Apostle said to these elders of Ephesus, so we may hear him say to us, that the Word of God is able to build us up substantially, to make us "strong in the Lord and in

the power of his might," and to give us eventually "an inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified."

It is worthy of note here that all the inheritances and eternal rewards held before the Lord's people in the Scriptures are to the "*sanctified*"--none of them are promised to any other class. One of the Society's colporteurs recently wrote us that when about to deliver a volume of the DAWN series to a person who had subscribed, the lady made objection, and declined to take the book, saying that she understood it denied that the Scriptures taught a hell of eternal torture; and that she was sure to the contrary, and that if there is no such place there ought to be. The colporteur replied by inquiring who she believed would be saved, and she answered, "The holy, the sanctified," the ones mentioned by the Apostle in this lesson. The colporteur asked the lady if she claimed to be one of the consecrated saints of God. She answered, "No." He then replied, "You are expecting, then, to spend eternity in torment?"

The lady saw at once the force of the erroneous argument, and said she would take the book, concluding that if all were to go to eternal torment who were not of the *sanctified* class the outlook for the future would be horrible, for almost the entire race. What a relief we find in the clearer knowledge of the divine plan, which shows us that the inheritance of the sanctified is to be the Kingdom, at the second advent of our Lord; and that the Kingdom then to be established is to be the divine agency for blessing the world of mankind with a clear knowledge of God, and a full opportunity to accept his grace and mercy and blessing unto *sanctification* and everlasting life through our Lord Jesus.

Having commended them to the Word of God, the Apostle draws attention to his own mode of life, while with them, as a proper illustration of the effect of the Gospel in a sanctified heart--as a *proper example of an overseer and elder* in the Church, which they should seek to copy. He could speak of these things now, to these fellow-elders, in a manner that he probably would have hesitated to speak of them to the Church at Ephesus while still ministering to them, as, by some, it might have been considered boasting. He would have these brother-elders and overseers note that in his ministering to the Church at Ephesus he had not coveted their silver or gold or apparel, but instead had labored with his own hands, and had thus in all things *set before them an example of how they also* as elders (presbyters) and overseers (bishops, *episcopos*) ought to help the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The Apostle could point thus to himself as an example of a proper servant of the Church, because he had so closely followed the example of the great Head, Jesus. It is blessed to receive, but still more blessed to give. God himself is the great Giver, continually bestowing favors upon us, and not upon the good only, but also upon the evil--even providing a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. These words of our Lord ("It is more blessed to give than to receive") are not recorded in any of the Gospels. Dr. Philip Schaff tells us that "outside the inspired memories of the Gospels we possess the record of some twenty sayings of Jesus which have floated down to us." This quotation by the Apostle Paul is one of these, of whose authenticity we can have no doubt; and surely it is in full accord with our dear Redeemer's conduct. He emulated the Father in that he continually gave, gave, gave to others. He did not selfishly see how much comfort and ease and honor he could secure for himself, but made himself of no reputation, for our sakes, daily giving his life for the assistance of others in matters temporal, as well as spiritual, until finally he completed the sacrifice at Calvary, having given on our behalf all that he had.

If all the elders of the Church of Christ could thoroughly take to heart these noble examples of Jesus and of Paul, and could become so thoroughly enthused with the Gospel message and with the privilege of being coworkers with God that they would entirely forget themselves, it would be a great blessing for them as well as for the various little companies of the Lord's people over whom, in the Lord's providence, the holy spirit has made them overseers, to watch out for the interests of the flock and to feed them. We are not meaning to say that there are no earnest brethren today. Quite to the contrary. But we do mean to say that it is well for us to lay to heart the Apostle's earnest

exhortation, that we all may be more and more faithful, more and more copies of God's dear Son, more and more like the great Apostle as regards self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of Zion.

At the close of the conference, when we may suppose the sailing of the vessel was announced, the Apostle knelt with the brethren from Ephesus, in prayer, the tenor of which may well be imagined. Then the parting took place, and doubtless the dear brethren began to realize more fully than they had ever done before what great blessings God had bestowed upon them through the Apostle's ministries, and the thought that they should never see him again filled them with sadness, and they wept as they accompanied him to the ship.

Doubtless the Apostle consoled them with the reflection that the time of partings would soon be over and the blessed eternity of union and fellowship soon begin, when they would meet not only one another, but above all meet the Redeemer himself and all the faithful in Christ Jesus. So our Lord also expressed himself on this matter, "a little while." The eighteen centuries intervening would have seemed a long while had any lived from then till now,--but since their "sleep" would be an unconscious interval, it was well that God kindly veiled their eyes and merely comforted them from his own larger standpoint of "soon," "quickly," "a little while." But now that the Kingdom is nigh, even at the door, our hearts no longer cry, How long, O Lord? but, Hallelujah! the day star is risen--the morning is here!

R5939

ORDINATIONS--TRUE AND FALSE

THE WORD ordination, as applied to the Christian ministry, seems to be very imperfectly comprehended by the majority of people-- including ministers. The *ceremony* practised by some Christian people in connection with the appointment of their ministers--such as the laying on of hands, etc.--is not ordination, but merely a ceremony connected with the ordination. The word *ordination* signifies simply the setting apart, authorization or appointment, to some particular work or office.

The proper thought connected with ordination is that which the Bible gives when we read that the Apostle "ordained Elders in every Church." (*Acts 14:23*.) Similarly, amongst the Lord's people today, Elders are chosen, or appointed, or authorized, by the congregation by the stretching forth of their hands--by the congregational vote. Every Elder and every Deacon Scripturally chosen by the vote, "the stretching forth of the hand" (not by laying on of hands), is thus ordained, or appointed, or authorized, to serve in the capacity indicated.

In thus ordaining Elders and Deacons, the Lord's people are instructed that they are to seek to know the mind of the Lord. Their voting for and electing one of the brethren to be a Deacon or an Elder implies that they believe that such a person possesses the Divinely indicated qualifications for the service. No one should be voted for who does not give evidence of having received the begetting of the Holy Spirit, which is the Divine authorization to preach or to teach, as set forth in *Isaiah 61:1*.

All of the Lord's spirit-begotten people are ordained in this general way to speak in the Master's name the wonderful Words of Life, according to their opportunities. But when a congregation of such ordained, spirit-begotten children of God chooses from its midst some to be Elders, others to be Deacons, it implies that they consider the ones chosen to be especially qualified, "apt to teach"-- ensamples to the brethren in word, in conduct.--*1 Tim. 3:2*.

The wrong thought respecting ordination is the one which ignores the Divine anointing (*Isaiah 61:1*), and which merely looks to the education and the talents of the one elected. Thus ignoring the Divine test, many today are serving as Ministers and Elders in the Church of Christ who would make no profession of being spirit-begotten and who give no outward evidence thereof. Such

are not properly ordained Ministers of God, and their church ordination gives no Divine blessing or power.

The most erroneous thought respecting ordination is that held by the three oldest Christian denominations-- the Roman Catholic, the Episcopal Church of England, and the Greek Catholic Church. With these ancient churches, ordination has a different meaning entirely. They claim to have *Apostolic succession of authority*-- that originally only the Apostles had a right to teach or to preach, and that any other teachers or preachers needed to get authorization and Divine power from the hands of the Apostles. They claim that before the Apostles died, there was a special order of bishops ordained in the Church; and that *apostolic power and authority* passed to those bishops, and has thus come down to our day and is possessed by the bishops of these denominations. They claim that only such as *they* ordain are Christian ministers.

In a word, these three ancient churches have set aside entirely the Divine ordination, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and substituted an authorization through a so-called "apostolic succession" of power and authority. Not only did Jesus tell us that there were only Twelve Apostles, but Revelation 2:2 points out this grievous error of those who claim to be apostles and are not, but do lie.

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

The above condensed statement of what is really meant by the ordaining of Christian ministers should be read over repeatedly until fully comprehended. Then the following questions and answers will be better understood:

(1) Are all Elders and Deacons chosen by congregations of God's people to be considered Divinely ordained?

No, no one can be considered Divinely ordained who has not received the begetting of the Holy Spirit. For a congregation to ordain any one who does not profess to be fully consecrated to God and to have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit is for them to do what they have not been authorized by the Lord to do. The person thus chosen would be merely the representative of the church thus ordaining him, but would not be a representative of the Lord.

But for a congregation to recognize the Lord's authorization of a Brother, and to recognize further his aptness to teach and his possession of the qualities fitting him for service according to the Divine Word, means the giving to that Brother of a *proper* election or ordination to be the representative of the congregation in the name of the Lord. No Brother should attempt to serve a company of the Lord's people without their request, and their request or their vote constitutes their appointment of him to that service--in other words, their ordination of him, or appointment, for the service, whether for a day or a year.

(2) If it is proper that all Elders and Deacons should thus be ordained and should not attempt to serve regularly without ordination, what did St. Paul mean when he declared that he was an Apostle not of men nor by men, but by the Lord Jesus Christ?--Galatians 1:1.

No man or congregation is competent to appoint or elect an Apostle. No congregational vote would make one of the brethren an Apostle. That is a special office or function which is of Divine appointment solely. Thus the Lord Jesus appointed only Twelve Apostles--"Twelve Apostles of the Lamb"--St. Paul taking the place of Judas, who lost his apostleship. (Rev. 21:14; Psalms 109:8; Acts 1:20.) It is in this particular that the Church of Rome, the Church of England, and the Greek Church do violence to the principles of God's Word, in that they claim to make, but do not really make, Apostolic Bishops --bishops possessed of apostolic power and authority.

St. Paul did not desire us to understand that he took no notice of earthly appointment, except in respect to his apostolic office. On the contrary, the Church at Antioch *ordained* Paul and Barnabas and afterwards Paul and Silas, to be their representatives and apparently at their expense to carry the Message to others. The Antioch Church did not ordain the Apostle Paul to be an Apostle, but

ordained him to be their missionary; and he accepted their ordination and rendered reports to them, as the account in Acts shows.--*Acts 14:26-28*.

(3) Does the *WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY* ever "ordain" ministers or representatives in connection with the Harvest Work?

It does. All the Pilgrims are thus ordained, appointed, or set apart for the special work of the ministry. Keep in memory always that ceremony is not ordination, but that appointment and direction are ordination. The Society ordains, authorizes, directs the course of the Pilgrims who are its representatives as well as the representatives of the Lord and His Word.

(4) Has the *WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY* the right to withdraw ordination from a Pilgrim brother?

Yes, surely! If it has the power to appoint and direct, it has power also to withdraw its past appointment and direction.

(5) Would the withdrawal of the Society's appointment or ordination mean that the Pilgrim thus suspended from its service would have no right to preach thereafter?

Surely not! In withdrawing its appointment from a Pilgrim the Society would merely be indicating that for some reason it no longer was represented by that Pilgrim, and that it no longer was responsible for him or his teachings or his conduct or his maintenance. The Pilgrim brother thus dropped from the Pilgrim List might still be a Brother and be so esteemed by the Society, but might not be any longer considered a suitable person to represent the Society, either by reason of showing some weakness of character or some lack of the aptness to teach or some other reason which the Society would believe should not be encouraged, or for which it would not wish to be held responsible, or for various reasons, illness, etc.

(6) What is the meaning of V.D.M., and what would be signified by the conferring of the V.D.M. Degree?

The title V.D.M. is a very old one. Indeed, it has been out of use so long that comparatively few know its meaning. The three letters represent the Latin words, *Verbi Dei Minister*. The English of this is, "Minister of the Divine Word." When, during the Dark Ages, the Divine Word fell into disuse and creeds were substituted, this title was generally lost and ignored. There were no ministers of the Divine Word; for the Divine Word was not preached, but, instead, the creeds of men. Instead of these simple words so expressive of the proper thought in connection with all the Lord's public servants, we today have high-sounding titles, such as Reverend and Doctor of Divinity, which are quite unscriptural. To confer the degree of MINISTER OF THE DIVINE WORD would not mean to ordain, but merely imply that the Society in giving this degree had looked into the reputation, and so far as possible into the character and especially into the doctrinal development of the person to whom the degree was given, and that he was in the estimation of the Examining Board found worthy of being called a Minister of the Divine Word.

(7) Are there any such Ministers of the Divine Word now?

Yes, assuredly! Every Pilgrim sent out by the Society is sent out as a Minister of the Divine Word, not a minister of creeds, nor of "isms"; but purely and simply a Minister of the Word of God. And in every case where a congregation of the Lord's people has elected a consecrated, spirit-begotten child of God to be an Elder, they have by their election ordained, or set apart, or indicated, that Elder as being a Minister of the Divine Word--one who serves, distributes, dispenses the Truth of God's Word.

(8) What is the object of the Society in getting out a list of questions with the intimation that the person who could answer those questions in a manner satisfactory to the Society would be considered a MINISTER OF THE DIVINE WORD?

Those questions are designed to fill a long-felt want. The questions are quite unsectarian; they are all Scriptural. The Society desires to know from the Pilgrims who are now in the service, or from any others who may at any time represent the Society as Pilgrims, what are their thoughts, their sentiments and their understanding as respects these fundamental questions appertaining to the

Gospel of Christ. Any Brother not willing to answer those questions would be considered to be confused in his mind, unstable, and hence not qualified to teach--not "apt to teach." This would not imply that he might not still be a Brother, but that he would not be considered a Brother suitable for the Pilgrim service. Neither would it mean that the Brother must not preach, but merely that the Society *would not recommend* him as an exponent of the Divine Word.

Any Brother willing to answer the questions, but showing considerable confusion in his replies, would to us indicate that he needed further instruction before he could properly represent the Society and what the Society believes to be the Truth respecting God's Word. Such a Brother would probably be brought to Brooklyn and have an opportunity to participate for a time in other features of the service, as well as in the Bible Study classes held at every meal time; and, by fullest liberty, have an opportunity of asking any kind of questions on subjects connected with the Truth, that thus the whole matter might be thoroughly regulated and clearly seen and understood.

A FRIENDLY SUGGESTION

Many of the Sisters in the Bethel Family, learning about the questions, made a special request that they might have a list of these and give their answers, with a view to practise and instruction which they might thus derive. Elders and Deacons in various classes have similarly requested the questions. We believe that it would be profitable for all of the classes of Bible Students everywhere, if they would choose to Eldership such as could answer these questions so as to be worthy of the Society's V.D.M. degree. This might make a good many changes amongst the Elders, but we believe that they would be profitable changes. Furthermore, we believe that all Elders earnestly desiring to teach the Truth, and the Truth only, would be glad to have the very assistance which these questions would bring to them.

We have been surprised, sometimes, how careless some of the dear friends seem to be in respect to those whom they elect or ordain as Elders--often novices, contrary to the direction of the Lord's Word, thus doing harm both to the novice and to the class. (*1 Timothy 3:1-7.*) Next to the importance of the election of only a consecrated, spirit-begotten child of God to Eldership should be the question--To what extent has he availed himself of the privileges of study, information? It is our thought that it is unwise to choose as an Elder any Brother who has not read at least once the entire six volumes of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, or who is not a regular *WATCH TOWER* reader. Let it be borne in mind that the Society exercises no authority, makes no criticism, but merely gives advice; and that in the interest of the Lord's Cause and the Lord's people.

R5981

THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION

IS IT in vain that the Lord instructed His people that the closing time of this Gospel Age would be an "hour of temptation" coming upon the whole world? (*Revelation 3:10.*) Surely we have not been taught of the Lord in vain! and so, all loyal to Him are buckling on the breastplate, the helmet and the sandals, and are taking the sword and the shield. If we have not yet entered into fierce conflicts, we know that we are to expect them; and we should be prepared, and have such practise and experience as would enable us to acquit ourselves valiantly in "the hour of temptation."

Since we are instructed that this "hour of temptation" cometh upon the whole world, as well as upon the Church, we perceive that it must be something in the air, as it were, that would affect everybody. We believe that this temptation is a thing spreading itself gradually in every direction; and the Master assured us that unless these days would be cut short by the establishment of His Kingdom in the hands of the Elect, no flesh would survive.

We understand this to mean that the spirit of selfishness and ambition, which is already operating among the nations and driving them insanely to war for commercial supremacy, is the spirit which will increase more and more, and will involve everybody, everywhere. This spirit is seen in the strikes, etc., of our own land--everybody anxious to serve self, and willing to fight for honors, privileges, positions, etc.

But we are more interested in the Church and in seeing how this "hour of temptation" will involve the Lord's people. What we are about to write is far from what we would prefer, but it seems to be our duty as respects the Lord's Cause and people. We believe that a great crisis is upon the Bible students; and that the sooner it is discerned, the more successfully it may be passed. It may mean divisions; but as the Apostle remarked, divisions are sometimes necessary that the approved course and the approved doctrines and the approved methods may be discerned, and that the true teachers be the more fully appreciated. --1 Corinthians 11:18,19.

Before mentioning the sad feature, we mention one for general encouragement; namely, that, so far as we can discern, through intercourse with the friends at conventions, etc., there was never a time when the rank and file of Bible Students possessed such a spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, love, intelligence, faith, joy, as now.

TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES

It causes real grief to write that much of the difficulty and danger to the Church seems to lie at the door of the Elders and Deacons--not all, thank God, but apparently a small minority of them, judging from the queries which come to the Office from time to time from the bewildered sheep, who seek advice as to their proper course. The true, loyal servants in the Church should be all the more appreciated by the Lord's people in proportion as they realize the difference between true Elders and Deacons and those who are untrue. Nor are we writing with a view to the discouragement of the unfaithful, but rather to open their eyes to the true situation, that perchance they may be recovered out of the snare of the Adversary and become helpers of the Lord's Flock, instead of hinderers.

So far as we are able to judge, the same conditions prevail today amongst Bible Students which the Apostle pointed out to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus when he charged them: "Take, therefore, heed unto yourselves and all the Flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with the blood of His own [Son]." (Acts 20:28.) St. Paul's prophecy came true: "After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the Flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace."--Acts 20:29-32.

COURSE OF TWO OF GOD'S SERVANTS CONTRASTED

As it was ambition which first misled Lucifer, and converted a glorious servant of God into an adversary, so it is his spirit that has been dangerous all the way down. The spirit of our Master was the very reverse of this. "He humbled Himself, even unto death," in the doing of the will of the Father. We see nothing of the spirit of pride or ambition or self-seeking of any sort in our Master. We are warned by the Apostle to humble ourselves after His example, if we desire to be exalted with Him in His Kingdom.

But how many seem to forget entirely these Scriptures, which we so frequently bring to the attention of the Lord's people as essential to our attaining to any position in the Kingdom! From reports given us, a horrible state of affairs prevails in some Classes when an election is to be held. The servants of the Church attempt to be rulers, dictators--sometimes even holding the chairmanship of the meeting with the apparent object of seeing that they and their special friends shall be elected as

Elders and Deacons. We have heard of cases in which an Elder refused to speak to one of the Congregation because the latter had not voted for him. Yet doubtless that very Elder would think himself the personification of modesty, humility and meekness.

Oh, for shame that such a spirit should have any place amongst those who have any knowledge of the teachings of God's Word and of the conditions upon which we may hope for joint-heirship with the Master! Of course, there are various degrees of brazen-facedness in such matters. Some quietly try to take advantage of the Class by having the election at some time which is especially favorable to them and their friends. Others seek to pack the meeting with their friends, bringing in comparative strangers, who have no thought of being regular in attendance at the Class, but come merely as an act of friendship to vote for one of their friends.

Additionally, it may generally be expected that such as manifest an ambition of this kind to be leaders and teachers and to ignore the principles of the Golden Rule, as well as the special instructions for the New Creation, are generally the ones who bring in false doctrines. The same ambitious spirit of the Adversary which leads them to strive for honor in the Class seems to lead them on to pose as great teachers--bringers forth of new light. This also, the Apostle explains, is a characteristic of Satan. He says, "What wonder if he transforms himself into an angel of light"--makes himself to appear a leader amongst the children of light.--2 Corinthians 11:14.

In many cases, the Classes are solely to blame, according to their own statement. In some instances, persons have been elected to Eldership who had not even made a profession of consecration to the Lord or who had not symbolized their consecration. Why? Because the Class happened to be without any special talent, and the one who was not a Brother at all, not a New Creature in Christ, was chosen because he had some speaking talent. What could we expect from such a one being exalted to the position of a teacher amongst Bible Students? We could expect only injury to the Cause and injury to the person thus pushed forward contrary to the directions of the Lord's Word. If the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit himself, how could he communicate things of the Spirit to the Lord's consecrated ones? How could we expect the Lord to guide such a one, who had not given over his life to be a footstep-follower of the Lord and to be instructed by His Word?

The selection of improper leaders is evidently a sin, and quite a reflection against the Classes who have the improper leaders. How could such get into positions to represent the Lord's people, except by the latter's votes? When will the Lord's people learn that ability to talk in public is only *one* of the qualifications of an Elder? Time and again we have noted how the Lord's Cause has been hindered, and spirituality amongst the brethren has been stifled, by attempts to imitate the nominal church in putting forward persons glib of tongue, lacking in spirituality.

In such a case, is it not pride on the part of the Class --a desire to make a fair show in the flesh before the world? If not, why do they elect such persons? If they have made a mistake, why do they not at once rectify it in a quiet and positive manner? When Elders seek to bring the Class under their power and control and succeed, does it not show that the Class lacks the very quality that the Lord tells us He desires to see--courage, overcoming? And does the Class not injure such a would-be ruler, as well as itself, by permitting him to succeed in his unscriptural methods?

DECEIVING AND BEING DECEIVED

We have already alluded to the ambitious and selfish spirit in the world leading on to anarchy; and we have just pointed out how the same selfish, ambitious spirit is leading on to anarchy in the Church. We foresee a Time of Trouble for the world upon this score, and a Time of Trouble also for the Church. The world cannot purge itself of this class; for the leaders and the led have the worldly spirit, which is sure to wax worse and worse. But not so in the Church of Christ. Ours is the spirit of the Master, the spirit of loyalty to Truth, the spirit of the Golden Rule, the spirit of brotherly love, the spirit of liberty and helpfulness, the spirit of fidelity to what we believe to be the Truth. It is inexcusable for the Church, possessed of this spirit, to continue under the domination of ambitious

men (and sometimes ambitious women). If they have not been conducting their Class affairs along proper lines, should they not begin at once? We believe that this is the time in which to set the House of the Lord in order.

But some one will say, "We would have a great disturbance if we attempted to do anything contrary to the wishes of those who have fastened themselves upon us as our leaders and rulers. To make a move at all, would endanger a division of the Class, and how could we think of anything which would result in that catastrophe?"

But, we inquire, which would be the better, to have a smaller Class operating along the lines which the Lord has indicated, or a larger Class upholding principles contrary to the Lord's provision, injuring themselves, hindering their influence, and encouraging as a leader one who is either a "wolf" or else a "sheep" which has been mistakenly misled into the wolf spirit? We encourage all the dear Brethren who are in such trouble to be very heroic; to see that they do nothing from strife or vain-glory, but everything in the spirit of meekness and love, that they may get back again to the liberty wherewith Christ made free, and be not again entangled in any human bondage.

REMEMBER DOCTRINAL TESTS ALSO

Repeatedly Bible Students write us that their Elders try to hinder them from the use of the WATCH TOWER SOCIETY'S publications as textbooks in Bible Study. Some of these Elders go so far as to tell the classes that they are out of harmony with many of the things in these textbooks. Sometimes, as rulers, they forbid the use of these in the classes. We are asked what should be done under such circumstances.

We reply, Let those who wish to follow such leaders do so--that is their right. We shall wish them well. But let us not follow with them nor submit for a moment to such arrangements. It is the height of impertinence for such a leader to intrude himself in such a manner, and attempt to tell the Church what they shall and what they shall not do. As the power of *election* is in the hands of the Church, so the power of *dismission* is in their hands. We recommend that such Classes vote to *dismiss* such an Elder from his *position* of service, telling him kindly that his services are no longer desired. Perhaps with a back seat for a while, and an opportunity for thinking over the matter, he may be benefited himself, and the Class also be greatly helped forward by taking such a stand--no matter whether there be no other person in the Class able to address a public meeting or accustomed to leading Classes. Far better would it be to appoint any one of your number to act as chairman, or to take turns in the matter of opening and closing meetings--anything to preserve your liberty and to continue the work of worship and study along proper lines.

Let us make a discrimination between the positive teachings of the Bible--the doctrines of Christ--and the slightly variant ways of *expressing* those doctrines. We are not to expect any two persons to use exactly the same words; but there are certain doctrines which are *fast and immovable* from the viewpoint of the majority of Bible Students. Any one not in good harmony with those presentations should not be encouraged in the *slightest degree*, but, on the contrary, should be discouraged. If he has different views, do not persecute him--do not follow the style of the Dark Ages, but follow the proper course of letting him "flock to himself," or with as many as prefer to view matters as he views them.

We have not given such strong advice heretofore; but we perceive that many of the dear sheep are being troubled, hindered of development and imposed upon. We see that proportionately such Elders and Deacons are growing more bold, and hence the need is the greater that all who do have the right spirit, and who realize that, under the Lord's guidance in our study of the Divine Plan of the Ages, we have not been following "cunningly devised fables," should now take a positive stand for the good of themselves, for the good of the leaders who manifest a wrong spirit, and for the good of the public, who are inquiring for the way of the Lord as never before.

While we are encouraging positiveness and courage, we are not wishing to encourage a spirit of strife, or of nagging and fault-finding amongst the faithful servants of the Lord who do manifest

the humble spirit and who do accord the Class its rights and liberties and who seek to "serve well." Again we repeat, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but all to the glory of God," and with the sole object in view of purging the Church of the influence of those who never should have been chosen, or having been chosen in proper condition, have since manifested a perverted and ambitious spirit. Again we counsel for these *positiveness*, but *kindness* and, *if they repent*, mercy--with a view possibly to restoring them to confidence later on. The Apostle wrote, "I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (*1 Corinthians 11:18,19.*) Here the division evidently must come; and evidently the sooner it comes, the better it will be for the Truth and for all who love it.

BY MY SPIRIT, SAITH THE LORD

We should never forget the Apostle's instruction, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (*1 Corinthians 2:14.*) Additionally, experience demonstrates to us that even after we have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, our ability to understand spiritual things depends, not only upon our study of the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise, but also upon the measure of the Holy Spirit which we possess. Hence the Apostle's exhortation, "Be ye filled with the Spirit!" --*Ephesians 5:18.*

This means that only the spirit-begotten may understand the deep things of God at all; and that their understanding would be in proportion as they attain more and more a filling, a saturation with the spirit of holiness, the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of Truth. Every Bible Student should realize that if, as a New Creature, he walks after the flesh and not after the Spirit, his mind will become more or less darkened, and not only will his ability to understand the deep things of God decrease, but even his recollection of the Lord's Word will decrease; and that, on the contrary, when he is living near to the Lord--walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh--his memory of the Divine Word and his ability to appreciate its Spirit are increased.

Additionally, let us remember that a correct understanding of the Lord's Word is not enjoyed by all the educated and talented, but comes to those who are of a meek and teachable heart, who study the Lord's Word and who live it and absorb its spirit. Thus we have illustrated to us the Divine declaration, "Not by might [greatness], nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."--*Zechariah 4:6.*

The lesson to us is that no matter how great, no matter how able any brother or sister may be, this will not make such fit to be a leader of the Lord's people unless he have additionally the all-important items--first, a knowledge of the Lord's Word; and second, the possession of a good degree of the spirit of Truth--one who always dare be trusted as an ambassador of the Lord. None others should be recognized as teachers or leaders amongst the Lord's people. It is the thought of Churchianity that only the great, the learned, the talented, should be the ministers of the Lord's Word; but the Bible's presentation is to the contrary of this. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Good Tidings to the meek."--*Isaiah 61:1.*

It is in view of these things that we feel justified in urging upon the Classes of Bible Students everywhere that they esteem with double honor such Elder brethren as manifest the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of meekness, the spirit of gentleness, the spirit of patience, the spirit of long-suffering, the spirit of brotherly-kindness, and the spirit of love--those who have a good knowledge of the Word of God and of the Divine Plan, and who manifest an appreciation of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of holiness, and who have an aptness to teach; and that on the contrary, all others be refused.

THE V.D.M. QUESTIONS

Long ago we called attention to the fact that many of the titles applied by the nominal church to their ministers are wholly un-Scriptural--Reverend, Most Reverend, Doctor of Divinity, etc. They

are not only opposed to the letter, but also to the spirit of the Scriptures. We called attention to the fact that the words Elder, Deacon and Pastor are Scriptural terms. We also called attention to the Latin title, Verbi Dei Minister (V.D.M.), and stated that this expresses exactly the Bible thought that every representative of Christ who preaches in public is a Minister of the Divine Word--not a minister of human creeds or of self. All Bible Students approved of God and of His people are of necessity Ministers of the Divine Word --each according to his talents, opportunities and restrictions, as set forth in the Bible.

In view of the fact that quite a good many Classes of Bible Students seem to be not sufficiently particular in respect to the qualifications of those whom they choose as their representatives, we formulated a number of questions styled, V.D.M. Questions, believing that the study of these questions would be helpful to everybody, and that the answers of them would help to mark out such as have a reasonable knowledge of the Divine Word, and whose ministries, therefore, it might be hoped would be profitable and not injurious. These questions are not sectarian, but would be proper for any minister of any denomination. Neither are they catch questions, intended to trip up the unwary. They are simple bona fide queries, the answering of which should be helpful to each individual, and especially helpful in designating those fit to be teachers and leaders amongst the Lord's people.

These we prepared and sent to the Pilgrims--the traveling preachers sent forth under the auspices of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, and to all representatives of the Society in any capacity everywhere. Next came applications from Elders and Deacons in various quarters, and from others of the Bible Students. Then we advised that the questions be studied and answered, as formulated, by all Bible Students. We received many applications, and many of these have been filled out and returned. It is our recommendation to all the Classes that any brother not able to answer these questions in a reasonable way be not considered a suitable representative.

In order that all Bible Students may have these questions and note their simplicity, we publish them below. Brothers Sturgeon, Burgess and Stephenson have been appointed a committee to examine the answers sent in by the Pilgrims. We have no doubt that every one of their answers will be found satisfactory as a whole. None will be rejected except for good cause, and this will be duly pointed out. By vote the New York City Class decided that none should serve it as Elders or Deacons who could not give a reasonably satisfactory reply to these questions. We suggest a somewhat similar course in all the Classes. The examiners of the answers could either be a committee from the Class or, if desired, the Society's representatives above mentioned, to examine the answers and give their criticisms upon request.

V.D.M. QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED BIBLE STUDENTS

- (1) What was the first creative act of God?
- (2) What is the meaning of the word "Logos," as associated with the Son of God? and what is signified by the words Father and Son?
- (3) When and how did sin enter the world?
- (4) What is the Divine penalty for sin upon the sinners? and who are the sinners?
- (5) Why was it necessary for the "Logos" to be made flesh? and was He "incarnated"?
- (6) Of what nature was the Man Christ Jesus from infancy to death?
- (7) Of what nature is Jesus since the resurrection; and what is His official relation to Jehovah?
- (8) What is the work of Jesus during this Gospel Age-- during the time from Pentecost until now?
- (9) What has thus far been done for the world of mankind by Jehovah God? and what by Jesus?
- (10) What is the Divine purpose in respect to the Church when completed?
- (11) What is the Divine purpose in respect to the world of mankind?
- (12) What will be the fate of the finally incorrigible?
- (13) What will be the reward or blessings which will come to the world of mankind through obedience to Messiah's Kingdom?

- (14) By what steps may a sinner come into vital relationship with Christ and with the Heavenly Father?
- (15) After a Christian has been begotten of the Holy Spirit, what is his course, as directed in the Word of God?
- (16) Have you turned from sin to serve the living God?
- (17) Have you made a full consecration of your life and all your powers and talents to the Lord and His service?
- (18) Have you symbolized this consecration by water immersion?
- (19) Have you taken the I.B.S.A. Vow of holiness of life?
- (20) Have you read thoroughly and carefully the six volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES?
- (21) Have you derived much enlightenment and benefit therefrom?
- (22) Do you believe you have a substantial and permanent knowledge of the Bible which will render you more efficient as a servant of the Lord throughout the remainder of your life?

Note: It is, of course, expected that each person filling out one of these reports will do so from his own knowledge and not by inquiring for or copying the answers of others. The BIBLE, STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and TABERNACLE SHADOWS may be consulted, however, and citations given.

SUPPOSED OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

One, and only one, objection was raised to the foregoing-- a fear that it is Babylonish, Sectarian. Ah! it is wonderful how the great Adversary strives always to make out that the right is wrong, that the light is darkness. Babylon's method is to take all power and authority out of the hands of the people of God and put it into the hands of one person or a clique of preachers or bishops or elders. Our aim continually is to preserve the liberty of each ecclesia and have each recognize its own authority and responsibility.

Our reply to the objecting Brother may be of interest to all of our readers, and so we present it below:

DEAR BROTHER:--I am glad to see you scrupulously careful of all of the rights and liberties of the Church of God, and careful to oppose anything that would seem to savor of sectarianism.

I remind you that sectarianism is an attempt on the part of many companies or classes to control each other in matters of doctrine and practise. We are suggesting nothing of this kind, but feel as much opposed to it as you do. We are not attempting to establish any law or rule which must govern all the classes of the Lord's people, but merely suggesting to them the establishment of law and order in their own midst, by themselves.

For instance, each member of every class in voting for Elders and Deacons should certainly consider before voting the qualifications of those for whom he votes: (1) What are his religious professions as respects faith in the teachings of the Bible on the fundamental points; (2) Whether or not the one to be voted for is clear in his understanding of the Truth so as to be apt at teaching it to others; (3) Whether or not the individual has made a consecration of himself to the Lord and has symbolized it; (4) Whether or not the individual manifests a high standard of morals in his deportment, and whether or not he is in sympathy with high ideals such as are represented in the Vow.

Heretofore, the classes have been obliged to surmise on these subjects, and our proposal now is that they do not surmise, but ask the brethren our list of V.D.M. Questions or any other set of questions which the class may prefer, and have their answers to these questions before deciding that they are suitable representatives of the class as its honored servants. This maintains the authority of the class, the Ecclesia, as no sectarian system does, and makes the class the judges of the

qualifications of its representatives as the Bible directs should be shown by the stretching forth of the hand and the ordaining or authorizing of the individual to serve as a representative of the class.

Your letter intimates a query as to the propriety of appointing three brethren to examine the answers to the V.D.M. Questions.

I reply that each class certainly has the right to recognize or appoint certain brethren in whose judgment they would have confidence to examine the answers given to the questions, and to report if any of them were answered unsatisfactorily in their judgment--so that the class could have the final decision. This seems to be an easier way than to have each member of the class read over the answers to the questions before voting. However, the matter is one for the class to decide. In the case of the New York City congregation, the vote was unanimous that all would have confidence in the broad-minded decision of the three brethren approved as a committee of examiners.

In respect to the Vow: Your letter seems to intimate that you have some opposition to it, and think an acknowledgment of its principles should not be required. Instead of saying what there is in the Vow that you object to, you hide behind the proposition that the expressions of the Vow are not found in that particular form in the Scriptures. I remind you that nothing in the English language is found in the Scriptures, because they were written in another language; and furthermore, that our hymns are not found in the Scriptures, and that what we believe to be clear statements of our faith are not found in the Scriptures in the very terms in which we would express them today. The Scriptures lay down for us the general principles of righteous living, and the true foundations of the faith once delivered unto the saints. We are to see to it that all that we sing and preach and pray and write and do is in line with these fundamental principles which the Bible sets forth. The great mass of THE WATCH TOWER readers have informed us that they believe that the phraseology of the Vow is in full harmony with the essence and spirit of the Word of God. If it is, and any brother finds himself in opposition to it, is he not finding himself in opposition to the spirit of God's Word? and if so, would he be a suitable representative of any class of Bible Students, as its Elder or Deacon? We think not. If any fault can be found with the Vow--if it can be shown to be in any sense or degree antagonistic to or out of harmony with the letter and essence of the Word of God we want to know it in no uncertain terms--all Bible Students would want to know this. But no one has yet shown any antagonism nor any deflections in the letter and spirit of the Vow from the letter and spirit of the Bible. We therefore advise all classes that anybody unwilling to assent to the Vow, unwilling to make it his own, has something the matter with him--either his head or his heart, in our judgment, must be out of harmony with the letter and spirit of God's Word and he would not be a suitable Elder or Deacon.

I trust, dear Brother, that as you read this over and ponder it and pray about it, you will realize that you have erred in your first judgment; or if you think of any points that I have not covered and thoroughly answered, it will afford me pleasure to have you state those points.

I here remind you that this Vow is unto the Lord, and not unto the brethren! We hold therefore that any one who declares that he has taken the Vow, has not brought himself thereby under bondage to any of the brethren; but merely declared to the brethren the obligation he has recognized and declared to the Lord--hence it would not be the province of the brethren to investigate the affairs of the brother who declares he has taken the Vow, any more after his declaration than before it. The keeping of that Vow is between the individual and the Lord. It neither adds to nor diminishes his responsibility to the brethren and the class. His declaration that he has taken the Vow merely informs the brethren of the high standard of moral living which he recognizes and is seeking to follow.

THEM THAT ARE CONTENTIOUS

"God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath."

THE Apostle's words foregoing are applicable in some degree to everybody, but they are especially addressed to and applicable to the Church. In a general sense, those who are seeking the higher and better things along the lines of loving obedience to whatever they may know of the Divine will, are receiving a blessing day by day, even though their pathway be a narrow and difficult one. On the contrary, those who are of a contentious disposition, fault-finding, irascible, the dissatisfied, are continually making trouble for themselves as well as for others, and are cultivating a disposition which neither God nor anybody in harmony with God, could approve-- a disposition which will not be rewarded by eternal life, but bring its possessor into more or less trouble continually, and spell failure for him in the end.

But our subject shines out most distinctly when we apply it as the Apostle here does, to God's consecrated people. Some, a decided minority, we fear, are patiently, perseveringly, seeking for God's best and grandest gift-- joint-heirship with the Redeemer in his Kingdom of Glory, and participation in his glorious, divine nature. There is only one way to seek for this great prize successfully, and that is by patiently and perseveringly cultivating and developing in ourselves the *character-likeness* of our Redeemer. (*Rom. 8:29.*) Various opportunities for serving the Lord are set before us, and these are blessed privileges, but we may rely upon it that the Divine purpose and intention in permitting such services is for *our own* development in Christian character. The command to all men is, to honor God supremely, and to deal justly with our fellows, treating them as we would be treated by them, loving them as ourselves; but the special command to the New Creation is, to *love one another* as our Elder Brother loved us--self-sacrificingly. Whatever we are permitted to do one for the other is in the nature of a test of our loyalty to God, of our justice toward the world, or of our loving devotion to the brethren.

Following the example of our Lord, we are to lay down our lives in the service of the brethren. This command is not so much for their *need* of our self-sacrifice as for *our need* of it, as a development of our love and as a test of our love. As the Apostle says, "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."

There are plenty of opportunities for sacrificing self in the interest of the Priesthood. Not only are some of the brethren in darkness, in ignorance and superstition, and need our assistance out into the glorious light of Present Truth, but, additionally, some of them have weaknesses and blemishes, and need our consoling sympathy and strengthening encouragements, or loving rebukes. To the extent of our faithfulness in these matters, we are self-sacrificers, pleasing and acceptable to our heavenly Father and our Redeemer.

The Apostle explained to Timothy, an Elder, that he should in meekness reprove those who opposed themselves, and not render evil for evil, nor railing for railing, nor accusation for accusation, but contrariwise by meekness and gentleness, patience and love, should show the brethren the more excellent way, and should develop ourselves in Christlikeness of character. It is by such "patient continuance in well doing," by such patient development of Christlike character, that we may successfully seek the glory, honor and immortality which God has promised only to such. For, as the Apostle points out, God has predestinated that all who will be of the elect Church, of the Bride class, must be copies of his Son in character, in heart.--*Rom. 8:29.*

Alas! that there seem to be so few well developed along these lines of Christ's character-likeness. Alas! that so many seem to be cultivating the wrong spirit which they know God will not

approve--the contentious spirit, the fault-finding disposition which, instead of building one another up in the most holy faith, is destructive of faith, destructive of peace, destructive of every good quality.

Alas! that amongst those who are in the Truth these contentious persons are to be found in considerable numbers, doing a destructive work, an injurious work, instead of a helpful work. Surely they must know that they are injuring and blemishing their characters and making themselves less and less fit for the Kingdom, or for eternal life on any plane. Surely they must know that they are doing a destructive work in the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Surely they must know that they are sowing seeds of discord, and planting roots of bitterness, which are sure to bring forth an evil fruitage, hurtful to many. Surely they must know that God has expressed a special reprobation for those who thus do injury to the Church.--*Matt. 18:6; Luke 17:2.*

What will be the reward to these? Not glory, honor and immortality, but indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish, says the Apostle. He does not say that this means an eternity of wrath, and anguish, nor do we. On the contrary, knowing that the extreme penalty of opposition to God is the "Second Death," we must suppose that the tribulation and anguish will be more or less connected with the present life--either by their participation in the "Great Company," and passing through the great time of trouble and there learning the lessons they neglected to learn previously, or, soured in disposition, robbed of the peace, and joy, and love, which they might have possessed as spirit-begotten ones, these will die the "Second Death" as incorrigible, as having received the grace of God and the instructions of his Word in vain. Instead of developing character symbolized by the fruitful vine, they are developing the characteristics of the briar and the thorn, whose end is destruction.

BE TRANSFORMED

It would be of no avail for us to call attention to these matters of Divine Writ, nor for the Apostle to have penned these words of condemnation, if there were not a possibility of change on the part of those who are well-doing and well-seeking, and also on the part of those who are evil-doing and contentious. Such condemnations, on the contrary, are intended to help us to establish our characters in the right direction. Whoever, therefore, realizes while reading this article that he is going in the wrong direction, cultivating a contentious and fault-finding spirit, and a disposition to pull down the faith and obedience, and spirit of love, in the Body of Christ, will do well to immediately resolve by the grace of God to take the opposite course. And whoever is seeking the glory, honor and immortality of the heavenly calling along the right lines of patient perseverance in well doing, should be encouraged, and made watchful, that he might persevere in the right way, and become more and more blessed, and more and more secure, and entrenched, and fixed, in the character which God will approve, and to which he will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joys of thy Lord."

To those who find themselves possessed of a cantankerous disposition, fault-finding, and nagging, destructive instead of constructive, quarrelsome instead of peaceable, we urge reform in great haste. We remind them that we are nearing the end of the Church's condition of trial; that we are already in the testing time, and that many are falling because of not having developed proper characters. We urge them to take the matter at once to the Lord in prayer, and by his assisting grace to immediately begin to reverse all these wrong currents of their lives. They should hearken diligently to the Apostle's words, and "seek peace and ensue it," and so far as possible henceforth "live peaceably with all men," and "let the peace of God rule in their hearts," and be thankful for blessings already received. In such a condition of heart they will have little disposition to find fault with the Lord or his providences in connection with his people and his work. They will "learn of him" instead of finding fault with everybody and everything which the Lord does not order to their pleasure.

We urge all such to take note of the fact that the murmurers and complainers in typical Israel were not permitted to enter into Canaan's blessings. (*1 Cor. 10:10.*) We remind them of the Apostle's

words to the effect that murmurings against the Divine arrangements are really murmurings against the Lord himself. Let us do with our might what our hands find to do, without murmuring, without complaining, without fault-finding. (*Phil. 2:14.*) Let us leave to God the management of his work. Let us humbly realize that if he would commit it all to our care we would be unable to manage it and would be obliged to take it back to him and to solicit his supervision of his own work.

If the thought comes to us that we could manage better than the Lord; that we could guide the harvest work better than he has arranged it, let us flee that thought as a snare of the Adversary by which he would entrap us. Instead of fault-finding and endeavoring to change the Divine arrangements let us do our own parts as faithfully as we know how, uncomplainingly, co-operating to the extent that our conscience and talents will permit in the work which the Lord is carrying on and directing. Surely we do not know that if the Lord should give the entire management of his harvest work into our hands that we could do it better than he; surely, therefore, we should humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time.

Let us be assured that only those who do thus humble themselves, and realize the wisdom and grace of God, and fall in line therewith, will have any part in the Kingdom work. The heady, the high-minded, the self-conscious, the contentious, the dissatisfied, shall have neither the good of the present nor the honors of the future.

YE SHALL RECEIVE THE SEVERER TRIAL

The Apostle James admonishes the brethren respecting the peculiar dangers which beset those ambitious to be teachers, saying, "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we (teachers) shall receive the greater condemnation (judgment, or trial). For in many things we offend all"--we are all imperfect.--*James 3:1.*

While all recognize the truth of the Apostle's words, few seem to be in any great degree deterred by them. As a consequence, we find many seeking the office of teacher in the Church, and perceive also the truth of the Apostle's words that as teachers they are subject to severer trials, and that the majority of those who appear to stumble and fall from the truth are of this class. We write thus not to suggest that teachers are unnecessary or contrary to the Divine arrangement, but to suggest that whoever enters upon the work of teaching should do so with a realization of the grave responsibility which he assumes, and the temptations or trials which beset his pathway toward the heavenly city.

St. Paul wrote, "He that seeketh the office of a bishop (of a shepherd, of an overseer) seeketh a good service," and so we should recognize that whoever out of a pure heart seeks to serve the Lord's cause as an under-shepherd of the sheep, and as a co-laborer with the Redeemer, is engaging in a most noble service. If he approach this service from this standpoint of earnest desire to serve the flock, an earnest desire to be in full accord with the Great Shepherd, he should not be ashamed to rejoice that he has to this extent the Spirit of the Lord. But if he find in himself, in either great or small measure, a spirit of ambition, a spirit of pride, a spirit of boastfulness, the desire to lord it over the brethren of the household of faith, then let him fear. With trembling heart either let him resign the service, or at the throne of grace rid himself, purge himself, of the evil ambitions of his heart, and be filled with the Spirit of the Master. That holy Spirit is the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness, love; to desire simply and only the glory of God and the blessing of his people-- the spirit that is ready to sacrifice self at any moment for the peace of the Body of Christ, or the assistance of the flock.

Some wonder why the Apostle should thus write of special dangers to those brethren who would attempt to teach in the Church. We answer that we accept his words as those of inspiration, and that, additionally, observation shows us the truthfulness of them. Moreover, unconsciously the Lord's dear people who make no pretensions themselves in the direction of teaching are often responsible to a considerable degree for the deflection of those whom they recognize as teachers, and

whom unconsciously they lead into temptation. The besetments of teachers are, (1) pride, and (2) arrogance.

(1) Encouraged by the laudatory words of the brethren, the tendency is for them to feel that they are somebodies, and to attribute the success of their efforts to natural ability, talent, etc., rather than to the wonderful power and beauty of the Truth. Ministers in general seem to be liable to besetment along this line, because it is indeed a very honorable position to stand before our fellows as ambassadors for the King of Glory. The general tendency is to boast of denominational strength and wisdom. But amongst those who are in the light of "Present Truth" the temptation to personal pride is perhaps even greater.

The antidote for this is a distinct remembrance of the fact that the plan is not our own, but all of its lengths and breadths and heights and depths are of God and for all his people, and that we are highly honored in the delivering of it in the most humble manner conceivable.

A proper allegiance to the Lord should lead us to hide ourselves, that all the glory and honor might go to the great Author of the Plan of Salvation, and to the great Redeemer, whose sacrifice is its very center, and whose love is the very circumference of our message. With these thoughts impressed upon our minds, the greater the service permitted us, the greater should be our humility and our realization of unworthiness to be the mouthpieces of the great Lord of Glory.

(2) Arrogance we mentioned as one of the besetments. Alas! how inappropriate it is that any, because of being honored of the Lord as his mouthpiece for his message, should attempt to take the place of his Lord, and to act arrogantly toward his brethren, or, as the Apostle expresses it, to "Lord it over God's heritage." (*1 Pet. 5:3.*) The Scriptures set before us the very reverse standard, namely, that those brethren permitted to serve as teachers, so far from being lords of the Church, are merely its *servants*. While they are servants of God, the Divine direction in the matter is to be sought through the Church. In a word, the Church's election of elders, pastors, or teachers is the election of those whom it esteems to be *the Lord's choice* for its service--to serve it in holy things, to minister to it the grace of God, to dispense for it the spiritual food of the Divine Word.

The Church has been responsible in a considerable measure for the stumbling of those whom it has recognized as Elder-brothers and teachers. While they should not think evil, surmise evil, surmise pride, or surmise arrogance, they should be so wakeful to their own duties and responsibilities toward these brethren that they would not *unduly* flatter them, nor *unduly* encourage them, nor *stimulate* them to manufacture new light.

On the contrary, all who are spiritual should be helpful to those elder-brothers; should compliment them on their loyalty to the Lord, and to the old, old story, rather than commend them for fanciful fictions, or encourage them further along such lines. The Gospel of Grace has not changed; it is still the old, old story of Jesus and his love, and of the Father's love; it still includes the thought of our calling and election by faithfulness to the terms laid down in the Scriptures. The brethren should be encouraged along these lines rather than along the lines of manufacturing types by guess-work without any authority of the Word of God.

As for arrogance on the part of leaders, and a supercilious lording it over the Church, we believe that the Church itself has a great responsibility. Beginners should not be hastily pushed forward, as St. Paul points out, and when any Elder-brother advanced in the Truth begins to show signs of headiness, and of disregard for the voice of the Church, and a disinclination to submit to it all the questions pertaining to its affairs, the Church should curb such arrogance promptly and thoroughly by declining the further election of such brother, and by insisting upon the rights of the Church. The insistence should not, however, be in the nature of wrangling or contention, but in a kindly, brotherly, noble manner the rights of the Church should be set forth, and the vote of the Church on the subject should be asked. If the vote be contrary to the brother who sought to protect the Church's rights, he should submit gracefully, because by him also the voice of the Church is to be accepted as decisive.

We have great sympathy for the dear brethren who, in the providence of God, occupy the positions of Elders and teachers in the congregations of the Lord's people. And hence, while calling attention to the severe temptations to which they are exposed, and while urging the Church to do its duty and to assist them to keep humble and faithful, we also urge, in the language of the Apostle, that those who are noble, humble, self-sacrificing, cannot be too highly esteemed nor too loyally supported. The Apostle's words are, "Remember them which have the rule (supervision) over you; who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering them that have the rule (supervision) over you, and the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." And again, "Obey submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief." (*Heb. 13:7,17.*) And again, "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."-- *1 Thess. 5:13.*

If the position of an Elder and teacher in the Church of Christ is a very hazardous one, a very difficult one to fill with acceptableness to God and to the brethren, and a position very full of temptation, the Church should sympathetically be very watchful not to increase the temptation, not to foster it and a wrong fruitage. On the contrary, however, where a faithful servant is found, all the loyal brethren should seek in every way to be helpful and to co-operate with such. Instead of being fault-finding and inclined to criticize this, and that, and the other word, and manner, and tone, and look, they should be so full of love and sympathy, and so appreciative of his loving zeal, devotion and humility, as to let trivial and unimportant matters pass unmentioned, and indeed unnoticed. Realizing the responsibility of his office they have some reason to doubt if they would be able to fill his place with as good or as great ability and humility.

In the selection of Elders the consecrated should remember that the responsibility rests upon them; and no vote should be cast without studious consideration of the Divine will, and prayer for Divine guidance. In seeking to determine the Lord's will in such a matter, we should remember the characteristics of the teacher as set forth in the Scriptures: (1) Of course, a teacher should be apt to teach; he should have the natural faculty or ability to make plain matters which he understands. (2) Still more important is it that if he have the ability to teach, he shall be clear in the Truth, so the Truth and not error may be set forth with clearness. (3) Humility and piety should be considered paramount and primary qualifications for eldership. However able a teacher, however doctrinally clear, no one is properly fitted for this position except he have humility and piety, and unless his words and deeds have manifested his love for the brethren. For, as the Scriptures set forth, these are qualities of great value in God's sight. Now as ever it is true that great opportunities for doing good means even greater opportunities for doing harm. This is because, under present conditions, spiritual sickness and contagions like earthly ailments spread and "catch" much more readily than spiritual health.

R1956

LAYING ON OF HANDS

WEST VIRGINIA

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--From the TOWER for Nov. 15, '95, I was gratified to find that your mind and investigation upon the subject of "Order in the Church" coincides so exactly with our own. Before seeing anything from you at all on the subject, the Church here realized the necessity of more order, and was forced to examine the whole subject with the result you state.

There is one item, however, that you seem to have overlooked or thought not necessary to discuss, upon which I greatly desire to have your opinion; that is, in regard to the custom of "laying on hands."

I agree with you heartily in its being the best to follow the "pattern" as closely as possible, and in doing so I cannot avoid the conclusion that the recognition of God's gifts is expressed by the solemn formula of laying on hands of the presbytery. Now, if my conclusions are erroneous, please help me out. If in your understanding they are wrong, please explain the following texts: Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22. Are the terms "bishop" and "elder" synonymous?

I am aware that in this ordinance the early Church conferred no special power, that it set up over them no ruler or lord; but did not this formula make the "elder" or "bishop" a representative or servant of those who lay on hands? We hope that your opinion, which we greatly respect, may help us out on this question.

We have appointed three "elders"--one who takes oversight of the work at this place and two who work in the adjacent localities, I being one of the latter. I say appointed, but no hands have been laid on us; but the question is now being discussed by the brethren, and comes up for final settlement shortly.

With fraternal love for you and yours, I remain,
C. A. McCLUNG.

[REPLY:--According to the Scripture use of the term the word "presbytery" signifies a "company of elders," the word coming from the Greek word which signifies "old man." The word "bishop" signifies "overseer," and is used with reference to elders in Acts 20:28, and is evidently another name for the elders mentioned in Phil. 1:1. The reference of 1 Tim. 5:22 may possibly be to ordination by laying on of hands; but this is uncertain.

With regard to the laying on of hands of the presbytery (that is, the eldership) upon Timothy: the eldership in this case probably referred to the Apostles who were still living. Timothy was chosen by Paul as his successor to carry on the work which he began, and he evidently desired that the Apostles in general should recognize Timothy. Besides it was the custom in those days for the Apostles to lay hands upon all who believed, and thus to communicate to them a gift of the spirit. Paul reminds Timothy that he had received such a gift. In evidence that only the Apostles could confer these gifts we recall the fact that Simon Magus offered the Apostles money in exchange for the power that they possessed, so that upon whomsoever he might lay hands he would receive a gift of the spirit. We remember also the case mentioned in Acts 19:6, also Acts 8:12-19, in which it is shown that although Philip (the evangelist) had preached Christ to the Samaritans, and they had believed and been baptized, yet Philip did not lay hands upon them nor communicate the holy spirit, but sent word to Peter and John who were apostles, and who went down and prayed with them and communicated the gifts of the spirit.

All of this seems to indicate clearly that only the apostles had the power to communicate these gifts of the spirit, although the apostles might very properly be called, and did call themselves, elders or presbyters. But since they are no longer living there are none who can convey the gifts of the spirit by the laying on of hands.

But notice that in the early Church the laying on of hands was used also to indicate *consent*; as, for instance, in the case of the Church at Antioch when it chose Paul and Barnabas to be its missionaries and representatives in Gospel work. This congregation fasted and prayed and laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas, and thus sent them away. The laying on of hands in this case did not imply the communication of any gift, but merely denoted representation, as in the case of the priests of old, when the offerer laid his hands upon the animal before it was slain, it represented that the animal or person upon whom the hands were laid was thenceforth recognized as the representative of the person who laid hands upon it or him. Thus the congregation at Antioch sent forth two from their midst as their representatives in the work. No doubt they also furnished them money for their travel, and after they had performed their journey Paul and Barnabas returned to the

Church at Antioch and gave them a report of the work done as their representatives as well as the Lord's representatives. --See Acts 14:26,27; Also 15:3.

Applying these things to the present time we would say: In Europe and America the custom of laying on hands to indicate representation is no longer followed, just as kissing among men is no longer a custom, although both customs are still in vogue in the far East. We suggest, therefore, that in our judgment the choosing and fasting and prayer are still the proper acts in connection with the congregational recognition of the elders--whether local or traveling; but that the laying on of hands, which could communicate no gift of the spirit, and which in the custom of our country no longer indicates representation, is no longer the proper thing. Indeed, we consider it the improper thing in view of the customs and practices in general, because it would be liable to be misunderstood, and to give the impression that the users hold the theory in common with many that an apostolic succession has been continued with power to authorize and commission and to imbue the subjects with supernatural abilities; for instance, as do the Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Episcopalians, Mormons and to a lesser extent nearly all other denominations.]

R5020

TRUTHFUL WORDS--POLITE SPEECH

--MAY 26.--MATT. 5:33-37; JAS. 3:1-12; 5:12.--

*"Putting away falsehood, speak every man truth with his neighbor:
for we are members one of another."--Eph. 4:25.*

IN OUR LAST study we contrasted the teachings of Jesus with those of the Pharisees respecting obligations to the Law. Our decision was that "never man spake like this man." In today's study we note the contrast between His teachings and those of the religionists of His day. Others attempted to limit the habit of swearing, but the Great Teacher said, "Swear not at all." How foolish is swearing of every kind! We are not, of course, objecting to solemn affirmations or legal oaths as required by law.

Truly Saint Paul declares that those who receive the Spirit of the Lord possess the "Spirit of a sound mind." They soon begin to realize the senselessness and vulgarity of swearing or of supposing it necessary to substantiate their word. Quite to the contrary, the fact that one boisterously swears that what he says is true implies that he does not expect his hearer to believe his simple word, and this in turn presupposes that his word ordinarily is not worthy of belief.

Note the injunction of the Master, "Let your speech be yea, yea, nay, nay"--anything further implies evil. The Master's meaning evidently is, When you say yes, let it *be yes*; when you say no, let it *be no*! Tell the truth! Your friends and neighbors by and by will learn how to value your speech. In other words, be so truthful in all that you say that it will be unnecessary to swear to its truthfulness, or to use any kind of specially forceful language to prove your sincerity--that you are neither overstating nor understating the truth.

MINISTERS SHOULD BE TRUTHFUL

In the second portion of our study St. James exhorts, "Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive severer testing. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." St. James seems to say that, while all Christians need to bridle their tongues, those in the more exalted positions are all the more liable to error in this respect. They have a special gift of speech and another special gift of

opportunity to use this speech, and so, exerting a wide influence, their responsibility evidently is proportionate.

It is not for us to judge ministers or others; there is One that judgeth, the Lord. We greatly fear, however, that many ministers, as well as Christians in humbler stations, fail to fully appreciate their responsibilities for every word they utter or have the opportunity of uttering. Many tell us that for years they preached what they did not believe. How terrible! How stultifying to their manhood! How serious a reflection upon their brand of Christianity! However, we should rejoice that finally their consciences triumphed.

A LITTLE MATCH STARTS A BIG FIRE

St. James gives some forceful illustrations. Christians should put a bridle of restraint into their own mouths, even as they put bits into the mouths of their horses. They should have a rudder whereby to steer their own course in life, even as they put a rudder upon a ship. They should remember that the tongue, although one of the least members of the body, is the most influential of all. A blow struck by the fist might injure one person near enough, but a bitter word, like a poisoned arrow, may strike afar off; yea, like a shell from a great gun, it may explode and do much damage. Yea, more! Its influence may pass through telephones, telegraph wires, cables and wireless apparatus to every nook and corner of the earth, and be reproduced in newspapers all over the world. What a tremendous power! what a sacred trust! what a talent for use or misuse!

Not all of us have such wide opportunities for good or evil, but in our own homes, in our own offices, shops, markets, we may send forth either good or evil influences, far reaching for either happiness or misery, either up-building or down-tearing character, either of helpfulness or of discouragement. Surely no Christian could be indifferent to this his most powerful member. St. James suggests that as a match will kindle a great fire, so the tongue might start a great flame, a great commotion and do much injury. He suggests boasting as being one of the most dangerous uses of the tongue. Our experience corroborates this. Boasting often leads us into error and fastens us there because we are not humble enough to acknowledge the fault. It often leads into untruth from which we may have difficulty in escaping. It is an evidence of pride, and therefore un-Christlike, improper.

Angry words, bitter words, sarcastic words, taunting words, may set ablaze the course of a whole life and impel it with angry force toward the Second Death, *Gehenna*. Hence St. James suggests that such evil-breeding words are like sparks from *Gehenna*, tending toward destruction.

NO MAN CAN TAME IT

The Apostle reminds us that beasts and birds and fishes are all subject to a taming power under man's direction, but that no man can tame another man's tongue. Yea, is it not safe to say that no fallen man can tame his own tongue? The only way by which to have our tongues brought into subjection to the Divine will and made useful as servants of truth and righteousness and love is by having them converted. And since the tongue is but the agent speaking for the sentiments of the heart, it follows that it is the heart that needs to be converted. The power of true conversion, true transformation of character, so that "all things become new," is of God.

The child of God, begotten of the Holy Spirit, has an assistance in the mastering and taming of his tongue that the unregenerate have not. How important then the message, "My son, give Me thine heart"! Out of the heart are the issues of life. Out of the abundance of the heart, of the heart's meditations, the mouth speaketh.

St. James declares that the tongue of the natural man is full of deadly poison. His illustration seems to be that of a serpent. Alas, that in our fallen condition it should be so true that "the poison of asps is under their lips!" It is when we become new creatures, with a new motive power and incentive of love instead of selfishness, that the poison fangs are drawn. The new mind, the new creature, can then use the lips to show forth the praises of God and to bless his fellowmen.

PRAISING GOD--INJURING MEN

But note that the Apostle calls our attention to the fact that some who have become people of God, some who do Him reverence, fail to take note of the fact that the same tongue with which they sing Divine praises and tell Divine mercy they use to backbite, slander, defame, crush, mortify, scathe, flay their fellowmen! Alas, we realize the truth of the charge! And to *realize* means to *correct* on the part of those who are seeking to do the Divine will and to be true disciples of the Redeemer. A fountain cannot send forth at the same opening pure water and brackish. Hence we may know that if with our tongues we are doing injury to our fellowmen we are deceiving ourselves with respect to our real attitude toward God. We may know that God will reject the prayers and worship coming from a heart full of bitterness, anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, and manifesting itself in acrimonious speech.

It was Carlyle who described sarcasm as being "the natural language of the Devil." It was Faber who wrote, "No one was ever corrected by sarcasm; crushed, perhaps, if the sarcasm was clever enough, but drawn nearer to God, never." Robertson wrote, "Love is the remedy for slander." Surely the Golden Rule needs to be applied to our speech as well as to our actions. Truly Bishop Jackson wrote: "From being the messenger of peace and love, the tongue has become the fomentor of jealousy and ill-will, the lash of uncharitableness and the weapon of hatred."

R5185

ST. PETER'S EXHORTATION TO THE ELDERS

"Humble yourselves...under the mighty hand of God,
that He may exalt you in due time."--1 Peter 5:6.

AS THOSE who have received Divine grace and the knowledge of the Divine purpose, the Lord's people have certain ambitions which are right and proper, and which should be rightly exercised, regulated and governed. No one should be without a laudable ambition. We cannot imagine God to be without ambition. Those who have little or none pass through life in a kind of maze, accomplishing very little for themselves or others, and usually fail in all they undertake.

There are, however, noble and ignoble ambitions. Some people are ambitious to become great, renowned; others are ambitious to rule; still others are ambitious for wealth, for social distinction, or for titles and honor amongst men. These are all selfish ambitions, yet they are the power that moves the world today--in business, social, political and even religious circles. These are all wrong ambitions; and though they may not all result in evil, yet they are all selfish, and tend toward evil. Many are seduced by selfish ambitions into doing those things of which their consciences do not approve.

The Christian has set before him the most noble ambition possible. God is calling from the world a people for His Name. Before these He sets the loftiest ambition. These are invited to become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. This is an ambition which inspires them to develop all the higher qualities of mind and character, in order to prepare themselves for the society, friendship and fellowship of the Heavenly Father and the Lord. Let us have this high ambition ever before us, as an incentive to the most earnest endeavor to heed the Word of the Lord.

Those who take this course are very pleasing to the Father. He has a great work to be done, and is seeking a people who will do it. Christ Jesus is the Head of this great work, and His Kingdom is to rule and bless the world, that in the ages to come, God may show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us. (Eph. 2:7.) Those who appreciate this high calling wish to be where

God has invited them to be. Those who do not care for what God has offered or who do not wish to conform to the terms should not enter the race for the prize.

Those who have the heavenly ambition should not forget that they have the treasure of the new nature in earthen vessels. To this class it becomes a laudable ambition to serve one another and to build one another up in the most holy faith. The Bride is to make herself ready. (*Rev. 19:7.*) So these should seek to get ready themselves and to help others of the dear family of God.

DANGER INVOLVED IN THE ELDERSHIP

To desire the office of a bishop, a shepherd, is a good ambition. (*1 Tim. 3:1.*) If one properly attends to the shepherding of the flock, he will not have time for other interests. Those who have been called to the position of Eldership amongst the Lord's people should consider this an honor and a privilege from the Lord; and they should be very careful to seek it, not for filthy lucre's sake, but with a ready mind. (*1 Peter 5:1-4.*) But in seeking this position let each one remember that there is danger of the development of pride and the assumption of power.

Those who have the high privilege of serving as an Elder Brother should watch themselves to see that they do not lord it over God's heritage. They should remember that they are not the Chief Shepherd, but only under-shepherds. If any should lord it over the flock, he would bring injury to himself as well as to the Church; for in thus doing he would be cultivating a spirit of pride.

St. Peter tells us that "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." (*1 Peter 5:5.*) Therefore if in the Lord's service one is humble, his course not only inures to the benefit of the Class, but it is the only way by which anyone will gain a position in the Kingdom. The Eldership is an honorable office which not only has great privileges attached to it, but has also great temptation and great danger. St. James says, "My brethren, be not many [of you] masters [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."--*James 3:1.*

The Apostle exhorts those that are Elders doing a work that is necessary to be done, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." Everything is being done by the mighty power of God, by which He is causing all things to work together for good. We cannot interfere with the Divine will. We might permit pride or fond desire to hinder our own progress, but we cannot hinder the Plan of God.

We all desire to seek the best way to serve others and yet to gain the great reward. St. Peter shows us that way--"Humble yourselves." As the poet has expressed it,

"I am afraid to touch
Things that involve so much."

This spirit will make us very fearful of developing any pride or bombast or desire of lording it over others. So, then, we humble ourselves and remember that God will especially bless those who are more lowly, more trustful in the Lord, and in due time will exalt them--at the Second Coming of our Lord.

Sometimes, indeed, the humble-minded of the Lord's people may be less esteemed in the Church than are some who lack this important quality of character. There is in mankind a general tendency toward brow-beating. They would rather have some one who will ride rough-shod over them than one who is gentle and moderate. Therefore they may not like us. But we are not to seek what they would like best in us. Rather we are to remember that we are to serve the Lord in His way, and that our chief responsibility in the Lord's sight is for *ourselves*. We are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt us in due time.

PRIDE IN KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH INJURIOUS

All these matters show us that our proper attitude is that of humility. The sentiment of our hearts should not be that of pride, but of meekness, humility, faithfulness.

Pride is selfishness gone to seed. The selfish spirit greedily gathers to itself as much as possible of all that it esteems good and valuable--wealth, learning, honor, fame and distinction among men. A measure of success in the acquisition of these treasures leads the selfish soul to a feeling of complacency, independence and indifference to the well-being of others. This spirit, gradually, but rapidly developing into arrogance, self-assertive pride, will continue to ripen with every gleam of the sunlight of temporal prosperity. As selfishness continues to ripen, it swells itself to ridiculous proportions and delights to vaunt itself, and gloats over its imagined importance and worthiness of honor and praise.

How much easier and how much wiser is the course of humility! The humble spirit seeketh not its own, is not puffed up, does not attempt to speculate upon inflated values, does not think of itself more highly than it ought to think, but thinks soberly--neither overrating nor underrating its own acquirements or achievements. Humility strives always to do business on a solid basis, though it contends lawfully to acquire a real worthiness and to achieve the true glory of the Divine commendation and favor.

There is a disposition on the part of many to be rather boastful on account of the Truth, as though we had originated the Truth. How foolish this is! We have made no truth. We have merely gotten rid of some of the errors that formerly blinded our eyes. *The Truth is God's*. He has allowed us to see out of the darkness of ignorance and superstition into the Truth of His Plan. If a man who had seen a beautiful picture should then boast as though he had painted it, we would say, "Foolish man! You did not *make* that picture. You merely *looked at it*. You have nothing to boast of concerning it."

We did not make any part of God's Plan of the Ages. If we had attempted to do so, we would have made a failure of it. Our attitude of mind, then, should be, "Come, we will show you what God has arranged, what God has pictured." Thus we would glorify God and be helpful to others; for to whatever extent we manifest pride or self-consciousness in the Truth, to that extent we do injury to ourselves and to others. The world would say, "We have just as able Doctors of Divinity in our denominations as you have--just as wise to teach us the Truth."

Our proper course, therefore, is to make it plain at the very beginning that we are of the right spirit--the meek, humble spirit of the Master. God is permitting us to see things in His Word, concerning which it is His due time to turn on the light. The picture was there all along, but the clouds and darkness made it so dim that we were not able to discern its beauties. Now the light is being turned on, and, as the poet has expressed it,

"Wonderful things in the Bible we see."

Instead of self-confidence, wisdom dictates a distrustfulness of self, remembering its weaknesses and imperfections, and correspondingly the greater reverence for God and reliance upon Him, which more than anything else will strengthen us and enable us to depart from the evil of our fallen estate.

It is indeed no easy matter to tread the pathway of humility, to continually check the human aspirations, and to keep the sacrifice on the altar until it is fully consumed. But thus it is that we are to work out our own salvation to the Divine nature with fear and trembling, lest we come short of worthiness for the prize promised to the faithful overcomers who tread closely in the footsteps of our blessed Forerunner, who was meek and lowly of heart.--*Phil. 2:8,12*.

It is when we are thus humble and faithful that the Lord makes us His chosen vessels to bear His name to others. Thus, emptied of self and filled with His Spirit, and with His Truth, we can go forth, strong in the Lord of Hosts and in His mighty Power do valiant service as soldiers of the Cross.

GOD'S SUPERVISION IN THE WORLD AND IN THE CHURCH

"Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; He putteth down one, and setteth up another."--Psalm 75:6,7.

MATTERS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

We would apply our text particularly to the Church-- the Church being especially guided of the Lord, and those in which He is especially interested. In His arrangement He has provided for the setting of these members in the Church. "God hath set the members every one in the Body, as it hath pleased Him." "God hath set some in the Church, first, Apostles, secondarily, public orators, thirdly teachers, pastors, after that workers of miracles," etc.--indicating different stations in the Body of Christ. We are to remember that, as the Apostle says, *God hath set the members in the Body.*

In proportion as twenty or thirty or three hundred or five hundred or a thousand put themselves in harmony with His will, He will set some to be Elders and some to be Deacons, etc. How will He set them? Through the voice of the Church. Whoever should receive the appointment to be a Deacon in the Church should be faithful to the Lord and to the brethren. And whoever should be appointed as an Elder should consider it a matter of privilege, and be faithful to the Lord and to the brethren, so that he might profit the Church and be pleasing to the brethren, and above all, be pleasing to the Lord.

This is the thought the Apostle gives in his parting words to the Elders of Ephesus. (*Acts 20:17-38.*) He tells them to take heed to themselves that they may feed the flock. And he goes on to give varied advice--how they should take heed as those who should give account of their opportunities and responsibilities, which they must recognize as from both the Lord and the brethren.

Sometimes in the Lord's permission--certainly not *without* His permission--the classes, in their endeavor to express the Lord's will, may say, This brother was chosen as Elder last time, and we will not choose him as an Elder this time. Or they may say, He was a Deacon last time, and we will not choose him as a Deacon this time, but we will drop him. What should be the attitude of the brother thus dropped?

SUBMISSION TO THE LORD'S WILL

We have had experience along this line--letters from those thus dropped, intimating that they think the Class has made a mistake in not recognizing their ability and not re-electing them. And our answer has been that we did not know what had been the thought back of the action of the Class, and we did not know whether the Class had acted wisely or not, but that our thought would be that the brother should accept this decision as from the Lord.

Such a one should say to himself, I have been the servant of the congregation and have appreciated it very much. I recognize that such a promotion is of the Lord, and that the service given me was of the Lord. But now, in God's providence, I am not to be an overseer for a year, or six months, or what-not. Perhaps the Lord has a good lesson in this for me. Perhaps the Lord wishes to show whom He will set up and whom He will not. So instead of feeling hurt or miffed or moody over the matter, I am going to say, If I can see anything in which I was derelict in my duty, I will consider it a chastisement from the Lord. I will remember the words of the Scripture which say, "Let the brother...rejoice in that he is exalted, and let the brother...rejoice in that he is abased." I am glad to see that the Class exercise independence enough to do what they consider the Lord's will. At all events, I will try to recognize that promotion cometh not from the East nor West nor South, but that God is the Judge, the Decider, and that He putteth whomsoever He will over the affairs of the Church.

R3014 [sel]

The custom of the nominal church systems, to have one member of the congregation do all the preaching, all the teaching, is one that has done much injury, in that it has given rise to a division of the church into classes--clergy and laity;--additionally it has laid too much work upon the few called the clergy to permit of their attention to things of this present life, providing things honest in the sight of all men; and by taking away from the majority of the Lord's people their responsibility and share in the ministry it has deprived them of a great blessing, and hindered their growth in grace and their development as servants of the truth.

We are not opposing the preaching of the gospel by those who have the talent for it; but our thought is that the Lord never intended the meetings of his people to be all of the preaching kind. It was not so in the early church as the Apostle explains (I Cor. 12; I Thess. 5:11.) An effort should be made to develop whatever talent there is in any little company --to incite and draw out thought and expression respecting the divine plan as presented in the Word. Let those who have ability to preach do so in moderation; let them also help others to various shares in the service of the truth. As each seeks to grow in grace and to assist others, the Lord will open further and wider doors of opportunity--perhaps in near-by towns or in other quarters of the same city. The harvest is great and the laborers are few, and it should be the constant effort of all who are faithful to the Lord and to the cause, not only to serve one another, but to help one another into the service. We pray the Lord that the new Bible may be greatly blessed of him in this way--in helping many to engage in the ministry of the truth as leaders of Berean Bible classes.

R4994

LOVE OF THE BRETHREN A CRUCIAL TEST

"Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."--Psa. 133:1.

PSALM 133 is evidently prophetic and seems to refer to the brethren in "the Church, which is the Body of Christ." This thought is implied in the second verse, which says, "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments," which is a picture of the Holy Spirit running down over the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Psalm seems to be specially applicable to our day, although it has always been a pleasant sight to see brethren dwelling together in unity. In times of persecution there would be greater unity, because there would be fewer likely to attach themselves to the Church; outside persecutions would be likely to deter all but the truly consecrated. Such persecutions all would be likely to feel, and only those who had common interest and common cause would be drawn together.

But as persecution would cease and as more would come into the Church, who were not so zealous, the opportunities for differences would seem to increase. Although today there is much opposition to the children of light, there is, apparently, little persecution. The Truth has attracted a number, some of whom, probably, are not all that they should be. In fact, none of them are what they desire to be--copies of God's dear Son; but each and all should be striving to attain to the standard.

CAUSES OF FRICTION INCREASING

It might at first seem strange that there would be any friction between these favored children of God. One would suppose that their hearts would be so filled with the Holy Spirit that there would be no room for the weeds of hatred, envy, strife, jealousy, and that these would be crowded out by

the fruits of the Spirit. Perhaps such was the condition when we first made our consecration; and there was no room for these works of the flesh. But it seems that the causes of friction are increasing rather than diminishing. It is proper, therefore, that we should note the source of the difficulty and thus be enabled to ward off the danger and to be peacemakers amongst the brethren. "Ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." (*Rom. 15:1.*) If this standard be the measure, there are not so many strong as we might have hoped; therefore, it behooves each of us to become strong and helpful to the weak brethren in the Church.

One thing to be considered is that there is more opportunity for friction amongst those who are spirit-begotten New Creatures than there is amongst the world, as a whole; that is to say, a company of people in the nominal Church would find it easier to live together in unity and peace than would a company of people more thoroughly enlightened, energized by the Truth. This statement might seem strange at first, but becomes more apparent as we examine. In the nominal Church religion is more a matter of form. With nominal Christians it is customary to dress up and attend meetings, to sit quietly and then to return home. Pleasant things are noticed, as, for instance, the sunshine, the flowers, the bonnets. Thus the day passes. But with those more enlightened there is a greater activity of mind, of thought. We, too, love the flowers, and all things provided for us by our Heavenly Father. We discuss these--and there is much opportunity for discussion; for as no two persons look exactly alike, so no two persons think exactly alike.

Some of the Lord's people boast that they do their own thinking. But the wisest course is for us to do our own believing. Some subjects are matters of inference and not of knowledge. We are taught of God. He tells us thus and so in His Word, and, if we accept these propositions as they come from the Lord, we can do so without too much discussion. It is pleasant, of course, for us to philosophize on the teachings of God's Word; it is our privilege to believe that which the Lord has stated to us. But whatever philosophizing we do should be kept in restraint and in harmony with the Divine statement. And when we remember that while we are philosophizing each other one is philosophizing also, we see where comes in the doctrinal difficulty.

These different doctrinal matters are drawn from the Scriptures. But as soon as we begin to reason about the things not written, there is danger of conflict. Whoever sticks most closely to the Word of God will thereby not only do himself good, but will also be able to avoid controversy with other brethren and their philosophies. We presume that the Lord would not be averse to our having certain reflections along certain lines. We are, nevertheless, to remember that if we have a thought and present it to the brethren, and it does not seem logical to them, we are not to force it upon them, nor are they to force their views upon us. The difficulty seems to be that there is a tendency in such matters to fight each thought to the finish, to want everybody to agree with us, whereas the proper way is to be content and let the matter rest.

Each brother has a right to his own opinion. We have no right to make our own views tests. The things that are tests are the things given us in the Scriptures; as, for instance, it is a test with us and as to our standing with the brethren that we should believe that Jesus Christ is the Anointed One and the Savior of the world; that we are to be joint-heirs with Him and share in His inheritance; that we are bought with a price; that we are to have share with our Lord in the sufferings of this present time and in the glories to follow.

Such plain Scriptural statements are to be the ground of our belief, and not any fanciful interpretations put on them by some others. Some see the more general outlines; some see the details and fail to see the general outline. While those who possess the different casts of mind are to be neither blamed nor praised, yet they must grasp the thought that we are to be willing to suffer for the Truth--in our loyalty to God, to the brethren and to the Truth in general.

THE TRUTH ATTRACTS STRONG CHARACTERS

We are to remember that these brethren who find it so difficult to dwell together in unity have this difficulty in part because of their real intrinsic worth, or character. There are some people whose

characters are like putty; there are others in whom you can make a momentary dent, as in a rubber ball; still others are like diamonds. The class that are diamond-like have attained a firmness of texture, of character. If we put a number of balls of putty, a number of rubber balls and a number of diamonds into a pan and shake them well, the diamonds will scratch everything with which they come in contact, because they are so hard. The Lord is not looking for the rubber ball class now nor for the putty class. In due time the Lord will deal with all classes--the people who are of the putty kind and the people who are of the rubber ball kind. But we know that the Truth is appealing now only to the jewel class, the diamond class.

When learning that there is danger of stumbling each other, wounding each other, the knowledge should give us wisdom. We should be appreciative of the fact that these brethren have real characters, and that they are not of the putty kind. Even their differences show character. We should try to appreciate the fact and so to exercise ourselves as not to irritate them. We are to counsel them, and to remember that they, as New Creatures, are just as desirous of pleasing the Lord as we are. We must, therefore, have patience with each other. There is one text in the New Testament which declares, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (*1 John 3:14.*) The intimation is that some of the brethren would be hard to love, and that, unless we had passed from death unto life, we would be unable to love them.

The Truth seems to take hold on the stronger characters rather than on the weaker ones. The former have in their flesh more of the firmness, grittiness and combativeness than have many others, who are too pliable and "wishy-washy" to be acceptable to the Lord as members of the "little flock" of overcomers. Thus we see that the very quality which makes us acceptable to the Lord and which is one qualification of the overcoming position, is a serious disadvantage in some respects, when a number of these come together as a Church.

Even a diamond surrounded by mud would cut nothing, would scratch nothing; but place a dozen diamonds together, and the more you get rid of the mud element the more gritting, scouring and cutting there is likely to be. So it is with the Lord's jewels--the more they come together, the more they get wakened up, the more opportunities there will be for friction, and the greater necessity there will be that all be thoroughly imbedded in and covered with the Holy Spirit, which, like oil, is smooth and unctuous and tends to prevent friction.

R5921

LOVE IN THE CLASSES

"LOVE one another, as I have loved you," is the Master's instruction. (*John 15:12.*) "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren," writes the Apostle. (*1 John 3:16.*) "He that loveth Him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten of the Father." (*1 John 5:1.*) As a matter of fact, all who belong to the Church of Christ have the spirit of love at the time of their spirit-begetting. And if progress be made in preparation for the Kingdom, that spirit of love will increase and abound more and more, until it will be perfected in the resurrection. Then we shall have our new bodies, which will permit our loving hearts to manifest themselves fully. But in the meantime, how frequently the dear brethren of the Lord seriously try each other, vex each other, and fail to provoke to love and good works-- inciting rather to strife!

While we should properly attribute such weakness, not to the New Creatures, but to the old, nevertheless we are never to forget that the growth of the New Creature means the death of the old creature, and hence in proportion as our flesh is not dead to sin and selfishness, in that same proportion we, as New Creatures, have not yet reached the ideal for which we strive.

The Editor frequently receives letters from Elders of Classes, asking advice as to how they shall deal with the Classes, and from members of the Classes asking how they should deal with their chosen Elders and Deacons. The chosen servants of the Classes frequently feel that their brethren, who elected them, do not repose a sufficiency of confidence in them and entrust them fully enough with the management of the affairs of the Class-- that the Class wishes to manage its own affairs and merely to have the advice of the Elders. In such cases we recommend that the Elders be fully content with such a condition-- that it is the Class as a whole which represents the Lord, and that no servant of the Class has the privilege of exceeding the authority which the Class gives to him by its vote.

It is our experience that the Bible Students feel a great need of protecting their rights and fulfilling the obligations which the Lord has placed upon them. Surely they are excusable even if they seem to exercise too great care in this matter--in view of the examples all around us, amongst both Protestants and Catholics, of the power of priestcraft, and the inclination of ecclesiastics to grasp power and authority and to ignore the Ecclesia.

On the other hand, frequently the Classes feel that they are being ridden or "bossed" by their Elders-- whether this is really so or not. They complain sometimes, for instance, that the Elders get a fever for preaching and desire to give lectures on every possible occasion, sometimes even turning prayer and testimony meetings and Berean Study classes into lecture opportunities. If intimations are given that Berean lessons are preferred, and that changes from the Class order are not appreciated, the Elders sometimes take offense with the whole Class, declaring that they are not appreciated; and other times they either take offense at the individual who has had the courage to kindly mention the matter to them or fancy that he is an exception and that they are pleasing the Class--a case of too much self-esteem sometimes.

PASTORAL ADVICE

It is difficult to know how to advise Classes in such cases where the Elders seem to have lost, not the Spirit of the Lord, but the proper balance of a sound mind. We generally refer inquirers to the extended treatise on the subject in *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, Volume VI., and ask them to read afresh and act accordingly. But even after reading, some of the Lord's dear sheep do not know how to obtain proper Scriptural order and maintain the liberties of the Class and refrain from permitting an Elder to injure himself and the interests of the Class!

Our general advice to the brethren is that they take such matters to the Lord in prayer, while watchful of any and every opportunity to promote what we believe to be the Lord's will in the Classes. On the one hand, we must admit that it would be entirely wrong for a Class to permit an elder to "boss" it or, as St. Peter said, "to Lord it over God's heritage." (*1 Peter 5:3*.) It would be injurious both to the Elder and to the Class interests.

On the other hand, the Classes should seek to avoid captiousness and faultfinding. They should esteem the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of devotion, the knowledge of the Truth and talents for its presentation, wherever these are to be found, and should gladly help one another to opportunities for development in grace, knowledge and utterance--each according to the talents which the Lord has bestowed upon him and in harmony with the directions of the Lord's Word. Forbearance, one with another, a willingness to wash one another's feet, symbolically, and to esteem each other for all Christ-like qualities, should be cultivated.

While the will of the Class should be carefully sought by every Elder, and fully expressed by every Class in respect to all the order and arrangement of its affairs, nevertheless we should not be over-exacting in respect to how the will of the Class is expressed. In other words, we should consider what is satisfactory to the majority of the Class. Elders are not to be found fault with simply because the Class satisfaction has not been expressed in some special, particular manner. In other words, a minority of the Class should not feel at liberty to distract the Class and stir up strife simply because methods which the minority prefer have not been accurately followed. Each member of the Class has full liberty to express his conviction at opportune times--especially at election time; but he should be

fully satisfied, after expressing his thought and preference, to abide by the preference of the majority, whether expressed positively or negatively.

JUSTICE FIRST--THEN LOVE

Let us, dear brethren, ever remember that while we are striving after Love and its bond of perfectness, nevertheless our own course of action should be squared first of all by absolute *justice*, and then love may add to that as much as it may please. For instance, at an election some brother may unwisely nominate, for some service of the Class, a brother who is not qualified for the position. We must not find fault with the brother, for he has his liberty of making the nomination and manifesting his unwisdom; but, on the other hand, we should not feel bound by his suggestion, nor should we allow fear of offending the nominated brother to hinder us from expressing, by vote, what we understand to be the Lord's will in the matter. And if voted down by the Class, the nominated brother has no right to take offense, but should rather admire the courage of the brethren, as expressed in his rejection.

One thus rejected by a Class has no right to inquire either of the Class or of any member of it why they voted against him. That is *their* business and none of his. They merely exercised the right which they had according to their own conscience. It was a matter of justice. Love, in the sense of human sympathy, has no place in the deciding of such questions where the Word of the Lord lays down the rules to be followed by each member of the Ecclesia. A failure to recognize principles of justice--righteousness--seems to lie at the foundation of nearly all Class difficulties. We request that all who get into such troubles take the matter to the Lord in prayer and then consider the matter along the lines of absolute *justice*.

We have advocated in the Sixth Volume of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES* that, if possible, the will of the Class be expressed by the majority--at least eighty-five per cent of the whole number. This, however, does not mean that either justice or love would turn over all of the affairs of the Class to the remaining fifteen per cent and allow them to dictate, as for instance, to permit them to determine that there shall be no Elders or Deacons elected because the minority would hold fifteen per cent of the whole amount and insist that its ideals should be met or that the whole work of the Class should come to a standstill. This would neither be loving nor just, and *should not be submitted to*.

The *majority* rule is the standard of *justice*, and what we suggested in excess of that was a concession of love-- an attempt to meet the tastes and preferences, if possible, of the entire Class, or at least a large majority of the Class. The majority should lovingly desire to regulate the Class affairs, so far as possible, to suit every member of the Class; and to whatever extent there is a failure to do this there is an invitation to discord and to a split in the Class. While, of course, a division of the interest into two Classes is always deplorable and should be striven against, and *sacrifices* be made *by all* to maintain a "unity of spirit in the bond of peace," nevertheless a division of the Class for a time would certainly be preferable to a continual strife, which would hinder the spiritual progress of all concerned.

R2924 [sel]

And the Lord's sheep should be careful to select as leaders, etc., only such as give evidence of having come under the influence of the holy anointing of the spirit of God. And this, no matter how much of natural ability the would-be leader may possess; indeed, the more his natural ability the more danger from his leading. Only those anointed of the spirit are to be recognized amongst the Lord's people as in any sense of the word representatives and mouth-pieces of the head. As it was the spirit of the Lord God upon our Lord Jesus that anointed or qualified him to preach the Gospel, so it

must be the same anointing received of him that will qualify any for this service of preaching or witnessing, in a manner that will be acceptable to the Lord and profitable to his flock. (Isa. 61:1.) All who are not in the attitude of full consecration to the Lord, full submission to the divine will, are in opposition, to some extent; and to the extent that they are in opposition they are wrong, or wicked. "And unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do, to take my words into thy mouth, seeing that thou hatest instruction (refusing to submit themselves to the Lord's arrangement) and castest my words behind thee [neglectfully]?"--Psa. 50:17.

R4458 / R5935

TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES AND THE FLOCK

--ACTS 20:2-38--SEPTEMBER 5--

Golden Text:--"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."--Phil. 4:13.

WHEN St. Paul fled from Ephesus, after the rioting, he made a tour of the European Churches which he had founded. Passing through Macedonia to the city of Corinth he came by vessel again to Miletus, about fifty miles south of Ephesus. He was accompanied by representatives of several of the churches of Asia Minor. He was en route for Jerusalem, for whose poor at his suggestion collections had been made in the four provinces in which he had been preaching. Seven delegates accompanied him, representatives of the Church at Thessalonica, Berea, Derbe and Ephesus. These visits are supposed to have consumed several months of time, and now, at Miletus, he would have his final opportunity of bidding goodby to the Elders of the Ephesus Church. The vessel on which the party were to go to the Jerusalem port was detained indefinitely at Miletus, so word was sent to the Elders at Ephesus and they came to Miletus.

Our lesson specially calls to our attention the Apostle's address to these Elders. We are not to understand this as a boastful statement, but rather as a plain rehearsal of matters which his hearers would fully concede and of which he boasted nothing. The rehearsal was given, not for his own sake, not as indicating personal vanity and self-praise, but with a view to quickening the recollection of his hearers and making the lesson of the hour more impressive upon them. He reminded them that for the space of three years they had known him intimately, the manner of his life, his devotion to the Lord, to the service of the Truth and to the service of the brethren. He reminded them of his humility of mind; that he had not been with them as a boaster; that his conduct had not been haughty and overbearing; that he had not sought to "lord it" over the Church, but on the contrary, he had endured amongst them many trials and difficulties with the Jews, with "false brethren."

They knew of his work, his endurance and of his holding back nothing from them that would be helpful to them; that he had taught them both publicly and privately as circumstances opened to him opportunities. He had testified both to Jews and to Greeks that there is only the one Gospel of Christ, to be accepted through faith and turning away from sin. By calling attention to these elements of his own character he was laying the foundation for his subsequent exhortation to them that they should copy his zeal, his fidelity. He had been a faithful overseer or bishop, watching over their interests. He had been a faithful pastor, guiding their welfare and seeing to their nourishment in spiritual things. Knowing the truthfulness of these presentations and having the whole situation in mind, they would be the better prepared to receive from such an one his parting exhortation--the great lesson which he had to give them.

BOUND IN THE SPIRIT

He informed the brethren that although possessed of his physical liberty he felt a bondage or restraint upon his mind that he could not shake off; that he must go to Jerusalem; that this was the

Lord's providence for him; and that at the same time he received assurances from others through the "gifts" that bonds and imprisonment awaited him at Jerusalem. Then he adds these courageous words: "But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." The Apostle had become apparently more intimately acquainted with the Ephesus Church than with any of the others. Apparently it was one of the most flourishing of them all. He had, by the Lord's providence, spent more time with them, and evidently the results procured justified the prolonged stay. Partings between friends are always grievous. And parting with no hope of seeing each other again this side the veil is a doubly severe ordeal.

PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Incidentally we note the message which the Apostle delivered and which he here particularly emphasizes as the Gospel of Christ--"preaching the Kingdom of God." It is right that we should recognize that this is the same Gospel which we are preaching today, or, if not, that we are not preaching aright. The grace of God was manifested in the gift of his Son, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. The grace of God was further manifested in an outline of how the death of Christ was designed to bring blessings to our race:

(1) By ultimately establishing a Kingdom under the whole heavens for the rule of mankind; for the suppression of sin and death; for the uplifting of those bound by these enemies.

(2) As a precedent to that general blessing to the world, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," the Divine proclamation first calls out the "little flock" to be joint-heirs with their dear Redeemer in that Kingdom. Thank God that these precious truths, respecting the grace of God and the Kingdom of God, so long covered and hidden from our sight by the traditions of the dark ages, are now coming forward, are now being revealed by the enlightenment of our eyes by the Spirit--that we might know the things that are freely given us of God, and that thus we might be assisted in making our calling and our election sure!

No wonder the Apostle could add the forceful words, "I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." What he preached to the Church at Ephesus during his three years' stay amongst them is surely the same message which, by Divine arrangement, has come down to us in his epistles addressed to the various churches. We note that St. Paul's message contained not one word respecting eternal torment, which is no part of the Divine Plan. Surely from these epistles we now assent that St. Paul was very patient in reproving, instructing, encouraging the Lord's dear people. He was much used of the Lord because he had given himself so thoroughly to the Lord.

Herein we note the difference between the operation of the holy Spirit of God and the operation of the unholy spirits, the fallen angels. In both cases the control increases in proportion as the individual relinquishes his own will. Fortunately for humanity we all possess an inherent dread of self-surrender. Had it not been for this natural tendency, this natural self-will, doubtless the whole world today would be obsessed by the evil angels, or, at least, more largely under their control. Even amongst spirit mediums there is generally only a partial yielding of the will and an urging by the spirits toward a full self-surrender. Spirit mediums, however, are freely warned through their journals and books that there is great danger in a complete surrender of the will, lest an evil spirit gain full possession--obsess the medium. Alas! poor mediums! They know not that all of the spirits which communicate through them are evil spirits, demons, fallen angels, who, at times, personate human beings and represent themselves as our dead friends.

Not even husbands and wives dare fully to surrender to each other their wills without danger of injury. Nor should parents seek to coerce their children to a condition of entire will-lessness. To

whatever extent they do this they injure the child, detract from its personality and make it a more easy dupe for the fallen angels.

The One, the only One, to whom we dare submit our wills fully, completely, is the Lord. He invites this full submission of the will to him; and we, in his name and as his ambassadors, may freely invite our children, our friends, our neighbors, to this same full submission of their hearts to the Lord. The more fully consecrated the will the greater the submission, the more blessed should be the experience--the greater the usefulness in the Lord's service. This is the substance of St. Paul's exhortation, "Be ye filled with the Spirit," sanctified, set apart wholly unto the Lord. In proportion as this condition of consecration or will submission is attained-- in such proportion we may be used of the Lord as his mouthpieces, his instruments, ready for his service, the service of the Truth, the service of the flock. St. Paul was a noble example of such a full self-consecration to the Lord; of such a filling with the Spirit; of such an emptying of self-will; of such a deadness to the world, its will, its plans, its service.

No wonder the Apostle was able to assure the brethren that they might follow him, as he was following Christ. Christ was filled with the Father's Spirit. St. Paul, a loyal follower in his footsteps, had a similar filling experience though of smaller capacity. And all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must similarly be filled with his Spirit, the will of Christ, the will of the Father--and be dead to earthly ambitions. The Apostle's thought in calling the elders was to impress upon them that, like himself, they not only were consecrated to the Lord, but, as teachers in the Church, they had a double responsibility --in respect to themselves and in respect to the Church of which the Lord had made them overseers.

Notice his words, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock in the which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers (bishops) to feed the Church of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own (Son)."--V. 28.

Several points in this are worthy of careful attention. The revised version, quoted above, says, "In the which the holy Spirit hath made you bishops," thus agreeing that the general Scripture statement that the elders of the Church are not *over* the Church in the sense of a superior, or "clergy," class, but *in* the Church--members of it--overseeing members, assisting members, by appointment of the Lord through the channel of the Church. Note the two points:

(1) They needed to take heed to themselves and to take heed to the flock. Whoever attempts to do shepherding in the Church will need, first of all, to watch himself lest he fall into temptation, for, as the Apostle declares, Those who accept the position of Elders in the Church, pastors, overseers, are exposed to special trials, special difficulties. They need primarily to take heed to themselves, lest, having preached to others, they themselves become castaways.

(2) Those who accept the ministry or service of the Church as Elder-Brothers under the Divine regulation should realize that they have assumed a weighty responsibility respecting which they must "give an account to God." (*Rom. 14:12.*) This does not mean fault-finding with the brethren. It does not mean merely preaching to them; nor merely visiting the sick and counseling the troubled. It means an oversight, a care of all the interests of the congregation and the individuals of it in their every detail. Those who are over-charged with the cares of this life are not in a condition, in any sense of the word, to accept the responsibilities of this service in the Church of the living God and should not be invited to do so; should not be voted for as Elders. Only those who seek first the interests of the Lord's Kingdom and the righteousness which it represents are in any sense or degree properly suited to such service in the Church. They should consider it a part of their responsibility to notice how the dear brethren and sisters are progressing, especially in their spiritual interests. They should feel it a part of their duty to warn, to encourage, to assist all of these, as opportunity may offer.

It is not the prerogative of all the brethren and sisters in the Church to endeavor to set each other right, unless it be in some *personal* matter specially related to themselves; then *Matt. 18:15* should be strictly followed. An Elder, however, by his very election, has been asked to take

such an oversight of the affairs of the congregation, to give such advice, to give such reproofs, as the nature of the case may seem to demand--in meekness, remembering himself also, lest he should be tempted, if not along the same lines, then possibly along some other line of temptation. He, too, of course, should follow *Matt. 18:15*.

GRIEVOUS WOLVES AND PERVERSE TALKERS

The Apostle, by way of impressing this duty of oversight upon the elders, reminds them that the Lord purchased this flock with the precious blood of the Lamb of God and that this value in the Lord's sight should be so deeply impressed upon their minds that they would be willing to lay down their lives for the brethren in any service which they could render.

Emphasizing the caution already given, the Apostle prophetically declared that there would be great need of their taking heed to themselves, because *of their own selves*, of the flock itself, and especially amongst the Elders, men would arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; desirous of being leaders, they would not hesitate to produce a schism or division in the Church to help along their ambition. The word *perverse* (here) in the original signified *distorted, twisted*. The thought is that those who begin to lose the Spirit of the Lord, begin to lose their clearness of appreciation of the Truth. As personal and selfish ambitions cloud their vision they see the Scriptures more vaguely and feel free to twist or distort them to make them support their ambitious sentiments. How true the Apostle's words; how great a danger there is along these lines, especially to the Elders, the overseers of the flock! Evidently selfish ambition is one of the greatest of foes with which they must contend.

Nor do these ambitions suddenly germinate, bloom and bear fruit; the process is a gradual one and hence the more dangerous, the more deceptive, the less likely to have our notice. How important then that all of the Lord's flock, and especially the elders, take heed to themselves and scrutinize their conduct, and, above all, the motives lying behind their deeds! Let us remember that absolute purity of the will is essential. Every admixture of selfishness, however little, is a poisonous virus which, if unchecked, would lead to the Second Death. "Take heed to yourselves," is the admonition, for, the Apostle goes on to say, that of their own selves should men arise telling truths in a distorted fashion, for the purpose of drawing away disciples after them; for the purpose of being leaders in the flock; for the purpose of having praise and honor of men. Ah, how dear the price--the loss of Divine favor and of eternal life!

"Grievous wolves" are ferocious wolves. For a time they may deceive the sheep by an outward manner and outward profession, covering their wolfish nature. They and the outward conduct by which they deceive are Scripturally designated, "Wolves in sheep's clothing." The Shepherd certainly knows their character before it becomes manifest to the sheep; but the docile, innocent sheep are deceived until these wolves begin biting and devouring and scattering the flock. The howls of anger, malice, hatred, envy and strife are noted in the Scriptures as "works of the flesh and of the devil"--not works of righteousness and peace and love, the Spirit of the Lord. The wolf does injury with his mouth and so do these-- slandering, backbiting and doing every evil work.

St. Paul warned the Elders of the Ephesus Ecclesia what to expect, and his words are true. Hymenaeus and Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes, and Philetus are mentioned by name. (*1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17.*) The same principles are still at work. The same warning still needs to be heeded. Indeed, the Scriptures in general imply that the severest experiences along these same lines are due to come upon the Church in "the evil day" with which this Gospel dispensation will close.

NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS

"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Here are two points set before us; first, the duty of the Elders of the

Church to watch against these evils so graphically portrayed; to watch for the interests of the flock as against the wolves; to watch to give the wolves as little opportunity as possible to tear the flock and backbite them, and to warn the sheep lest any of them, becoming inoculated with the rabies of the wolves, should display signs of hydrophobia and begin backbiting one another, with the usual symptoms of hydrophobia--with an apparent thirst for water (Truth) yet a refusal to drink it.

Second, the elders are to watch also against those sure to arise "of your own selves." Proper watching will begin with our own hearts, saying, Lord, is it I? And proper watching will in time discern such characters as Hymenaeus and Philetus and, following the Apostle's example, will expose them--not from any feeling of bitterness towards them, but in the interests of and for the protection of the flock. St. Paul reminds the brethren that such was his own course--one of great watchfulness, interest, care, over them and over all the Churches of Asia Minor. The expression, "Night and day with tears," shows us clearly that the great Apostle felt properly the weight of responsibility resting upon him as a servant of God and an ambassador of the King of kings and an over-shepherd and overseer of the Lord's flock--as a "minister of the New Covenant," delegated by the Great Head to assist in calling out those who will be the members of his Body, for their instruction and building up in the "most holy faith," that eventually they might all come to the full measure of the stature of manhood in the Body of Christ, as the great Mediator, Prophet, Priest and King of the world.

DIVINE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

The exhortation closed thus, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." The Apostle's thought seems to have been that his words, his earnest exhortation, might not only awaken them, but have them to inquire as to what defences could be depended upon for the crisis thus pointed out. He draws attention to the fact that God, the great Center of all our blessings, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, is on our part, is on the part of all those who are seeking to cooperate with his arrangements. By way of further explanation he mentions the Scriptures, the Word of God's grace, the Gospel message. He tells them that they, and we also, may be assured that the Word of God is able to build us up, to give us the necessary development of character, of heart and head, and to give us ultimately a share in the great inheritance which God has in reservation for all those who are sanctified by this message.

Let us lay this well to heart: neglect of God's Word of grace, neglect of his promises means a deficiency of strength to bear the trial which is our portion. It means also the opening of the door for Satan to put light for darkness and darkness for light for our confusion. It means that those who will not give strict heed in following might be unable to distinguish between the bleating of the sheep and "the midnight howl" of the wolf; might be unable to distinguish between those who are holding fast and blowing on the trumpets of the Lord's Word and those who are seeking to cause divisions amongst the sheep and speaking perverse things--misrepresenting facts, that they might divide the flock and draw some after themselves.

Let us make no mistake. It is a question of *inheritance* or *no inheritance*, amongst them which are sanctified. He who is faithful in that which is least, acknowledges the Lord and his provisions in connection with all of his blessings, temporal and spiritual, will be prepared to look forward with continued zeal and will receive the Shepherd's care accordingly. On the other hand, those who do not appreciate the "meat in due season" and the special provisions of this Harvest time--these will not be prepared; these will quite likely be deceived by those who endeavor to deceive them and draw them aside to themselves.

AS AN EXAMPLE TO THE FLOCK

St. Paul had already pointed out that the lesson of the law was that the ox that threshed the corn should be allowed to have a share of it for his nourishment; and that similarly those who

minister to the Church in spiritual things legally, justly, should have a share in the temporal blessings of those whom they serve. He had also pointed out that if he had served the Church spiritual things of immeasurably more value to them than earthly things, it would be a small thing indeed for the Church to minister to his temporal needs. But, while noting these as points of equity, which should be observed by the Church, he did not require these things of them. It would be to their advantage to see these matters in their proper light and to act accordingly. But if they did not see their privileges in serving him and other ministers of the Truth in temporal matters, he perceived that this offered him a still larger opportunity for self-sacrifice, self-denial in the service of the Truth. Their neglect he did not resent, saying, You have refused me temporal necessities, I will refuse you spiritual comforts. On the contrary, his reasoning was this: These dear sheep need the spiritual blessings and I am so glad that I am privileged by the Lord to be his servant in dispensing them. The more it may cost me in the way of self-sacrifice, self-denial, the more it will evidence to the Lord my love for him, for his Truth, for his flock, and the more I will have of the Great Shepherd's favor, because I will be more like the great Redeemer, who bought the sheep by the sacrifice of himself.

On these lines the Apostle proceeds to call attention to his course--not boastfully, but for their advantage, that they might be the better able to discern what would be the proper character of an under-shepherd of the Lord. He says, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." He was not serving them for the accumulation of wealth, nor to secure the comforts of the present life. He coveted their hearts. He coveted the pleasure of bringing them into relationship with the great Head of the Church as members of his Body. He appreciated his privileges as a minister of the New Covenant along these lines--preparing the members of the Body of Christ, the Mediator, and helping them to make their calling and election sure to the glorious things promised in the Word.

He continues, "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Apparently some of those who were of St. Paul's company had no trade or could find no profitable employment, while the Apostle's trade of sail-making, tent-making, was apparently a lucrative one, furnishing employment in the various seacoast cities visited. Apparently the others were largely dependent upon this leader for things temporal, as well as things spiritual. He had never complained. He did not now complain. He merely drew their attention to the proper course which he believed he had followed, which he believed was pleasing in the sight of the Lord. He commended to them a similar spirit of love for the Lord and love for the flock and love for the Truth--to the self-sacrificing degree. Thus they might be faithful stewards of God's mercy, faithful overseers of his flock. His own form of stating the message is summed up thus, "I have showed you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

R5501

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY BASED ON PRINCIPLE

WE MUST never forget that our authorization to meet as brethren is the Master's Word: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.) As this is our charter-right for meeting as the Lord's people, we must concede an equal right under it to all of God's people who may choose to meet in His name at any place and at any time. We should remember the Bible illustration of this principle: On one occasion the twelve disciples had returned from a preaching tour, and St. John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke 9:49,50.) This one forbidden by John would correspond well with some now holding meetings other than those which we attend. What did Jesus

say? "Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name that can lightly speak evil of Me."--Mark 9:38-40.

Here is a general principle which will serve to guide, to instruct God's people of today respecting His will in similar matters. We, of course, think our arrangements most pleasing to the Lord, or we would not have them so. If others think differently, the responsibility is with them and with the Lord. It is not for us to forbid them, but it is for the Lord to bless them or not to bless them, according to His wisdom in the management of His work.

Some one may suggest, Would not this thought, acted upon, break up the meetings of the Lord's people into very small classes? We reply that this must depend upon the brethren themselves. They have the right to meet in twos and threes or in larger numbers. If they can find it to their advantage to meet in larger groups, no doubt they will be glad to do so. This means a great deal of liberty in the Church within the lines of the word and spirit of Jesus' teaching, directly and through His Apostles.

Brethren meeting as a class should understand that in so doing they properly waive, or make void, some of their personal liberties and privileges. Individual preferences are to be more or less subjected to class preferences. Even the majority of the class should be considerate of the wishes of the minority, and if possible, should moderate the arrangements, so that all can be accommodated and pleased in respect to speakers, and in respect to place and character of meetings. No one should selfishly consider merely his own preferences and welfare. The spirit of co-operation, the Golden Rule, the spirit of love, should prevail. And as this is true, all those filled with the Spirit of the Master and living close to Him will find fellowship one with another in yielding personal preferences in the interest of the whole number.

CONSCIENCE TO BE RESPECTED

The only things that may not be yielded to the will of the majority are matters of *conscience*. No one is to do what he believes to be sin, injustice, wrong, even though all the remainder of the brethren think it right. And no one is to leave undone what his conscience dictates, even though so directed by all the remainder of the brethren of the class.

Conscience is always to be respected--never to be throttled or violated. Nor is any one who stands faithful to his conscience to be disesteemed therefor by his brethren, even if their consciences view the matter differently. On the contrary, his courage in standing by his convictions is to be considered estimable.

On these principles liberty may be maintained in the Body of Christ; and we shall find blessing in proportion as those of one mind can fellowship with each other. Where fellowship is not maintained, the assembling is neither desirable nor in harmony with the Divine arrangement. But where the brethren find it advantageous to meet in different classes, it will usually be found, we believe, that originally too great restraint of personal liberty was exercised, and that the majority were too careless of the sentiments of the brethren constituting the minority.

But even where it may be found necessary or desirable to have more than one gathering of the Lord's people in one city, it certainly still is true that they should have one heart and one mind, and be of one brotherhood under the Anointed Head. They should consider each other's interests, and do all in their power "to provoke one another to love and to good works."-- Hebrews 10:24.

ENDURING HARDNESS AS GOOD SOLDIERS

ACTS 14:8-19

"Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."--2 Tim. 2:3.

LEAVING Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium, about 100 miles distant. There also they preached the Word faithfully, and there also opposition was aroused and persecution threatened; "and when there was an assault made, both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use them despitefully and to stone them, they were aware of it, and fled unto Lystra." They did not allow fear to hinder them from the preaching of the gospel with courage, boldness; neither did they fear threats; but when the persecution took a positive form they delayed no longer, but fled. Why did they not wait, and expect the Lord to grant them some miraculous deliverance? Why did they not challenge their opponents to see whether the power of God or the power of Satan was the stronger? We answer, Because they were better instructed respecting the divine will. They were following the instructions of the Lord. He did not say to them, Be fearful of persecution, withhold your message, and put your light under a bushel; but the reverse. He did not say, Flee in fear, when there is no danger; but he did say, "When they persecute you in one city flee ye to another."

Arriving at Lystra, the preaching of the gospel was begun afresh, as courageously as tho there had been no previous opposition. Amongst the auditors was a cripple, presumably a Jew or a proselyte, who manifested much interest in the Apostle's words. Paul, perceiving this, and that the man had faith, stopped in his preaching and called out to him, "Stand upright on thy feet!"--a thing he had never done. He had the necessary faith and obeyed the Apostle's command; and thus a miracle resulted, evidently to the astonishment of the entire congregation. The effect upon the people was electrical, and they shouted in their own dialect, "The gods have come down to visit us!"

The city of Lystra figured as the scene of a mythological event, the tradition being that Jupiter and Mercury, two of the gods of mythology, having once come to their city in the form of men, had been everywhere refused lodgings until they came to the lowly hut of a poor man who entertained them to the extent of his ability. They rewarded him by turning his hut into a gorgeous temple, and punished the others of the city with a flood. These traditions were very old, but were perpetuated by a statue of Jupiter at the gate of the city, as its protecting god.

The missionaries were probably preaching, or conversing and explaining quietly, to the more interested ones, when they heard of the commotion in the city, and of the sacrifice which was about to be offered. They did not for a moment think of taking advantage of the superstition of the people to make of themselves some great ones, nor did they attempt to turn the event to a service of the truth by claiming that God was Jupiter, and that Jesus was Mercury, and that they represented them. On the contrary, most earnestly and simply they entreated the people to desist; explaining to them that they were nothing but imperfect men like themselves, "of like passions," and that their mission was the very reverse of what they supposed, and that Jupiter and Mercury and their fabled deeds were only products of imagination, ignorance and superstition. They ran in amongst the people while they, full of excitement, were preparing for the sacrifice, and with difficulty, even then, amid protests of their own nothingness, did they restrain the people from sacrificing in their honor. Noble men they were, and their faithfulness to the Lord and to the truth attested the wisdom of the divine choice in sending them on this missionary errand.

We may draw a lesson from the incident, helpful to all of the Lord's people who are to any extent his ambassadors, representatives, teachers of the truth. The truth itself, especially in the light of our day, is so wonderful, so brilliant, that it naturally reflects some of its brilliancy upon those who represent it, causing men to marvel, and to say, as of old, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?"

In some instances it might lead to an undue deference, to an ascription of undue honor, and to a subserviency which it would not be proper for the Lord's ambassadors to receive, and which they should as promptly and as thoroughly repudiate and refuse as did Paul and Barnabas refuse the honors which the Lystrians were about to bestow upon them. From the worldly standpoint this would be an unwise course. Those who will accept flattery and adulation and honor more than is due, are likely to be prospered in this course to some extent by the Adversary, and apt to find that the worldly spirit likes to worship worldly heroes, Jupiters, Elijahs, etc. The only wise course for the Lord's servants is, therefore, the one followed by these missionaries of our lesson--to repudiate the entire matter; to confess that they are men of like passions with others; to hold up the light of God's Word, and behind it to hide and ignore themselves entirely. Not alone will this be profitable as respects the finding and development of the true children of God whom he is now gathering out of the world, but it will be profitable also for the Lord's ambassadors; for in this way they will grow in the Lord's grace and likeness; of which humility was a prominent trait. Thus they will best abide in his love, and ultimately attain to the still greater exaltation which God has promised to all of his children who are faithful and humble under present conditions.

The Apostle, in pointing out to the Lystrians that their ideas were vanities, well knew that this could not bring him the favor of his hearers; for it is not human nature to appreciate being told of our follies. To have worked his way into their good graces he would have needed to tell them a lie--that they were very wise, and that their course was a very proper one, etc. He, therefore, in his endeavor to be candid, and to serve the truth, risked their disappointment and displeasure; and he was undoubtedly keen enough to know this in advance, and what result to expect. Nevertheless, as God's mouthpiece, he shunned not to declare the whole message, whatever its results might be as regarded himself and his work. Here are good lessons for all of the Lord's people. It requires comparatively little courage to be a soldier of the cross and faithful to the truth amongst those of like precious faith and obedience; but it requires great courage to resist improper honor of men when we know in advance that this resistance will not only deprive us of their honor and friendship, but make us ignoble in their sight, and turn them into enemies. True soldiers of the cross still have the same trial, and it still requires hardness--a hardening campaign of experience in the Lord's service--to endure these things and come off joyful in the Lord. The babes in Christ, the weak, the untried, those who have not passed through trials and experiences and development of character, are not hardened, and could not stand such experiences. Hence it is that the apostle advises the Church that even proper exaltation to a service in the Church should not be accorded to a novice, lest he should be puffed up and thus be injured himself, as well as become injurious to others. (*1 Tim. 3:6.*) It requires time and seasoning to know how to either rightly accept and appreciate the honors of the brethren or others along proper lines, or to decline honors and dignities along improper lines.

Had the incident of the sacrificing not been thus followed by some trying experiences, who knows but that the Apostle might have felt a little of self-gratulation, such as would be natural to any man who, having honors thrust upon him, had voluntarily renounced them. He might have been disposed to glory in his strength of character; but his experiences led him in an opposite direction--as he himself subsequently wrote, "I will glory in tribulation." All of the Lord's faithful ones can learn good lessons here; can learn to trust to the Lord's providences in all of their affairs;--not only in those which seem to go favorably, but in those also which apparently are working disadvantage and disaster. The Lord said concerning Paul, when declaring that he was a chosen vessel for his service, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." From this lesson we may draw the inference that when the Lord's servants are permitted to suffer for his name's sake (not for wrong-doing, not for anger, malice, hatred, strife, evil-speaking, etc., but for his sake) it is an attestation of the Lord's favor, in the acceptance of his sacrifice--as in the type, Abel's sacrifice was accepted with fire.

R4968 [sel]

THE LIFE, NOT THE WORDS, A TRUE INDEX

The Truth should be the standard. Everything else is certainly quite contrary to the Divine will; and that person who fails to uphold the Truth in his daily life gives evidence that he has not the Spirit of the Lord in the proper degree. If, therefore, any of us should find that in our daily lives we have not been living in conformity with the message of our lips, it would be a matter of serious concern, for we cannot doubt that whoever is out of harmony with the Lord in his heart, will sooner or later get out of harmony in his utterances.

We think, therefore, that if in a congregation of the Lord's people any one were proposed as an Elder or a Deacon who outwardly had ever so great ability as a teacher, but who did not in his daily life give good evidence of being fully consecrated to the Lord, and of seeking to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, he should be regarded as a very dangerous person to put into the high position of Elder or Deacon. The sooner he is left quite by himself the better. For the more such people are put forward in public, the worse it will be for them and for the congregation whom they are supposed to serve.

R4345 [sel]

TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES

The Apostle's words to the Elders of the Ephesus Church never were more fitting to the people of God in general than they are today. He said to them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with the blood of his own Son. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."--
Acts 20:28-31.

The Elders everywhere need to take special heed; because in every trial the most favored and most prominent have the severest besetments and tests. Hence the Apostle exhorts, "Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that a man shall receive the more severe testing." We, likewise, exhort all the Elders who in heart are pure, unselfish, that they have nothing but love and good wishes for all mankind, and that they become more and more filled with the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit, taking heed also to the flock. Remember, that the flock is the Lord's and that you have a responsibility to the Lord, as well as to them. Remember, that you are to watch for their souls (interests) as those who must give an account to the Great Chief Shepherd. Remember, that the principal thing is Love, in all; and, while not neglecting doctrines, give special heed to the development of the Lord's Spirit amongst the various members of his Body, that thus they may become "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," and, according to the Divine will, be not suffered to stumble in this evil day, but, having done all, to stand complete in Christ, his Body, his Members, his Joint-Sacrificers, his Joint-Heirs.

BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BRETHREN

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."--1 John 3:14.

WE are glad to testify that both from personal contact and through correspondence we have every reason to believe that the Bible Students, who constitute the large majority of our readers, have been growing in grace lately--during the past few years. Contrasting the present with three, six or ten years ago, we notice a great increase in spirituality--the Spirit of the Lord--the Holy Spirit of Love.

Not only is this manifested in activities in the service of the Truth, but also in broader sympathies one for another and for all Christians--and, indeed, for the entire groaning creation. This is just what it should be every year; every week, indeed, should mark progress in Christ-likeness, as we remember that, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," and therefore will have no part in the Kingdom--whatever inferior blessing he may obtain under stripes and disciplines necessary to the development of the proper character.

We remember further the Apostle's statement that the Divine predestination respecting the Church is that we must each individually in character become copies of our Lord. (Romans 8:29.) Surely such clear statements of the Divine will and of the terms upon which we may make our calling and election sure should be stimulating.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding all the progress noted, many of the little classes are experiencing friction, which causes more or less concern and unhappiness. As the Truth makes us free and opens the eyes of our understanding, it enables us to see our own imperfections and the imperfections of the brethren and of the world more clearly than ever. Unless there be a large amount of love, this will mean a disposition to find fault, to criticize.

We may safely give ourselves considerable liberty along these lines in dealing with our own character. We may find fault with ourselves and criticize ourselves often to advantage. Yet even this should not be carried so far that we forget the Lord's gracious promise that He will judge us according to our heart intentions and not according to our imperfect attainments. We are, perhaps, better able to appreciate our own shortcomings, and how they were unintentional; but when the shortcomings are those of others, it tests our love, patience, brotherly-kindness, meekness, gentleness, etc. Yet such testings are very profitable. We pray that the Lord will assist us in growing in the graces of the Holy Spirit. Let us remember that the only way to assist us would be by giving us testings along these very lines. Our strength of character, our development in these graces, will be in proportion as we receive these testings in the proper spirit.

PROOF OF RELATIONSHIP AS NEW CREATURES

Our text seems to imply that the love of the brethren is one of the most beautiful experiences of the Christian. Whoever finds that he has full love for all the brethren, full sympathy for them, therein has a specially strong Scriptural proof that he himself is a New Creature-- that he has passed from death unto life. And whoever has any other sentiment than love to any of the brethren surely lacks proof, or demonstration, along this line of his relationship to God as a New Creature.

If we keep this always in mind, how valuable an assistance it will be to us! Do we not frequently desire to reassure ourselves of the Lord's favor and of our continued relationship to Him as New Creatures, passed from death unto life? If we do, here is the text, the application of which, if we are in the right condition, should bring peace and joy. And if we are in the wrong condition, it should bring alarm for our personal safety as New Creatures.

One of the points of friction in many of the classes is the relationship between the class and its servants. So far as we can judge, the fault is sometimes with the one and sometimes with the other. We are frequently asked in respect to the duties of the Elders, the responsibility of the classes,

etc. In general, we prefer to refer all such inquiries to our very full discussion of the subject in the sixth volume of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. We know not how to improve on the suggestions there made. We believe that if what we have written were thoroughly studied, the recommendations there given would be found ample for every case.

On doctrinal matters we prefer not to write personal letters; for in a few cases we have found that the persons receiving the letters have either misunderstood them, or only partially communicated their contents to others when discussing the matter. Again, some have said, "Brother Russell wrote thus and so in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, but we have a later letter which intimates that he has changed his mind." We wish the dear friends to feel assured that if our judgment changes respecting any important truths we will put the change before all *THE WATCH TOWER* readers as speedily as possible. Until you see such changes mentioned in *THE WATCH TOWER* give no credit to them; esteem the statements of the *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES* just as though they were written yesterday and direct to yourself.

PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Briefly summarizing the principles governing the Church of Christ, let us say: There are two views prevalent amongst Christians respecting Church government:

(1) The Episcopal view, which holds that the Church is to be ruled and governed by bishops, because of the claim that these are Apostolic bishops; that is, that they are successors to the Apostles, and invested with Apostolic wisdom and inspiration and authority for the regulation of the Church and its affairs. This view is held by Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics and Episcopalians.

(2) The other view is the Congregationalist, and holds that each congregation of the Lord's people is a unit, and has the right to govern itself and to make its own regulations for its own welfare, subject to Divine guidance. Congregationalists, Baptists and some others claim to be governed by this view. Other denominations, with more or less confusion and indecision, divide authority between the ministers and the laity.

We hold that the Bible arrangement combines the Episcopal and the Congregational views. Thus the Scriptures teach that the twelve Apostles were and still are the Episcopate--the only inspired and authoritative Apostolic Bishops. Whatsoever these declared to be binding on earth is binding amongst the Lord's people. Whatsoever they declared loosed, or not binding, would not be obligatory upon the Church in the sight of Heaven. From this viewpoint, the words of Jesus respecting all other so-called apostolic bishops are quite pointed. He declares that they are "false apostles and do lie"--they are not apostles in any sense of the word. (*Revelation 2:2; 2 Corinthians 11:13.*) Hence we are not to give heed nor to in any manner recognize the claims of these bishops, whom Satan has deluded into thinking that they have Apostolic power--Apostolic succession.

As the people of God have the original Episcopacy, the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, for authority and direction, they are thus organized under an Episcopal government, or government of the Apostolic Bishops--nevertheless their organization is properly congregational. Each company of the Lord's consecrated people is entirely free, and should have its own faith in the Bible and all the precious truths of the Bible. No congregation and no individual can properly be bound by the vows of other congregations or other individuals.

The Congregation, Ecclesia, Church, coming together to act as one, to worship together, to serve God's Cause together, should do so because of their mutual appreciation of the Divine character and Plan. They are not under anybody's government, or rule, except that of the Bible Episcopate--the Apostolic teachings. As for the Elders and Deacons of each Congregation, they are to be chosen by the Congregation from their own number, in accordance with the instructions of the Bible. No earthly power has a right to intervene between the instructions of the Divinely-appointed twelve Apostles and the companies of the Lord's people who choose to assemble themselves in harmony with the Apostolic instructions. This at one stroke wipes out all papal authority and the authority of all apostolic bishops falsely so-called.

Since the Deacons and Elders, Pastors and Teachers, are lifted to their places of service and honor by the *votes of the brethren*, it places the Congregation in greater authority than its servants. But the Congregation, in turn, is bound not to force its preferences, but merely to act loyally in harmony with the Divine direction given by the Apostles in the Bible. Thus we see that the truth on the subject from the Divine standpoint has been measurably lost sight of for centuries, to the disadvantage of the Church--some taking one part of the Truth and some another--few, if any, recognizing the whole. Indeed, this is what we find to have been the case in respect to nearly every doctrine.

While particulars have been set forth in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Volume VI, yet in what we have above stated lie the principles involved. Whoever thoroughly grasps the principles should be able to appreciate the details. And it would be only a question of thought and patient deliberation to settle all the details of the affairs of any little Class, in accordance with the Scriptures. Thus while the Class gives certain authority and service into the hands of those chosen to be its Elders, and appoints others to assist them in the work as Deacons, or servants, nevertheless, both Elders and Deacons are answerable to the Congregation, to the ecclesia.

THE ECCLESIA SUPERIOR TO ITS SERVANTS

In case of any dispute, the judgment, or decision, of the Congregation should stand as the right thing for the time being. If it prove later to have been unwise, the Lord is able to overrule the error of judgment for good--for instruction. To illustrate: Should the judgment of the Class at any time differ from the judgment of the Elder or Elders, the proper course would be for the Elders to submit to the higher authority, which is the Class, the Church, the Ecclesia; for he who *appoints* is superior to him who is appointed. Our Lord's arrangement for the Classes, or Ecclesias, is, "Wherever two or three of you are met in My name, there am I." The Lord has promised to be with the *Class*. He has not said, Wherever there is an *Elder*, there am I, and to him shall the Class gather; but, Wherever there is a *Class* there am I; and it may appoint an Elder, whom I will recognize and bless as its representative and for its good, in proportion as he shall strive to be a suitable vessel to be My servant in blessing that Class.

This appreciation of the true relationship between the Elder and the Class should help the Elders to cultivate those fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit described by St. Paul as meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness, long-suffering, love. But, on the other hand, the Congregation, Ecclesia, having chosen one of its number to serve it as an Elder Brother and to look out for its interests, should hope that they had wisely chosen in harmony with the Lord's Word and providences. So hoping, they should be prepared to give support and encouragement to the Elder, in proportion as they see him striving to know and to do the Lord's will and faithfully to lay down his time and talents in the service of the Class. Should they subsequently find that apparently they had not fully discerned and followed the Apostolic instructions respecting the selection of the Elder, they should still be kind and gentle toward him, remembering that the fault was theirs in electing him--a fault to be rectified at the next election--and trusting and praying that they may know the will of the Lord more perfectly and be wiser in their selection.

DUTIES OF THE ECCLESIA

From this viewpoint the Congregation has everything to say in respect to the number of meetings to be held, where they are to be held, by whom they are to be conducted, the character of the lessons or studies, etc. Nothing of this kind is for the Elder to decide, though as a member of the Congregation he has the same right to be heard that the others have. In proportion as he is esteemed highly, his opinion will have weight with the Ecclesia, Class, or Congregation. Nevertheless, the Class should never forget the thought that however highly the Elder may be esteemed, he is not their

guide. The Elders and all others are to be heeded in proportion as they are seen to wisely interpret the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.

We believe that with these principles seen, approved and looked up to, there will be less and less friction in the Classes. The Elders, in just their proper sphere and conscientiously seeking to serve in harmony therewith, will be restrained from doing and saying many things out of their province and likely to stir up difficulties among the members of the Classes.

A POTENT FACTOR IN ALL DISPUTES

It will generally be found, we believe, that *pride* is a potent factor in all Church disputes. Sometimes the Elder undertakes to do for the Class more than it wishes him to do and more than it has authorized him to do. Or, misguided by the sentiments prevalent among all denominations of Christendom, he thinks of his Eldership as an office of authority over the Church, and not as an honorable *service*, the authority being vested in the Class. Sometimes the difficulty is with some member of the Class, who, seeking to preserve the rights and authority of the Class, goes to an extreme, and unnecessarily harries the Elder, criticizing him for doing the right thing, but not doing it exactly the way this well-intentioned brother thinks he should do.

Love should apply the Golden Rule. We should be willing to give the Elder as much reasonable liberty of action as we would like to enjoy if we were in his place --provided, of course, that this liberty should be in full harmony with the Word of God. Furthermore, we should remember that the Elder is the servant of the *whole Class*, and not the servant specially of any one member of it. Any criticism, therefore, of his conduct should come from the Class and not merely from an individual member of it. If an individual member has an important thought which the Elder ignores he should be at liberty to ask the judgment of the Class on the subject for his own instruction and for the instruction of the Elder; but no individual member should undertake to criticize the Elder or to find fault with his procedure.

If the Class approves of the Elder, the individuals thinking differently are at liberty still to *think* as they please, but should *yield* to the *majority*. In other words, peace and order in a class are items of great value in respect to all progress in Bible study. Nothing should be done to disturb the peace and order unless there be something positively wrong, unscriptural, connected with the matter. Then the brother or the sister calling attention to the matters which he considers unscriptural, should say little about his own opinion and deal chiefly with the Scriptural injunctions which he believes are being violated.

LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE

These suggestions are intended to increase and promote peace and unity amongst the Lord's brethren wherever this journal goes. We have confidence that all who are begotten of the one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, are desirous of knowing and doing that which is right-- that which is pleasing and acceptable to God and for the best interests of His Cause. "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Our thought is that all being one with the Lord--of one heart, of one will-- our difficulties lie almost entirely in our heads, in our misapprehension of some of the principles governing the Divine arrangement. And these principles, we may be sure, are perfect, right. In proportion as we can come into harmony with these principles, we shall be at peace one with another, joyfully assisting each other toward the Kingdom, in which we shall have a share with our Lord.

Let us continually remember that love for all the brethren is a sure indication that we love as New Creatures. And love for the brethren means that we will do them no injury, that we will speak no evil respecting them unless of absolute necessity; and, finally, that we will not even surmise evil in respect to their words and deeds. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God (by His Spirit dwelleth) in him." For though we should give all our goods

to feed the poor, and though we should even sacrifice our bodies to be burned in the interests of righteousness, yet if we have not *love*--the *Spirit of love*--we are nothing in God's sight.--Romans 13:10; I John 4:16; I Cor. 13:3.

R2220

PAUL'S HEART REVEALED

ACTS 20:22-35

*"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said,
It is more blessed to give than to receive."--Acts 20:35.*

PERHAPS no other words give us a clearer insight into the heart of the Apostle Paul than his address to the elders of the Church at Ephesus. They show us what were the moving impulses of his active life. He sought not for ease or fame or worldly pleasure. He was thoroughly imbued with his Master's holy spirit which delighted in honoring God and doing good to all, regardless of earthly reward, persecutions, insults, slander and misrepresentations.

In our lesson for August 29th we saw how the Apostle "endured a great fight of affliction" at Ephesus, just as he was about to start for Macedonia. It is supposed that he spent about ten months in Macedonia and Greece, visiting the Churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth, besides extending his labors into other cities further north, not previously reached, but where some interest had been awakened by others. Having gone the rounds, he was now on his way to Jerusalem with the collections of the Churches of Macedonia and Corinth. His time was limited, if he would reach Jerusalem in season for the Passover, and hence instead of going overland and visiting the Churches of Asia-Minor, he continued his course by sea and sent word from Miletus, the seaport, to Ephesus, inviting the Elders of the Church there to come to him: and this lesson is Luke's report of his discourse to them.

God made known to the Apostle the fact that something extraordinary was to befall him at Jerusalem, as a consequence of which he would never again have the privilege of meeting these dear brethren in the flesh. This made the present meeting with the elders or representatives of the Church a specially impressive one, and at the end of his talk his auditors were in tears.

Wishing to stimulate these dear brethren who, inasmuch as they were chosen as elders or special servants of the Church, may be regarded as amongst the most earnest and zealous of the Lord's people in Ephesus, the Apostle very briefly refreshes their minds on a subject already well known to them;--his own methods and course as a minister of Christ. He would impart to them some of his own spirit of consecration-- the Master's spirit--that they might be the more faithful as servants of the Lord and of his people. He reminds them, but not boastfully, of his own humility of mind in serving the Church; how he kept back nothing that was profitable to them, but on the contrary sought to impart to all the same knowledge of the divine character and plan which he himself enjoyed, and how he had not affected a superior wisdom that made peculiar statements without submitting the proofs. The inference is left for his hearers that they would thenceforth have an increased responsibility and should seek to follow the same heaven directed course.

While telling them that his trials were not over, but that evidently worse things awaited him, he courageously declares, "But none of these things move me neither do I count my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy and [fulfil] the ministry that I received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel by the grace of God."

After calling their attention to his own faithfulness in keeping back nothing that would be profitable, and thus making sure that he was free from responsibility in respect to any that might fall

away, he exhorts his hearers to take heed, to be careful (1) of themselves: that they might make their own calling and election sure; that they might so walk in the footsteps of the Master that they would be acceptable to him. And (2) they should remember that, having accepted special appointment as ministers, they had an added responsibility on behalf of the Lord's flock. Oh, that all the servants of the Lord's cause might take this exhortation to heart, and feel the responsibility that rests upon all who minister in holy things. (And this will apply in a still wider sense, for every brother and every sister is to some extent his brother's and sister's keeper, and is commissioned to help in watching over the Lord's flock.) The Apostle points out that their commission is not merely that of the Church which selected them to be its servants in holy things, but that they became representatives of the holy spirit, and are therefore not to think lightly of the responsibility which they have accepted. The whole Church of the consecrated are begotten of the spirit, and hence their conscientious action in selecting their Elders, according to divine direction, is to be considered the work and selection of the holy spirit.

The object of the appointment of these elders, as the Apostle points out, was to *feed* the Church of Christ; to bring to the attention of the flock the green pastures and still waters of divine truth. They are not commissioned to pen them up in human sects and thus hinder the sheep from pasturing upon the Lord's provision. Neither are they to consider the sheep as so much mutton whereoff they may feed themselves, and from whom they may shear the golden fleece for their own benefit: they are to remember that the Church is not theirs, but God's, which he purchased with the precious blood. They are therefore to conduct themselves as servants or ministers of the Lord's flock, and not as its lords and masters.

Speaking prophetically, the Apostle declares his knowledge of the fact that greedy wolves would get in amongst the flock, and full of selfishness would be reckless of the interests of the sheep, and careful only of their own interests. These are some of the "wolves" which deceptively present themselves "in sheep's clothing," for otherwise the sheep would be on guard against them. And still worse than this the Apostle prophesies, --there would arise amongst themselves certain "heady" ones who, desirous of name and fame, would preach errors in order to "draw away disciples after them." Alas, how true this prophecy has proved, applicable not only to the Church at Ephesus but to the Church all the way down, from then until now! How few like the Apostle seem willing to preach not themselves, but Christ, and not human philosophies (their own or those of other men) but the cross of Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God to every one that believeth. And the Apostle points out that he had been guarding them and the whole Church along these lines for three years.

These, he says, will speak *perverse things*;--that is, they will distort the truth, to make it harmonize with some theory which they have accepted and which they wish to impress upon others, thereby exalting themselves as the discoverers of new light. No less than five of these false teachers who arose in the Church of Ephesus, some before and some after, are mentioned in the Apostle's epistles to Timothy,--Hymeneus, Alexander, Phygellus, Hermogenes and Philetus.-- 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17.

Under the circumstances, realizing the trials that were coming upon them, and that he would be unable to share these with them, what commendation would the Apostle give to these representatives of the Church? He gave them grand advice in these words, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Ah yes, there can be no better recommendation to any than this--to keep close to the divine Word, and to take heed lest they twist or wrest the Scriptures, and thus blind themselves and make ready for the Adversary to lead them further into darkness. The Apostle thus points out to them that they are not yet ready for the heavenly inheritance; that they must first be built up in sanctification; and that the spirit of the Lord's Word permeating them will more and more produce this sanctification of heart and life.

What a noble testimony by the grace of God Paul was enabled to give: "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." He not only had used his trade as a tent-maker for his own support,

but also to help financially those who were associated with him in the gospel work. Praise God for so noble an example of devotion! For altho the Apostle could not and did not endure more, nor as much, as his Redeemer, and is not to be considered as a superior example, nevertheless the illustration of a full devotion which his life affords does us great good; for we remember that our Lord was perfect,--holy, harmless, separate from sinners; but the Apostle declares that he had "like passions" with ourselves;--he was imperfect, and obliged to keep his "body under," in subjection to his new mind, the will of God in Christ.

And now we come to the grandest expression of the whole discourse: "I have showed you [illustrated to you, in] all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Would that these words might be deeply graven upon all our memories. The world's rule, the general disposition of the fallen nature, is to give adherence or support to the strong, and expect weaker ones to rally around and support or uphold us. This is self-pleasing--the way of the fallen nature: but the method of the "new creatures" is to be the reverse of this--they are to be on the lookout for the welfare, interests and comforts of others, especially in their own families; and applying the Apostle's words to the Church they inculcate carefulness for the weaker members of the "household of faith." Each of the stronger should take pleasure in helping the weaker and the less learned, and so far as possible in bringing all up to the stature of manhood in Christ.

And the Apostle here shows that the secret of his success as a servant of the Lord, and the reason why his life could be pointed to as a pattern, was that he was remembering and putting into practice the words of the Great Teacher. The art of *giving himself* is one of the secrets of a happy Christian life. He first gives his will to the Lord, then his time, his energy, his talents, to the service of the Lord and for the Lord's people. He has pleasure in the giving and a blessing, whether others know and appreciate it or not; and by and by his time for receiving will come,--the Lord's time for giving. The Lord will give unto such eternal life, eternal glory and association with himself in his Kingdom.

R1720

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

In our last issue we stated that a different wording for the proposed Introductory Letter for traveling teaching brethren had been decided on; and this we give below. It may be well, however, to guard against any misunderstanding by explaining:--

I. These letters are not *authorizations* to preach. That cannot be given by man. All true disciples, trusting in the precious blood, and fully consecrated to the Lord's service, are *authorized* by God's Word to preach the gospel in any and every way they can do so; and according to their talents and opportunities such should be glad to do all the preaching they can do, publicly or privately, by word or pen or printed page. (See *Matt. 28:19*.) The Apostle Paul, while assuring us that his authorization or ordination as a minister was not of man nor by man, but of and from God only (*Gal. 1:1*), nevertheless went forth to his ministry with Barnabas under the auspices of the Church at Antioch--as the Lord's representative and as the representative of the Church at Antioch. (*Acts 13:3;14:26,27*.) He evidently took just such a letter; for it was the usual custom to give and carry such letters. (*Phil. 2:28-30; Rom. 16:1-15,17; 1 Cor. 16:3; Acts 18:27*.) This is intimated in his epistle to the Corinthians-- "Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you," etc.? (*2 Cor. 3:1*.) He did not need such a letter to the Church at Corinth, because, as he there explains, he himself had founded and established that Church and few could know him better than they, or them better than he. But when first he visited the Church at Jerusalem, he did need letters, or more, a personal introduction. (See *Acts 9:26,27*.) It is this Apostolic custom and safeguarding of the

flock that we seek to copy now, for the *benefit* of all concerned. Individual letters would serve where the individuals are known, or Church letters would serve where the Churches are known; but in this case the Tract Society is known to you *all*, and we are confident that its introduction will be appreciated by the scattered ones everywhere.

II. ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY is not a "religious society" in the ordinary meaning of this term; for it has no creed or Confession of Faith. It is purely a *business* association, whose mission is to serve in a business manner the wishes of its beneficiaries, who are represented in its officers. How faithfully it has served these purposes thus far, its enemies no less than its friends bear witness.

The design of the organization of the Tract Society is to keep the affairs and moneys, represented by it, quite separate from the *individual* affairs of its managers. This present convenience, however, is still less than may be enjoyed in the future; for it is hoped that the death of any or all of those now managing the Fund would not destroy the Society nor totally hinder or involve its work, as the representative and servant of the household of faith, in economically providing tracts, etc., etc., for their use, benefit and assistance in missionary work, since in its Charter provision is made for such contingency.

III. The issuance of these Letters of Introduction means no more than if you or any other individual gave such a letter--except that it represents the judgment of experienced brethren, well informed respecting the character, ability, etc., of those introduced.--See Acts 16:2.

Thus, in this day of "deceivers" (2 Tim. 3:1-13; Rom. 16:18; Matt. 24:24; Eph. 4:11-14), you may the more readily receive those of whom we bear testimony, knowing that we will use conscientious care.

IV. It will be noticed that the eight qualifications named in this Letter of Introduction are not doctrinal, except as to the *ransom*--the foundation: and we hold that without it none are Christians at all. The other qualifications are those respecting *character*, and we believe them to be reasonable; and any one who could not confess them to be true of himself by the grace of God, we could not feel free to introduce as a proper person to be a teacher or a qualified servant, in the Church of the living God.

It is not to be understood that those making these professions of qualification claim to be *perfected* in all those Christian graces and qualifications, but that they believe that they have them to *such a degree* as they concede a representative of Christ should possess them, in order to be a servant of the Church in holy things. All possessed of the right spirit, however, will desire and strive to continually grow in grace and knowledge and love and in every good work, and expect to be perfected only when they awake in the resurrection, in the likeness of their Lord.--1 Cor. 15:42,43.

This Introductory Letter expires December 31, 1895, and should be returned at that date, with application for renewal, if a new one is desired. The holder agrees to return this letter to the Society upon demand of the Society through its Board of Directors, at any time.

Copy of the--

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

FROM ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY,
ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.

To the Church of the living God, whose names are written in heaven (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23),
Greeting!

We hereby commend to your Christian fellowship, and to your acceptance as a helper and counselor,
our beloved brother and co-laborer,

_____.

He is a brother beloved in the Lord, well reported of by brethren who know him, and one whom we recognize as a child of God and follower of Christ (with all that this implies respecting good moral character); and we believe him to possess the following qualifications for SPECIAL SERVICE to the household of faith:

- I. Unexceptional moral character, polished by the truth.
- II. Meekness--that he may not become puffed up, and thus be injured himself, while seeking to help you.
- III. A *clear* conception of the Lord's great plan, and large participation in its spirit.
- IV. *Ability* to impart the truth to others in its own power and simplicity (not necessarily an orator).
- V. *Known* fidelity to the doctrine of the ransom in its only true sense--a corresponding price or substitute for the forfeited life of Adam and his race, which inherits death through him.
- VI. A humble mind, seeking to preach not himself, but Christ--not to air his own knowledge, but to present God's Word in its purity and simplicity.
- VII. A student of the Word, of cultivated thought, well founded and settled--not a wondering *novice*; not a teacher of speculations and fancies, nor of Anglo-Israelism, Socialism, Politics, Astronomical theories, or other questions not of spiritual profit, but to the subverting of the hearers (2 Tim. 2:15-17; 1 Tim. 4:7; 6:20,21); but--
- VIII. He comes to you seeking to establish the faith and character of the Church, presenting the One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism-- the one gospel, authorized by and based upon the one sacrifice, given once for all.

He has affirmed to us, in writing, that, by the grace of God, he already possesses these qualifications, and that he is striving daily to *perfect them* in his actions, words and thoughts; and, in showing this Letter to others, he thereby makes the same confession to them.

He comes to you under the GENERAL ORDINATION AND COMMISSION of our Lord's Word, applicable to all *fully consecrated believers* in the precious blood (Matt. 28:19,20; Isa. 61:1-3); but is particularly commended by us to you, because of the above eight special qualifications,--for your upbuilding in knowledge and practice of the truth, to help you over difficulties, and to help you to *stand*, in this evil day, against all the wiles of Satan and his multiplied, deceptive errors. We hope also that he will be able to water and bring forward to perfection some of the good seeds of truth which you have been patiently sowing amongst your neighbors for years, by word of mouth, and by the printed page;--answering their remaining questions, and convincing and confirming such in the knowledge of the truth; and to aid all in the great life-work of "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

He has full authority from the Lord (as above cited) to administer symbolic baptism, according to all and singular the commands and teachings of the Holy Scriptures; and to take a leading part in gatherings of the "household of faith," either for commemorating our Lord's death, or for worship, or for Bible study; but he has no more *authority*, under the above commission, than has any other consecrated believer, except such authority as *special qualifications for this service* would give. His coming to you with this our letter of introduction and commendation will, we doubt not, secure to him the leadership of any meetings held during his stay,--even though the local leader should hold a similar letter of commendation. Receive him in the spirit of love and Christian fellowship, and aid him by your prayers and cooperation (Col. 1:7; 4:7-9; Phil. 4:3); nevertheless, PROVE (1 John 4:1-3) critically, by the Word of the Lord, his every presentation. Hold fast that proven to be good.--1 Thes. 5:21.

In the love and service of the King of kings and of Christ Jesus, the Lord, Redeemer and Head of the Church, we remain

Your loving servants,

ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY.

{Corporate} _____ *President.* {Seal. } _____ *Secretary.*

R1847

TRACT SOCIETY'S INTRODUCTORY LETTERS

IT has been decided best to recall all of the Introductory Letters issued under the auspices of ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY, and to issue no more of them.

ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY is only a business association (has no creed or confession). It merely represents a fund entrusted to its officers for use to the best of their judgment in the spread of the Truth;--especially of those truths set forth in MILLENNIAL DAWN and ZION'S WATCH TOWER, by means of which many of the donors have been brought, by God's mercy, out of darkness into his marvelous light. The funds donated are used under the direction of the Editor (who is President of the Tract Society), just as they were used before the Society was organized. It was chartered at the request of some of the friends and contributors with a view to the continuance of the "harvest" work should the Editor die before the end of the "harvest."

This Society, therefore, would have the same right as any other business firm to give a Letter of Introduction to any one it might think worthy. But we find that the very word "Society" is liable to be misunderstood by some to mean Church; and that some are in danger of regarding this Society's Letters of Introduction as if they were Commissions, Authorizations or Ordination papers. We discontinue these Letters because we wish to "avoid the very *appearance* of evil," as the Word teaches.

Neither one man, nor many men unitedly, can either give or take away from anyone authority to preach in the name of the Lord. God only can give such authority; and he alone could cancel it. He has given this authority to all his people, saying: "He that hath my word let him speak my word." We sought specially to guard against such an idea as that the Letters of Introduction were letters of *authority*, and the Letters themselves state this most explicitly; but since they are misunderstood by some, they might later on come to be misunderstood by many. Hence they are recalled before they can do harm. Indeed, they may do good by leading to this emphatic calling of attention to God's as the only competent authorization; and the pointing out afresh that ZION'S WATCH TOWER TRACT SOCIETY is not a religious but a business association. It makes no creeds; it merely keeps accounts of the moneys received and expended; just as a banking firm receives deposits and returns checks or vouchers showing what was done with the money. It makes no demands, nor assessments, nor does it beg or importune for money. It merely gives notice that it is ready to receive and use, as wisely as possible, whatever money may be sent by the interested ones, who have been helped out of Satan's darkness into the sunlight of God's loving plan by its aid.

But what shall we do to shield the flock from some who have left the truth of which the *ransom* is the foundation? Well, the "sheep" are, *very properly*, learning to be on guard against "wolves in sheep's clothing," and must be all the more on guard and receive not every spirit. They must all the more carefully watch against the *wiles* of the devil. Let them remember that the true spirit is--

(1) "First pure, then peaceable." And let them beware of any and all coarseness, vulgarity or other uncleanness or impurity, in word, act or personal appearance.

(2) Let them remember that the spirit of Christ is never without *meekness* and *gentleness*. A contentious, quarrelsome, rude, selfish spirit is a sure indication that the one possessing it is not fit to

be a teacher even or "babes in Christ." But specially beware of some who are hypocritically smooth and meek and who engender doubts, suspicions, fears, and destroy faith and confidence with feigned love and tears. The openly contentious are far less dangerous than these wolves in sheep's clothing.

(3) Reject instantly and have no fellowship or communion with any who either openly deny the merit of Christ's work as our ransom-price, or who do so by the sophistry of their arguments, while professing to hold to the ransom, upon which they put a false meaning, ignoring the true meaning of the word ransom, Gr. *antilutron*, --a corresponding price. Such errors although the worst and most destructive are easiest of all to "prove"-- a moment or two will suffice; then act on the true principle and have *no fellowship with them*, and investigate no further.

(4) The outward proofs of character may be satisfactory, and the first applied tests of doctrine--faith in Christ as a savior from sin and its penalty, by a ransom,-- may be quickly made; but then comes a further criticism. For we are not to "swallow" even the less important teachings of any except as we find them to be in harmony with God's Word. Unless you are absolutely sure of them, turn and look at the connections of any Scriptures quoted to prove any *new* point. Accept only such views of Scripture passages as agree well with the context. Many are susceptible to error through neglect of this rule.

(5) While "preaching" is one of the very best methods for giving and receiving instruction, it is only proper for such as have some natural ability in that direction. Others should be encouraged to serve in other ways, each "according to his several ability." (*Matt. 25:15.*) Some who are not platform speakers are excellent otherwise, "apt to teach," and should be appreciated and used in Bible Class talks. And even an orator should not be encouraged unless he have an *aptness* for teaching--an ability to make matters clear, and not as some to use fine language and yet only confuse the hearers. With small groups "Parlor talks" and "Bible Class" studies are in our judgment preferable to set sermons.

(6) Even if there be a recognized "preacher" in the company, there should be, if possible weekly, a meeting at which *all* could be heard, on the lines of propositions 1, 2, 3 and 4 above;--a Bible-Study class.

(7) There should be, if possible, one meeting per week for prayer, praise and testimony--a meeting not for doctrinal discussion but for spiritual exercise and enjoyment, and for self inspection and mutual helpfulness in holy things.

(8) The congregations established by the apostles appear to us to have had *both* the Congregational and the Episcopal features.

The Congregational feature is seen in that each congregation had the control of its own affairs under the Lord, its head, to whom alone it was responsible; and each regulated its own ministry.

The Episcopal feature is seen in the fact that it was understood and expected that the Lord, the great Shepherd of his sheep, would provide pastors, teachers, etc., for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. (*Eph. 4:11-13.*) The congregations looked for the Lord's providential leading in this matter, yet were not unmindful that there were many false teachers raised up by the adversary, and they sought to *prove* their teachers.

When, and so long as, teachers were recognized as having been God-provided, and so long as they *approved* themselves by conduct and the Word of God, to the congregation, they had more honor than others; and their opinions were given proportionately the more weight. (*1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17; Rom. 12:10; 13:7.*) But still the power rested with the congregation to reject any teacher according to their judgment of the Word and will of God.

(9) Love is the only *bond* of perfectness--the perfect bond. Neither bind yourselves nor others with any other bond. Love supreme to God will mean that loyalty to his Word will outrank all other considerations; love for the brethren will mean a generous readiness to see as many as possible of each other's virtues and talents and to seek for each other's highest spiritual welfare--whatever the channel.

(10) Avoid all "organization"; meet as a family of God; recognize as "brethren" all who profess forgiveness of sins through faith in the precious blood and who show by their daily life that they are "striving against sin"; and choose your honored *servants* from your midst. In choosing seek not your own will or glory, neither that of other brethren, but the will and glory of God only, remembering the foregoing considerations as you find them Scriptural.

Should the Editor have occasion to send any special messenger to you he will probably give him *his personal* letter of commendation. (The giving of such letters is usual among friends whether Christians or of the world. But every child of God should feel a special responsibility as to whom he recognizes as friends or introduces to God's people as teachers.) If a Brother come to you bearing such a letter signed by the Editor, you may know that he is one with whom the Editor is well acquainted, and who he believes has some special talents for serving to you the bread of life.

R3744

PUNISHING FELLOW-MEMBERS

SOME of the dear brethren earnestly striving to conform their lives to the divine Word are noticing from the reading of MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. VI., more clearly than ever before the divine regulations respecting methods of procedure as set forth in *Matthew 18:15*. Some of them need to be reminded that it is not necessary for them to follow out all the regulations there set forth. If they choose to overlook the brother's fault it is their privilege; but if they cannot overlook the fault, if it continues to injure them, they may not speak of the matter to others but must follow the Lord's direction there given as the only method by which they can seek redress.

Some inquire respecting the kind of punishment to be meted out to those who are contumacious, who will neither heed the private cry of the brother against impositions nor heed the counsel of two or three brothers nor heed the voice of the Church--what punishment should be applied to these, we are asked. Our reply is that we are not at liberty to punish our brother at all. The Lord proposes to do that; and tells us that at the present time we are not competent to judge the degree of each other's weakness according to the flesh, and consequently the degree of each other's responsibility as the Lord would justly measure it. It is ours to forgive, but not ours to punish; it is our privilege to seek to stop the injury which is being done us, but we may not execute any penalty on account of things of the past.

The whole lesson of the Lord's direction in *Matthew 18:15* is to the effect that we are to strive thus to regain our brother's love, and to stop him from further injuring us. If we succeed in so doing in the same measure we regain him as our brother, we recover him. It is not the thought then that the brother should be brought before the Church to be *punished*, but merely that as a last resort he be brought before it for reproof, for correction, that he may see the error of his course and acknowledge it and cease to do wrong. The effort at every step should be to turn the brother to a right course, not to expose him, not to injure him, not to punish him, for the Lord has said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

The very most that the Church could do according to this Scripture would be that, after having vainly endeavored to get the brother to repent and reform, it should withdraw special brotherly fellowship from him until such time as he would express a willingness thereafter to do right. Then he should be received again.

Even treating the brother for a time as "a heathen man and a publican" would not mean to do him injury, to castigate him, to pillory him, to expose him to shame or contempt before the world. We are not permitted to do any of these things to heathen men or publicans. He may merely be treated in the meantime in the kindly, courteous way in which it would be proper for us to treat any

publican or Gentile, withholding the special rights or privileges or greetings or voting opportunities that belong to the Church as a class separate from the world.

R5336

CHOOSING ELDERS AND DEACONS

NUMEROUS inquiries have come to us indicating that some of the brethren have difficulty in applying the suggestions given in Vol. VI, on the subject of election of servants for the Classes--elders and deacons.

It was not our thought there to lay down an invariable rule on the subject. The Bible gives none, and no one else has a right to establish such a rule. Our suggestion was that wherever possible the election should be unanimous, and unless seventy-five per cent. of the Class, or more, favored a brother's election, it would be rather unwise for him to accept the office--the service. We did not by this mean that a minority of twenty-five or thirty per cent. should be encouraged to obstruct the Class and hinder an election.

Strictly speaking, a majority of *one* in a Class would decide any matter except as love might come in to urge a consideration of the sentiments of others. If, for instance, a Class numbered one hundred, fifty-one of these would have a *right* to decide respecting who should be the servants of the Church, and the other forty-nine should very quietly acquiesce, recognizing the fact that they constitute only a minority, and should loyally strive to support the will of the majority.

Only the spirit of love and the best interests of all in the Class suggests more than fifty-one per cent. Love should strive for a unanimous vote. But how might this be obtained? We will offer a suggestion.

Suppose that in a Class of one hundred six Elders were considered necessary for the service. A, B, C, D, E, F would represent available candidates of more or less ability. A might have a hundred votes; B, ninety; C, eighty; D, seventy; E, sixty; F, fifty. Under a strict voting on the lines of preference only two would be selected on a ninety per cent. basis; but our thought would be that the entire six might be unanimously elected, if they were on the average as good material as the Class possessed, and if nothing were known derogatory to their moral characters.

It is a mistake to think that the standards established by St. Paul are to be taken literally, for no one would be found fully up to all the requirements. The Apostle has stated what the *ideal* Elder would be. Each voter should have this ideal before his mind in thinking of the will of the Lord; but the Class is not to be left without an Elder unless there are serious blemishes.

Our Lord similarly set a perfect standard before us when He said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." (*Matt. 5:48.*) Who is perfect in the sense that God is perfect? "There is none righteous; no, not one." (*Rom. 3:10.*) The Master evidently meant that we should not measure ourselves by a low standard, but by the perfect standard, that thus we would be assisting ourselves up to the grandest ideals in respect to our own lives and characters and in respect to those chosen to be Elders and ensamples to the Flock.

Be it always remembered that none are to vote except those professing full consecration, manifested by the usual symbol--immersion in water. Such as have not symbolized their consecration are not to be disowned as brethren, but should be considered so immature as not to be competent to express an opinion in respect to who would be qualified to serve the Church, and, of course, would not be qualified to be servants themselves.

Another question which here and there is obtruding itself is, Should any one be chosen as a servant of the Church who has not taken the special Vow which so many of us have found very helpful, and which has been recommended to all? We cannot make the Vow a test of brotherhood, for, even though we believe that the Lord has specially brought it forth at this time, and that to a

certain extent He intends it to serve as a test amongst the consecrated, nevertheless the Bible does not authorize us to make this a test of brotherhood. It is a matter of judgment rather than of Divine direction, just as the candidate's misuse of the English language, or uncouthness of manner might properly enough be taken into consideration, although not mentioned in the Bible amongst the qualifications for eldership.

It would rejoice us greatly to know that all the dear Elders and Deacons amongst the Lord's people everywhere could see eye to eye with respect to the reasonableness of the Vow, and its harmony with the Divine Word and with our consecration Vow, to which it is, as it were, a blue fringe, or border and finish. One can scarcely refrain from wondering what objection any Christian brother or sister could have to that Vow. To some of us it seems as though it would imply either something wrong as respects their heart intentions or something defective in their reasoning faculties. However, we are not competent to judge so closely. The Master said, "Judge not."

Our thought is that in selecting Elders or Deacons a preference might well be given to those who have taken the Vow and who see eye to eye on this subject. Nevertheless, if the brethren who are competent to lead Classes are acceptable in every other way and are not *opposers* of the Vow, they might be chosen. This would be especially true of those who declare that they are living up to all the requirements of the Vow to the best of their ability, and merely decline to take it because of fear that somehow or other the taking of this simple Vow might injure *them* while it helps *others*. We may not understand the processes of their reasoning, nor the attitude of their hearts, but we may under such circumstances pass over what we cannot understand nor appreciate.

R4183 [sel]

LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?

JOHN 21:1-25

"SIMON, LOVEST THOU ME?"

Poor Peter was doubtless wishing for some favorable opportunity to make some amends for his denial of the Lord, when our Lord looked at him and addressed him not as Peter, a rock, but as Simon, saying, "Lovest thou me more than these?" He may have meant, Do you love me more than these nets and boats and this fishing business? or he may have meant, Do you love me more than these other disciples? At least there was an opportunity for Peter to call to mind his own rather boastful expression of love for the Lord on the same night in which he denied him. He had said, "Lord, though all should forsake thee yet will not I." Peter replied without making any comparison between himself and the others or the fishing implements, saying, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Our Lord used the word *agapao* for love, while Peter used a different word, *phileo*, supposed to signify a warm, personal affection. Upon this declaration our Lord replied, "Feed my lambs," my little sheep. There was in this the suggestion of a partial restoration of Peter to the work of the ministry. Three years before, our Lord had taught the multitudes on the shore from Peter's boat, and subsequently had performed the miracle of granting them a great draught of fishes, so great that the net broke. Following that incident, our Lord had said to Peter and James and John, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Now he gave them a similar miracle, and the net did not break, although 153 large fish were caught; and it was now, after this catch, that our Lord wished again to start the apostles as fishers of men under the auspices of the Gospel dispensation beginning with Pentecost, when they would be endued with power from on high. Although our Lord did not directly reprove Peter, he nevertheless impressed upon him the seriousness of his mistake and his denial, and intimated that thereby he had forfeited his place as one of the apostles. This new commission that he

might feed the lambs of the flock indirectly implied that he might not be a full shepherd amongst the sheep. But our Lord again put the same question in the same form, and Peter replied in the same words. Jesus then extended the commission to him, saying, "Tend my sheep," care for the sheep, serve the sheep. By these two parts of the commission Peter was authorized to feed the lambs, but merely to tend the sheep; he had not yet received the full liberties of shepherding. As Peter had denied the Lord three times, so our Lord questioned him the third time, this time, however, changing the word for love to *phileo*. Perhaps Peter recognized the analogy; in any event he was deeply grieved at this third questioning of his love and that our Lord used this time the word *phileo*. Peter's reply was pathetic, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." With this third confession our Lord restored him fully as a bishop or shepherd, saying, "Feed my sheep." He was authorized not only to feed the lambs and tend the sheep but finally to feed the sheep also. We are glad for Peter; and we admire our Lord's course in adopting such a skilful method of reproof and his generosity in not reproving more severely. Let us learn lessons from this grand exemplar! Are there any other lessons we may learn from our Lord's words? Is it not well that we inquire each of his own heart whether or not we have a warm, deep, earnest love for the Lord, or if it is only a general love and admiration? We are to seek to cultivate that personal fellowship with the Master which will enable us to answer these questions affirmatively, and to assure him that we love him more than lands or houses, boats or nets, parents or children, husband or wife or self. As our heavenly Bridegroom he is worthy of our love, and if we do not feel this love toward him we are not of the kind fit for the Kingdom, not fit to be members of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. And how shall we know, how shall we test our own hearts as to the degree of our love for the Lord? How will the Lord test us if not by permitting trials and difficulties, oppositions, etc., to overtake us? As our Lord hid himself from the apostles for three weeks or more, yet was near them watching over them and ready to take advantage of the most favorable moment to impart the necessary lessons, so we may be sure that he watches over our interests to give us needed instruction and guidance--and if sometimes he hides his face behind a frowning providence it is with a view to our blessing or strengthening, to prepare us to appropriate some valuable lessons which will be helpful to us in our preparation for a place in the throne. Let us, then, rejoice even in tribulation, knowing what it is working out, and in such tribulation let us ask ourselves the question, How am I showing my Lord that I love him supremely?

As our Lord said to Peter upon the profession of his love that he might feed the lambs and tend and feed the sheep, so he says to all who are his followers. Not that we can have the honorable place of apostles in connection with the Lord's dear flock, but that each of us may find opportunities for tending and assisting, feeding, nourishing the flock of God, especially all whom the Lord's providences place in the Church as elders so that, as the Apostle Paul said of the elders at Ephesus, they may feed the flock of God over whom the Spirit has made them overseers, bishops, shepherds. (Acts 20:28.) It is proper, nevertheless, that each one for himself provide things decent and honest in the sight of all in a temporal way; it is also necessary and proper that each under-shepherd give attention to his own spiritual feeding and refreshment; but it is very important that the Master's commission in respect to the flock shall have a prominent place in our hearts, that we shall rightly esteem it a great privilege to feed and to tend the Lord's followers in his name and as far as possible in his spirit of self-denial, self-sacrifice, in loving service, laying down our lives for the sheep, as he did. Whoever is heedless of the sheep should not in any sense of the word be recognized as an Elder, a leader, and each dear Elder should be esteemed and chosen to the position by his brethren because of evidence of loving zeal and devotion to the cause of the great Shepherd and the flock, and not from any selfish or worldly reasons. The primary qualification of an Elder in the Church, an under-shepherd, must necessarily be love for the Lord. All of the eloquence, all of the zeal might be hindrances and injurious to the flock's best interest, except as love for the great Shepherd would be the mainspring of action. And how may we know who has love for the Lord, and know of its measure? Our Lord tells us through the Apostle that if we love not our brethren whom we have seen

we would be deceiving ourselves if we claim to love God, whom we have not seen. Hence love for our Lord must be expected to manifest itself in love for the brethren, and only those who manifest great love and sympathy, benevolence, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness for the dear flock, are to be considered faithful shepherds or worthy of eldership. The self-seeking, the ambitious are to be feared and not to be encouraged.

WHAT SHALL THIS MAN DO?

Following the questioning our Lord, still addressing the Apostle Peter, made a prophecy respecting him that he would live to be an old man, and that then he would be deprived of his liberties. This was not a very bright prospect to hold out before Peter; it meant a further testing of his loyalty. We are glad to know that the Apostle was not discouraged, and that he was faithful even unto death. The prophecy proved to Peter and to the other apostles present, that in the work in which they were to engage afresh they were not to expect Kingdom honors and blessings, but rather to remember the Lord's previous declaration that the servant is not above his Master, and that as men despitefully used the Master the servants must expect nothing better. How nobly those chosen ones came up to the various tests and requirements placed upon them! There is a lesson for us, too, along the same lines, namely, that faithfulness to our Master will probably bring us tribulation of one kind or another. Hence we are not to seek our own wills or our own ways, but rather to look for and accept the Lord's providential guidance of our interests and to prefer this, knowing that he is able always to make all things work together for our good as New Creatures. John tells us that our Lord's words were understood to signify that Peter would die a violent death, and that in conclusion Jesus said, "Follow me," note my example and copy it.

Peter evidently felt that the conversation was pivoted largely upon himself and sought to turn it a little, saying respecting John, whom he recognized as the Lord's favorite disciple, "Lord, what shall this man do?" What is your prediction and what will be your providence in respect to John? Our Lord's reply was almost curt; it amounted to, Mind your own business and you will have plenty to do, though it was stated in a more polite form. Jesus said, "If I will that he tarry until I come,

WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME

This is a difficult lesson for all of the Lord's followers to learn, but a very important one. If we allow ourselves to look about us and to wonder why some fellow-disciple is not receiving apparently the same amount of chastisement or trials or difficulties or burdens that the Lord permits to come to us, and if then we permit ourselves to become judges of the Lord and his wisdom and his providences, the result will be disastrous to ourselves. It will destroy our peace and undermine our faith and hinder us from learning the lessons necessary to prepare us for the Kingdom. If such criticisms of divine providence at any time come to our minds, we should answer ourselves, promptly, in the language of our Lord to Peter, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." You are not competent to regulate these matters, nor is it proper nor necessary for the Master to explain to you all of his plans and purposes. It is far better for you that you learn faith, submission and trust. No two of us have the same natural disposition, no two of us, therefore, need the same disciplinary training at the hand of the Lord. We have confidence in his wisdom and love; let us manifest it, realizing that if our trials are greater our blessings will be proportionate, and as the Lord said to Paul, so he would say to each of us, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9.) With the Apostle let us say, If, therefore, the Lord's grace is proportionate to our trials let us receive with rejoicing all the trials he may send that we may have the more of his grace! It is for each sheep to know the Shepherd and to follow him, taking as straight paths for his feet as possible, and leaving with the Shepherd the general oversight of the flock and its interests, giving attention in proportion as the Lord through the brethren gives opportunity to assist in the shepherding work and in the name of the Lord to counsel or assist his dear flock.

TAKE HEED LEST YE BE DEVOURED

"Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."--Gal. 5:13-15.

WHERE the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. This is illustrated in the world's history most remarkably. It was because the Jews had the instruction of the Law and more or less of its spirit that for centuries they were known as an unconquerable people. That is to say, they were conquered time and again, but were so dominated by the spirit of liberty that they made trouble for their conquerors and larger neighbors continually.

Similarly, though to a larger extent, the same has been true of Christianity: wherever the Word of God has gone the effect has been stimulation of the love of liberty in the same proportion. When during the "dark ages" the Word of God was "clothed in sackcloth," and false teachings of men took its place, the spirit of liberty slumbered and the world had a measure of peace and a general serfdom of the people. With the Reformation movement came the love of liberty afresh. The latest illustration along these lines is to be seen in Russia.

We do not mean to say that Christ and his apostles taught war, and discontent and strife,--neither did Moses and the Law. Quite to the contrary; love, peace, brotherly kindness, gentleness, patience, meekness, --these were the teachings of our Lord and his servants. The influences which proceeded from the Word were of two kinds: Some, with the enlightenment and liberty, received also the divine instruction and sought to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit; others receiving the spirit of liberty through the knowledge received not the spirit of the truth, but engrafted the knowledge upon the selfish stalk of the fallen nature and were more discontented because of their increased intelligence.

EFFECT OF TRUTH ON THE CHURCH

There is a Church nominal which is really part and parcel with the world, glossed with a little knowledge of the divine Word and plan and with some small endeavor to heed divine instruction; but the real Church includes only those who have turned from sin and accepted Christ with a full consecration of thought, word and deed. What effect has the truth upon these? We answer that even these "new creatures" find that the knowledge they receive and the spirit of liberty which comes to them through that knowledge have one effect upon their flesh and another effect upon their wills, their hearts. With their hearts they desire to serve the law of God, to live peaceably with all, to cultivate all the fruits and graces of the Spirit of Christ and to deal gently, lovingly, not only with the fellow-members of the body of Christ, the Church, but also to deal gently with the world. But they have, some more and some less, difficulty in contending with their own flesh and permitting the new mind to dominate it in word and in deed.

What Christian does not know from more or less experience the meaning of the words of our text, "If ye bite and devour one another"? If the hearts of God's people, their wills, their intentions, could be appealed to, separate and distinct from the weakness and bias of their flesh, there would be no doubt at all that every one of them would agree perfectly in his desire to live peaceably with his brethren and to glorify God by his meek and quiet disposition, his gentleness, brotherly kindness. But we cannot have it thus, for the new will is in the old body that is sadly warped and twisted by

selfishness, and it must "fight a good fight" against the flesh, and must conquer at least to the extent of loving, striving for the right, the gentle, the good, however imperfectly it may attain to it.

The truth seems to take hold on the stronger characters rather than on the weaker ones. These have in their flesh more of the firmness, grittiness and the combativeness than have many others who are too pliable and wishy-washy to be acceptable to the Lord as members of the "little flock" of overcomers. Thus we see that the very quality which makes us acceptable to the Lord and which is one qualification of the overcoming position is a serious disadvantage in some respects, when a number of these of like strong character come together as a Church. Even a diamond surrounded by mud would cut nothing, would scratch nothing; but place a dozen diamonds together, and the more you get rid of the mud element the more gritting, scouring and cutting there is likely to be. So it is with the Lord's jewels--the more they come together the more they get wakened up, the more opportunities there will be for friction, and the greater necessity there will be that they all be thoroughly imbedded and covered with the holy Spirit, which, like oil, is smooth and unctuous and tends to prevent friction.

TRIALS TEND TO INCREASE

On the one hand we may see that as the Lord's people grow in grace and in knowledge and in the fruits and graces of the Spirit, there should be less danger of friction in the Church; but on the other hand let us remember that polished diamonds do more scratching than rough ones. Let us remember, too, that in our earliest experiences in the Truth we were somewhat like babes--we knew not enough to quarrel and dispute with each other respecting the lessons we were learning. As each grows, therefore, in knowledge and appreciation of the Truth he must likewise grow in the spirit of the Truth, or else his growth in knowledge will mean that he will be that much more of a trial to his dear brethren than when he was a babe in knowledge.

From this standpoint it should not surprise us if in the light of our day on every subject, especially on the Word, there would be more room for friction year by year, and the greater need for our remembrance of our 1906 text, "Be patient, brethren." The context shows us that these words were intended to be especially applicable in the end of the age. The time of trouble is accurately described--the conflict between the rich and the poor, which is coming about on the lines of increased knowledge in connection with the selfishness of the fallen nature. Then comes the exhortation, "Grudge not one against another, brethren; the Judge standeth at the door," "Be patient, brethren, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

The lesson here is in full accord with the text we are discussing. We need patience; we need to remember that it is not in order for us to nurse grudges or hard feelings of any kind, especially against those who like ourselves are striving to walk in the narrow way and to attain joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom. Rather we should be willing to sacrifice something of our own rights and liberties and privileges in the interest of others. This does not signify that we should sit quietly and hear the truth misrepresented when we have the right and the opportunity to defend it. We should contend earnestly for the truth against the error, but we should not contend against the brethren. If there be any who deny the foundations of our Christian faith, the ransom, the Lord through the apostles has left us no room to doubt how firmly we should take a stand in respect to any kind of fellowship with them. (*I Cor. 5:11*.) But there are a thousand and one occasions of friction amongst the brethren where no principle of truth is at stake; and these we are to be willing and glad to waive in the interest of harmony and peace and fellowship. This, however, need not mean that we should not present our understanding of the truth on proper occasions, but we need not insist upon them nor force them upon others if they cannot see them as we do.

In our text the Apostle seems to imply that such a condition might arise even amongst the Lord's people that some would not only be wounded to the extent of being "bitten" by the harshness and slander of others, but that the tendency to retaliate more or less in kind would arise, and that it

would mean a general conflict unworthy of God's children and more nearly resembling a fight among dogs.

"Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another," urges the Apostle. What if in our appreciation of the liberty that is ours, and of which we know through the Gospel, we should reach the point where we would be so contentious for our liberties, great and small, that we would consume some brother for whom Christ died! What if in injuring another the spirit of strife should so react upon us as to poison our own spiritual lives and we also should be consumed--lost as respects the gracious things to which the Lord has invited us and for which we have been running in the race! Let the Apostle's words ring in our hearts, "Lest ye be consumed one of another."

With this thought before our minds let us more and more put on the armor of God to fight *against* our own fleshly weaknesses and to fight *for* our dear brethren, assisting them by example and by precept to war a good warfare also against the world, the flesh and the adversary.

R2951

DEACON STEPHEN, CHRISTIAN MARTYR

ACTS 6:7-15

*"Fear not them which kill the body,
but are not able to kill the soul."*

STEPHEN may be acknowledged the second Christian martyr--for surely our Lord Jesus was the first. We must begin with the first verse of our lesson--chapter in order to trace the history of this worthy soldier of the cross. An emergency arose in the Church, calling for a force of seven deacons to look after various temporal matters, and Stephen was one of these seven, all of whom were chosen by the congregation, not by the apostles, as men of honest reputation, wise, and full of the holy spirit. This incident suggests to us the loose character of the organization of the early Church. It had not cast-iron rules and laws, except that the Lord, the Redeemer, was the Head of the Church, and that none could be recognized as members thereto except as they recognized him as their Savior and Lord, and made consecration to him, receiving his spirit, and recognized as of his appointment and of the holy spirit's designation his specially chosen apostles, as the authorized instructors of the Church. Aside from this, the necessities of each case seem to have guided: and yet, we may safely presume that in all the arrangements in the Church, as well as in the teachings of the apostles, the holy spirit directed; --for the benefit also of those believing on the Lord through their word, throughout the entire age.

In a previous lesson we saw that a measure of communism was early established in the Church; but the incidents of this lesson clearly imply that it was only limited, and not a complete division of property. It was evidently the intention of the early Church to provide for the poor of their number who were without means of livelihood. Prominent amongst those provided for, if not the only ones, were widows without income; such at that time must have been comparatively helpless and dependent upon charity, since there were so few opportunities for earning a living, especially amongst women.

We are not to suppose that there was any intentional partiality or neglect of the Grecian more than of the Hebrew women. Apparently it was unintentional, and possibly arose from the fact that the apostles, native-born, appreciated more keenly the needs of the native widows than of the foreign-born. These were all Jewesses, of course, whether born in Palestine or born in Greece. Up to this time the Gospel had not been sent to others,--Gentiles. No doubt there was some reasonable cause for the murmur. In any event the apostles manifested their honesty of purpose in the matter by promptly

instituting measures for the correction of the difficulty. There is a lesson in this for all of the Lord's people: if difficulties arise, based upon temporal questions, likely to sprout a "root of bitterness" or to cause a schism in the Church, the proper course would be to throw the responsibility upon the shoulders of the whole congregation--to ask for the election of some of the number who could give the matter better attention, and see that all were justly dealt with. We are not to forget that in this as in other ways the Lord has clearly indicated that the *Church as a whole* is under his supervision, his care, and that it is therefore proper that the general affairs of the Church be conducted by the *congregation* and not by one man, nor by a clerical class.

No doubt some of those chosen for the serving of tables--the money collection and the food distribution --were representatives of the Grecian brethren who, knowing the peculiarities of the Grecian customs, would be the better able to see to the welfare of the Grecian widows. It is here that we get acquainted with Stephen, as one of the seven chosen deacons. The word "deacon" signifies runner, attendant, servant. The "elders" of the Church were more particularly chosen according to their Christian character and aptness to teach, while the deacons were chosen according to Christian character and aptness in business affairs. In both instances, however, the Christian character, the holiness of spirit and wisdom were primary considerations. So with the Lord's people to-day: those chosen to any part of the service should first of all be recognized as the best and the wisest of the number--the possession of a holy, meek and quiet spirit, of great value, being carefully considered -- then natural abilities.

In Stephen's case we see an illustration of the Lord's methods of advancing his people step by step in his service: (1) He was honored with a knowledge of the truth: faithful in his acceptance of it, and zealous toward the Lord, he ere long manifested these qualities; and under the guidance of the holy spirit, was chosen a deacon. (2) Faithfulness in this, serving tables, prepared him for further opportunities, and (3) we find him exercising the gift of healing and performing signs in attestation of his *ministry of the truth*; which implies that he had actually attained to the position of an elder in the Church tho' the apostles residing in Jerusalem, perhaps, made an unnecessary election of elders,-- for they were all elders. (*I Pet. 5:1.*) Stephen was so full of the spirit of the truth and devotion to its service that he had the high honor (4) of being the first one of the brethren to follow the Master's footsteps in a sacrificial death. Here surely was an advancement in service and its honor that may well quicken and energize all of the Lord's people to greater efforts to serve and please the same Master. He who thus accepted the consecrated Stephen, and advanced him step by step in his service, is ready and willing to-day to take and use those who are similarly consecrated, and burning with heavenly zeal. He is willing to make of such burning and shining lights in the Church, if they in turn are willing to suffer with him, that they may also be glorified together in due time.-- *Rom. 8:17.*

Stephen's faith and power and opportunities for service came to him along the same lines as faith and power have come to the Lord's people since--whole-hearted devotion to the Lord, to his people and to his truth. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Had Stephen been selfseeking and ambitious for honor of men or of the brethren we may be sure we would have heard little of him, unless, like Ananias, his approbateness had resulted in his being made an example of evil-doing. This is a danger which besets every brother chosen by the church to any service. Hence the apostle's caution "Be not many of you teachers brethren." Hence the necessity that the Church choose for its servants only those of humble mind; and the need of care amongst these servants that they fall not into the snare of the Adversary, and after having preached to others, themselves become castaways.-- *Jas. 3:1; I Tim. 3:6,7; I Cor. 9:27.*

Stephen in preaching got into a debate with some of his day, and was more than a match for them. As we read, "They were not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." We are not to suppose that Stephen was the greatest of all orators, nor even that he had no peers amongst those with whom he disputed. In this case the adage was well applied, "Thrice armed is he who hath his quarrel just." It was because Stephen had the truth, the right side of the controversy, and because God was with him, that he was more than a match for any of his adversaries.

The same God is still with his people; and the Lord's Word, therefore, is still worthy of all acceptance, --"I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist." (*Luke 21:15.*) Do we not see this same principle illustrated to-day, when humble ones amongst the Lord's people are more than a match for all their adversaries? The truth being powerful, prevails, though it is not always acknowledged to prevail, even as it was not acknowledged by Stephen's enemies.

We are not advocating public debating of the truth. We believe that debates, as a rule, accomplish little good; because the opponents of the truth are apt to conduct their arguments unfairly, deceptively--apt to strive for victory, rather than to strive for the truth. However, there are cases to-day, like this case of Stephen's, in which the opponents of the truth are the aggressors; and in such cases those who have the truth are not to be ashamed of it, nor fearful, but to trust in the promise of the Lord for words and wisdom for the occasion. We are not given a report of the discussion, but from what we know of Stephen's character, so well illustrated in the discourse subsequently delivered, we cannot escape the conviction that he spoke to his opponents in a kind, generous, reasonable manner-- that he neither ranted nor stormed nor endeavored to throw a dust of false arguments. He had the truth, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, and we may be sure that he spoke the truth "in love," according to the apostolic command.--*Eph. 4:15.*

Stephen's disputants were evidently of the Grecian Jews, and Stephen himself was also probably of this class. Possibly Saul of Tarsus, afterwards the Apostle Paul, was amongst those who disputed with him, as he himself tells us that he was a sort of ringleader amongst those who killed him. (*Acts 22:20.*) We cannot help wondering to what extent young Saul, the lawyer, instructed by Gamaliel, and an adept in logic, may have taken some lessons and caught some ideas from Stephen's reasoning--not enough, however, to make transformation of his career.

It was Stephen's turn to be called before the Sanhedrin, that he might give the leaders of his people a gospel sermon, the basis of which was Jesus and the resurrection. His opponents, who could not down him in argument, were determined to destroy him; and, like other zealots, deluded by superstition, they were nevertheless influenced by their higher principles to desire to accomplish his destruction *legally*--that is to say, with a form of law. Alas, how many people now, as well as then, of comparatively noble mind, succeed in "deceiving their own selves" into thinking that a wrong becomes a virtue, becomes right, if to any extent they can wrap it in the folds of the law! The Lord's people need to have the *spirit* of the law, the *spirit* of justice, the *spirit* of righteousness: without this even the best balanced minds may be led astray under the pressure of zeal, superstition, or error.

The doctors of the law and members of the Sanhedrin (Saul of Tarsus is supposed to have been a member) did not wish to be parties directly to the charges, nor to seem to be interested in the destruction of a noble man. They therefore procured others to give testimony that would be of the kind desired--testimony upon which it would be possible for their distorted judgments and consciences to render a death verdict. Strangely enough, the second martyr, like the first, was convicted of blasphemy against God and against the Temple, and without any more foundation for the charges than in the case of his illustrious Master. Of course the charges were distorted, and yet there was a measure of truth in them. Just how much allowance should be made for those who convicted the Lord and Stephen on such evidence is perhaps difficult for us to judge. Nor is it necessary, because the judgment of such matters is not yet put into our hands. The Lord alone knows to what extent the prejudiced mind was unable to discern the truth, and to what extent the Adversary succeeded in blinding the judgment, so as to make the light appear darkness, the truth appear error.

Doubtless, as Stephen heard the charges against him, and noticed the advancement of the case, he mentally remarked the correspondence between these charges against him and those upon which his Master was convicted. We may be sure that some such thoughts were passing through his mind when his face was so wonderfully lit up with the indwelling joy, that it is recorded that all sitting in the Sanhedrin "looking steadfastly on him saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel." But even an angelic face could not move such hearts, some of the same, doubtless, that had sat in

condemnation of the Master himself. Seemingly, Stephen's witness was fruitless, so far as his auditors were concerned; the same might have been said respecting our Master's trial and testimony. And yet, as the latter bore fruit on the day of Pentecost and afterward, so, doubtless, Stephen's testimony bore fruit subsequently. Who can say that that beaming and angelic face was not one of the "pricks" against which Saul of Tarsus had been contending for some time, when the Lord interrupted him enroute to Damascus?

Who can tell that experiences connected with this martyrdom may not have been valuable not only to Saul, but to others? At all events, it was Stephen's duty, as it is our duty, to be faithful under all circumstances, under all conditions, regardless of whether appearances indicate the accomplishment of much, or of little good. We are to remember that the Lord's work is in his own hands, and that our part is to be faithful to him and to the truth, to the extent of our opportunities.

The Editor would like, for himself and for all the Pilgrims, and for all the elders of the Church everywhere, and for all the brethren who speak at all, publicly or privately, in the name of Jesus, that Stephen's beaming face might be impressed upon our memories. If it is, and if every time we stand forth before men publicly or privately, as the representatives of our Lord, we could so realize his blessing and our privilege as his servants, that it would fill our hearts, and beam forth from our faces, in gladness, in thankfulness, for the privilege of serving, then indeed we would have the highest degree of blessing to ourselves, and doubtless also would bring the largest degree of blessing to all those whose hearts would be prepared for the truth, and also for those not yet ready for it, but who are under the Lord's discipline and guidance, in preparation for it, as was Saul of Tarsus.

Our Golden Text is very appropriate in this connection. It is well that the Lord's people, especially when they come into trying positions on account of their fidelity to the truth, should remember these, the Master's words. Men may kill our bodies, or they may speak evil of them, or spitefully use them otherwise; but it is beyond their power to injure us as new creatures, or to ruin our prospects as respects the future life. That life which the Lord has promised to his faithful,--the resurrection life,--is beyond the power of man. It is the eternal, the invaluable life. If we gain it, no matter what the cost may be, as respects the present life, and mortal-body condition, we shall have made a great bargain, we shall have gained a great prize. All who really appreciate it see it to be a "pearl of great price," for which they, like the Master, are willing to lay down all,--to sell all that they have, that they may obtain it.

God is able to kill the soul--able to blot out existence entirely--and he has threatened to do so in all cases of wilful deliberate sin, against full light and knowledge. This is a cause both for comfort and for fear. For comfort, as opposed to the false human teaching that the masses will spend an eternity of woe: for fear, lest after having tasted of divine goodness and learned of God's gracious provisions for such as obey him, any of us should seem to come short and lose our all--life!

To have the proper course in life, to be able to meet the trials and difficulties of life as they come to us, and to meet them in the proper spirit which the Lord directs--in the spirit of rejoicing in tribulation, and counting such experiences all joy,--it is necessary that all fear of man, which brings a snare, shall be removed. And it is our Lord's direction that we shall fear Jehovah, and not fear our mortal fellows. The righteous are bold as a lion, as well as gentle as a dove, and meek as a lamb. This peculiar combination should be found in every Christian, and we doubt if it will be found elsewhere.

R4929 [sel]

THE HARVEST A SPECIAL TIME OF TRIAL

So surely as we recognize that we are in the "harvest" time, we must also assume that the Lord is now specially ripening the "wheat" and separating it from the "tares" and, shall we say,

dividing the wheat into *two classes*? It is this special testing of this harvest time which the Scriptures draw particularly to our attention, frequently warning us of the necessity of having on the whole armor of God and being not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

From our vantage-point in THE WATCH TOWER we perceive that just such testings as we should expect are in progress throughout the Lord's ripe wheat field. Divine providence is permitting tests of love and loyalty, faith and obedience, brotherly kindness and patience. Sometimes the trials come to the classes through the Elders, who should be the very ones to help, protect, admonish and assist the flock. Sometimes the Elders assume a lordly disposition quite contrary to the Divine Word and example and trying to the patience and love of the brethren.

Sometimes the trial is from the other side. Some members of the class may be very exacting, very ready to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, very ready to find fault with everything that the Elder may do, however faithful he may be. Such experiences, whether coming from the one side or the other, are tests, and it behooves each of the Lord's people to see just how he receives these tests and just what effect they have upon his own heart and character. If the experiences embitter him, anger him, or wound deeply his pride, it proves that he needed just such disciplinary experiences to show him his own lack and to point him to the Throne of heavenly grace for mercy and help.

Again, some of the dear classes are assailed by the Adversary through false doctrines and have their own difficulties in endeavoring to defend the Truth, the Divine Plan of the Ages, and to maintain their stand in harmony therewith. Or, on the other hand, the difficulty may arise from some of the dear friends being hypercritical and trying to find differences where there are none--fomenting the spirit of strife rather than the spirit of harmony --discord rather than love.

We exhort, dear brothers and sisters, what we all can agree to, namely, that we are in the *testing time* and these various matters are our *test*. Only by the exercise of much fervency of spirit, much zeal for the Lord, for the Truth and for the brethren, can we hope to stand faithfully and to be of assistance to others to a faithful stand. Let us not be faint-hearted. If we faint not, we shall soon reap our reward and hear the Master's voice: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

We are in the time of general unrest, grumbling, etc. Let us not think for a moment that such grumblings and murmurings are contentions for the "faith once delivered to the saints." Let us rather cultivate more and more the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. Let us specially exercise these in connection with our brethren of the "household of faith," of course not neglecting to "do good to all men as we have opportunity" and to be patient and forbearing to one another. But the special blessing of the Lord comes to those who specially seek to promote peace, happiness, welfare, prosperity and growth in grace in the Body of Christ, which is the "Church of the Living God."

R5350

ELECTING ELDERS AND DEACONS

IT WAS a slip of the pen on the part of the Editor when he recently intimated that the only ones who would properly be entitled to a vote at Church meetings would be those believers in the Atonement who had made full consecration and who had symbolized that consecration. The error was in including the *symbolization*. Many of us were truly Christians, truly accepted of the Lord, truly members of "the Church of the Firstborns whose names are written in Heaven" (Hebrews 12:23), before we saw the real force and significance of water immersion. We have always held (See Vol. 6, STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES) that all such are entitled to vote at Church elections--yea, that it is their *duty* to vote--to express the Lord's will in respect to the servants of the Church, according to their judgment.

But what we meant to emphasize is that any brother who had not as yet accepted the Bible teachings respecting the proper symbolization of his consecration would not be far enough advanced to be properly appointed to be either a Deacon or an Elder in the Church. It was altogether by an inadvertence that we included with this the thought that such should not vote.

Difficulty has been experienced by some classes in respect to *nominations*. When a call for nomination is made, a brother is nominated as an Elder or as a Deacon, without proper consideration of his qualifications. His nomination is seconded; and the whole class, loving the brother, feels disinclined to vote against him lest they should be misunderstood.

There should always be a reason for the choice of anybody to any service in the Church. An elder should be an able teacher, of a broad mind, able to give assistful advice to those who need it, of deep insight into the Word of God, of good influence in the Church, and a wise counselor. No one, probably, could have all of these good qualifications in equal measure. Some might possess more of one, and some more of another qualification; but all should possess some of them or there would be no excuse for his election. Likewise a Deacon should have time at his disposal and some aptitude as a prospective Elder, and also an inclination to serve the Church.

What seems to us a very good plan of nominating Elders, Deacons, etc., is by ballot, particularly if there has been any difficulty or if to a majority such a nomination might seem desirable. To put this plan into operation pieces of paper and pencils would be required. Each one entitled to a vote should write, "I nominate the following to be Elders of the _____ Class for the ensuing _____ months." Then should follow as many names as there are Elders at the time the election was taken. If the Class desire to either increase or decrease the number it can be done after the nomination at election time.

After the ballots have been collected the results should be tabulated and announced publicly to the Ecclesia. The Class should then decide how many Elders it would properly need. If it decided that the number should be three, then the six brethren receiving the largest number of nominating ballots should be voted for. The three receiving the largest number of votes with outstretched hands should be considered the choice of the Class. Or another way would be to accept all the nominated ones who received ballots equal to one-third of the entire number of voters and to elect all such by, as nearly as possible, a unanimous vote, this arrangement being intended to give minorities a representation amongst the Elders.

The thought always to be borne in mind is that, so far as possible, the judgment of all the Class should have recognition. While a majority might rule, it is always preferable that they yield something to the minority, so that the eldership of a Class might reflect the sentiment of the entire membership. No matter how this result be reached, we are doing wisely; and no matter how any other result be reached it would be unwise, as endangering the peace and harmony of the Class. Brotherly love always represents sympathy, kindness, love and a desire to yield something wherever no vital principle is involved.

R5368

LOVING RULES AND PARLIAMENTARY RULES

THE dear friends of the I.B.S.A. properly feel a responsibility in respect to their voting for Class Elders and Deacons and for everything that they do especially in the name of the Lord. We have already suggested that it would be unwise, perhaps unkind, to enforce parliamentary rules in respect to Church meetings, when perhaps only a few are really acquainted with such rules. The rules are, of course, good, wise and generally profitable. The spirit of parliamentary rules should apply

everywhere; for they are built on the Golden Rule basis of protecting the interests of all and getting through with the business with the least friction and delay.

With the Lord's people, however, love is always to have the first place. While love is always in accord with the Golden Rule, it is always at liberty to do more than even-handed justice. So all of the Lord's brethren should be quite willing to deny themselves a little preference in the interest of another where no principle would be involved. Love, joy, peace, should prevail in every Class. Everything tending toward these and in fullest harmony with loyalty toward God and His Word should be cherished.

Several recent letters make further inquiry respecting Church elections, methods of nominating, etc., and inquire whether or not it would be improper to follow a little different method of nominating than that suggested in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Vol. VI. We answer that in all such matters the will of the Class is the law. The Lord left the matter in the hands of the Church; and each little section, or part, of the Church has fullest authority to follow the Divine arrangement, according to its judgment.

In certain cases we believe it a very good plan to nominate Elders and Deacons by ballot, first deciding how many are desired for the term. Suppose that two Elders and five Deacons were considered a proper supply for the Class. Then, in balloting, each consecrated person should consider the Lord's will in respect to the nomination he would make. He may write the names of two nominees for Elder and five nominees for Deacon. Or, unless there were objection to it, he may give his two votes for one Elder and his five votes for one Deacon, or divide those votes in any way that he may choose. In this way, minorities in the Class would have an opportunity of being represented among the Elders.

When the balloting is finished and the account made up, the two Elders who have received the largest number of nominating ballots should be considered the choice of the Class; and similarly the five Deacons. Then it would be in order to have a vote. It is usually both pleasant and appropriate to make elections of those receiving the highest number of ballots unanimous by a vote with the outstretched hand.

Do not forget that the object always sought after is not how you can accomplish your will, but how you can give to every brother and sister the fullest opportunity for representation and have the same for yourself, especially with a view to doing the Lord's will. No matter how the results are reached, if they express satisfactorily the judgment of the majority, or all or nearly all of the Class, the matter is thoroughly legal, and in harmony with the principles laid down in the Bible.

"Let brotherly love continue." Let us seek to lay down our lives for the brethren. We cannot serve the Lord directly, but can serve Him indirectly, by serving the brethren and by manifesting our patience and sympathy and love for them.

R3943

TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES

ST. PAUL'S words, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God, which he hath purchased with the blood of his own Son" (*Acts 20:28*), were never more worthy of our attention than now. From our vantage point on Zion's watch tower we see clearly that, while the Truth is progressing grandly in all directions, the "Evil Day" is upon us, the time of testing those already blest and enlightened. It is not, therefore, merely a question of who shall be blest with the ear to hear the message of Present Truth, but additionally, "Who shall be able to withstand in that *evil day*, and having done all to stand" the

final tests (*Eph. 6:13*), and be acclaimed-- "More than conqueror through him who loved us" and bought us with his precious blood.

We perceive the attack of the Adversary, referred to in our caption, in every direction;--the grievous wolves of error and ambition among "your own selves." We must sound the alarm and tell you that "the hour of temptation" is come--the one for which we have been preparing for the past thirty years. With the knowledge granted us let us not slumber at the critical moment; but soberly and prayerfully and faithfully meet the situation.

Let us remember that our *knowledge* means an added responsibility, and that it will avail us *nothing* except as it is combined and active with *Love*, which is the bond of perfectness, the fulfilling of the divine law or requirement. How many blessings the Lord has granted us, and opportunities to put on the whole armor of God that we might be able to withstand the very trial now upon us!

Wisely did the Apostle first say, "*Take heed to yourselves.*" That is our first responsibility. We should each first examine our own hearts to see whether we are to any degree moved by jealousies, or ambitions, or any selfish motive. To do this effectively we must not measure ourselves with others, nor yet by our own imperfect standards, but by the Lord's standard--Perfect Love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy being, with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor [and especially thy brother in the Lord] as thyself." Oh! what brotherly-kindness, what tenderness of word and act, what sympathy of thought for each other's weaknesses, what appreciation of each other's better traits, what long-suffering kindness and patient forbearance in love, what care for each other's welfare, rights and liberties, as for our own, this would imply and produce!

"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith!" writes the same Apostle. Doctrinal soundness is very important, but not enough; we must also be "in the faith" in the sense of *exercising faith in the Lord*--in all of life's affairs, and especially in all the affairs of his Church. If ever we allow *expediency* to swerve us from the Scriptural program in the affairs of the Church it manifests that we are *not "in the faith"* as God designed. For confidence in God and his overruling wisdom and power would never permit expediency to say, "Let us do evil that good may follow"--Let us take an unscriptural course for the best interests of the Lord's cause. The faith dictates that to *obey God* is better than sacrifice, and that he is able to make all things work for good to all who love and serve him.

Dearly Beloved, let us, then, remember that this is our test and now our testing time; and let *love* for the Lord and his brethren and his Word be constantly in command of our lips, of our conduct and, above all, of our hearts. "If ye do these things ye shall never fail, but so an entrance shall be granted us into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

What is thus true of all, is specially true of those honored with a special stewardship in the Church--the Elders--in this the hour of trial that is upon the whole world and peculiarly upon "the very elect."-- *Rev. 3:10*.

R4472 [sel]

THE CHARGES AGAINST US

Indeed, we have wondered if our faithfulness to the Church in pointing out the liberties and authority of the *ecclesia*, and that pastors, elders and deacons are the servants of the Church, and not her lords, may not be the very reason why some of the elders and leaders amongst them seem especially opposed to "Scripture Studies," Vol. VI. Some instances have been brought to our attention in which the liberties of the Church have been usurped by the leaders who, wishing to

maintain the usurpation, have tried to hinder the Lord's flock from hearing the Shepherd's voice telling them their proper course from "The Watch Tower." It is not for us to judge any. "The Lord will judge his people." It is for us to forewarn all with whom we have influence that the nearer they get individually, and as classes and Churches, into exact harmony with the teachings of the Lord's Word, in that same proportion will they be ready and able to stand the crucial tests that are upon us now.

May we suggest that to our understanding the special trials of this "hour of temptation" begin with the leaders and progress more and more amongst those who have been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light? Later on this will reach the clergy of the nominal Church and its laity, and eventually, the wholly unregenerate masses. The Apostle's words represent well our own sentiments toward all with whom we have influence, namely, "Remember, that by the space of [thirty] years I ceased not to warn every one night and day."-- Acts 20:31.

R2442 [sel]

BLESSING GOD AND CURSING MEN

"But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."--James 3:8-10.

Proceeding with this subject, the Apostle points out that there are two kinds of wisdom, a heavenly and an earthly, and that all of the Lord's people should discern these, and should see to it that theirs is the heavenly. The Apostle's intimation is that there may be some with the Church, who may have counted themselves in the Church, who may have associated themselves with the Church from worldlywise motives --some who have caught sight of the fact that there is a reasonableness and a wisdom in the teachings of the Scriptures, which they admire and which they can turn perhaps to their own advantage. These, he implies, will be inclined to be heady and to make a show of their wisdom, and to be "puffed up" by it, and while outwardly acknowledging the propriety of the Christian graces, brotherly-kindness, gentleness, meekness, patience, love, they have in their hearts bitter envyings and strife--strife to have name and fame--envying those who may seem to them to have more of these.

These, the Apostle intimates, will find it difficult, yea, impossible, to avoid *cursing* (speaking evil of, injuring) the brethren. It will be so natural to them to do so that they cannot avoid it, because they have not pure hearts--they have not regenerated hearts. If their hearts ever were regenerated, they have returned like the sow to wallowing in the mire--like the dog to his vomit. The Apostle's advice to such as find that they have in their hearts envious and bitter feelings, is that they have no cause to glory or to boast, but on the contrary should acknowledge that, having these evil conditions in the heart, they are not Christians at all, and they should cease to lie against the truth--cease to act fraudulently, hypocritically--cease to continue to claim to have renewed hearts, sanctified in Christ Jesus.

He tells such plainly that their wisdom, their knowledge, is not of God, is not of the holy spirit,-- "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; for, where envy and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work [to be anticipated]." --Jas. 3:15,16.

It seems evident that, altho the Apostle's denunciation applies to any professing to be Israelites indeed, he nevertheless is specially aiming his remarks at those who profess to be teachers

in the Church, to have *wisdom* to a considerable degree. And his words remind us of the words of the Apostle Paul, when speaking of the various gifts distributed to the Church, he seemingly points out the dangers of those of large knowledge, and as an illustration of this principle which James presents, he says:--

Tho I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Love, it would imply that I had become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, making a noise indeed, but having no feeling respecting the matter myself,--I have neither part nor lot with those who possess the spirit of Christ. Altho I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and tho I have all faith, and have not Love, I am nothing; and tho I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not Love, it profiteth me nothing.--**1 Cor. 13:1-8.**

Thus the Apostle points out distinctly that knowledge and oratory are not the most vital tests, but that Love permeating the heart and extending out through all the course of life, and actuating and operating our mortal bodies, is the real test--the real proof of our divine relationship. He points out that those who had received gifts of God before they had come into a proper relationship to God might become sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, and thus become "nothing," if they lose the love, if they lose the spirit of Christ; for "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

It is well for the Lord's people to take particular note of these divine instructions from two of the chiefest of the Apostles, and to remember that valuable tho they be, neither *oratory* nor *knowledge* are to be considered amongst the "brethren" as sure proofs of their being in the right way, nor that their influence might not be injurious instead of helpful. The *leading* characteristic to be looked for in everyone accepted as a servant of the Church, to minister in holy things, should be first of all the spirit of love. We do not mean to say that knowledge and ability should be entirely ignored, but we do mean to say that these should be considered of secondary and not of primary importance, as is always the tendency. Look out from among yourselves holy men, full of the holy spirit, that they may have the charge of the spiritual interests of the different companies of the Lord's people. And for a divine explanation of how this holy spirit will manifest itself, of the qualities therefore that are to be looked for in the servants of the Church, see **1 Cor. 13:4-8**; also **1 Pet. 1:22,23**; **2 Pet. 1:1-13**. For their own good, as well as for the good of the Church, all who, having other qualifications, give evidence of being puffed up and of desiring to lord it over God's heritage, the Church, or who manifest envy, strife, bitterness, evil-speaking --these should be passed by, as giving evidence of having the wrong spirit that cometh not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. They are unsafe teachers, and are likely to do more harm than good, with whatever knowledge they may possess.

R3135

HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD

1 THESSALONIANS 5:14-28--JANUARY 25.

OUR LESSON is a summary statement of the proper attitude for the Lord's people to maintain in order that they may grow in grace and through faithfulness finally come off conquerors through their Redeemer. Although addressed to the saints at Thessalonica, these noble words have been a source of strength, encouragement and discipline to the faithful in Christ Jesus from their writing to the present time. No child of God can afford to ignore nor to neglect these words of divine counsel, and in proportion as each of us gives heed to them our lives will surely be the more Christ-like, and we will thus be the more pleasing to the Lord, and eventually make our calling and election sure to joint-heirship with him in the Millennial Kingdom, and its glories and its service to the world of mankind. Let us take up these apostolic injunctions seriatim.

Not the elders alone are exhorted by the Apostle, as though they were a separate class, exercising control and treating the brethren as their wards; he addresses the "brethren"--the entire Church, including the sisters also. But this does not signify that the counsel would not apply specially to the elders; because they were selected as amongst the brethren most advanced in Christian doctrine and practice, and as the representatives of the Church, to specially look after the interests of the Lord's flock. These apostolic words apply to each member of the flock in proportion to his capacity and ability, but would naturally come with special force to the elders who, under God's providence, had the oversight of his Church, "to feed the flock." (Acts 20:28.) While, therefore, all the brethren are to see to the carrying out of the injunctions here given, the elders in every Church should feel a special responsibility respecting them--a responsibility derived from the position they occupy as representatives of the Church,--its standard-bearers.

The unruly are here contrasted with the feeble-minded or faint-hearted and the weak. The divine arrangement is full of order as well as full of liberty; and, rightly understood, liberty can best be conserved by order; and order best be maintained through a reasonable recognition of personal liberty. The mistake frequently made, not only by earthly law-givers and disciplinarians, but also in the Church of Christ, is along the line of extremes, either in one or the other of these directions. Some misunderstand liberty to mean lawlessness, disorder, unruliness. Others with equally good intentions, no doubt, are disposed to carry order and obedience to rules to such an extent as to dwarf the individual liberties of the flock. Great grace is needed along this line, to prevent friction amongst the Lord's people--to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of love and peace.

We are not to have such false ideas of personal liberty as would ignore rules, law, order, in the assemblies of the Lord's people; and those disposed to be unruly, self-conscious, thrusting themselves forward, without the request of the Church, need to be held in check--to be "warned"--to be shown that their course is contrary to the spirit of the Lord and all the arrangements instituted by the apostles, his representatives. They need to be "warned" also that their course would mean injury to the Church, instead of blessing and peace and joy and development; and injury to themselves, in that it would develop in them a combativeness or self-esteem, already too large, and might thus not only work injury to the cause, but hinder themselves from attaining the character-likeness necessary to a share in the Kingdom.

But while some might need thus to be warned and held in check, others, faint-hearted and weak, would need aid, support, encouragement;--naturally backward, diffident, lacking in combativeness and self-esteem, they need to be pushed to the front a little, in order to bring out what talents they really possess, for their own encouragement and for the blessing also of the entire household of faith.

"Be patient toward all" seems to imply that the better balanced amongst the Lord's people should look with sympathy upon and exercise patient forbearance toward the classes above mentioned;--not only toward the weak and those who lack courage, but toward *all*; including those who have too much courage and self-push. The Scriptures repeatedly admonish us, "Ye have need of patience," and day by day the advanced children of the Lord realize the truthfulness of this, and come to appreciate patience as one of the chief Christian graces. (1) Growth in knowledge helps us to grow in this grace of patience, for as we appreciate more and more the heavenly Father's patience with us it helps us to apply the same principle toward others. (2) As we come to realize the great disaster that is upon our race as a whole--our fallen condition and how the fall has affected some more in one manner and others more in another--some chiefly mentally, some chiefly physically, and some chiefly morally, it enlarges our sympathy toward our fellow-creatures, and thus increases our *patience* in dealing with them. This is particularly true in respect to the household of faith, in which we recognize amongst those whom God has graciously called, some more blemished, perhaps, than ourselves in some particulars--though we may be more imperfect in others. The thought that our heavenly Father has favored and called anyone should make us extremely careful how we would cooperate with the Lord in respect to the call, and be as helpful as possible to all those who are seeking

to walk with us in the footsteps of our Lord in the narrow way. We certainly should have special patience, therefore, with the brethren. --Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11.

"See that none render evil for evil unto any." This exhortation has a special force when we remember how much evil treatment was heaped upon the followers of our Lord at that time; and that the writer himself, as well as those specially addressed, had suffered much on account of their faithfulness in dispensing the Word of the Lord, the Word of life, the good tidings. The exhortation means that the Lord's followers are not to attempt to retaliate upon their enemies by doing them evil in return, or in any manner to "get even with them." The Lord's exhortation is that we seek to render good in return for the evil we receive, and includes our language as well as our conduct, we are not to give word for word, railing for railing, accusation for accusation, slander for slander any more than blow for blow. It includes also our very thoughts, for we are not even to render anger for anger, malice for malice, envy for envy. Two evils can never make a good--two wrongs will never make a right. Our sympathy for our blinded enemies is to cultivate our patience and forbearance toward them in thought, word and deed.--1 Pet. 2:21-23.

The Lord's people, so far from ever turning aside to render railing for railing or evil for evil, are uniformly to "*pursue that which is good*"--that which is right, that which the Lord approves. This will mean that each member of the Royal Priesthood will pursue righteousness to the extent of his ability--pursue every good and noble sentiment, and seek to live as nearly as possible up to the high standard of righteousness, perfection, exemplified absolutely in our Lord. This pursuit of goodness is to be maintained not only amongst the brethren, where all are professing the same pursuit, but also toward others--in our dealings with the world. Some of the world can learn more of the gospel through witnessing our avoidance of evil and our constant pursuit of righteousness, than by anything we can say to them;--and possibly as they discern the new life in us they may gradually come to have "an ear to hear" the message of good tidings which has wrought this change in us.

The worldly spirit does not approve this part of the Apostle's counsel, but urges, rather, that we should treat others as they treat us--that we should "give as good as we get,"--meaning that we should give as bad as we get. By way of saying as good a word as they can in their own favor along these lines they sometimes accuse the Lord's followers of cowardice. Courage is one of the noble qualities of humanity, and it is quite a trial to some to be considered timid or lacking in courage; and to such this enjoined restraint of word and act is a particular trial. It is not true, however, that the Lord's counsel tends to effeminacy or lack of courage. This matter is well stated in the language of another, as follows:--

"One feature which stands out clear in the society founded by Christ and his apostles is the extraordinary heroism which was shown in the face of death and tortures, not only by men, but by feeble women and tender children. It amazed the heathen magistrates who were striving after *fortitude* by the aid of philosophy. It amazed the wild savages, who mistook gentleness for cowardice, when they found it was harder to terrify the missionary who came with the Gospel than the invader who came in battle array. Quiet endurance may be *more heroic* than violent resistance, and the Christian law of bearing personal insults and injuries meekly tends to the development of the highest courage and truest manliness. There is nothing more courageous, more heroic, in all history than living up to this precept."

"Rejoice evermore" is the same exhortation that in our last lesson we saw the Apostle sending to the Philippians. The Christian's rejoicing is not hysterical, but founded on established principles, upon promises and comforting assurances of the divine Word which stands firm amid all the storms and trials and shocks of life.

"Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks." Only somewhat advanced pupils in the School of Christ are prepared clearly to comprehend this exhortation. Having surrendered their wills and all of the interests of the present life to the Lord, exchanging earthly interests for heavenly interests, the Lord's people are less disposed than others to pray unceasingly for *earthly good things*. Having set their affections on things above, their prayers are in respect to those things,--the

heavenly robe, the heavenly food, the heavenly favor. Their prayers are specially for such leadings of divine providence and such assistance of divine grace as will enable them to rejoice always in such experiences as their gracious Lord may deem best for their spiritual development. More and more they find their prayers to consist of thanksgiving for blessings already received, as well as for those yet to come, which they grasp by the hand of faith.

Their prayers are without ceasing, in that, having the condition of heart which is in fellowship with the Lord and fully devoted to the doing of his will, they not only implore his blessing at the beginning of each day, and present their thanks at the close of each day, but in all of life's affairs they seek to remember that they have consecrated their all to the Lord, and by faith look up to him in all of the affairs of life;--and in proportion to the importance of their undertakings they, by faith, realize the association of God's providence with all the interests of life and give thanks accordingly. This is the will of God concerning us;-- he wills that we live in such an attitude of constant regard for his will and for his blessing;--and he wills it in respect to us because it will be the condition most favorable to our progress in the narrow way, and which will best assist us in making our calling and election sure.

Having stated succinctly the Church's proper attitude toward the Lord to be one of continued rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving and acceptance of his divine providences, the Apostle next briefly admonishes them respecting their attitude toward each other in the Church, in their feasting together on the Word of the Lord;--saying,

"Quench not the Spirit.
"Despise not prophesyings.
"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
"Abstain from every form of evil."

By following these admonitions, their fellowship in the Lord would be the more profitable--they would, as a congregation of the Lord's followers, be helped onward the more toward the grand standard to which we are called. The spirit of the Lord amongst his people is compared to "a flame of sacred love" for the Lord and all connected with his cause: this flame is enkindled through the divine message in each one individually, when begotten of the holy spirit, and appertains, therefore, to the Church collectively, under the guidance of that spirit. In proportion as the church grows in knowledge and in love and in fellowship with the Lord this "flame of sacred love" will make it a light in the world,--as a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. This is a different figure from the use of fire as a symbol of destruction.

True, the flame of sacred love does not consume and destroy sin, but sympathy with sin; sin is not a part of the new creature, which opposes it and desires to have it consumed,--that the light of righteousness and truth may shine the more brightly. This "flame of sacred love" may, indeed, consume our mortal bodies, as living sacrifices in the service of the truth; but with such a consumption the new mind is fully in accord, and rejoices, realizing that it has in heaven an enduring habitation, and counting it all joy to be reckoned worthy to suffer for the Lord's cause. The more this "flame of sacred love" burns, individually and collectively in the Church, the greater will be the progress in all good things. Hence we are to be specially on guard, that our words and conduct and the general management of the interests of Zion in our midst shall permit this spirit of love to have free course in all our hearts and lives--that it be not quenched either with false doctrines or forms and ceremonies, or too rigid rules or by worldly spirit or by cares of this life or by any other thing, circumstance or condition under our control.

The Church is not to despise prophesyings: the Apostle does not mean that we are not to despise the prophecies of the holy men of old who spoke as they were moved by the holy spirit--it would be unnecessary to caution the Church on that subject. The exhortation is, not to despise prophesyings that may be done in our midst. As we have previously seen, the gift of prophecy in the sense of foretelling coming events was to some extent in the Church in the Apostle's day, as one of

the gifts of the spirit, to mark out the Lord's people and to assist in establishing them at a time when the inspired messages of the Lord were unavailable. We find, however, that the Apostle frequently used this word "prophecy" in respect to *public utterance*, declamation, preaching. The early churches were accustomed to having general gatherings for their mutual assistance and upbuilding, and may have been in danger of thinking more of the gifts of miracles and tongues than of connected and logical discourse respecting the truth. The Apostle points out that without discarding the other blessings, this one should not be despised--our Lord was a preacher; the apostles were preachers, and the Lord has since raised up instructors amongst his people. Hence, such service should not be despised or ignored.

We live in a time when the very reverse of this is true; when the danger is rather that too much time and too much attention may be given to preaching, and not sufficient to the other methods of inculcating truth and encouraging the Lord's flock, "edifying and building up yourselves in the most holy faith"--when too much reliance is apt to be placed upon a leader and a connected discourse.

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." However much they should ever come to respect prophesyings, or public preaching, the Lord's people should learn proportionately not to receive what they might hear without proper examination and criticism: they should prove all things that they hear, should exercise discrimination of mind, as to what is logically and scripturally supported, and what is mere conjecture and possibly sophistry. They should prove what they hear, with a view to holding fast everything that stands the test of the divine Word, and shows itself to be in accordance with the holy spirit; and they should as promptly and thoroughly reject whatever will not stand these tests. Alas! the Lord's people today greatly need to give attention to this exhortation; for much is being presented in the name of the Lord and as the teaching of his Word that is neither logical nor scriptural--that is supported neither by the letter nor the spirit of the Word;--much that is not good, and should be rejected. With such a discrimination prevailing amongst the Lord's consecrated ones, how much of the chaff of nominal "orthodoxy" would be rejected, and what a hungering and thirsting and searching there soon would be for the good Word of God, that would stand these tests! Let us diligently heed the Apostle's exhortation on this point.

"Abstain from every *form* of evil" (Rev. Ver.) gives the Apostle's thought. There are various evils which present themselves; some in their true hideousness, and some under a cloak of hypocrisy--some openly and boldly admitting their evil character and endeavoring to decoy the Lord's people into sin; others, garbing themselves as angels of light, would seek to mislead and to deceive. The exhortation is that everything that is evil, whether it have a good form or a bad form, is to be resisted and opposed. We may not say with some, "Let us do evil that good may follow." The Lord's people must be loyal to the *principles* of righteousness, under any and all circumstances. To do otherwise would be surely to undermine the character which they are seeking to build up.

To abstain from every *appearance* of evil is another thought--a different one from what the Apostle's words in the original would warrant; nevertheless, they represent a sound principle. We surely should abstain not only from evil things, whatever their form or garb, but we should abstain so far as possible from doing things that we know to be good, which our friends or neighbors might misunderstand and consider to be evil things. The spirit of a sound mind dictates that not only evil in its every form, but everything that has an evil appearance, even, should be avoided--that our influence for the Lord and the truth may be the greater.

In closing, the Apostle pronounces his benediction. It is an invocation--the expression of his heart's desire on their behalf--that the God of *peace* would sanctify them wholly. He thus emphasizes the fact that God is not a God of confusion, anarchy, turmoil and disturbance, but a God of peace; and that in proportion as we are taught of him in the School of Christ we will become lovers of peace, and the peace of God will dwell in us and will abound in us more and more, and cause us to be not unfruitful in regard to holy character, and will make us advocates and promoters of peace in our words and deeds. As it is written, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the

children of God." Peace in the heart, manifesting itself in the look and word and conduct, is, as the Apostle intimates, an evidence of whole or complete setting apart, and that God's spirit has come into such a sanctified heart and is filling it with his peace, the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

"And may your spirit, soul and body be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (R.V.) The Apostle could mean this only in respect to the Church, as a whole, and not concerning the individual members; because he surely did not expect the Christians at Thessalonica without exception to live until the presence of the Lord, even as he did not himself expect to live until that time, and so declared. (2 Tim. 4:7,8; 2 Pet. 1:12-15.) The Apostle is not, therefore, to be understood as speaking of the spirit and soul and body of each individual Christian at Thessalonica, but respecting the spirit of the Church, [R3137 : page 27] the soul of the Church, and the body of the Church. In other words, his desire was that the Church at Thessalonica might continue to the full end of the Gospel age as a noble and faithful congregation of the Lord's body, full of his spirit and courageous in his work. As a matter of fact, we know that the Apostle's good wishes, or prayer did not come true; for this congregation, like the others he planted, died out: not heeding with sufficient care his injunctions and exhortations, not proving all things, not holding fast the good, not abstaining from evil, not being sanctified wholly, the spirit of the Lord in their midst was quenched, and as a congregation it died, or ceased to be--the light having blessed and confirmed some, passed on to other quarters, seeking those "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."*

"Faithful is he that called you, who will also do it." The fact that the Thessalonica Church has not been kept in accordance with the Apostle's prayer, is not to be charged to unfaithfulness on God's part, but to neglect and unfaithfulness on the part of those whom the Apostle addressed, or their successors in that congregation. So it is with every one of us who has been called of the Lord. It is for us to hear and to heed the Lord's message through his servants, if we would make our calling and our election sure. If not disposed to hear his message in the way he has sent it, the fault lies at our own door. Faithful is he who called us, who would rejoice to do for us abundantly better things than we could ask or think, if we accept his provisions in faith and follow the directions of his Word.

"Brethren, pray for us." There was nothing of the pope or lord about the Apostle--no feeling of such a superiority to the others of the Lord's flock that he could pray for them to their advantage, but needed not their prayers. Similar is the spirit of all who are in the proper relationship with the Lord--a spirit of humility and appreciation of all the household of faith, and of their petitions at the throne of grace--a realization that the humblest of the Lord's people has access to the throne of heavenly grace, and may there obtain mercy and find strength to help in every time of need.

"Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss." This was the ancient style of greeting, corresponding to our present style of saluting with the hand or with the hat or by shaking hands. The custom of men kissing each other is still followed in eastern countries. The Apostle's thought is that there should be thorough cordiality amongst all who claim membership in the body of Christ, and that this fellowship should be manifested by the accustomed form of greeting,--whatever reasonable form that might be. Possibly he meant--"I greet," etc., implying that he would love to be with them and greet them personally, and now did so by letter.

Before invoking the Lord's blessing upon the Church, the Apostle charged most strongly that this epistle should not be considered as a private message or letter to those in whose care it was sent, but that it should be considered as his address to the entire company of the Lord's faithful, and should be read to them all. The Apostle seemed to fear that there might be a spirit of censorship amongst the leading brethren which might lead them to preserve his letter to themselves, and to dole it out second-hand to the Church, either as a whole or such parts of it as in their judgment would be *prudent*. Such a spirit on the part of the elders in any Church would be reprehensible. God's Word is for God's people, and whoever would hinder its flow would surely offend the Master himself. That the elders at Thessalonica were faithful is apparent from the fact that the epistle was delivered to the Church. Some today need caution along this same line: many preachers and teachers have discerned

in *The Plan of the Ages* the light of the Millennial dawn, but, instead of heralding it to others, have sought to hide it from the Lord's people that they might use it as a personal illuminant to cause themselves to shine before their flocks. They consider this cunning,--"wise and prudent,"--forgetting that the Lord declares that he *hides* his deep things from the wise and prudent and reveals them unto babes. (Luke 10:21.) True to our Lord's words, this class rarely makes much progress;--the truth passes on and ere long they are in comparative darkness;--because they received not the truth in the love of it, but in the love of self. (2 Thess. 2:10.) Loyalty to the Lord and to his flock and to his Truth, through whatever channel it comes, demands that it shall be heralded by each of us to the extent of our ability and in its purity and as speedily as possible,--consistent with the condition and interests of those for whom the Lord intended it--his flock. Shepherds who feed themselves and not the flock are warned by the Lord of his displeasure, and could not be expected to thrive spiritually, or otherwise to enjoy the light of the Lord's face.-- Ezek. 34:2,7-10.

R3142

THE TRUE FOLD NOT A PEN

MANY OF THE LORD'S SHEEP are penned in behind various creeds of men and thus hindered from obtaining the food and exercising the liberty which Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, intended they should have. It is contrary to the will of the great Chief Shepherd that his sheep should be separated from *each other* by pens, and hindered from the proper liberties of the fold. There is one general enclosure behind which all the *true sheep* of this age and flock will be found; and to it the Lord informs us there is but the one *door*--himself.

We might assume that all know something about this *one fold* and its *one door*; but this would be a mistake; many are so confused by the numerous man-made folds of Christendom that they confound these with the true. Some "wolves" are disappointed to find that the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the "sheep" has provided certain limitations beyond which the sheep cannot go if they obey his voice (his Word), and beyond which they do not desire to go if they are actually his sheep.

Let those who like call this true fold, with its well-defined walls, "a man-made pen";--those who enjoy its security, enjoy also its liberty. It has one and only one wall, great and high, which so far has kept out the "wolves," except such as pretend to be sheep--who come arrayed in sheep's clothing. This wall is *faith in Christ* as man's *ransom-sacrifice*--finished at Calvary.

None whom that fence excludes are "sheep." And behind that simple, yet strong, creed-fence there is all the liberty proper for the Lord's "sheep;";-- though probably not nearly enough for the "goats."

Further, while it is wrong for under-shepherds or anyone else to erect denominational fences inside this true fold, or to entice the "sheep" into them, and thus to restrain their liberties within the fold,--it is not only proper, but a part of the true under-shepherd's duty to protect the flock within the true enclosure of the true fold, from the "wolves in sheep's clothing" wherever found. No doubt it was as a type of the true Shepherd of the Lord's flock, that David [*i.e.*, the Beloved], while defending his flocks, slew a lion, and a bear, and delivered the sheep of his charge.

Our Lord, the great Chief Shepherd, set an example to the under-shepherds; and all true ones of his appointment must needs have the same spirit or soon lose their office. It was he who forewarned the true sheep, saying, "Beware of false prophets [teachers], which come to you in sheep's clothing [professing to be of the Lord's flock, but in reality not such, because they do not trust in the great sacrifice offered once for all for their sins], but inwardly they are ravening wolves [who would destroy your faith in the *ransom*, and thus destroy you as "sheep"]. But he that is a hireling and not the shepherd,...seeth the wolf [the false teacher] coming, and leaveth the sheep, and

fleeth; and the wolf [the false teacher] catcheth them and scattereth the sheep....I lay down my life for the sheep."--Matt. 7:15; John 10:12-15.

It is not the approval of the "wolves," in sheep's clothing or without it, that is to be courted by the true under-shepherd. He will, however, have the approval of the Chief Shepherd, and of all the developed sheep who have their senses exercised by reason of use. The Apostle Paul battled hard against such false teachers, who affected to be believers, "sheep," while they were not such. Speaking on this subject he said to the Elders (under-shepherds) of the Church at Ephesus:--

"I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all....Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers [shepherds], to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood [--faith in which purchase constitutes them 'sheep']. For I know this, that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you [in sheep's clothing, of course, otherwise they would not be received], not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking contrary things [things different from what I, Paul, have taught] *to draw away disciples* [followers] *after themselves. Therefore watch*, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."--Acts 20:26-31.

The Apostle Peter, too, made a similar appeal to the under-shepherds, saying, "The elders which are among you I exhort....Feed the flock of God, as much as in you is, taking oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a willing mind." "But as there were false prophets [in the past--'wolves in sheep's clothing'] even so there shall be false teachers among you, who *privily* [deceptively, covering the real purport of their teachings] shall bring in [to the fold] damnable heresies [errors leading to condemnation and rejection] even denying the Lord that bought them.... And *many shall follow* their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."--1 Pet. 5:1-4; 2 Pet. 2:1,2.

The Apostle John also cautions us, saying: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward....He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ [that the Son of Man came to give himself a *ransom* for all--Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6] he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you [as a would-be teacher of the 'sheep'] and bring not this doctrine [of the *ransom*, taught by Christ], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed [or who even indirectly helps to spread the 'damnable heresy' that we were not *bought* by the Lord] is partaker of the evil work [of him who publicly and openly does so]."-- 2 John 8-11.

Thus we see that the duty of under-shepherds to protect the flock from deceptive wolves, as well as to feed them meat in due season, has been recognized from the start;--because from the start there have been such wolves. And since the holy Spirit gave special warnings that in the end of the age "evil men and leaders astray" would wax more and more bold, and that through their instrumentality Satan would propagate error, and affect to be a messenger of light, is it not due time for all the sheep to recognise these facts, and not to be deceived by "feigned words" and "fair speeches"? The true sheep must not judge of fellow sheep by the pelt; for a wolf can wear a sheep's pelt: they must learn to note the Shepherd's voice and manner--directly through his Word, and indirectly through those whom he shall use as his representatives to "*feed the flock* over which the holy Spirit hath made them overseers [shepherds]."

Not only did the Apostle Paul thus direct the under-shepherds, but he points out the advisability of this to the flock, since it is thus that the Chief Shepherd leads and feeds and keeps his flock.--Heb. 13:17; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12:27-31; Psalms 91:11,12.

Let us stand fast, therefore, in *that* liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;--allowing no one to pen us up by human creeds;--neither allowing any to lead us out beyond the bounds fixed for us by the Chief-Shepherd, into liberties, licenses and speculations that he never authorized. Let us abide in Him, keeping ourselves in the love of God, as saith the Apostle.

AT PEACE AMONGST YOURSELVES

WE HAVE all heard the proverb, "Diamond cut Diamond." All jewels are very hard as well as very pure. This hardness enhances their value. The Lord's people are all jewels--not only are they purified by the Lord's grace, but they have crystallized characters. This being true, as we have previously pointed out, there is more danger of cutting and scratching when they are together than there would be with materials less hard. Putty and clay do no cutting--neither do characters of putty-like quality.

Remembering this, the Lord's people should be very sympathetic with each other and very appreciative of each other. We learn to appreciate, as the Lord does, positiveness of character, strength of character, fixity of purpose, even though at times these qualities of character may cause some trouble. No wonder then that Berean Bible Classes have their difficulties sometimes, as well as do worldly organizations!

THE LORD'S PEOPLE NOT STRIFE-BREEDERS

Nevertheless, the Lord's people are to remember the special injunction of their Master that they should be peace-makers and not strife-breeders. It requires no great skill to stir up trouble. It requires considerable of meekness, gentleness, patience, and the other qualities of the Holy Spirit amongst the Lord's people to prevent strife, even with only the best of intentions prevailing. How much we all need to be on guard lest the Adversary tempt us, mislead us from the paths of peace!

It requires considerable experience and the wisdom that cometh from Above to enable us to judge rightly whether a matter of difference between others and ourselves is a question of principle, where some fundamental truth is at stake, or whether it is merely a question of opinion and preference without principle being involved. In the latter case, we should be willing to submit to practically anything for the sake of peace, whereas we could not do so where principles would be involved. However, the delusion is often presented to us that our preferences are always backed up by principles of truth and righteousness. We must learn from experience that this is a mistake, and must critically examine every such suggestion, asking the Lord's wisdom to enable us to see the difference between that which is merely our preference and those questions which involve principles and teachings of Divine origin.

For instance, in a Class there are often brethren or sisters who critically insist on a matter being done in a certain way, because that had been the previous custom or because they believe it to be the better way. They are ready to precipitate a quarrel unless their preference is followed. The wiser course is to waive our preference in favor of the preferences of others, if they are insistent, provided the right result is reached--namely, provided the will of the Class is really attained; for the will of the Class is to be taken as the will of the Lord--or if not that, the Lord will overrule the matter and bring a lesson to us out of it for the Class.

Each and every member of a Class should earnestly strive to promote in a Class fruits of the Holy Spirit-- meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly-kindness, love, joy, peace. This promoting is to be done by remembering these qualities and exercising them ourselves, thus setting an example to others and showing forth the influence of the Holy Spirit operating in our own hearts and lives.

A FREQUENT MISTAKE

Too often the mistake is made of thinking that the whole weight of responsibility rests upon us--forgetting that our responsibility ends when we have exercised our judgment and have acted upon it.

Lack of faith in the Lord is closely associated with the error of bringing strife into a Class on some technical grounds. We should remember the Lord's interest in the Class and in all of His

people, and that He is able and willing to overrule our experiences for good--likewise the experiences of others. If, therefore, matters are not going exactly to our pleasement in the Class, it will be better for us, and often for all, that we take the matter to the Lord in prayer, rather than that we should be continually nagging or fault-finding with that which is or which appears to be, satisfactory to the others, or at least to the majority of the Class.

R5644 [sel]

OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD

*"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."
--1 THESSALONIANS 5:15.*

THE CHRISTIAN NOT A GENERAL POLICEMAN

If you receive a double injury, there would be a double reason why you would wish to correct it. The inclination to try to do so would rise, but there should be nothing like retaliation. We are not to return evil for evil. We are under responsibility to do evil to none. The expression, "See that none render evil for evil," has been understood by some to signify that the Christian should be a kind of general policeman, to see that his brethren, his neighbors, and everybody else, do no one harm. This is a mistaken idea. There seems to be a certain exception, however, in the case of the head of a family. As the head of the house, one would be responsible to the civil law, as well as to the Divine Law, for the conduct of his household.

Some have supposed that this injunction of the Apostle means: Let the Elders of each congregation see that the members of the congregation do no wrong. This likewise is not the right thought. This Scripture does not give an Elder any more right to *see* that none render evil in return for evil than it does any one else. The passage seems to mean this: Let each of you see that you do not *yourself* render evil for evil.

There might be some ways in which it would be proper for any member of a family to render help to another member who was being wronged. If, for instance, one saw another doing injustice to a third, he might remonstrate. He might say, Brother (or Sister), do you not think so and so about this matter? And so with the Church. But the Elders are charged more especially with looking after the interests of the Church. If they should see some one in the Ecclesia not living up to the Scriptural standard, it would be quite proper to make a suggestion to that one about the matter. But we must not be busybodies in other people's affairs.

We are to build one another up; for thus the Bride makes herself ready. These matters should be approached only after prayer and in the very wisest way possible, lest we do more harm than good. Let us remember that we are consecrated to righteousness, to follow that which is good. Let us also remember that not merely in the Church are we to render no evil for evil, but amongst all men; for we have pledged our lives to follow that which is good under all conditions and circumstances.

According to the standard of God's Word, the disciples of Christ should be the most polished, the most courteous, the most refined, the most generous, the most kind and considerate, of all people. Theirs should not be merely an outward appearance of these graces, so common to the world, but should be a kindness, a gentleness, which springs from the heart, because of the possession of the Lord's Spirit, the spirit of justice, of mercy and of love. Thus they are to let their light shine in their lives.

RIGHTEOUS REPROOF AND FORGIVENESS OF WRONG

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."--Psa. 141:5.

IN THE SCRIPTURES the word righteous is used in a two-fold sense. In one sense, *absolute righteousness* is referred to, as when we read, "There is none righteous, no, not one." In the text under consideration the intimation is given that our Lord Jesus is the Righteous One who smites. In this sense, of course, the chastisements would come from our Lord; and the one chastised would receive them with appreciation, knowing that the Wisdom, Justice and Love of God are connected with such reproof. But there is a secondary use of the word righteous, applying to mankind. Various persons are spoken of in the Scriptures as being righteous, not because they were perfect, but because they were right-intentioned, right-willed, and manifested in their conduct the Spirit of God, the spirit of righteousness.

In this use of the word righteous, the text seems to imply that all who are the Lord's people should be able to give reproof and correction in righteousness in a manner that would be helpful to those corrected, and for their good; in a way that would bring a measure of comfort and blessing and refreshment; in a manner that would be like excellent or fragrant oil, whose perfume would linger for hours. With this thought before our minds, there is a valuable lesson here. First of all, we should be of those who receive the corrections as of the Lord; and who are glad to be set right if we are wrong in any manner; secondly, we should be of those who recognize that if reproof be proper to *give*, it should be of a kind that would not be injurious, but such as would be spiritual, uplifting and refreshing.

In order to accomplish this end a reproof should be sympathetic. We should remember that all of the Lord's people are fallen according to the flesh, but are New Creatures in Christ; and, if they be New Creatures in Christ, they must have the mind of the Lord and desire to glorify Him. Any of the brethren giving a reproof from this point of view would recognize that the person reproved had not bad intentions, and would explain as gently and kindly as possible what are the real facts. A reproof of this kind should not be given suddenly; and the person reproofing should judge of the punishment to be given and of the proper time, etc., as of the Lord. Thus should any one that is righteous do in administering reproof to another. It should be done only after careful consideration and prayer, and after having arrived at the conclusion that this is the best possible way to help the brother or the sister. If all reproof were given under such conditions we may readily suppose that it would be much more helpful than is the usual reproof.

CRUSHING REPROOF IS UNRIGHTEOUS

The expression, it "shall not break my head," would mean that a reproof should not be disastrous, not be crushing, but it should be an anointing or blessing. To crush the head would be to kill the person. The righteous are not in the world for the purpose of doing injury to others or of harming them, but for doing good in the world. Those who injure others are to that extent unrighteous. Those who use their criticism and reproof, etc., so as to exercise a crushing effect upon the reproved are not righteous. Such should learn how to properly administer criticism. They should learn that the Apostle's statement, "reprove," "rebuke," etc., was not made to all of God's people, but to Timothy, who was an Elder. And only those should be chosen as Elders who are men of moderation, men of development, men who have learned to control their own lives and their own tongues, so that they would not crush, but that their rebuke would be helpful and intended to draw the person nearer to the Lord, and to be encouraging and helpful generally.

REBUKE NOT AN ELDER

When St. Paul instructed Timothy not to rebuke an Elder, but to entreat him as a father, the Apostle did not refer to an Elder of the congregation, but a person older than one's self. Do not rebuke a person older than yourself. Treat him as a father; likewise the elder women as mothers; and the younger men as brothers, and the younger women as sisters. In other words, an Elder is not appointed in the Church to brow-beat or to trample down the liberties of others. The spirit of kindness, gentleness, etc., is the Holy Spirit. If an Elder rebukes in another spirit than this, he should remember that the person rebuked is not a child and should not be treated as a child--not reprimanded or denounced or told "This is all wrong!" Such an unwise course in administering a rebuke is a fruitful cause of difficulty.

It would not be wise or kind or gentle for a younger person to lose patience with older people whom he feels should know about a matter and to say, "You ought to know all about this. *I will give you a lesson.*" This kind of spirit has made difficulty in various places. Apparently the Apostle's remark is to the opposite of this course of conduct, and exhorts to kindness, gentleness, consideration of age and everything that might enter into the matter. It is very evident from different Scriptures that there was a family sympathy in olden times that we do not see exemplified today, as shown in the Apostle's statement: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a *father*; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters."--*1 Tim. 5:1,2.*

Today it is the custom to be very polite toward strangers and very impolite toward those of one's own family; and some will be very polite amongst those who are outside and very impolite to those to whom they ought to give kindness and help and sympathy. The same thought seems to be given in connection with the admonition to "love as brethren." But today, if you want to find true, real friends, you do not often look for them in the same family. In this respect our progress has surely not been [R4978 : page 67] of the evolutionary kind. Father, mother, brothers and sisters should be treated with consideration, with kindness, with love. And this principle should be applied to the household of faith.

LOVE WORKETH NO ILL TO HIS NEIGHBOR

In *2 Tim. 4:2* the Apostle, as a minister of the grace of God, explains that the declaration of the Gospel may include three features: (1) reproof; (2) rebuke; (3) exhortation. But it is safe to caution all of the Lord's people against too liberal use of the first two features. In order to reprove properly, the heart should be very full of love and sympathy; else the reproofs and rebukes might be sharp and possibly do more harm than good. Even with the heart full of love, it requires a head that is exceedingly well balanced to be able to make use of reproofs and rebukes to good advantage to those who really need them. And herein God's people are to be "wise as serpents, harmless as doves." Exhortation is the form of service which quite evidently can best be used by the majority of the Lord's people. And even this form, as well as the other efforts, should be characterized by patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness.

WHEN FORGIVENESS IS PROPER

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."--*Luke 17:3,4.*

God does not forgive our sins until we acknowledge them and ask His forgiveness. Our Lord expressly states the propriety of expecting those who trespass against us to make some acknowledgment of their fault before we express our full forgiveness. If he "turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."

We are not to accept one portion of the Divine direction and to ignore another portion. We are not to say that our Lord meant it when He said, "Forgive him," and that He did not mean it when

He said, "Rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." With the majority of people, however, it would be quite unnecessary to urge the propriety of repentance--unless they were the transgressors whose duty it is to repent. Most people are sufficiently disinclined to forgive to wait until their forgiveness is *asked*.

WE SHOULD LIVE ABOVE TRIFLES

On the other side of the question, however, a caution is necessary. The Christian is to have the loving, generous disposition of heart, a copy of the Heavenly Father's disposition. In trivial affairs he is to have so much sympathy and love that he will take no notice of the little wrongs, just as God for Christ's sake deals with us, unless it represents knowledge and wilfulness. Such a rule operating amongst Christians--a determination not to recognize as offense anything that is not purposely done or intended as an offense--would be a great blessing to all, and the proper, God-like course. The transgressions to which our Lord refers are not trivial affairs, things of no consequence, are not evil surmisings or imaginings, are not fancied insults, but positive wrongs done us, which are susceptible of proofs and on account of which it is our duty, kindly and lovingly and wisely, to give some proper rebuke--some intimation that we recognize the wrong and that it has grieved us and hurt us. Then comes the Divine rule respecting the one and only proper manner of rebuke given by our Lord (*Matt. 18:15-17*) and more than once elaborated in this journal and in our other publications. Our Lord intimates that disobedience of His commands evidences a lack in discipleship. Though He gave very few specific commandments, this command which He carefully marked out as the one, only way of adjusting a grievance, is utterly ignored by many advanced Christians.

EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU

The disposition to forgive should be with us always, and should be manifested by us at all times. Our loving generosity and kindness and desire to think no evil--or as little as possible--should be shown in all the words and acts of life. This course is God-like. God had a kind, benevolent, generous sentiment toward us, even while we were yet sinners. Nor did He wait for the sinners to ask forgiveness, but promptly manifested His desire for harmony and His readiness to forgive. The whole Gospel message is to this effect: "Be ye reconciled to God." Our hearts should be so full of this disposition toward forgiveness that our faces would not have a hard look, nor our words of reproof a bitter sting. On the contrary, they should manifest the loving forgiveness that we should have in our hearts at all times.

Our Lord particularly called attention to the difference between an outward and formal expression of forgiveness with smooth words, and the true forgiveness which is from the heart. The former, or outward forgiveness is only lip-deep, and means that a rankling of an evil, unforgiving spirit is within, and that it will be only a matter of time until the pent-up force of malice and hatred will break forth in words of slander. God reads the heart, and, whatever the lip-professions may be, He will not consider these unless the heart and the life correspond with them. It is vain, therefore, that anyone should say, "I love my brother," and at the same time seek, either by word or act, to do him injury. All the evil-speaking, malice, hatred, envy, strife, proceed from evil in the heart; hence the necessity, on the part of all who desire to be of the Lord's Body, that they "purge out the old leaven of malice" that they may be members indeed of the unleavened loaf--the Body of Christ.

Forgiveness "in your hearts" is the condition which is always to obtain there. We should never harbor any other feeling than that of forgiveness and good-will toward all, no matter how seriously they may have trespassed against us. If this be the case, we shall be longing and anxious to exercise the forgiveness outwardly and to express it to the repentant ones. Hence we shall not seek to compel the most elaborate statement on the part of the penitent; but, like the father of the prodigal, to see the repentant one coming in an attitude of humility will touch our hearts and prompt us to go out

part way to meet him, to forgive him, to greet him kindly and to put on the robe of fullest fellowship and brotherhood.

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."--Matt. 6:15.

HATE THE SIN, BUT NOT THE SINNER

Our earliest definition of "Injure not" would probably have been that we should not kill or wound our enemies physically; but as we look at the Teacher and heed His words we hear Him say, "Learn of Me," and we note with the Apostle that though He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, yet, "When He was reviled He reviled not again [in return]; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed His cause to Him that judgeth righteously."--I Pet. 2:22,23.

If we are faithful pupils it will not be long until we see that the perfect law of liberty, the law of Christ, is a discerner of the very thoughts and intents of the heart; and that while we must hate all sin, we cannot hate any sinner and yet have the love of God perfected in our hearts. We see that this means, not only that we must not retaliate and revile our foes, but that we must not even wish to do so. The evil wish must be conquered and the selfish conditions which gave it birth must be utterly destroyed and replaced with love--the Spirit of Christ.

COPIES OF GOD'S DEAR SON

We may learn a lesson from the fact that those two grand characters, John the Baptist and our Lord, each fulfilled his own mission, according to the Divine *arrangement*; but that they had different missions. John's mission was pre-eminently that of a reprover and reformer, and we are to understand that as a Prophet he was supernaturally guided in respect to the various features of the course he took. Our Lord's mission, on the contrary, was a different one; He was gathering to Himself those whom John's ministry served to arouse to righteousness and to zeal to know and to do the Lord's will.

We who are called to be the Body of Christ and to follow Him may learn a lesson in this as respects our proper course. We are not sent forth as John was, to dwell in the wilderness, living and dressing uncouthly, and to criticise and denounce everything and everybody. Some of the Lord's dear people fail to notice that such commissions are special and very rare; and sometimes in following the wrong copy, they undesignedly bring reproach upon the Lord's cause.

We are to be *copies of God's dear Son*, our Lord, and not to be copies of John the Baptist. We are not to stir up strife by trying to mind other people's business, nor to seek to govern all the affairs of this world, reproving emperors, kings, governors, etc.; but, on the contrary, we are exhorted by the Apostle to remember that what God sees fit to permit, we can see fit to endure. Even though we find many things which we cannot endorse, we may equally find ourselves able to avoid any special denunciation of them--especially of things which have no bearing whatever upon the proper understanding and fulfilling of the Lord's Word. The Apostle points out the proper position, saying, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And our Lord emphasized the same thought, saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."--Rom. 12:18; Matt. 5:9.

AN UNWISE COURSE

Some of the holiest of the Lord's people err on this subject in their own families, and needlessly arouse prejudice and opposition, and make their homes unhappy, by continually finding fault with things which, though not up to the standard of saintliness and cross-bearing, are, nevertheless, not immoral or wicked, even in tendency. Parents and guardians are surely to guard against all tendencies toward immorality, etc., but to find fault with those they love, merely because they are only nominal Christians and have the spirit of worldliness, is certainly unwise. The general

life of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit is the very best reproof of worldliness they can give, and the very best recommendation of the glorious Gospel they profess. This is the epistle that will be read, the light that will reprove darkness.

In other words, we must not expect from, nor try to force upon the unconsecrated the details of our own self-denials. We must wait until they shall see full consecration to be their "reasonable service" and present their bodies living sacrifices to God. Pastors and teachers, however, should seek to keep continually before the Lord's consecrated "flock" the high Scripture standard, realizing that many influences are continually at work to lower the standard of holiness and devotion.

WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT WE TO BE?

How highly we, who belong to the Gospel Dispensation, should value its privileges and opportunities, seeking to "make our calling and election sure!" (2 Pet. 1:4-11.) If those who were called with an earthly calling, to be a "house of servants," rendered but a reasonable service when they engaged in the Lord's work zealously, as did John the Baptist, and were faithful, how much more zeal and energy ought we to put forth--we who have been favored so much more highly? "What manner of persons ought *we* to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!" --2 Pet. 3:11.

Let us remember that this "high calling," this "heavenly calling," to joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom, is a very special and a very limited call, that it will soon end, and that so far as the Divine revelation shows, it will never be repeated. In view of these things, let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel, looking unto Jesus the author, until He shall have become the finisher, of our faith.-- Heb. 12:1.

R4197 [sel]

THE CHOICE OF A KING

I SAM. 10:1-27

Golden Text:--"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."--2 Sam. 23:3.

GOD'S CHOICE OF SAUL INDICATED

When we read that Samuel called all the people together at Mizpeh, we should understand that it signifies that according to their national organization all the people were represented, not only as twelve tribes, but by persons representing the different tribes proportionate to the number of persons in the tribe. The proper persons to represent the tribes, we are informed, were chosen by lot; but no matter how, all the tribes were represented, and not all the people were expected to go to Mizpeh.

At the proper time the prophet Samuel stood forth and explained to the people afresh, that they had not done wisely in appealing for a king instead of continuing the Lord's arrangement, but that the Lord was willing to give them an experience along the line which they had preferred, and that they were now come together to ascertain from the Lord who of the hosts of Israel should occupy the important position of king. Accordingly they first inquired of the Lord respecting the tribe in which was the person of his choice. The testing of the twelve rods, representing the twelve tribes, gave the answer that the expected one should be from the tribe of Benjamin. Next the testing as to the different families of the chosen tribe, and next as to which member of the chosen family, the choice falling upon Saul, the son of Kish, as Samuel already knew it would, and as Saul also knew because of Samuel's words and the anointing oil. Thus the Lord dealt with the minds of the people to show them his choice and to teach them to look for divine direction in their various interests.

There is a lesson here for the Lord's people in respect to the choosing of elders and deacons in the various ecclesias. Each of the consecrated should recognize that in doing his part in the election he should merely act as the Lord's agent and that the Lord's will should be done fully, completely. Personal preference should be ignored, wire-pulling and attempting to influence the minds of those who would vote should be merely along Scriptural lines in respect to character, and nothing should be done for strife or vain-glory, but all to the glory of God. Earthly relationships should have no influence in this question, as his people should speak as the oracles of God, recognizing that the matter is in their hands to be decided according to the directions of the holy Word and Spirit.

The record shows that when the announcement was made that Saul, the son of Kish, was to be the king, there was a general search and none knew his whereabouts. Inquiry of the Lord revealed the fact that he was hidden amongst the stuff, the baggage of these tribes. The modesty of Saul is commendable. He knew that he would be the choice on this occasion, for the Lord had indicated this by his anointing, but he modestly withdrew. As much modesty of heart, even though differently expressed, should be found amongst all the Lord's dear people, specially amongst those who are chosen to serve the Lord's flock in any capacity. The man should be hiding himself rather than aspiring to the position of service, however much he may appreciate the honor of being a servant of the Lord and of his flock.

Saul's modesty is further evidenced by the fact that after being chosen he did not assume a dictatorial spirit and authority, but reasonably, properly went to his own farm to attend to its interest until such time as the Lord would indicate some forward movement on his part--until the Lord would bless him with the kingdom. And it is so with us; we are to do as the Apostle tells us: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," not necessarily forever, but until such time as the Lord's providence should open the door and call him forth to service for the Lord and his people. If the matter is of the Lord at all, he will give the opportunity and the wisdom to use it properly. If it is not of the Lord, the service would better never be entered upon in any degree.

WHOSE HEARTS GOD HAD TOUCHED

Verse 26 tells us that a band of men accompanied Saul to his home--men whose hearts God had touched. And on the other hand the following verse tells us that there were other "sons of Belial," who despised him, brought him no present, but said: "How shall this man save us?" Apparently the latter class were more numerous than the band who accompanied Saul. The whole account reminds us of our Lord after his anointing, when a band of the people were drawn to him, "Those whose hearts God had touched." These became his disciples and followers, and the Apostle tells us that the number of them was about five hundred. There were certain sons of Belial who withstood Jesus, of whom the prophet tells us saying, "We hid, as it were, our faces from him; there was no beauty that we should desire him." They said in effect, "How can this man save us?" There was nothing desirable in him in their estimation.

The same thing is true of the Lord's people and cause ever since, and particularly true of those who occupy any place of prominence in his service. Some approve God's dealings, recognizing his providences, and act in harmony with their faith. These are the ones whose hearts God has touched. God's directings and touchings in the present time are mainly through the truth, "Thy Word is truth;" "Sanctify them through thy truth." The sanctified are looking for the Lord's leadings, and they are assisted in discerning them. On the other hand, as there were in Saul's day and in our Lord's time, so there have been since, sons of Belial, contentious, unwilling to be guided by the Lord's providences and the words of his prophet. These sons of strife are not always dissolute either; as, for instance, in our Lord's time they included scribes, Pharisees and doctors of the Law, who were moved, we are told, with envy and jealousy; those Satanic qualities which trouble the entire human family so much. The lesson to us is that we should never forget the Lord in our personal affairs, and specially in the affairs of his Kingdom. And the recognition of this should make us very careful respecting every step we take "Lest haply we be found even to fight against God."--Acts 5:39.

PROMPT TO USE OPPORTUNITIES

In the Lord's providence an opportunity came to Saul, and his promptness in seizing it endeared him to the hearts of the majority of the people. An enemy, the Moabites, made an attack upon the city of Jabesh, overpowering it. They then sent a message to the people offering to spare their lives, but on condition that their eyes should be put out. Saul promptly sent a message to all of the tribes to come to the help of their brethren, and with the recruits thus gathered drove off the enemy and delivered the people. May we not draw an illustration from this also as respects those whom the Lord anointed with the holy Spirit, with a view to their becoming ultimately joint-heirs with Jesus in the Kingdom. After being anointed of the Spirit we should expect some opportunity for divine service, and should be on the lookout for the same, even while, as the Apostle urges, we abide in the same calling wherein we were called. We also know of an enemy who has blinded some of the Lord's people and who is threatening others with blindness. The circumstance should become to us a call, and we should go forth in the name and the strength of the Lord, and with all the assistance we can command in harmony with his arrangement for the delivering of our brethren from the power of the blinding forces. Whoever sees such an opportunity and fails to avail himself of it, gives evidence that he is not in a proper condition of heart for one of the royal priesthood; he needs more love for God and for his people.

R1159

AN ALLEGORY

I sat down in my arm-chair, weary with my work; my toil had been severe and protracted. The church wore an aspect of thrift and prosperity; and joy and hope and courage were the prevailing sentiments on every hand. As for myself, I was joyous in my work; my brethren were united; my sermons and exhortations were evidently telling on my hearers; my church was crowded with listeners; the whole community was more or less moved with the prevailing excitement; and so the work went on. I had been led into exhausting labors for its promotion.

Tired with my work, I soon lost myself in a sort of half forgetful state, though I seemed fully aware of my place and surroundings. Seemingly a stranger entered the room, without any preliminary tap, or "Come in." I saw in his face benignity, intelligence and weight of character; but though he was passably well attired, he carried suspended about his person measures and chemical agents and implements, which gave him a very strange appearance.

The stranger came toward me, and extending his hand said, "How is your zeal?"

I supposed, when he began his question, that the query was to be for my health; but was pleased to hear his final word; for I was quite well pleased with my zeal, and doubted not the stranger would smile when he should know its proportions. Instinctively I conceived of it as a physical quantity, and putting my hand into my bosom, brought it forth and presented it to him for inspection.

He took it, and placing it in his scale, weighed it carefully. I heard him say, "One hundred pounds!"

I could scarce suppress an audible note of satisfaction; but I caught his earnest look as he noted down the weight; and I saw at once that he had drawn no final conclusion, but was intent on pushing his investigation.

He broke the mass to atoms, put it in his crucible, and put the crucible into the fire. When the mass was thoroughly fused, he took it out, and set it down to cool. It congealed in cooling, and when turned out on the hearth, exhibited a series of layers or strata; which all at the touch of the hammer

fell apart, and were severally tested and weighed; the stranger making minute notes, as the process went on.

When he had finished, he presented the notes to me, and gave me a look of mingled sorrow and compassion, as, without a word, except, "May God save you!" he left the room.

I opened the note and read as follows:

"Analysis of the zeal of Junius, a candidate for a crown of glory: weight, in mass, 100 lbs., of which, on analysis, there proves to be, viz.:-- Bigotry 10 parts. Personal ambition 23 " Pride of talent 14 " Love of praise 19 " Pride of denomination 15 " Love of authority 12 " Love of God 4 " Love of man 3 "

I had become troubled at the peculiar manner of the stranger, and especially, at his parting look and words; but when I looked at the figures my heart sank as lead within me. I made a mental effort to dispute the correctness of the record, but was suddenly startled into a more honest mood by an audible sigh, almost a groan, from the stranger, who had paused in the hall, and by a sudden darkness falling upon me, by which the record became at once obscured and nearly illegible. I suddenly cried out, "Lord, save me!"

I knelt down at my chair, with the paper in my hand, and my eyes fixed upon it. At once it became a mirror, and I saw my heart reflected in it:--The record is true!--I saw it; I felt it; I confessed it; I deplored it; and I besought God, with many tears, to save me from myself: and, at length, with a loud and irrepressible cry of anguish, I awoke.--*Selected.*

* * *

Since all of God's consecrated saints are his ambassadors, ministers of his truth, and members of the royal priesthood, this allegory may be of profit to all. Love of God and love of our fellow-men are the only elements of real zeal in the above analysis. All the other parts are detestable dross in God's sight and will be in ours, as we take God's standpoint of criticism. Let each servant who desires to stand approved of God, examine *his own* heart, analyze *his own* zeal, *his own* motives.

R5388

ST. PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO ELDERS

"Take heed to yourselves,...for grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."--ACTS 20:29,30.

THESE words were addressed to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus. St. Paul, going toward Jerusalem, had found himself not far from Ephesus, and had sent word to the Elders that he would remain there a little while, and would be glad to meet them once more. They came and held a lengthy conference with him. This text is part of his message to them. He told them that he would not see them again, and exhorted them to take heed to themselves. It behooves every one to take heed to *himself* more than to *others*. And unless a man learns to rule his *own* spirit, he could not be in a proper condition to rule *others*.

This is particularly true of all Elders. They should watch *themselves*. Because of the honor which the Church gives them, they are in danger of being carried away by a feeling of self-importance--self-conceit. They are in danger of becoming arrogant. But the message is to take heed to *themselves*, and to *the flock of God*, over whom they are made overseers. They are to recognize their position as representatives, not only of the Congregation, but also of the Lord. This position being given them in the appointed way--an election by the stretching forth of the hand--they are not

only to take this as the word of the Church, but also to realize that they are chosen of the Holy Spirit. They are to recognize this care of the Church as their great mission, an important service to be rendered in the name of the Lord.

WOLVES AND APOSTATE SHEEP

There are two particular reasons why Elders need to be on guard. The first reason, as given by the Apostle, was that grievous wolves would enter in among them, who would not spare the flock. The intimation seems to be that the wolves are not *part of the flock* at any time. They would not represent themselves as *wolves*, however. The Apostle's warning would seem to imply that a certain class of people of a wolfish nature would seek to associate themselves with the Church. Our Lord warned, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matt. 7:15.) This seems to imply the thought of deception--walking like sheep, going about amongst the sheep and representing themselves to be sheep, wearing sheep's clothing, but never being real sheep. Their object in coming into the flock is selfish, their influence is that of a wolf amongst sheep. A wolf worries the sheep--his intention is to kill them, to suck their blood.

So there seems to be a class who, for no reason that we can imagine, pervert the truth, injuring the flock, stirring up arguments that confuse the flock, destroying them as New Creatures, and dragging them down to death. Presumably there has been such a class all the way down through the Age. While our text does not imply that sheep could ever become wolves, perhaps some of us have known persons who at one time were sheep, but who after a while manifested a wolfish disposition, and took pleasure in doing all that they could to injure the flock. The Lord and the Apostle warn us that we should beware of those who come in amongst the sheep, palming themselves off as sheep.

In addition to this danger from wolves, there will be dangers among themselves. The Apostle points this out as a *very subtle* danger. In addition to those of the wolfish nature, some in a class will engage in service as teachers, and by speaking perverse things will seek to draw away disciples unto themselves. They seek to draw them away as *their own*. Their sentiment seems to be, This is *my class, my flock*--not recognizing that the Church is the *Lord's Flock*, that they are the *Lord's* sheep. In this there is a selfish attitude quite contrary to the Spirit of the Lord and to the Scriptures. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" is a principle of the Divine Government. If any one would be a true Elder, a real servant of the Lord, he is to remember these things, and to avoid everything that would be of a self-seeking spirit. Otherwise, he may be sure that he will do injury, not only to himself, but to others also, by such a course.

RESPONSIBILITY PROPORTIONATE TO ABILITY

Sheep are very timid animals and need some kind of leading. In the absence of a shepherd, they need some one of their own number to be, as it were, leader for them. In flocks of sheep there are wise sheep--rams of the flock, leaders--that the sheep learn to follow, in the absence of the shepherd. These old rams of the flock would represent Elders in the Church of Christ. The ram's horns constitute a means of defense, with which he could drive off adversaries in a time of attack, and the sheep would be able to get behind him.

But the Scriptures speak of danger as respects some of the rams of the flock--certain leaders of the Lord's people. (Ezek. 34:17-23.) These rams got into the stream and made it muddy, defiling the water. He-goats are also mentioned; this is an illustration of the disposition of some Elders of the Church of Christ, and should not be lost upon us. We are told that owners of sheep sometimes use a *goat* as a leader of the flock, because a goat is more combative than a sheep, and thus supply the sheep courage, etc. We do not know how many of the Lord's Flock are being led by a goat. But

whenever any one manifests the goat disposition, the Ecclesia should strictly avoid making him a leader.

The proper leaders are those who show the proper disposition. The Church is very much at the mercy of the leaders; hence the latter have the greater responsibility. So the Apostle says, Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that a man who is a teacher has the severer trial, the severer test. (Paraphrase of *James 3:1*, R.V.) He has the greater responsibility in proportion to his ability. It would seem, then, that all who accept the position of Elders are, to some extent, representing the Lord, who is the great Shepherd of the Flock.

R1134 [sel]

ORDER AMONG THE ROYAL PRIESTS

But in showing that the Scriptures recognize no separate clergy class, but that the entire Church of Christ is the Priesthood, and that they each and all have the *same authority* to do anything that the Lord and the apostles enjoined, as they find they have the ability, let no one suppose that we urge disorder. It is proper that each congregation should select or elect some of their number, *best qualified*, for these services. But it should always be remembered that the one who thus serves belongs to no higher class or caste than his brethren who chose him to thus minister or serve. "All ye are brethren, and one is your Master." Such a servant of the church is no more reverend or sacred than others, though if he be a very faithful and Christ-like servant he should be esteemed very highly "*for his work's sake*," because of loving, faithful service, but for no other reason. (*1 Thes. 5:13.*) He is not a "clergyman" in God's sight; for God recognizes no such class, and his Word authorizes no such distinction.

Whatever "*authority*" such a minister or servant of the church possesses, is *given* him; he possesses no more "authority" than the humblest of his "brethren," the entire church, any of whom has the authority of God's Word (*Matt. 28:19,20*) to declare and to do any or every thing which it enjoins, according to his talents and opportunities and the desires of his fellow-believers to be served by him. Authority to preach or otherwise minister cannot therefore be *given* by other ministers, or by conferences, synods, etc. Each royal priest is the peer of each other one in authority and dignity of priesthood, though in talents, intelligence, etc., and therefore in fitness, they are not all equals. The choice of one or more to specially represent and serve all, as ministers, implies, or should imply, that those so chosen have some qualifications for such service superior to others; which should be willingly and freely used for the service and benefit of all.

R3077 [sel]

SO MOSES THE SERVANT OF GOD DIED

DEUT. 34:1-12.

JOSHUA THE NEW LEADER

Joshua was now eighty years of age, and was accepted by the Israelites as Moses' successor without murmur. They had, doubtless, learned some valuable lessons in their wilderness discipline. Joshua, it will be remembered, was Moses' companion when he went up into the mountain, Sinai, and there received the Law, and indeed throughout the wilderness journey he seems to have been the one above all others upon whom Moses could thoroughly rely. He and Caleb were the two spies who

brought the favorable report, declaring that by the help of the Lord Israel might go up and assuredly take possession. In the change of leadership Israel learned another great lesson; viz., that their confidence and trust must not be in man; that so long as they recognized the Lord as their Leader they might feel safe and confident; because, altho others might pass away, the Lord would abide faithful and could raise them up at any time just such leaders as he saw best.

There is a lesson in this matter for spiritual Israelites as well. We are not to put our trust in leaders, but in the Lord. This does not signify that we are not to trust leaders, and not to acknowledge leaders, for all the history of the Lord's dealings with his people, the typical as well as the antitypical, shows us that he is pleased to use human agencies as his representatives in the teaching and leading of his people from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge. The lesson to be learned is that the Lord is thoroughly competent to manage his own work, and that while we may look for his leading through human agencies our trust is not in them, their wisdom, their strength, but in the Lord's wisdom and strength, guiding them and us through them.

R3938 [sel]

THE DANGER OF COVETOUSNESS

GENESIS 13:1-13

Golden Text:--"Take heed and beware of covetousness."--Luke 12:15.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

As a rule, quarrels in the family and in the Church arise from selfishness and covetousness; and it is the privilege of those who are nearest to the Lord and most developed in his character-likeness to be the most generous in any quarrel. The majority of quarrels are over trifles, which can as well as not be compromised or yielded to; only in the case of principles may the Lord's people contend earnestly. And even then the contention should be in the spirit of love and benevolence --the spirit of willingness to yield to the other so far as personal preferences are concerned, but a firmness for the Word of the Lord and the principles of righteousness. In the Church when quarrels arise it will generally be found that the basis of the quarrel is a misunderstanding or selfishness, covetousness, a desire to be chief and greatest. It behooves each of the Lord's people under such circumstances to examine well his own heart, and to see that his own eye is good before he attempts to assist his brother who has the opposite view. Having made sure of his own generosity of heart, and intent and willingness to yield, and to see and admire and approve the good in others, he will then be prepared to reason with others and to help them to also take the proper, broad, generous view of the situation.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory," urges the Apostle--neither in the Church nor in the home. Love is the only motive power that should be recognized amongst those who have passed from death unto life, who are New Creatures in Christ Jesus. There is generally a peaceful way of settling all differences, and our Lord himself has set it forth, and we have presented the matter in detail in DAWN, Vol. VI., chap. VI. But, where all fails, rather than allow the spirit of brotherhood to fail and enmity or anger to prevail, it were far better that those who find themselves totally unable to fellowship in love together should seek to maintain fellowship in spirit by a separation, as in the case of Abraham and Lot. Nevertheless while this is to be approved as a final resort rather than to have internal strife, the necessity for such a course would certainly be lamentable--it would certainly imply that some if not all of the company were very immature as respects the new nature, very deficient as respects the powers of a peacemaker, very lacking in the

brotherly love which can hide a multitude of faults, and endure much with long-suffering and patience, gentleness, kindness and love.

R1475

THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME

--PSALM 23:5.--

When the Lord prepares a table we may be sure of several things: first, that it will be clean; secondly, that it will be good; thirdly, that it will be orderly, bountiful and beautiful. And wherever we find the truth thus carefully set before the household of faith--whether by the press, the pen or the pulpit--there we may be sure the spirit of the Lord has been at work, directing and superintending the matter. The Prophet *Isaiah (Chapter 28:8)*, referring to the tables of popular theology now spread before the masses of nominal Christians, graphically described their present condition when he said, "For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." For centuries past they have been feeding on the miserable husks of human tradition, until now a reaction has set in and they are vomiting forth the abominable stuff, and their tables are full of filthiness.

Then again there are many more tables being spread with new traditions and human speculations, to which those are promptly invited who turn away in disgust from the old, polluted tables. In all of this the great adversary of the Church is diligently and faithfully at work with all his accustomed craft and cunning, using with great effect both the press and the platform, the two most potent agencies for reaching the people.

It is an increasingly popular idea among religious journalists that such a journal should be a medium merely for the expression of all shades of human opinion upon all matters of divine revelation, and that each individual should abstract from them all what he conceives to be true, and reject the rest. But this is precisely what the readers, and often the editors, too, of such journals are unable to do, and the general confusion is only increased unto greater blindness and denser darkness, and thus the purpose of the adversary is accomplished.

There is a deep responsibility to God which every man assumes, whether he realizes it or not, when he becomes a public teacher. "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall *teach* men so, he shall be called *the least* in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever *shall do* and *teach* them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."-- *Matt. 5:19*.

No table is fit for the household of faith to be summoned to that has not been spread by careful hands, fully submitted and obedient to the great Head of the house, whose directions are found in his Word. God says (*Hab. 2:2*) to some to whom he has granted a measure of ability to serve the household, and who (*verse 1*) are watching (studying his Word) to know what he would have them communicate--"Write the vision [what you have seen of divine truth] and make it plain upon tablets." That is, set it out in an orderly, systematic manner, "that he may run that readeth it"--that he may run for the prize. Observe that it is not every man that is called to make the truth plain, but that some of the class specified are called to do so for the benefit of all the rest. In the Scriptures there are many surface truths which all may see and appreciate, but the systematic ordering of the divine plan, much of which was purposely hidden and obscurely expressed, and the bringing out of its wonderful details, was left for an appointed time. And when the appointed time has come and the faithful watcher is led to *see* the systematic harmony of divine truth--not to guess at it, or to surmise about it, but to *see it*, so plainly that he can clearly, logically and Scripturally demonstrate it to others--then it becomes the privilege of such a one to make plain to others what the Lord has made plain to him. And such a one may consider his ability in this direction (together with a possible opportunity and a strong love for the saints, which longs to bless them with a fuller knowledge of

God and to exhort and stimulate them to greater faithfulness) as the Lord's call to him to make it plain.

But such should remember that the commission is to "*make it plain*," not to make it obscure. And if a man has no truth to make plain, but is only seeking for truth, he makes a great mistake in launching out his crude and inharmonious ideas for the confusion of other minds. Such a one should maintain the proper attitude of a disciple, a learner, until he does see clearly and is thus fitted to become a teacher of others. And if he is a faithful student, studying to show himself a workman approved unto God, ere long he may enjoy the privilege of declaring the truth to others through some medium, and be greatly blessed in so doing.

Let none of the consecrated be in haste to rush into print with crude, undefined ideas, and thus become stumbling-blocks in the way of many others. Be content to spread the truth you have received, and proved to your thorough satisfaction, before some other hungry saints; but keep the table clean: don't make up for your deficiency of knowledge by spreading out a host of idle speculations. Better is a pure morsel from a clean table than great abundance under other conditions. By and by to this morsel another morsel will be added, and in due time the wealth of divine bounty will be realized.

R4927

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ONE ANOTHER

"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."--Romans 15:1.

THE GREAT PRINCIPLE set forth in our text is the principle of Love, the essence of the Divine Spirit. God is love; and the Spirit of love is the Spirit of God. This spirit, operating amongst God's people, necessarily makes them considerate of one another. It is the opposite of a selfish spirit. It seeks the welfare of others as well as of itself, especially the welfare of the household of faith.

In every case it should be our disposition, as far as possible, to help the weak and those who need assistance. The general disposition of the world, on the contrary, is to speak slightly of those who are weak and to say, "They have my sympathy." But *really*, the weak do not get much sympathy. The world applauds those who are the most successful, the mighty, the rich. But as God has sympathy for the weak and lowly, so we should show sympathy more for those who are in need of sympathy than for those who are not. In the Church there are some who are *intellectually* strong, some who are *intellectually weak*, some who are *physically strong*, others who are *physically weak*; some who are *spiritually* strong and others who are *spiritually weak*.

In proportion as we are strong, we should not only help others to overcome their weaknesses, but should be assistful to all, encouraging them and pointing out to them how they can best overcome their shortcomings. We should not make these points too strong, however; for most people do not appreciate their own weaknesses; and the stronger should bear with them in their difficulty as well as bear some of their blunders. If anyone sees his own weakness, it becomes a wonderful incentive to endeavor. Therefore, the mission of the stronger would be so to call the attention of others to their weaknesses as not to offend or stumble them. If their attention be called to these weaknesses in a wrong way they are liable to be stumbled; but if called in a wise way, they will be helped. This might be applied in all the ramifications of life. We should ever be on the alert to see and to overcome our own weaknesses, and to be glad to spend and be spent in the interest of the brethren, considering matters from their standpoint and lending them our assistance.

The Elders in the Church should be really elder brethren. In the family the elder brother is supposed to be next to the father, helping and assisting, and spending himself for the interests of the

other members. And so in the Church. Those who are older in the Truth, who are more developed in the Truth, should encourage, assist, lift up and defend the younger. This we observe in the affairs of earthly life in every family. The elders are helpful in the family to give assistance to the younger, and at the loss of their own convenience, their own preferences; their own pleasures are to be yielded up in the interests of the younger of the family. The thought of the Apostle is that both strong and weak should be growing in grace, in knowledge and in love by exercising themselves in spiritual things.

"WE ARE NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES"

The latter part of the text, "And not to please ourselves," carries with it the thought that, although we have made a consecration to the Lord, although we have turned our backs upon sin, nevertheless we have a tendency, a disposition to sin. The disposition of the New Creature, however, is not to sin, but to do that which is right and to build himself up in the "most holy faith." Yet in seeking to build himself up in that "most holy faith" he might allow something of self-interest to stand first in his mind. But while he should have self-interest prominent in his mind--his own upbuilding--he should remember that, having responsibility in being a member of Christ, he should not wish merely to please himself, but should be willing to forego some of the right and proper things that he might serve others, and thus get a lesson in the Lord's providence. For instance, the more spiritually developed might choose to be off by themselves discussing the interests of the work. But the spirit of the Apostle's exhortation seems to be that they should look beyond their own preferences, seeking to arrange their own affairs so as to be most helpful to the brethren.

Amongst the different classes of the Lord's people, the classes of Bible students, there is a disposition among those who are more advanced to segregate themselves, to hold themselves aloof from the others. We have endeavored to throw our influence against this disposition. If there are some who have less knowledge let them have the opportunity to learn. If they should bring in good, hard questions, so much the better. We are not merely to please ourselves in respect to time and places of meetings. We might see that some would be desirous of having the meetings in places more difficult of access, but we are not to be selfish or self-seeking, but seek to please the majority of those whose interests are concerned. If this spirit were observed in classes, more progress would be made; and the Lord's people in general are learning this lesson.

The same thought applies to the servants of the Church. There is a disposition for the Elders to say, "We will meet together and discuss amongst ourselves different things." Now, this is not with bad intention. It might be wise to do so occasionally. But as a general thing, the Elders should meet with the Deacons and treat them with confidence, so that they also might be counted in the Lord's service: it is better for all to meet together, and in the majority of things to have the congregation informed about everything, rather than to keep secrets from the Church. Of course, there would be, at times, something not to be made public in a general way; but, as a rule, the Elders and the Deacons should seek to arrange their meetings so as to assist all the congregation who have time and ability, etc., that all will feel that there is no class separation.

Centuries ago the theory was started by the Catholic friends that the clergy are a separate class constituting the Church, and that the others are the children or infants of the Church. This theory was adopted afterwards by the Protestants. And so we see that the clergy set themselves off by themselves as a separate class. The fact that the Lord has set some in the Church as Elders does not make them separate. We are all one class. Thus, the Apostle says that the eye cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of thee." Every member is to be considered; and no one is to assume a position over others. If one has a higher office he is to use it for the others; if one has a lower office he is to use it for the general good. And so, the Church is to make herself ready until all come to the fulness of the Body of the Anointed, of which we are all members.

Principles may never be abandoned for any consideration; but *liberties* and *personal rights* may be ignored in the interest of others frequently and to Divine pleasing. The Apostle Paul was ready to go to any length in defense of principle (Gal. 2:5-11), but in the sacrifice of earthly

rights and privileges and liberties for the sake of Christ and the Church, the Apostle evidently came next to our Lord Jesus, and is a noble example to all the Church.

"How wise are God's commands;
How sure His precepts are!"

R3906 [*sel*]

THE PILGRIM WORK

This branch of the service is, we believe, a very useful one--one which we feel sure has been very profitable to the Lord's dear flock during the year past. The "Pilgrims" are brethren recognized as having not only a clear knowledge of the Truth, but as additionally possessing more than average ability in its presentation to others. They go from place to place at the Society's expense, and meet with the dear friends for usually about two days at each place. They are prepared to speak at least twice every day if suitable arrangements can be made for them. We urge that not more than one-half of the meetings at any place be for the public, allowing the other half to be especially for the interested, and we are urging that the "Pilgrims" during the coming year shall make a specialty of giving examples of the successful way of conducting Berean Studies at each of their visits.

We do this because we know how profitable these studies are to those who have learned how to conduct them along proper lines, and how insipid they may be if the real spirit of them be not caught by the leader and the class. In those classes where these studies have been most carefully and earnestly followed, and where tactful leaders have been chosen--leaders who will draw the answers to the questions from the classes rather than give the answers themselves, and then in conclusion will summarize the answers--results are excellent. We trust that all the dear friends will take hold of these Berean Studies. The majority of people neither know how to study nor how to teach, and hence fail to get the real food, nourishment, out of what they hear and what they read. Permit the "Pilgrims" to help you still more in this direction during the coming year.

"Pilgrim" appointments are only made where we have a positive request, and each May we publish a series of interrogatories, requesting answers thereto from those who desire "Pilgrim" visits, that we may judge the better as to the needs and the possibility for public and private meetings. We are always glad to receive these from any of the dear friends, and your contributions to the Tract Fund, while appreciated, are not allowed weight or influence in the matter. We seek to supply the "Pilgrims" where they are needed and would do the most good, leaving it to the Lord to find the means for the expenses thus incurred. The fact that you may be quite a distance need not hinder you from answering these questions, and be assured that we shall respond as well as we are able to all such appeals and as often as the men and the expenses and the money at our command will permit. It is too late to make the request when you notice that a "Pilgrim" is headed your way, for their routes are made out several months in advance, and they generally go in continuous journey, thus effecting a great saving of traveling expenses.

R4312

REMOVAL OF THE SOCIETY'S HEADQUARTERS

QUITE keenly do the dear friends of the Allegheny-Pittsburg Church seem to feel the near departure of the Bible House family; yet, philosophically, they have agreed with us that the Lord is abundantly able to care for the interests of his people everywhere, and quite likely he is giving them,

in this experience, a special blessing, throwing upon them a greater weight of responsibility in spiritual matters.

On the Wednesday night before Christmas, wholly without our knowledge, they had prepared for a special union meeting in the Bible House Chapel, and requested Brother Russell to come in and say a few words. On his arrival an appointed speaker, in well chosen terms, expressed the love of the Congregation for their Pastor and informed us that, desiring to make a tangible expression of their love, they had selected a fine velvet rug, a fine mahogany desk, a handsome chair, besides a small table and letter-holder. The offering for these gifts had far exceeded the expectations, so that \$138 remained, which they requested should be also used in some manner in connection with the outfitting of Brother Russell's Study in the new Brooklyn home. We accepted these tokens of love with heartfelt appreciation, and told the dear friends that only our conviction that the removal is in the Lord's provision and implies a forward step in his work, would enable us to leave cheerfully the numerous loved ones with whom we had been associated for more than thirty years, as Pastor of the Congregation.

BROTHER RUSSELL RE-ELECTED PASTOR

Two Sundays in advance announcement was made that on the last night of the year 1908 a general meeting would be held, at which the Congregation would expect to elect those who would serve it during the ensuing year. The Bible House Chapel was crowded, though it had been expressly stipulated that only those professing full consecration were invited. A solemn hush was upon the audience while Brother Russell briefly narrated some of the incidents connected with his Pastorate of the Congregation for more than thirty years. He mentioned by name some of those present who had been faithful supporters of the Truth during all of that period. Still larger numbers dated their affiliation with the Truth for twenty, fifteen, ten, five, and then down to one year. He remarked that he had not done for them, either collectively or individually, all that he would have liked to do, but assured them that he had served their interests in every manner to the best of his ability. He further declared that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, he had never done injury to any of them--in deed, in word, or in thought. In vacating the pulpit it caused him great gratification that these things were so. In concluding he requested that, if there were any present who felt that in any sense or degree, at any time or place, he had ever done them injury, in act or word, he hoped they would speak out, that he might know about it, and have opportunity for apology. There being no response to the invitation, he assured them that, not only had he not injured them in word or act, but even in his thoughts they were cherished, loved, yearned for and prayed for.

Before leaving the platform, Brother Russell remarked that Pilgrim Brother Rutherford was present and would doubtless make an excellent Chairman for the business meeting called for the election of the Church's servants for 1909. He said that, unless some objection were made, it would be considered that Brother Rutherford was unanimously approved as Chairman of the session. Silence gives consent, so Brother Rutherford stepped to the platform, Brother Russell stepping down and taking his seat with the friends.

A vote of thanks for the Pastor and Elders who had served during the year was proposed, seconded and passed unanimously. The object of the meeting was stated by the Chairman, and a motion was declared to be in order. Brother Dr. Spill at once arose and proposed that Brother Russell be reelected Pastor of the congregation for the year 1909. He urged that, even though rarely present with the Ecclesia, his election as Pastor would insure to the Church, possibly, a still greater watch care and make him more free to give advice in its affairs and interests. He declared that many congregations were in the habit of thus electing Brother Russell as Pastor, not only as an expression of their love and confidence, but also as an assurance to him of their desire for his special oversight of their interests, and with a view to making him feel the more at home with them at any time he could be present. Several brethren seconded the motion. Brother Russell arose, thanked the mover

and seconders, but assured the dear friends that they would always have his love, best wishes and assistance every way irrespective of his election, as suggested. He wished them to understand that he could not hope to be with them frequently in the future. He was glad even that for nearly two years he had addressed them only once a month, or less frequently, because it made the coming separation easier for all concerned. He did not wish anyone to vote on the motion with the thought that it would bring him to Pittsburg often, for he must attend to the interests of the general work. He remarked also that he could not think of accepting such an election, unless it were practically unanimous. The vote was taken and declared to be unanimously carried.

At Brother Russell's suggestion the Bible House family declined to vote at this election, because, not expecting to remain long, it would not be appropriate for them to express a choice. Chairman Rutherford remarked this and then added that, since the local congregation voted unanimously, there could be no objection now to taking another vote which would include the Bible House family, and show their love also for Brother Russell. The motion was put and carried unanimously, the Bible House family voting.

Following the custom of previous years, Brother Russell suggested the names of some who he believed would make faithful servants of the Church-- Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses. He remarked that these were mere suggestions, any or all of them subject to rejection. He would not even nominate them, but merely suggested and left the congregation to make its own nominations. Brother Russell's suggestions were nominated and chosen--unanimously elected by the congregation. Altogether the occasion was an enjoyable one. Following the election a prayer, praise and testimony meeting was opened which lasted until after mid-night. Some of the dear friends remarked afterwards on the earnestness and unction of this Watch Night meeting.

R4709 [sel]

HE SHALL GIRD HIMSELF AND SERVE THEM

ALAS! how few realize what a dangerous thing is liberty; how carefully it must be used for our benefit, and how easily it might be misused to our eternal danger. Because God created us free agents; because this is part of his likeness, and because, additionally, ambition must be a part of every progressive individual, therefore this free agency and ambition in conjunction bring us all under tests of character. And the greater our abilities, the more our talents and the wider our influence, the stronger the power of ambition may become. Then comes the test. Will this laudable ambition be subject to the Divine Will--thoroughly consecrated to do the Lord's will even unto death?

If our devotion to the Lord be absolute, fully in control of our thoughts and words and doings, our liberty and largest ambition will be rightly directed and eventuate in blessings to ourselves and to others. But if the Divine will be not first and absolutely in control of our wills, the more ambition and the more liberty we have the greater will be our danger. Where the Lord is not revered -- obeyed with heart, mind, soul and strength-- some one else has an influence in our hearts--husband or wife, parents or children, or, more than probably, self. We cannot be overcomers except as our hearts are absolutely loyal to the Lord, with self-will and every other will thoroughly subjected to the Divine Will. This is the lesson of life to those who would come off conquerors. How we rejoice, in every struggle, when finally, by God's grace, we recover balance!

It is not to be wondered at that the more prominent brethren have the more severe trials along this line. Of this condition of things the Apostle forewarns us, saying, Be not many of you teachers, knowing that he who is a teacher will experience the more severe trials. The deflection of some recognized as teachers will cause special trials to others not teachers, and will prove to what extent

they have a personal relationship to the Lord through his Word and through an individual consecration to him and through his instructions by his Word and the prophecies --in the School of Christ. We fear that too many are in an attitude of leaning upon others whose fall might bring them disaster. It is because we have long recognized this principle that, in our writings, we have presented the Lord's message as his message, and not as our own, giving the chapter and verse for every doctrine.

R3210 [sel]

PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

2 TIM. 3:14-4:8

Realizing that he had come to the end of his own course, he sought to impress as much as possible of his own spirit and zeal upon Timothy--that he might be the more faithful and efficient servant of God. The exhortation is specially applicable to all who seek in any manner to minister to others--and this really includes all of the Lord's people, each one of whom should be a living epistle showing forth and speaking forth the Lord's message as his ambassador. Let us each apply to himself the words of this lesson.

Timothy is first reminded of how great his privileges had been--that he was well born, under religious instruction from his infancy. He is reminded, too, in a most modest manner, of how he had received his understanding of the Scriptures through the Apostle, and had been assured that the instructions were of God-- that the Apostle spoke as an oracle of God; "He that heareth us, heareth God." The Apostle points to the Word of God as a great light, or lamp, able to make wise unto salvation. He must have referred chiefly to the Old Testament, since the New Testament was not yet completed; but no one will doubt that if the Old Testament is valuable for the instruction of the Lord's people, the New Testament is still more valuable as its key and elucidation.

"Preach the Word!" All of the Lord's people are teachers; as it is written, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good tidings," etc. This anointing of the spirit which came upon our Lord, the Head of the Church, comes down to, and covers every member of the body, anointing each one similarly to preach the good tidings, the Word of God's grace and mercy and peace through Jesus--to all who have an ear to hear. The Christian washerwoman is to preach this message; so is the Christian business man and laborer and housewife, each according to his opportunities--and there are surely some opportunities for all. All should be able to show forth the praises of him who hath called us "out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9); --should be living epistles known and read of all men. We are to consider the preaching of the Word to be the chief business of life, and the earning of a living and keeping ourselves in comfort to be secondary and incidental to the one vocation to which we are called of the Lord. He who would hold back the word of truth must surely do so for a reason, and the reason cannot be a proper one. If he has received the truth in the love of it, he will love to tell it forth; and any restraint will, therefore, indicate either that he is subject to the fear of man or ashamed of the Lord and his Word; and the Master has declared that such are not fit for the Kingdom--not fit to be of the Bride class, whatever else they may be fit for.--Luke 9:62.

"Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." This part of the exhortation is not alike applicable to all; too many feel at liberty to reprove and to rebuke. Doubtless many need reproofs and many need rebukes, but how few are able to administer these to profit and not to injury! The Apostle addressed these words in a particular sense to Timothy as an experienced elder in the Church of Christ, and to some extent an overseer amongst the elders. It would be a great mistake to apply these words in general, and for each of the Lord's people to see to what extent he could administer reproofs and rebukes to his brethren. Rather should sympathy go out to such an extent

that reproofs and rebukes would be avoided, except as duty, because of responsibility in the Church of God, should necessitate this. Even so experienced an elder and overseer as Timothy must see to it that his reproofing and rebuking and exhorting should be done with all longsuffering--with patience, gentleness and forbearance, and with doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2); showing clearly wherein the principles of righteousness were infringed and pointing out distinctly the Word of the Lord concerning the same. This duty still rests upon those who occupy places of prominence in the Church to which they have in the Lord's providence been appointed; and in proportion as they are filled with the Lord's spirit of love and gentleness and meekness and patience and forbearance, they will strive to perform this delicate and unpleasant business of reproofing and rebuking, where necessary, in most modest language and under the most favorable conditions.

R4251

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CHURCH

SINCE the appearance of the article, "The One True Church," we have received several communications inquiring as to the right or privilege of a portion of the congregation to split off and hold meetings by itself as a separate and distinct Church. As already pointed out in the article referred to, our Lord's words inform us of his willingness to recognize any two or three of the faithful, consecrated ones when they meet together in his name, and that the presence of the Head with such members constitutes a Church, in the Scriptural sense.

But while this is true it is also true that the teachings of our Lord and of his apostles and the practices of the early Church all agree with the thought that the New Commandment, "that ye love one another as I have loved you," implies such a close fellowship of spirit amongst all of the Lord's dear people as will lead them to desire to come together rather than to disintegrate into smaller groups. We should notice carefully the words, "As I have loved you"; that they signify a very deep, earnest love and not a mere tolerance. The Lord loved us to the extent of giving his life for us, and the Apostle points to him as our example and declares, "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." This is the love wherewith he loved us. We are to remember, too, that this is not a sectional or sectarian love for class or party in the Church, but is for all, because they are his. True, it is not possible to love all to the same degree of appreciation, but all are to be loved to the degree of a willingness to lay down our lives for them; because even the humblest of the Lord's little ones has a claim on the noblest of them, for does he not belong to the same great army of the redeemed, enlisted under the captaincy of Immanuel in the fight against sin and with a covenant agreement with his Master to lay down his life in his service? How could we help but love those who have devoted their all to the same Master whom we serve-- and the fact that the Master accepts of such and is not ashamed to call them brethren is the best of reasons why we also should accept them and not be ashamed of them, but on the contrary love them and be glad to serve them, even to the extent of laying down hours or days of life itself in their assistance.

Everything connected with the Spirit of the Lord and the instructions of his Word seem to antagonize the thought of division amongst the members of his Body. A beautiful illustration of this is found in the fact that the dear friends everywhere, as they grow in grace and knowledge, seem to become more and more imbued with the desire to come together--in the one-day conventions and still more so in the general conventions; and in these the thought is often expressed that our longings and fellowship for one another will not find complete satisfaction until we gather with our Lord and all his faithful in the General Assembly of the First-born, "whose names are written in heaven."

We all remember the Apostle's arraignment of sectarianism; and it is well that we take note of the fact that he attributes it to a partisan spirit with which he had no sympathy and to which he refers as an evidence of carnality, fleshly-mindedness, indicating an immature development along spiritual

lines. He says, "While one says I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, and another I am of Cephas (Peter), are ye not carnal? Is Christ divided?" (*I Cor. 3:3,4.*) He goes on to say that none of these redeemed us, but Christ alone, and that we are all baptized into his Body and therefore are related to each other, because we are related to him our Head; and he proceeds to say that there should be no schism in the Body; that is to say, no split, no division.

Whether we are conscious of it or not, dear friends, it is doubtless true that a spirit that favors a division of the class, where such a division would not be due to distance hindering a proper gathering at one place, must be a spirit of sectarianism or partisanship. Sometimes this is a result of a brother desiring to be leader and wishing for a fuller opportunity for the exercise of his talents as a servant of the Church. At other times, as in the case the Apostle mentions, it is due to partisanship on the part of a portion of the Church who are desirous of following leaders, even when the leaders themselves do not desire it, as in St. Paul's case cited. In any event it would do us good in this connection to scrutinize our own hearts individually rather than to judge one another in this matter. Quite possibly in some places where there is a disposition on the part of some to split off and hold separate meetings there may be some real cause or reason; but the better way would be to correct that difficulty and remain united. Unconsciously sometimes the Lord's people become too narrow and control Church arrangements too much along the lines of the will of the majority, rather than endeavor to arrange such a programme as would as nearly as possible please, profit and happy all.

The Apostle's exhortation is that we "consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." This signifies not merely that we should consider the tastes and preferences of the better educated or the naturally more noble or rich or refined, but that we should seek to consider all the dear members of the Body. It is easy comparatively to love the refined, the educated and the well-developed spiritually, and to love these is in harmony with what our Lord suggests that even the Gentiles do, "If ye love them that love you what thank have ye? do not even the publicans and sinners the same?" The brotherly love to which the Apostle refers, saying, "Hereby we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"-- this love is not merely the love of the refined and elegant and accomplished and noble-minded. Many people love those who have not passed from death unto life. But it becomes an evidence of our having passed from death unto life if we love the brethren, of whom the Apostle intimates that many are ignoble; yea, even saying that "God hath chosen the mean things of the world." It is when we come to the place of loving those of the brethren who are naturally mean that we may consider it an evidence of the new nature being in control of the mind. We love them not for their meanness, nor for their ignorance, nor for their stupidity, nor for their poverty, but because they are his and because all his are ours, because they are enlisted under the same banner in the same fight with ourselves; because the Father hath acknowledged them as his children in the begetting of his Spirit. These reasons call for our love, for our sympathy and our help one for another in climbing Zion's Hill.

Our Lord intimates that our love for him will be gauged by our love for the brethren, and the Apostle points out to us that as the Lord's compassion and grace are given to each of us in proportion to our needs, so our sympathy and love should be manifested to others according to their needs. To seek chiefly the company of those who are of our own plane of development, mental or spiritual, is to please ourselves, and the Apostle points out that we should love one another or serve one another and not please ourselves, pointing out further that even Christ pleased not himself. Furthermore he points out that as in our physical bodies we sometimes bestow more care upon a deformed hand or foot to cover the deformity than we do upon one that is natural, so we are to do in the Body of Christ; those who are most in need of our sympathy and assistance and fellowship should receive it, that the whole Body of Christ may be edified, built up and knit together in the bonds of love as the members of Christ under him who is the Head.

We need each member of the Body, as the Apostle intimates, and as the trying times before us become more strenuous we all more and more need the actual cooperation and assistance and sympathy and love of each other. Let us, therefore, avoid schism as well as "ism" and let us have that

spirit of oneness appropriate to the Body, for we are all one in Christ Jesus and members one of another. Let us seek more and more to see eye to eye in all these matters.

* * *

Question.--Is it proper to choose as an Elder one who has not participated in symbolic water baptism?

Answer.--While we urge that all of the consecrated and all who profess faith in the ransom and a full consecration to the Lord be accounted and dealt with as brethren and members of the Church, irrespective of their obedience to the water symbol, we would not think it either wise or in harmony with the Lord's teaching to select such a one to the eldership of the Church. We could not consider such a one sound in "the faith once delivered to the saints." We could not consider him as well developed in the Truth, even though we accept him as a brother. We could not, therefore, consider him a proper person to be specially chosen to instruct others respecting the divine plan, etc.

R5409 [sel]

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

PERSONAL AND CLASS RIGHTS

DEARLY BELOVED PASTOR:--

I have never thought it wise or expedient to write to you before, except on one occasion, and then only to express my love and to inform you that I had taken the Vow. I feel the same reluctance in writing now, lest I unwisely interfere with your time, but feel that it is the proper thing to do.

For a time some of the brethren have been holding in their homes regular meetings which have not been arranged for by the Church. In some cases these meetings are conducted by brethren who are neither Elders nor Deacons. In other cases, certain Deacon brethren in their love and zeal found an opportunity for assisting some beginners, and after a time began holding regular meetings in their interest, confining their meetings to evenings which did not conflict with the regular meetings of the Church.

These matters came before the Church and were discussed, resulting in the following Resolution, which was voted upon and carried:

Resolved--That, while we do not question for one moment the good intentions, love and zeal for the Lord and the brethren, on the part of those who may participate, in our judgment, the holding of regular meetings in _____, apart from those arranged by the Church as a whole, are not to the spiritual benefit of the Church of _____, tending, amongst other things, to prevent amongst the whole body here, that full measure of fellowship which we feel so greatly in need of at the present time.

Personally, I supported the Resolution when it was voted upon. Later, after some misgivings as to whether I had acted wisely, I began giving the matter much prayerful thought, searching through the TOWERS and the Volumes for all the help I could find. Eventually, I came to the conclusion that so far as I was concerned I had made a mistake, and had participated in a Resolution that to my mind has the tendency to interfere with the freedom and liberty of others.

Last night at a regular business session, the matter came up again for discussion, the brethren interested in some of these meetings having addressed a letter to the Church, requesting the Church to appoint a chairman for their meetings. After three hours' discussion the matter remains unsettled. And now I find myself confronted with a serious problem, which is giving me much concern. I find myself taking the opposite view from the other Elders, and standing alone as an Elder in the position

I have taken; namely, that the Resolution which we passed was unwise and inexpedient, having a tendency to destroy personal liberty, and being specially injurious to some of our brethren.

The position is taken that the passing of this Resolution does not tend to bondage nor in any way to interfere with the rights of others. But to me it now appears as being in a measure, "an appearance of evil," which I desire to avoid, having in my mind this thought, that the good which might be accomplished by the Resolution from one standpoint, would be more than offset by the injury it might do from another viewpoint.

I have not been and will not be contentious, but I do want to know and to do the Lord's will; and finding myself taking the opposite view from the other Elders and some of the other members of the Class, I feel greatly concerned and ask your advice. Taking into consideration the present and future interests of the Class, I feel that the matter is now too important to be in doubt about. I am,

Your brother in His blessed service, J. J. B.

OUR REPLY TO THE FOREGOING

We have endeavored to set forth in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Vol. VI., what we believe to be the Scriptural teaching covering the queries of this letter. Repeating now, and seeking to make the matter applicable to the case in question, we would say:

Each spirit-begotten child of God, by virtue of his anointing, has a right to speak, to preach, to declare his Heavenly Father's Word and Message. The right to preach is not confined to bishops, nor to those upon whom they lay their hands, nor to Elders and Deacons chosen in the Scriptural manner by the stretching forth of the hands of the Ecclesia. There are natural limitations, of course, such as lack of ability, from any cause, to hold the attention of an audience. Except the Apostle's restriction that the sisters are not to do public preaching, there are none.

With this broad view of the Divine commission, the anointing or authorization of the Holy Spirit, we perceive that none has a right to interfere with another. As Jesus said to the Apostle John, "Forbid him not."--*Mark 9:39*.

However, while none may interfere with or bind his brother, we may give over some of our own liberties. Recognizing that God is a God of order, and that every good work is prospered by order, and following the instructions of our Lord that His followers should assemble themselves together as one body, we realize that in taking our places in the body, we lose some of our own personal independence, liberties, privileges. We are glad to do this, for we believe it to be the Lord's will, because He instructs us: "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together." So all who thus become associates, or members, in a class of Bible students thereby surrender individual rights. They operate as a Class, deciding which meetings are necessary and which are unnecessary, which of their number would best lead and serve the class, which render other service, etc.

From this viewpoint, it would not be proper for brethren associated in a Class to start new Classes and still consider themselves members of the original Class. For a member of a Class to individually start another Class separate from anything provided for by his Class, would mean to ignore it, to break off his relationship with the older Class and would indicate that he would no longer in any sense of the word recognize himself, either as a servant of that Class, or as a member of it, or as a sharer in its privileges. In reassuming his own personal liberty he laid down his privileges as a member of the Class.

Hence from this standpoint we would say, that the brethren and sisters who participated in the organizing of the new Classes evidently had only the best intentions, and quite probably did not consider at the time the real force and meaning of their action in organizing the Classes.

It would look, too, as though the parent Class and its Elders and Deacons had not fully provided for all the desires and necessities of the Class; otherwise there would have been no incentive or reason for the starting of new Classes aside from their arrangements. A sharp look out

by the servants of the Class should always be maintained, to see that the spiritual needs of the interested are supplied; and a sufficient number of Elders and Deacons should be chosen and appointed.

While we sympathize with the sentiments of those who drew up the Resolution, we incline to doubt the wisdom of the movement. We believe that the better way for all concerned would be for all parties to confess their error. The Class and the Elders might very properly say: "We regret, dear brethren and sisters, that we had not such a grasp of the situation as would have enabled us at the time properly to supply the needs of the Class as respects meetings. We promise to do our duty more faithfully in the future."

Those who started the new Classes would, we think, do well to say: "We regret, dear brethren and sisters, that we did not take a broad enough view of the subject and put in a request for the meeting, to the intent that the need might have been supplied through appointments by the Class."

With such apologies and resignations, we believe the entire matter will adjust itself and everybody feel relieved of a tension, and quite probably the results will not be far different from what they are now, except that the new meetings will be under the appointment of the original Class.

R4359 [sel]

MISSIONARY SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN ANTIOCH

Our lesson tells us that there were three public speakers at Antioch, besides Paul and Barnabas, and that as they served and practised self-denial, the holy Spirit indicated that Barnabas and Paul should have a special work to do in carrying the message of God's grace to others. And in this way we have a suggestion in respect to the proper course to be pursued amongst the Lord's people generally, wherever it is found, that the number of public speakers and teachers, Berean Lesson leaders, etc., is greater than is really needed. Instead of wasting valuable time and energy all should recognize the facts of the case, and square them to the instructions of this lesson, and separate some to special missionary effort. A failure to notice the breadths of the Lord's work and the privileges of service has proven a temptation to some, and led to fault-finding and bickering, heart-burnings and discouragements, instead of mutual encouragements, sympathetic aids, and increase in the joy of the Lord and spread of the Truth. Each member of Christ, and especially each one of teaching ability, should seek to take the broadest possible view of the Lord's work and the most loving and appreciative view of every fellow-servant's endeavors. This course leads to mutual upbuilding, while the other course tends toward coldness and leanness, if not to back-biting and devouring one another.

LAID THEIR HANDS ON THEM

The Church ordained the Apostles for this missionary service. The laying on of hands did not signify the impartation to them of any spiritual or occult powers. It did not mean the giving to them of *authority* to preach. It did mean that the congregation of the Lord at Antioch recognized these two men as God's servants and authorized them to go forth as *their* representatives, and impliedly at their charges, to carry the message of good tidings to others. As the priests laid their hands upon the animals which were to represent them in sacrifice, so the Church laid their hands upon those who were to represent them in the service of the Truth.

Similarly today we are following what we believe to be the direction of the holy Spirit in sending forth the Pilgrims to proclaim the good tidings. They go forth, as the apostles expressed the matter, not authorized to preach by man or men or human systems, but by him who said, "Go ye,

disciple all nations"--people of all nationalities, and not merely the Jews, as at first. Nevertheless the Church in general lays its hands upon these Pilgrims in the sense of saying, "You go with our approval, as our representatives, and all of your expenses will be met out of our donations to the Tract Fund. Serve the Lord faithfully and make reports to us through the Society's channels.

R5888 [sel]

MISSIONARIES SENT FORTH

For a considerable time Paul and Barnabas met with the Church at Antioch in the worship of the Lord and in the study of His Word. The result of these studies was that the Church as a whole was developed and brought to the point of considering and praying about means for the spread of the Gospel. There were a number of Prophets--public speakers--and teachers in the Church; and evidently they began to think of how they might be used to the glory of God and to the blessing of others, as they themselves had been blessed by the Truth.

This is always the case with those who receive the Truth into good and honest hearts. Properly enough, they desire to feed thereon themselves and to grow strong in the Lord. But just so surely as the Truth is received, it gives a strength and a desire to use that strength. This is as true today as it was then. The sanctification which the Truth brings starts with our begetting of the Spirit; and the energy for service corresponds with the quickening of the Spirit.

Evidently the Church at Antioch had an oversupply of teachers, as compared to its own requirements, and began to look about for larger fields of service. They were uncertain as to the course they should follow, and hence looked to the Lord as the real Head of the Church. They served and they fasted; and we may be sure that they prayed also. As a result they came to the conclusion to send forth two of their number--Barnabas and Paul--as representatives of the whole in mission work.

We are not informed in what manner the Lord directed them to this decision. It is possible that this was after the same manner that we today would consider a similar case, and would say, "After studying the Scriptures and praying, seeking thus to know the mind of the Lord, we believe that it would be His will that such ones of our number should go for a public service of the Truth. We believe that we are guided to this conclusion, not by any wrong spirit of pride or ambition, nor with any mercenary motive, but by the Holy Spirit. We believe that it is the Lord's will that we as a congregation should send forth these representatives to carry the light to others."

In some manner the conviction came strongly to the Church at Antioch that this was its duty and privilege. It is worthy of note that the Church sought out its very best representatives for this service, thus letting the spirit of self-sacrifice prevail. No doubt the Lord blessed the Church correspondingly, and made up to them the loss sustained in the giving of these two very talented brethren to the mission work.

ORDINATION AND LAYING ON OF HANDS

The proper course having been decided upon, the congregation fasted, prayed and laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas, and then sent the two on their missionary tour with God-speed. The laying on of hands would probably be done by the congregation through their representatives, the Elders. But this proceeding did not signify, as is generally understood today, an "Ordination"; for Paul and Barnabas had been recognized for a considerable time as amongst the principal prophets and teachers in the Church at Antioch. It would not signify authority to preach, as Ordination sometimes means today amongst Christians of various sects and parties.

This ceremony simply meant, "We, the congregation at Antioch, by this laying on of hands of our representative Elders, are sending forth these two men, Paul and Barnabas, on a missionary tour; and that they go, not only as representatives of the Lord and of themselves, but also as

representatives of the Church of the Lord at Antioch; and that as such we hold ourselves responsible for their maintenance. We will supply them the needful assistance, and thus will be colaborers--sharing in their labors, sympathizing in their difficulties and trials, helping them in their necessities, and partaking with them also in whatever results shall come to the Lord's praise through their efforts."

Accordingly we find that after this missionary tour the two brethren returned to Antioch, and made report. It would appear that subsequently the Apostle Paul, at least, traveled without any such dependence upon the Church at Antioch--without any such praying and laying on of hands and without any subsequent reports of results of labors--though still in love and sympathy with them, so far as we may judge.

R5954 [sel]

INTERESTING LETTERS

WHEN DIVORCED PEOPLE ARE FREE TO MARRY

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

I am well aware that Volume VI., STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, seems to touch every phase of the experiences, difficulties and proper course of action of the Lord's people of the New Creation; nevertheless, a question has arisen which is causing some perplexity in our Class and threatens a division. A Brother and a Sister, members of our Class, have always enjoyed our fellowship, until now it is learned that the Sister was previously married, and that her first husband is still living and has remarried.

Some of our Class desire to disfellowship this Brother and Sister and to forbid their attendance at the meetings. The main contention is based upon the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:9--"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." In the case mentioned it is claimed that the Sister's first husband had been guilty of adultery; but others claim that this would not release her for remarriage; for Jesus said that whosoever marrieth a divorced woman (whether properly divorced or not) would be committing adultery. Please give us a little more light on these points.

Very truly your Brother, ----.

[The Class is evidently making a mistake in allowing the matter here presented to cause any division or disturbance. In any event they would seem to have no ground for forbidding attendance at meeting. The very most they might vote would be to withdraw fellowship and include in this a refusal to visit at their home or to invite them to the homes of the Class--the Class declining also to appoint the Brother to any office, such as Deacon or Elder. As for refusing them the privilege of attending public meeting, that would be very inconsistent; for surely all kinds of people living in all kinds of sin come occasionally to meetings, and we hope that by coming they may be benefited and recovered.

In this case, where it is admitted that adultery was the basis of divorce and that the fault was with the husband, it plainly comes within the exception mentioned by our Lord-- "except for adultery." Besides, if that had not been originally the cause of the separation, the fact that the former husband had *remarried* signifies that he had considered the marriage tie broken; and therefore the first wife was released from its obligation. Evidently the Sister whose case you cite has both of these

proofs on her side and had every right, therefore, to have married, if she thought that the wisest and proper thing to do.

It is not supposable that our Lord meant merely a separation between husband and wife; for St. Paul counsels that if the unbeliever depart, let him depart--do not consider it a hardship, but rather take it as a blessing. He does not say that the departing of the husband or wife would be a divorce. A divorce is a full breaking of the original marriage contract. Jesus was criticizing the too slack observance of the marriage tie, and condemning it. He declared that the marriage contract could not be fully broken except by adultery.

In our day these matters are regulated by courts. Very properly, Bible Students govern themselves additionally by the Word of God. The fact that a court would grant a divorce would not by a Bible Student be considered liberation from the marriage bonds, unless upon the one ground which the Master specified. But a court divorce is to be respected when it is backed by the condition of adultery--or backed by a second marriage of the separated one.]

R4417 [sel]

ST. PAUL'S PASTORAL TO THESSALONICA

I THESS. 5:12-24

OVER YOU IN THE LORD

*"We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you,
and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you."*

While the Scriptures are very particular to maintain liberty of conscience for all of the Lord's people, and while they assure us that in Christ there is neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, but that his consecrated ones are "all one" in him, his members, nevertheless they distinctly set before us the thought that God is the supervisor of the affairs of his people and that their prosperity will result from their appreciation of the Lord's Headship and their recognition of those whom God hath "set in the Body" --apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers, helps, etc. The Lord's people are all children of God possessed of "the liberty wherewith Christ makes free," yet he has not given us a liberty to sin, but a freedom from sin, its slavery, its blight. These liberated ones, introduced by faith and consecration into the family of God, need to realize that the Father's house and all of its arrangements are under heaven's first Law--order. They must first learn to willingly and gladly submit to this order as the condition upon which they may abide in the Divine love and favor and participate in the family blessings. Neglecting to do so, they can never make progress into the deeper and more spiritual matters of that household, but, as babes unskilled and unruly, will be permitted to go no farther than the nursery.

The recognition of the Lord and the watching for his guidance through his Word and his promises will enable the Lord's people to discern the ones he has set over them in the Lord. While, therefore, in the Divine order, the Church is to select its own servants, Elders, Deacons, Pastors, each member is to "stretch forth his hand" in voting, not according to his own judgment merely, but according to his understanding of the Divine judgment or will. If, therefore, in the Lord's providence, our conception of the matter is not realized; if, under a fair understanding and vote, some one is set over the Church contrary to our conception of the Divine will, we are to be submissive and cooperate with such to the best of our ability; because recognizing the Divine wisdom and power we are to realize that the will of the majority of the consecrated is to be accepted as the Divine will. If sometimes the Lord may seem to permit things in the Church to go contrary to her highest interest, we are not to fear, but to trust everything to him and to content ourselves with a full and free expression of our judgment of the Lord's will, whether others see eye to eye with us or not.

The Apostle in our lesson takes for granted that the Church is acting in an orderly manner and has in the name of the Lord appointed some of their number to be over them in the Lord--to have a supervision and measure of control of the interests of the work. The Apostle urges that these be known, be recognized, not only personally, but in their capacity as servants in the Church and of Divine appointment through the Church. They are to expect admonishments from these. They are to realize that as faithful servants they must watch over the Church's interests. And all who love the Lord and the Truth should seek to cast as few difficulties in their way as possible and should do all in their power to uphold their admonitions and proper influence. These elect servants are supposed to labor amongst the brethren, as well as to admonish them. The service of the Church is not merely an honorary one. The word minister signifies servant and is a proper one and full of meaning--and more full of meaning than many seem to observe.

Continuing the Apostle urges, "Esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake." Permit no rivalry of spirit to come in to constitute in your own heart and in others a root of bitterness. Permit no unkind word of criticism to fall from your lips as against any servant of the Church. On the contrary, esteem them, honor them, as their position requires, for in a measure they represent the Lord. And honor them in proportion as their labors of love in the Church seem to merit. Thus, the more Christ-like will be the more loved.

Furthermore, St. Paul exhorts, "Be at peace among yourselves." Why not? Why was it even necessary to suggest peace, harmony, amongst those who had left the world behind, named the name of Christ, and come together as the followers of the Prince of Peace? What should hinder their peace? Surely each one of them must have known from experience something of the wrangle and jangle of the world. As sheep every one of them has been to some extent worried by the wolves, or at least threatened. Having come together, why should not these worried sheep have rest and peace and joy and comfort under the Great Shepherd's Son and his appointed under-shepherds over them in the Lord? This is the ideal peace, love, harmony. Of course, not peace at any price, not harmony at any price, but peace and harmony because Divine standards are well upheld in the Body of Christ and because the voice of the Master has been heeded in the choosing of the Elders, Deacons, etc.; because all have been seeking to know the Lord, to know his will, to know those whom he hath set over them in the Church; because all are hearkening for the voice of the Shepherd and striving against the self-seeking spirit in word and in deed.

ADMONISH THE DISORDERLY

"And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering towards all." We must assume that in these words the Apostle addresses the entire Church and that some features of this exhortation belong specially to the chosen representatives of the Church--the Elders. While it is true that any member of the Body of Christ might with propriety admonish any brother, encourage a faint-hearted one, give assistance to a weak one and be patient towards all, nevertheless some of these duties belong specially to the chosen Elders--they should be chosen with a view to the fact that they are more advanced in knowledge and in character, "Elder" brothers. The younger brethren, the brethren not specially designated by the Church as "Elder," should indeed feel an interest and a care, but they should exercise great caution in respect to admonishing the disorderly, realizing that the Church has specially appointed certain ones as Elder-brethren, and that specially upon these such duties properly devolve. Even when the disorderly need correction, it requires to be wisely done, else more harm than good may result. Many of the Lord's dear people need to learn this lesson and to restrain themselves lest they be disorderly in attending to a matter to which another is appointed under Divine regulation.

We have already pointed out that the word "Elder" applies to the spiritual development and not to the natural years. As, for instance, Timothy, though a young man, was an Elder in the Church.

So, in this young Church at Thessalonica, although none of them had been long in the Truth, some were found competent to serve the others as "overseers, to feed the flock of Christ."

Notice the wisdom of the Lord's injunction through the Apostle. It was for peace, but not for peace at any price. The unruly, the anarchists, were to be admonished. The faint-hearted were to be encouraged. The weak were to be assisted. And each member of the Body was to endeavor to be patient, long-suffering, toward each other member. How beautiful the picture! How grand the ideal of a Church from the apostolic standpoint, the Divine standpoint, our standpoint!

Let us each labor more and more towards these ends. Let us remember that while the Lord deals with us as individuals, he deals with us also collectively. While there is to be a development, shaping and polishing of the Christ-likeness in each of us individually, the same thought is to be preserved in connection with the Church as a whole. No man liveth to himself nor dieth to himself and no member of the Church of Christ is privileged to ignore the fellow-members of the Body of Christ. This is the Apostle's standpoint in this lesson.

SEE THAT NONE RENDER EVIL

Of course, each is to see for himself, first, that he renders no evil to others; but secondly the Church should see to it that none of its members in fellowship so do without being admonished. As we have seen, this is specially the duty of the "Elders"--to watch out for all the interests of the flock and the relationship between the Church and others. The Church is the Lord's family, and whatever one member of this family may do that is contrary to Justice and Love will bring reproach or dishonor to all the members and specially upon the Head of the House--our dear Redeemer.

DESPISE NOT PROPHECYINGS

We are not to despise prophecies, but to respect them and to heed them. But this is not what the Apostle refers to. By the word prophesying he meant teaching, public utterance. Do not despise what anyone may publicly utter as a child of God in the Church of Christ. If he is a true Christian so far as you can discern, not only in his professions of faith in the Redeemer and his sacrifice, but also confesses him in a consecrated life, be willing to hear such. Receive him not to disputation of his doubts, but permit him to tell his view of the Truth of the Divine Plan, if he has something in harmony with the foundation which he seems to believe would be additionally helpful to others and to the Church. In a word, be not above hearing any of the brethren.

Nevertheless prove all things and hold fast that which is good--that which stands the test. Because a brother is sincere, is earnest, does not prove that he is right in his Scriptural expositions. God could hinder such from having any opportunity in the Church. Nevertheless, his permitting them may work a blessing to all who are in the right heart attitude. Even if you cannot accept his proposition, the study of the subject, the searching of the Scriptures in the proving may be of lasting benefit to yourself, establishing you more than ever in the Truth. But let us be sure that we hold fast to the good. We have known cases in which this advice was not carefully followed. Some of the bad was taken with the good, and the result was untold mischief.

R5888 [sel]

INTERESTING LETTERS

SPIRIT OF A SOUND MIND

DEARLY BELOVED PASTOR:--

I am not giving any name or address, as I think it wiser not to, and please do not notice this note if you do not think it advisable, otherwise if you can spare a short paragraph in THE TOWER I should appreciate it, and others also.

A Sister recently arrived from _____ tells us that the Class there are teaching that the Church must not expect to be glorified until 1925, and that this is *your* thought; consequently it is producing a spirit of apathy, and many are taking a greater interest in business and worldly things. Whether or not it is so, to me it seems that I have to be on my guard and "watch and wait," with loins girded and Lamp burning, that I may be ready.

I have realized and accepted this glorious Message of "Present Truth" for five years; and it grows more precious all the time. I grew up in the Church of England, and living at Oxford with the College Set, was extremely High Church, so you know what I have had to unlearn.

I praise God for raising you up, dear Brother, as "that Servant." May He bless you still more, that you may give us the "meat in due season." I also thank the dear Lord that He brought me to this country before this awful war; and made me to realize "where are the dead," as all my people are being shot and I should have been in despair.

There is another little matter I would like to mention. At the Class I attend the presiding Elder never seems prepared. He does not know where the MANNA Text for the day is, and although it is a Prayer and Testimony Meeting, he occupies most of the time with his views on the present state of affairs and the war crisis. No one else can have much time.

I hope you will not think I am too critical, but in the little old Church I had been accustomed to *reverence*, and for an Elder to be gaping, sleeping or picking his teeth and nails--well it jars awfully! He also brings with him a child of three years that disturbs the Class very much. No one likes to say anything to him, as he says that he has been in the Truth for fifteen years. But we do not feel spiritually helped, especially as he is a business man. Before the meeting he talks business; and the moment it is over, *shop*.

O dear Brother, I don't want to think evil, or speak evil, but this does worry us! Many of us have prayed about it. The children do bother us; but I dare not speak of that, as I am told that I have too strict English ideas. I would not wound his feelings in any way, so if I am in the wrong please ignore what I have written. The dear Lord knows that I am trying to follow in His footsteps, and to keep my pride under and make myself of no reputation, as the dear Master did.

Apologizing for encroaching on your valuable time, I am, dear Pastor, YOUR SISTER BY HIS GRACE.

EDITOR'S REPLY

The Apostle declares that God gives His people the spirit of a sound mind--His Spirit, His Mind. But we receive this in proportion to our earnestness and heed to the Lord's Word. The longer we have been in the School of Christ, if apt pupils, the better we should know Him and the better be able to exemplify His character and teachings.

As the letter is anonymous, we have not the slightest idea who the Elder may be. We will assume that he means well. We might also, however, assume that he has not been sufficiently wide-awake to well exemplify the spirit of a sound mind in the matter of the service of the Lord. Otherwise, would he not be more careful of his actions and words, in order that he might glorify the Lord and be assistful to His people?

Lack of reverence is manifest everywhere, but it seems especially out of place in assemblages of the Lord's consecrated people. As we have said before, we may say again, that no matter how limited our talents we can by our actions and manner speak volumes in the praise of Him who called us from darkness into marvelous light.

We cannot help it that many of the dear friends continue to tell what THE WATCH TOWER believes, and to misrepresent its teachings. Our kindest thought must be that they are not giving much heed to its teachings. Otherwise they would know from its columns that we are not looking forward to 1925, nor to any other date. As expressly stated in THE WATCH TOWER, we are simply *going on*, our last date or appointment having been passed more than a year ago.

THINK IT NOT STRANGE

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as tho some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."--1 Pet. 4:12,13.

NEVER have we known a time when the Great Adversary seemed more energetic in his assaults upon the "harvest" work, than now. Information comes from every quarter of fiery trials, pitfalls and persecutions being operated or prepared against those who have followed the light of present truth, and who have set their faces to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free. It is not best that we should publish all that reaches us, for, while there is much to discourage, there is much also to encourage; which, we thank the Lord, more than counterbalances. We do, however, desire that all should know in a general way, for two reasons, (1) It will help to fortify them for their turn, when it shall come; and (2) it will develop in them sympathetic love: for when one member of the body suffers, all the members are *benefited* by suffering with it.

We will mention one case here because its narration may serve to point a lesson to some. Brother Bahret's letter states the trouble as follows--

NEW YORK

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I must tell you of our experiences. Some time last June Brother W. de Ronden Pos came here from N.Y. City and held a meeting in the evening, speaking on Rom. 8, and I would say that it was a very good and blessed meeting. He expressed at the time his intention of leaving the nominal church and engaging in some other pursuit and said that, if he could, it might be possible that he would come here to live. Of course, we expressed our desire that we should be glad to have him in our midst, but nothing further was done. Later on he was in the city again for a week's visit and held a few meetings, but my brother and I, being in Germany, were not present and did not know what arrangements had been made till we came back. I was told that he had concluded to come here and take up any occupation he could find, as for instance an agency, or that he buy a place in the suburbs of the city where he could raise some vegetables and chickens to help to make a living. I was given to understand that he was a man of some means who was not entirely depending on his work. We thought our meetings would be continued in the same way as before, only he taking the lead for the most part of the time.

We intended to assist him with temporal things to the extent of our ability, and when he came here a short time after my return from Europe, I said we ought to make it \$15 per month, and informed our treasurer that I would make up any deficiency.

We had a few good meetings after he came. At that time in one of the Wednesday night meetings he made the proposition that we should *organize*. I made the suggestion that we would better consider everything well before taking action; but then he put the vote that all those in favor of organizing should signify it by rising, and all arose; I did the same rather hesitatingly, altho I had no definite objection to offer, and did not want to vote No. However, I said that we ought to have another meeting before the time set for organization-- a week afterward, on Dec. 15th.

We brothers then held a meeting, he being present, but all the time was taken up by speaking on baptism which he thought ought to be enforced, we urging that we should not force anybody or exclude anybody because he cannot just see as we do respecting water baptism, if otherwise they are children of God, believers in Jesus Christ. We supposed he had agreed with us on that point, and so on the evening of Dec. 15th we had a meeting, and after some words by him, reading the "Confession" which he had formulated, we signed it: I one of the first, because I said I can subscribe to *that* anytime. The confession we subscribed to was a very simple one which acknowledged the

Heavenly Father and Jesus his Son our Savior and Master. I think twenty-two subscribed that night, some of them people we had never seen before, who were no more of us than other people of the world. Brother de Ronden Pos spoke then on baptism at some length, saying that *he would not let any go to the Lord's supper if not immersed*, not even his own mother, and tho it should break her heart. Some of our number then asked their names to be erased from the roll, others objected, and then the trouble commenced.

In this same meeting Bro. Pos expressed his position to the effect that he was no more nor less than any other member, and if at any time he had had any aspiration of being "something," he had entirely given it up, and that any of the brethren stood on the same level with him, and therefore he would not put his name down first on the roll of membership, and only signed towards the last. It therefore seemed strange to some that he should take the liberty at the same meeting to declare that *he would not let any come to the Lord's table that were not immersed*, when he knew that the others thought differently.

Before I go any farther now I must give another explanation: the Sunday before this Bro. Pos brought before the meeting his thoughts that the "Lord's Supper" ought to be observed every week. Some agreed and others did not agree with him on this subject.

The next Sunday we observed Lord's Supper and Brother Pos read Rom. 14 and stated that the Lord showed him through the very circumstances what to do in the case of the unimmersed (for, as I said before, there were some who subscribed whom we really did not know, as they only attended a few times at previous meetings and a few not at all; but they were of the denomination called "Disciples;" they had been immersed, but were yet to all appearances only nominal Christians); he said to enforce this rule would let in some people who, altho immersed, were yet of the world, while others who were much more in harmony with us would be excluded, and so he readmitted these and rejected the others for the time: but later on he let them in again; and these are the ones who are now his chief standbys. Things went along with ups and downs, till about the first week in January; by that time we saw the necessity of having some system, and it was proposed that some elders be elected, which we found Scriptural and your advice in the Nov. 15, '95, WATCH TOWER. Meantime I wrote you a letter that I thought he had much ability to preach, and it would be a pity if he could not make full use of it, and suggested to you the plan that he be employed in part by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. It seemed rather strange when I heard from you that you had heard very little of him of late, as I thought you were in steady correspondence; but still I thought I would let him know that I had written to you and that you considered it favorably, but would like to hear from himself. I intended to speak to him on a Sunday afternoon, after the meeting, and was only waiting till he should be through speaking to somebody else, when all at once he commenced to denounce the doctrines of MILLENNIAL DAWN as from the pit; and he said, may the Lord forgive those people who say the Lord has come. I said then, "Brother, be careful what you are saying: do not say hastily that a thing is from the devil." He said then, "I do say it's from the devil, and a good many have stumbled over these doctrines," and he denounced them even more.

We were all shocked, at least I was; but I did not want to write anything to you about it then, as I hoped that when I would get opportunity to speak to him about it and explain, he would see his error. But matters went from bad to worse.

Two weeks ago we had a meeting appointed for the election of elders. It was only a meeting of the brothers, as Bro. Pos said (and we partly agreed with him) that in the ruling of the church the women should be silent according to Paul's teaching. He said that the women are so easily deceived that it is not safe to let them vote, for they are much more apt to choose according to personal liking than qualification. The question came up, How should elders or overseers be chosen? I suggested that their qualifications be made plain, as we read in Timothy and Titus, and then let each one choose according to his best judgment. Bro. Pos objected to that and thought that he as the pastor should have the right to choose or nominate those whom he thinks would work best in harmony with him;

we could then agree with his choice or, if not, he would make another choice. The suggestion was then made that *so far as we knew it was not generally understood that he was the pastor.*

Well, he said, if we have no pastor and if I heretofore have only been pastor *pro tem.*, the first thing we have to do is to choose a pastor; and if I am not your pastor I will not take the leading of another meeting. Why, we said, we only want to do what the Bible authorizes us to do; if it authorizes us to elect a pastor in that sense, we will do so; but we will first satisfy ourselves about the matter.

We asked him to lead the meeting meanwhile as before. This he agreed to do, but said, In the election of a pastor it's different: the sisters have then just as much to say as the brothers, because they are just as much concerned. We answered that whatever way we should find the Bible to teach we would do, but that we were not ready to act on that night. He said, I know the sisters will be satisfied with whatever you say; and what would *the people* (the public) say, if they thought you had a pastor, and it turns out now that you have not? We said, we did not care what the world might say. Then, when he saw that we would not act on that night, he said, "I came here *by the holy spirit, organized the church, gathered the flock, and am therefore the shepherd (pastor), and I DECLARE MYSELF AS SUCH, whether you will have me or not.*"

We said, if we find that to be the Scriptural way, we will accept it, otherwise not; and as it was getting late, the meeting was adjourned till a week later on Monday. On Sunday following he preached a sermon on Nehemiah (putting himself entirely in his place), and showed others trying any way and every way to destroy his work but he victorious at last because the Lord is on his side.

On Monday he went away to a convention of the "Disciples," where he was till Wednesday afternoon. Monday night the meeting was held, two Elders being chosen, Bro. Knauss and myself; but the proposition was then made that as we thought there was better talent in our midst to teach and lead the meetings an assistant minister or Deacon be chosen and Bro. Pos was chosen. A committee was appointed to inform the Brother of the results of our meeting. Bro. Knauss, Bro. Doughty and myself were appointed and we went to his house and told him. He then said, "I cannot accept that. *I came here an ordained Elder* and evangelist, and I am your first elder, and I will call a meeting of the church and let all know of it; and they can say then if they stand by me or not. Besides, a brother of the Disciples is coming here in a week or two, and we are going to put up in this city a wooden structure seating a couple hundred people; and if you will not stand by me you can hold your meetings as before."

I then asked for the privilege of leading the meeting for that evening. I should have liked to speak on our duty in this present time of the "harvest," whether it is our principle duty to *reap* or to sow more seed. I had hoped that perhaps I could have made some things plain: but he said, "I must first present a few things to the people, and if they then want to listen to you they can do so." In the meeting he first brought up the subject, saying that some seem to think that he had so far only been pastor *pro tem.*, and that he wanted to know his position, and whether this church had a pastor or not, and therefore he made it the first business of Sunday afternoon that the church declare its position.

After he got through I wanted to say a few words, but he would not let me, saying, This is not a business meeting, we are come together for edification, and started to read from the Scriptures. I said, I will wait till after the meeting is over, and any that would like to hear a few words of explanation could stay. After the meeting he said that he advised every one to go right home and pray. They should do so if only to please him, and if they considered his judgment better than anybody's else. I said, All those that are satisfied with a one sided presentation of a case have, of course, privilege to go home, the others are invited to stay. Some went and some stayed. Before that the suggestion was made, by Brother Knauss, that this matter should not be brought up on Sunday, but ought to be settled on another day, but he insisted on having it on Sunday; and as I now see it, his object was to get a big crowd there whereby the others would be scared. But it only worked to his own disadvantage. To avoid trouble as much as possible, we wrote out in few words that we were not willing to be joined to a denomination, as his plans were, and as he had caused to be published in the

newspapers, using some of the names without consent. I handed him the papers with the signatures Saturday night and informed him that we did this in order to simplify matters, and that it had been agreed by the brethren that on Sunday afternoon we would better only have a Bible study and prayer meeting. He then said that as all his friends were coming there, he would present his case first and then give me ten or fifteen minutes to state our side; and then he would preach, and we could do what we liked after that.

So Sunday afternoon came, and quite a few strangers were present. He took his seat amongst the rest, and when the time had finally arrived he said, As long as nobody occupies the chair I think we better elect a chairman. I said then, that I, as the appointed Elder of the church take the liberty to occupy the chair, and I did. We sang a hymn and had prayer, then I stated the case as nearly as I could, also announcing the meetings for the week; and said that as Bro. Pos had expressed his intention to preach, we give him the opportunity to do so, or if he had any statements to make, he might make them.

He said that he could not preach under the circumstances and that it was not true that he wanted us to join another denomination, but that the question was *whether we would fellowship with brethren that stand on the same foundation as we do.*

Now as to Brother Draper's coming here I would say, We will be only too glad to have him here any time, but whether he can change the result is very doubtful, only it might strengthen those that are left. We were greatly helped by his former visit, and I am sure it gave us courage to stand through this fiery trial.

Yours in Christian love,
C. F. BAHRET.

* * *

We congratulate the dear friends who have stood this shaking, that they so loved the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, that they were unwilling to be led back again to Babylonian bondage and darkness, by a self appointed pastor or shepherd--even tho he at first came to them as a messenger of the light of present truth!

These dear friends might have been saved some of this trial had they taken heed sooner to the Scriptural advice we laid before them in the WATCH TOWER of Nov. 15, '95, respecting Order in the Church: the proper course for preserving their liberties in Christ from those who would "lord it over God's heritage," who would undertake to appoint themselves pastors, superior to the choice of the church; and who would attempt to dictate their own views and to determine whom *they* would let and whom *they* would hinder from partaking of the Lord's supper, etc. Their neglect on this point left them open to *confusion* when their liberties were attacked. We congratulate them, however, and praise the Lord for his deliverance of them.

The friends erred in their supposition that a pastor is a deacon. Deacons were chosen in the early Church to look after the more secular interests of the Church, while the Elders were all pastors or overseers, who looked after the spiritual interests of the Church. If one were chosen as pastor-in-chief and others as his associates and assistants and advisers, we cannot see that this would have been contrary to any Bible instruction. But they were quite right in *not choosing*, and in supposing that God would not have them choose any one who either directly or indirectly sought to *grasp* the position, and to browbeat and override the Lord's *Church*.

Too frequently the real idea of church meetings "*for edification*" is lost sight of under the popular desire for *preaching*--through a spirit of conformity to Babylon. Ability as a public speaker should never be despised or ignored, but it should be sought and appreciated only as it is unto edification. The more preaching, the worse if it be along wrong lines.

We commend also the moderation with which the matters were held straight--only that there was too much moderation at first. They were misled on the subject of the "Lord's Supper." They

should have asked, *Where* in the Scriptures is it suggested that morning and noon meals are "suppers" or by what manner of twisting is the word supper to be distorted out of all meaning and sense. The word in the Greek signifies "An evening meal" and not otherwise. Why did they not inquire respecting the commemoration of his death on a day (Sunday) specially set apart to commemorate our Lord's *release from death*? Why did they not point out that the "breaking of bread" practiced by the early Church was no more "the Lord's Supper," commemorative of his death, than was the "breaking of bread" at Emmaus? (*Luke 24:30; Matt. 14:19.*) They should also have asked why the "cup," the wine, emblematic of our Lord's shed blood, is not mentioned in connection with any account of the "breaking of bread" if these were memorials of the Last Supper--while it is given full importance in the narrative of the Last Supper in *1 Cor. 11:23-34.*

It was a mistake for the brothers to elect the Elders without the concurrence of the sisters; "all are one in Christ Jesus." The limitations respecting *publicspeaking* should not be stretched. Our views of the Scripture presentation on this subject are given fully in the WATCH TOWER of July, 1893. The election should be held over again, when all who usually meet with you and who trust in the *ransom* and who profess full consecration to the Lord, should be invited to express, not *their* choice: but their judgment respecting the Lord's choice as gauged by the declarations of Scripture.

We rejoice, too, that the brethren rejected the water baptism test as to fellowship; and that they fully declared their desire to fellowship all who love and serve our Lord irrespective of the lengths and depths of their knowledge: for those who love the Lord will seek to know more and more of him through his Word.

We may be asked here, What is the difference between the profession of the "Disciple Denomination" and our position as Bible Christians, so we will here state the differences briefly.

(1) If the "Disciples" would live up to their professions they would be with *us* in short order. Their professions are quite right--the Bible as the only rule and guide respecting the one Lord, one faith and one baptism, and respecting our duty to God and man,-- with full freedom from ecclesiasticism.

We endorse all this and live up to it; but do the "Disciples?" Surely not! Attempt to go amongst them to present the "harvest" message of present truth, and see how *much* of an unwritten creed they have and how tightly it binds them. Indeed, while professing in their formal statements that they are the most *liberal* of the sects of Babylon they are (unwittingly) the most narrow and most exclusive. We will prove this statement in our second proposition.

(2) They make a test of *water immersion*; and by declaring that it is for the *remission of sins* they assent to the proposition that all the Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Reformed and United Presbyterians, Protestant Methodists and all others who have not been immersed in water, with a certain formula of words, are *all sinners*--strangers from God and aliens and foreigners as respects his grace and truth in Christ. Could any narrower creed than this one be found? If so let us know of it! Yes, we think of just one that is narrower, namely that of the Christadelphians. But then the Christadelphians consign others to *destruction* while the Disciples send the sinners to a hopeless eternal torment;--nor will they give an opportunity to show from the Bible the fallacy of this view. If we are incorrect we will be pleased to receive official notification to this effect, and will see that the truth is presented to them forthwith.

A DOUBLE MINDED MAN IS UNSTABLE

We first knew of Rev. de Ronden Pos in California, when he sent us the following letter which we published in our issue of Feb. 1, '92.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I must write to tell you how exceedingly interested I have been in MILLENNIAL DAWN VOL. III., which I spied out in a book store in Los Angeles. I enclose 50 cents, for which I would like you to send me, at once, VOLS. I. and II. of the series. I would also

much like a sample or two of your paper--ZION'S WATCH TOWER--for if it is what I expect it to be, after DAWN VOL. III., I shall at once become a subscriber. VOL. III. is already circulating among my friends.

Yours in the waiting for Christ's Kingdom,
W. DE RONDEN POS,
Pastor First Baptist Church.

Next we heard from the gentleman from the neighborhood of Kentucky, still later at Washington, D.C.; afterward he wrote us from Montreal, Canada, that he was pastor of an Episcopal church there, and subsequently he was officiating as pastor of a Reformed Episcopal church in Baltimore, Md. We were glad to hear that the gentleman had *finally* concluded to stand *free with us*, in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free from sectarianism and its bondage. We *hoped* much from his association with the friends, yet *feared* that they were expecting too much from one who had for years shown so great a weakness for "Babylon and its corn-crib"--tho we gave no hint of our fears to any.

In view of this our knowledge of the gentleman's past affiliations it caused quite a smile when we read as above of his heroic determination that *he would allow no unimmersed person to come to the communion table*. We wonder where his courageous soul stood for the years he preached for and pastored the Episcopalian and Reformed Episcopalian sheep and sprinkled their infants, and in due form and ceremony administered "sacraments" to them. According to his present "*faith*" those "sheep" were not "sheep" at all, but were yet in their sins--not having been *baptized for the remission of sins*. He received their dollars regularly, we suppose, for Episcopalians are counted good payers; but did he fulfil his trust and tell them his belief that they were all condemned sinners? Did he point them to *water* as the way to eternal life? or did he deceive them and receive their money under false pretence? Of course, we could not say so! we cannot judge the hearts of such people! possibly his conscience slept all those years, or possibly he has no conscience.

At all events we are confident that the truth has met with *a valuable loss*. We expect the opposition of such people and prefer it to their hypocritical and blatant pomposity. We have no reason to believe that the knowledge of the deep things of God, including the *parousia*, is intended for such. God is choosing the worldly-foolish and weak and insignificant *honest* "overcomers" of the world to be his joint-heirs and is passing by the "trimmers," "men-pleasers," mammon-worshippers. "Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight!" And beloved fellow "sheep," let us remember that those who resist the Adversary's encroachments and allurements and wiles and attacks, from any quarter, will be the stronger therefor, and be the more closely bounden together in love and sympathy and the more firmly established in the letter and spirit of the "perfect law of liberty."

R3004 [sel]

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

We see a distinction drawn in our lesson between prophets and teachers. The Greek word rendered "prophet" signifies a "forth-teller." It might be understood to mean one who tells in advance, or foretells, or prophesies coming events; but in its general use in the New Testament the word seems to indicate one who tells forth, in the sense of proclaiming, giving public utterance to, or standing up before the people in declaration of the Lord's message. The distinction between prophets and teachers, as here used, seems to be that the former were persons of natural talent and ability for teaching the truth in a public manner, in orderly discourse, etc., while the teachers would be those possessing talent as instructors, but not necessarily in a public, or oratorical manner. The same distinctions are true today amongst the Lord's people; comparatively few have the qualifications for

public speaking--for presenting an address in an orderly manner, that will be truly helpful to the hearers. Some others, who have not ability as public discourses, have talent for presenting the truth in a less public manner, as in Bible studies, etc.

It is for the Lord to supply the talents as he may deem best, and it is for each individual and the Church as a whole to utilize the talents of which they find themselves possessed. Little companies of the Lord's people are not to determine that they must have public preaching, and then endeavor to have it, good or bad. Rather, they are to seek to know the mind of the Lord on the subject, and to have such meetings as the Lord's providence may make possible and proper. If there be one or two or more brethren in the congregation who have the ability to teach--to conduct the services of the Church, and to draw out the brethren in questions and answers as a Bible class, in a Bible study, giving their own opinions with the others, the Church should seek to use such brethren in its services as they may consent. And if there be in the number one or more with talent for a public or connected presentation, in the nature of a discourse, let them also, if they will, be put into service. The object of the Church should, in every case, be to develop, to use, to exercise, *all* of its different members: each according to his ability and development, spiritual and natural.

R5704 [sel]

INTERESTING LETTERS

SERIOUS FAULTS NEEDING CORRECTION

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

For quite a while I have been desirous of writing to you of some matters which happen in some classes, yet I have not had the courage to do so for fear I might be in error. The matter, however, has come to my attention so often, and it seems to be so injurious to the Lord's cause, that I am impelled to drop a few lines, asking your pardon for whatever may seem to you as bad judgment on my part.

Some good brethren are elected as Elders; they are zealous to do the Lord's will. Berean meetings are tendered them and accepted. Some of these dear brethren seem to get the thought that it is important to "feed" outsiders, but not so important to "feed the flock of God." So often when one comes to a Berean meeting, the leader will say as he opens the meeting, "Dear friends, I am sorry to say that I have not looked over the lesson," or, "I was so busy doing thus and so that I do not know where the lesson begins." Often I have heard this remark by leaders: "The class is pretty well posted on these things, and it does not make much difference whether I know much about it or not."

This thought seems to make them careless and indifferent. It seems to be so distressing to have a good-sized class and then hear the leader make such remarks of ignorance. What is the result? The meeting opens; a question is asked. Brother A. gives his view, then Brother B., then Brother C., then Sister D., etc. The views apparently *conflict*. A brother who thinks he knows all about it, says, "*That is all wrong: it is thus and so*"; then some more discussion follows; then the same brother again jumps up and says, "*That is not right.*" The leader is embarrassed, and not having studied his lesson dares not say a word, and finally the question is passed by without any definite decision.

I notice that in some meetings some of the dear friends who are backward go home without opening their mouths, because they are not encouraged. Some who are well up are called upon to do all the talking, and sometimes the class has to sit and listen to a little debate between three or four.

Another matter: While it has been mentioned so many times in THE WATCH TOWER nevertheless some leaders, as well as the class, when they begin the lesson, have the question book in one hand and the STUDIES in the other. Since much reading is done, discussion is shut out, with the occasional remark, "It is so plain in the STUDIES that discussion is hardly necessary."

If these thoughts I have brought to your attention are out of the way, Brother Russell, kindly throw the letter in your waste basket. Nevertheless, until then, it shall be my earnest prayer to the Lord that something may drop from your guided pen which may correct these conditions and help the dear brother Elders to realize their responsibility in this branch of the Lord's service--feeding of the flock.

I daily remember you in my prayers, wishing God's comfort and strength in your trials and joys. With warm love,

Your Brother in the one Hope, _____.

[If brethren chosen to be Elders are found incapable, it is the duty of the Class to elect others--perhaps some of *less ability*, who, by *study*, will be more *helpful*. A good leader is not the one who talks too much, but the one who, by coaching the diffident, will help them to the correct expression; or who, if the expressions are in his judgment incorrect, will very kindly suggest the proper thought without particularly calling attention to the mistaken views that have been presented--backing up his own expression with Scripture citations and citations from the "STUDIES."]

PROFITABLE BEREAN STUDIES

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

I have noticed in this and other parts of the country that some of the brethren leading Berean Studies seem to be under the impression that they are supposed to do a good deal of talking. Now, for the leader of a study to give a five-minute discourse on every question or remark is surely a mistake; rather he should see that his place is to see that the study is conducted in an orderly manner, endeavor to get expressions from as many as possible, and then with his own brief comment close the question.

Sometimes I have noticed, too, that there may be a brother in a class who has a good deal more ability than have the remainder. He will comment at length on every question and remark. Would it not be wiser for such a one to control his zeal that others not so able may feel more free to express their thoughts? We say sometimes that "brevity is the soul of wit." Brevity in our Berean Studies might be helpful all around. With much Christian love,

Yours in our Lord, F. H. HARRISON.

ANSWER TO ABOVE

[We agree that a leader of a Berean Class, to be most helpful, should draw the answers from the Class--otherwise the brethren might nearly as well each read for himself at home. We have endeavored to give this thought in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. VI. We cannot, however, agree with the writer above that the leader's comments should always be very brief. There might be questions which the most skillful leader would not be able properly to draw answers from the Class. In such cases, after doing one's best, the proper course would be for the leader to answer the question very thoroughly, but in as brief form as possible. Indeed, all of the answers or suggestions should be brief and to the point. Any one addicted to the habit of long talks on every question should be kindly reminded of proprieties by the leader in a private way at first, but, if necessary, in a kindly way before the Class. If he still persists, an alternative would be to ask the questions of different members of the Class by name, giving only a fair opportunity, and to avoid calling for general answers. This, however, is not desirable if it can be avoided.]

R5789 [sel]

INTERESTING LETTERS

ABOUT DIVIDING CLASSES

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

In June 1 WATCH TOWER, 1915, page 2, you speak of the division of the Berean Classes, when they number more than twenty, and say that this same rule, you believe, would be found advantageous for the Prayer meeting. A few of our Class want the Wednesday meeting divided, but have said nothing as to the other classes being divided. I am sure that we *all* want to do the will of our dear Lord. Was it your thought that the classes should be divided regardless of the will of the majority?

REPLY BY THE EDITOR

Everything in THE WATCH TOWER and in the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, etc., should be understood as advice--nothing as commanded. We hold that only the Lord and the Twelve Apostles (St. Paul taking the place of Judas) have the right to command the people of God. Others, including the Editor, have merely the right to advise. And such advice should always be accompanied by either a Scriptural citation or an explanatory reason.

In recommending to the classes of Bible Students throughout the world that classes be divided when they number over twenty, we were following this rule--merely giving advice. There being no Scripture for this, we submitted our reasons: That large classes cannot so efficiently participate in the lessons and, therefore, cannot be expected to reap as large a blessing from them. We hold that in every Wednesday evening Testimony meeting a special blessing comes to all who participate; and very similarly, that in the Berean classes participation sharpens interest and deepens the impressions, and thus enlarges the blessings to be derived.

However, in every case it is for the class itself to decide, and that by a majority vote, whether in their case the class shall be divided or not. There might be reasons why a general rule might not apply in some particular cases because offset by other conditions. Be it always understood that according to the Divine arrangement as given us in the Bible, the class itself decides every question. And only the consecrated ones constitute the class proper, although the pleasure of the unconsecrated who may attend might well be considered by the consecrated when voting.

While each class might be considered an Ecclesia, or Church, by itself and entirely independent of every other class, nevertheless unity and fellowship are very desirable, and the various classes in one city may very appropriately be united in one Ecclesia, or Church, thus deriving the benefits of occasional joint meetings, joint fellowship and participation in the joint arrangement in the selection of servants-- Elders and Deacons. In thus uniting, each class, as well as each individual, sacrifices independence for the benefits of cooperation.

R5122 [sel]

INTERESTING LETTERS

QUESTIONS RESPECTING CLASS DISCIPLINE

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Some of us desire your further advice on two points:

(1) What attitude should we take toward brethren who hold little meetings not authorized or appointed by the Class with which they are connected?

(2) We note your recommendation concerning testimony meetings and their helpfulness in character-development. What should we do in a case where Elders oppose such meetings, but where the Class desire to have them?

THE EDITOR'S REPLY

We think it rather unwise for a brother claiming to be a member of the Class to entirely ignore that Class in the matter of holding meetings. For him to inaugurate meetings, advertise them, hold them during the regular hours of the meetings of the Class, etc., would seem to be in the nature of ignoring the Class; and to hold meetings at the same hour might be considered an opposition. However, even though all this were done, it would not constitute a cause of offense or of excommunication. The Class should rejoice to know that the Gospel of the Kingdom is being preached, even though it were preached in a strifeful and contentious manner, as St. Paul suggests. (*Phil. 1:15-18.*) A Class would have no more right to think or speak evil of such a brother and of his effort than to think or speak evil of any Christian minister of any denomination and of his effort.

If, however, a brother were invited to give a little talk in a private or a semi-public manner to a few, not as a regular Class, nor as an opposition meeting, nor at a conflicting hour, there would seem to be no ground whatever for reproof. On the contrary, we should all commend his love and zeal and, thanking the Lord for the brother's privileges, seek as good for ourselves.

We are to keep strictly in mind that the Lord has not given any of us a right to supervise His work nor to forbid another to preach the Gospel. The disciples of old did this on one occasion and Jesus rebuked them, saying, "Forbid him not; for there is no man that shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me." (*Mark 9:38-40.*) Again He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (*Matt. 18:20.*) He did not say that the two or three must be authorized, commissioned, or in any manner privileged of men. Hence, whatever there is of co-operation in the Church should be merely of love, of wisdom, of estimation of the Divine will and the oneness of the Church.

We are surprised to learn that there are any in opposition to the weekly testimony meetings which we have so strongly urged. In our experience this class of meeting is one of the most spiritually helpful. In many places if it were necessary to have but *one* meeting, the Classes undoubtedly would hold on to the weekly testimony meeting as the best and most helpful of all. We commend Wednesday night as being a most suitable occasion for this kind of meeting. We have already recommended that the weekly topic be the *Manna* text of the preceding Thursday. Observing this rule, the Lord's people all over the world can study and think much along the same lines and, looking for experiences in the same direction, obtain corresponding blessings.

We recommend a trial of this method to all of the Classes everywhere. They will have plenty to testify about if once they acquire the habit of looking for the Lord's providences in the affairs of life, noting experiences and lessons and comparing them with the instructions of the Divine Word. Those who are following this course are often surprised to note how much more every day is worth to them than formerly.

With many, life is a business routine or a dream. As New Creatures we desire to have every day full of Christian experiences and intelligent thought directed and moulded by the Divine Word. This blessed condition is attained largely by the method we have indicated. Our growth in grace depends not so much on the number of chapters or verses which we read, as upon the exercise of our minds, hearts and wills in connection with what we already know and what we daily learn of the will of God.

It is not for the *Elders*, but for the *Class* to determine what meetings it wishes to hold. When the Class decides, the Elders, of course, still have their privilege of resigning. Indeed, it would

certainly be advantageous, both for the Elder and the Class, to have such Elders resign as desire *to rule* the Lord's household, instead of desiring to *serve it*.

However, our experience teaches that frequently supposed *oppositions* are merely *misunderstandings*. We advise a careful study afresh of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. VI. Indeed, we remind the dear friends how leaky are all our memories, and of the wisdom, therefore, of the course being followed by a great many--the reading of the entire six volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES every year--twelve pages or more every day. Those who are following this course report great blessing and give evidence of great clearness in the Truth.

R241 [sel]

WHO ARE TO PREACH?

We answer all who receive of the anointing spirit and are thus recognized as members of the body of Christ (the anointed.) Of each member it is true as of the *head*--"He hath anointed me to preach the gospel." We have each gifts and talents differing from the other and none of us are like our head, *perfect*, but each is responsible for such and so much preaching as he can do. Some can preach to multitudes; others to the twos and threes; others from house to house; others can drop a word in season; others can distribute tracts; others can give of the consecrated money entrusted to their stewardship to help others preach. Some can do several of these things, and some can do all of them, and *all* can and should preach by their life and customs the power of the good news to transform, for we are all living epistles, known and read of all men.

Are you preaching? We believe that none will be of the little flock except preachers. Are you preaching with all your talents and all your might? If so, you will by-and-by hear the words: "Well done good and faithful!" If not, begin now; remember that you consecrated your all before you were *anointed*, and now you cannot be an overcomer and keep back *part* of the price. (Acts 5:4.) Paul says: "Ye know your calling, brethren." Yes, we were called to suffer with him and to proclaim the *good news* now, that in due time we might be glorified and perform the things now preached. We were not *called*, nor *anointed* to receive honor and amass wealth, but to spend and be spent, and to *preach* the good news. Let us give all diligence to make our calling sure and to perform that for which we were anointed.

R4771 [sel]

"BE AT PEACE AMONGST YOURSELVES"

1 THESS. 5:13

Because general discontent prevails in this our day, and because God's children, although not *of* the world, are *in* it, are influenced by it, therefore it becomes daily more necessary that each child of God shall be on the alert to keep his body under, to keep his tongue from murmuring, to keep his heart from discontent, to be filled with thankfulness and gratitude to God in appreciation of all his benefits towards us.

Additionally the characters being called and drawn of the Lord during this Gospel Age must all be firm of texture --strong characters. God seeketh such to be of his Son's Bride and joint-heirs. Their firmness, positiveness, is in contrast with the supineness and indifference of others. Their weaknesses through heredity are as great as those of others. Hence when a number of these are brought together, as in a class for Bible study, there is a great need of patient forbearance one with the other. If differences and clashes come, the damage one to another is sure to be greater than with

people of less character, of less positive convictions, of less determination. Consequently these find the Apostle's words true, "Ye have need of patience."

With the Truth, therefore, to this class God proposes there shall also go the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of holiness, meekness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love; otherwise serious friction and damage would result.

If in any class of Bible Students, STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES be neglected, weakness, worldliness, love of pleasures, lack of zeal in the Lord's service, etc., are sure to manifest themselves. And if STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES are prosecuted but not applied to the heart and life the fruits of the Spirit will be deficient--meekness, gentleness, etc. Every item of knowledge should be used as the foundation for soil in which further graces of the Spirit will be developed for the enrichment of the character of the New Creature.

We have had occasion at times to call the attention of the classes to the fact that those chosen to be their servants, ministers, elders, are not to be recognized as their "lords," and are not to be upheld in any attempts to "lord it over God's heritage." (1 Pet. 5:3.) Now, on the other hand, we wish to call special attention to the fact that a hypercritical spirit might be engendered by the class, which might lead some of the members to take a wrong attitude. It would evidently be just as contrary to the Lord's Spirit if the class were to "lord" it over the elders. They are to be loved, to be upheld, to be appreciated; and if they have some imperfections, like other men, they are no less worthy of sympathy and forgiveness and exoneration.

In proportion as the Elders or ministers are faithful, humble, diligent, in the service of the flock, they should have the hearty co-operation of every member of the class. "Honor to whom honor is due; praise to whom praise is due."

Some of God's people, like some of the people of the world, take a hypercritical view of some trifling things, such, for instance, as parliamentary usages in connection with meetings. We are to remember that the Bible lays down no particular parliamentary usages, but gives to God's people the one broad, general law to govern each one of them in all the affairs of the Church. This Law the Master mentioned in few words, saying, "A New Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."--John 13:34.

Let this law of love measure all of our relationships as God's people; whether we be of those chosen to be Elders or not chosen, the law of love should be used to measure our every act, our every word--yea, our very thoughts. If we can all, dear brethren, have this rule continually in mind, it will save a great deal of friction, heart-burnings and heart-achings. It will make us more like our blessed Master, better representatives of him before each other and before the world. It will incline us to be as methodical and careful as possible ourselves in all that we do and then lovingly not to expect quite as much of others until after they shall have learned the beauty of the right way by observing our course. Let us be content whatever the method adopted by the majority, if it expresses the will of the majority, however the conclusion may be reached. If we think the majority less wise than we, let us learn patience and wait, as the Lord does, until they learn the error of their course and amend it. In a word, let us each more and more seek to be peacemakers: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."--Matt. 5:9.

R5698 [sel]

GENTLENESS A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRIST

"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."--2 Timothy 2:24,25.

THE words of our text were addressed by the Apostle Paul to Timothy, an Elder of the Church. The Lord's people, all who belong to the Body of Christ, are sons of God; nevertheless, they are all servants--bond-servants of Jesus Christ. Every true son would desire to serve the interests of his father, especially a just, loving father; and every faithful servant would wish to serve the interests of his master or his employer, particularly a noble, worthy employer or master. Our Lord Jesus, who was the special Son of the Heavenly Father, made Himself Servant of all, in order that He might serve the Father's interests, accomplish His will.

Our text is applicable to any servant of God, any member of the Church of Christ, whether he holds office among the brethren or not. It is an injunction which applies to all of the Church. Every spirit-begotten child of God is to teach according to his opportunity and ability, under the limitations of sex, etc., given in the Scriptures. "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (*Isaiah 61:1*.) These words of the Prophet apply to every member of The Christ, Head and Body.

QUALIFICATION OF A TRUE TEACHER

The Apostle says that the servant of the Lord should be "apt to teach." (*1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24*.) St. Paul was here especially addressing an Elder in the Ecclesia. To be apt to teach is to have the teaching ability. Not all have the ability, the gift, of making things plain to others. There are some people who the more they say the less they are understood. If there are some who find themselves in this condition, they should use printed matter and then try to learn how to present the Message in a way that will be assimilable to the minds of others --making it clear, plain and logical. In the presentation of the Message to others patience is necessary. Be willing to go over the point again and again, having sympathy with those you are instructing, remembering how difficult you found it when you were trying to emerge from darkness into the light.

Whether presenting the Truth publicly or in private, never assume an air of superiority, never manifest haughtiness. Never allow yourself to become so irritated as to say, "I know more about this in five minutes than you do in a year"; nor even imply this thought in the expression of your face, or in tone or manner. You see, you can express yourself in these four different ways at once; but any one of the four would be sufficient to place a barrier between yourself and those whom you were endeavoring to interest. You are to be meek, lowly of heart, humble.

If some one presents to you an argument or a Scripture that he thinks contradicts your position, say to him, "Well, brother, let us see whether that is in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. We must accept as Truth only that which will harmonize all the statements of the Word of God. Let us prove the matter." Have a meek, teachable manner, one which shows that you are willing to learn from another if he can teach you something from the sure Word of the Lord. Thus your opponent will be more willing to hear what you have to say, if he is disposed to be at all reasonable.

Undoubtedly the Lord's people are learning more and more the lesson inculcated in our text--"the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all." It is a lesson that all must learn, Elders and Deacons and every member of the Body of Christ. It is necessary to our own character-building, and necessary in order that we may do more effective service for the Master. When at first we buckled on the armor and took up the Sword of the Spirit, we probably did some flourishing, and perhaps often did more harm than good. We felt that we had something that no one could argue down. But we have been learning to be more gentle, more wise, more patient, more loving; and thus we have become better qualified to be instructors of others. We have seen how we may injure the Cause of the Lord by a wrong presentation of the Truth, and how by proper presentation we may become more successful in doing the Lord's work, in reaching hungry hearts, and more pleasing to our great King, whom we all love and long to serve.

R5161 [sel]

INTERESTING QUESTIONS

PROPER COURSE FOR PILGRIMS

Question.--Is it wise or proper for a Pilgrim en-journey to be entertained by those who are out of sympathy with the Vow and with the work of the Society in general, even though he be an Elder of the Class?

Answer.--Most decidedly not. Furthermore the Pilgrims should make clear to the Class that they had greatly erred in selecting such a one for an Elder, and should help them to rectify the matter as quickly as possible.

If the Class likes that Elder who is out of accord with the Society's work, it should not make a request for Pilgrim service. Some of the Lord's dear sheep are very stupid. Meekness and gentleness are commendable; but there are times when they would mean disloyalty to God.

R5922 [sel]

INTERESTING LETTERS

RE SOME CLASS BUSINESS METHODS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Ever since our Class has been organized much time has been consumed each month in our business meetings, but since all matters are decided by the Class, under present arrangements, we do not see how such meetings can be avoided and less time spent.

We believe that with your wide and varied experience, you could give us a few valuable suggestions along this line and we would be glad if you would give us some advice. Praying the Lord's rich blessing upon you daily, we remain

Yours in His service,
ST. JOSEPH [MO.] CLASS.

In Reply: Where a Class finds, after trial, that one or more of its Elders or Deacons possess good business acumen and faithfulness, it sometimes proves a good plan to make a Business Committee of such and leave much of the Business routine to such Committee. Care, however, should be observed not to put matters too fully out of the hands of the Class. Care also should be observed not to put too much power into the hands of any who evidence a desire to grasp power and to exceed the wishes of the Class. In all matters the easiest and smoothest way of obtaining results is advisable; but the authority of the Class should be recognized. Any one ignoring the Class and its wishes would better be left without any special service as Elder, Deacon, etc.

R2079 [sel]

"WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS." NO. 2.

WORSHIPING FELLOW MESSENGERS

God's people are to love and esteem each other, and that in proportion as they recognize in each other the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of holiness and devotion to truth and

righteousness; as the Apostle says, the faithful should be esteemed "very highly for their work's sake" (1 Thess. 5:13); but while there may be danger that some will fail to render "honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:7), there is undoubtedly danger also that some might render too much honor to human instruments, whom God is pleased to use in connection with the service of the truth. It is proper therefore that we call attention here, as we have done heretofore, to the danger of man-worship. This matter is very forcibly brought to our attention in Revelation 22:9. John the Revelator, who, representing the living saints all down through the Gospel age, is caused to see unfolding the various features of the divine plan, in conclusion falls down to worship the angel who showed him those things. So there has been and is a tendency on the part of many to give more than love, respect and honor to the servants of God who from time to time have been used as special servants of God in bringing to the attention of the Church things new and old, or to the particular brother or sister who was the means of conversion or other spiritual benefit. There was this disposition in the early Church, some exalting one Apostle and some another as their chief and master, and naming themselves as his disciples, saying, "I am of Paul;" or "I am of Apollos;" or "I am of Peter," etc. The Apostle Paul assures them that this disposition indicates a measure of carnality, and he inquires, who then are Paul, Apollos and Peter, but merely the servants or channels through whom God has been pleased to send you the blessings of the truth. "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." He indicates thus that they should recognize, not the channels through whom the blessings came, but the Lord, the Author of their blessings, and loyally bear no other name than his who died for and redeemed them.

Likewise, when the Church began to get rid of the gross darkness of the dark ages under the help and instruction of the reformers, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others, they naturally and properly had great respect for those whom God had honored as the instruments in the work of reformation. But again the tendency to "worship" the messengers, the human agents, instead of the divine Author was manifested, and to-day there are hundreds of thousands who call themselves by the name of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell and others, and who give more respect to their teachings and writings than to the Word of God, and this with corresponding injury to themselves.

Likewise, to-day, in the light of present truth, shining more clearly than ever before, no doubt there is need to be on guard against this carnal tendency which has had so deleterious an influence in the past.

When John fell down to worship the angel who had shown him the wonders of the divine plan, the angel's refusal to accept homage should be a lesson to all ministers (servants--messengers) of God. He said, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant [not thy Lord and Master], and [fellow-servant] of thy brethren the prophets, and [fellow-servant] of [all] them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God [the source from which come all these blessings and all this light]." All servants of God are fellow-servants regardless of the time or extent of their service.

The Apostle calls attention to this man-worshipping tendency in his epistle to the Colossians (2:18,19), saying, "Let no man *beguile* you of your reward, in *avoluntary* humility and worshipping of angels [messengers]." The intimation is that this temptation will come insidiously, craftily, and not by brazen demands for reverence. Such is the reverence accorded in general to the ministry of the nominal churches. Many ministers who seem very meek, and who would not think of demanding reverence or worship, nevertheless accept of their flocks the *voluntary* title, Reverend, and encourage it, and feel offended if reverence or worship of this sort is not rendered. The effect has been and still is to injure the household of faith, to give an over-confidence in the judgment and word of the minister in spiritual things, so that many neglect to prove their faith by God's Word, and to trust implicitly to its authority.

And there is danger amongst those who do not use the title, Reverend. It should always be remembered (as pointed out in our issue of Nov. 15, '95) that *control* resides in the congregation and not in *self*-appointed leaders, whether they seek to serve a dozen or thousands. The churches of Christ should recognize the leading of their Head, and know their leaders to be of his choice

(See Heb. 13:7,17,24, *Diaglott*), but they should beware of any disposed to usurp the rights of the congregation or to ignore those rights by taking the place of leaders without the *specific* request of the congregation; *beguiling* the company into supposing that the leader alone is competent to judge and decide for the congregation as to the Lord's choice, and thus failing to hold the Head (Christ) as the only real teacher, who is able and willing to guide all the meek in judgment, because they are his Church--"his body."

Nor is this *beguiling* of the attention of the flock, away from the only Shepherd, to a fellow sheep always the fault of the "leaders:" there seems to be a general tendency on the part of all who have the true, humble, sheep nature to follow one another. It is a lesson, therefore, for all to learn,-- that each sheep recognize as leaders only such as are found in full accord with the voice and spirit of the Chief Shepherd (Christ), and the under-shepherds (the Apostles), and that each sheep see to it that he eats only "clean provender" and drinks only "pure water" as directed by the Shepherd. (See Ezek. 34:17-19.) This implies the exercise of the individual conscience of each member of Christ's flock on matters of doctrine and practice, and tends to keep each one in sympathy and fellowship with the Shepherd, who knoweth each sheep and "callesh his own sheep by name." The same intimate relationship of the individual Christian with the Lord is illustrated in the figure of Christ the Head and the Church as members of his body.--1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:15,16.

As we have been to some extent, by the grace of God, used in the ministry of the gospel, it may not be out of place to say here what we have frequently said in private, and previously in these columns,--namely, that while we appreciate the love, sympathy, confidence and fellowship of fellow-servants and of the entire household of faith, we want no homage, no reverence, for ourselves or our writings; nor do we wish to be called Reverend or Rabbi. Nor do we wish that any should be called by our name. The name of him who died for all--the name Christian--is quite sufficient to designate the spiritual sons of God, the true brethren of Christ; and whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil, of carnality, and tends toward more of the same.

Nor would we have our writings revered or regarded as infallible, or on a par with the holy Scriptures. The most we claim or have ever claimed for our teachings is, that they are *what we believe to be harmonious interpretations of the divine Word*, in harmony with the spirit of the truth. And we still urge, as in the past, that each reader study the subjects we present in the light of the Scriptures, proving all things by the Scriptures, accepting what they see to be thus approved, and rejecting all else. It is to this end, to enable the student to trace the subject in the divinely inspired Record, that we so freely intersperse both quotations and citations of the Scriptures upon which to build.

CR122

SPECIAL MEETING FOR PILGRIMS, ELDERS AND DEACONS

(The sermon directly below is by the Pastor from the 1910 Convention Report, starting on page 236.)

Dear Friends: I am very glad to meet with you this evening -- the pilgrims, strangers, foreigners, respecting this world, elders and deacons in the Church of Christ, of all denominations, irrespective of denominational lines. I thought I should like to have a little talk with you, because it seems to me that, in the first place, there is a great work devolving upon you -- a great responsibility in connection with the Lord's harvest work. And, in the second place, because I believe that those who occupy any place of service in the Lord's household have correspondingly heavy temptations and trials, and every one of us ought to feel the responsibility of the position and the dangers to our own feet. You know it is very easy for us to think about other people, and other people falling, and other people slipping, and other people sliding, but it is a very important matter, I think, to bring it

right home to ourselves. When, in looking over the general interests of the Lord's work, I have seen those who are in danger, and those who are slipping and sliding, I have observed for years that a large proportion of them are those who have had influential places in the Church of Christ -- important positions of service in the Body of Christ, -- and I feel that the Apostle's words are fully substantiated when he said, "Do not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive a severer judgment." So while it is a very honorable thing to be a servant in the Body of Christ, it carries with it a very weighty responsibility and danger, lest, after preaching to others, we ourselves should be castaways. In my own personal experience, dear friends -- and I expect to say nothing to you I do not feel for myself -- I have had this heavily upon my heart and mind for several years. I have noted some of those who slipped away from the truth, and have said to myself, "Some of these people have good intellects, some of them at least see matters very clearly, and if they could see clearly at one time and, apparently, be very intelligent in the truth, and then to lose it and have it all become blind to them, might not I, similarly, fall away from the position of favor, and knowledge of the truth, also?" And my heart answered, "Yes" and I said to the Lord, "Lord keep me, hold me in thy powerful hand."

While we are not to attempt to pass judgment on anybody and say, "You are thus, and you are so, and you have too much of this, and too little of that," yet we cannot be oblivious to some conditions you know, and after one has fallen away, it is not improper at least to say, "on what did he slip?" At the time it might be improper for us to judge that anyone was slipping, or that he was in a wrong condition of heart, because we are not able to judge the heart; but after one has slipped, then I think it is right and proper that we should look to see upon what did that person slip.

I remember as a boy passing along a street of Pittsburgh, one evening, after the snow had fallen, I walked over one of those old, smooth, iron cellar doors when it was covered with a thin shimmer of snow. Just as I stepped upon it I went down that quick (snapping finger). And just as I fell I thought of the Scripture that says, "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." I think I had hardly touched the cellar door when I had that all through my head. I do not know that I had any haughty spirit in connection with that fall, but I concluded that I could learn a good lesson from that. I have watched, and my experience is that there are slippery places along the spiritual pathway, and when we are carelessly walking along, thinking about something else, and not minding our feet, not watching where we are stepping, is the time when we are likely to go down quickly. And the thing, so far as my judgment will enable me to determine, that has proven the most disastrous to those who have fallen, has been a spirit of pride and selfishness. You know what I mean. I think it is often well for us to be so much on guard on that subject that if we find any feeling creeping up at any time of any disposition to sit down on anybody, we had better inquire of ourselves, Why am I wishing to sit down on that brother? Is it simply because it is necessary and proper, or is it some feeling of pride that I have? And whatever may be the matter that comes, we need to keep close watch upon ourselves, upon our own hearts. Of course, we want to keep watch upon our tongues, and upon all the conduct of life, but especially upon our hearts. What is the motive? Why did you say that? Why did you do that? What was the motive behind such an action? And when we thus criticize ourselves, we are doing what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, "See then that ye walk circumspectly." To walk circumspectly means to look all around to see where you step. And so you and I, dear brethren, in proportion as we have service to do for the great King, realize that our adversary, the Devil, goeth about seeking whom he may entrap, and ensnare, and stumble, and that in like proportion he gives special attention to us. I am confident he gives me plenty of attention. Of course, we are glad on the other hand that the Lord also is giving us his attention. Whoever is specially beset by the adversary, the Lord, we may be sure, is also specially caring for, if they are his and loyal at heart, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them."

It would not be my thought to inculcate a spirit of slavish fear, but a spirit of great reverence for God, and an intense feeling that we are in the most important work and that we are simply there

as God's servants, and the servants of the Church, and it behooves us to do all in our power to serve the flock of Christ and not to do so from any selfish motive, any spirit of vaunting self, or puffing up self, or exalting self before the people, but, simply, How can I best serve the Lord, and those who are his? And where that spirit is within, I believe there is safety, and if there be any other spirit, if you find yourself looking out for a position, I believe you will find you are in a dangerous place and should pray God for deliverance.

I am not the only one who has observed this. Some dear brethren have written me along the same line. I think of several pilgrim brethren who wrote me, saying, "Brother Russell, I wish you could put something in the Watch Tower that would serve to help save and protect us pilgrims. When we go places the dear friends make so much of us that I feel," one writer said, "That so far as I am concerned I sometimes almost feel my head swelling, and you know that is a dangerous feeling." It was; he was right. It is well that the Lord's people everywhere should exercise judgment, and not speak in too laudatory terms of anybody, but speak in as laudatory terms as you please about the truth and about the Great One who gave us the truth -- the Lord. But do not puff up anybody unduly. There may be some that could stand it, and others who could not stand it, and you and I would be very sorry if we should find ourselves responsible ultimately for having helped to stumble some brother in the way. The very fact they mention this, you see, shows that others besides myself have felt the importance of the situation and the responsibility of the position.

As I was thinking about this little address this evening, a certain text of Scripture came into my mind, the language of the Apostle Paul when he called together the elders of Ephesus, when he was on his way to Jerusalem, and had not time to go to the city. The elders came out to meet him near the ship, and when they were together he said, as the mouthpiece of the Lord Jesus, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28) Mark the way the Apostle states it -- "Take heed unto yourselves." That comes in first, my dear brethren, with all of us. God sees it to be more important to you what you shall do for yourself than what you shall do for anybody else, and God sees it to be so with me, and that I must be more particular respecting myself than respecting anybody else, no matter who. It is well I should feel the responsibility of being a servant of the Lord, and a mouthpiece and ambassador, and it is well that you should feel your responsibility in whatever you shall say and in all you shall do and in all your conduct, remembering the influence this will have on others, either for good or for evil, but it is still more important for yourself. God says that this matter should begin with you, in your own heart, and with me in my own heart. "Take heed unto yourselves." That means, dear friends, a very careful watch of all we do -- strict heed -- not merely that you took heed last year and took an inventory and saw then just the condition of your heart and found it all right. I have found in my experience it is important for the Lord's people, especially for those who are in any prominent place, to take inventory of their condition every night. How are you tonight, before you go to bed? What is your heart's condition? How near are you to the Lord? Have you any spots upon your garments, any wrinkles upon the wedding robe? If so, get rid of these. There is only the one way. He who does not keep rid of the spots he gets and keep rid of the wrinkles he gets, is not in any condition to teach the flock of God anything on the subject. This matter begins with ourselves, dear friends. "Take heed unto yourselves."

Then secondly, you will be in the proper condition to take heed of the flock of God, which God has purchased with the blood of his own Son. How much heed does the flock need? All your imperfect powers, and all of my imperfect powers. It is a wonderful privilege to be ambassadors for God, as though God was speaking, as though we were his mouthpieces. Oh, if we could only feel this evening as we sit here, and feel it every day, that it is not a plume or a medal, or something to be displayed, but it is a responsibility that we must give an account of! If you have large privileges, you have also large responsibilities. If the Church of Christ has given you a position, then you owe it to God to consider, as the Apostle said; that the Holy Spirit has made you an overseer -- not merely that

the flock of God has made you an overseer, not merely have they voted for you to be the elder or deacon in the Church, but that God has been behind this matter, and that the whole arrangement is of him. It is that you are to recognize and feel the responsibility, not merely to those brethren who chose you, but also that God was behind the whole arrangement, and that they were acting according to design and arrangement in electing you, and that you in accepting the election were responding not merely to their votes as the votes of so many New Creatures in Christ, but because you understand that the Holy Spirit was acting and moving according to the directions of the Word of God through those brethren who thus voted, and that your responsibility, therefore, is a double one: that as having accepted their voted and as having accepted the service which they tendered, and to God as recognizing that all the affairs of the Church of Christ are under divine supervision. As the Apostle puts it, God hath set in the body the various members as it pleases him, and if we are not faithful to the setting, he is very able to unset and to bring a different arrangement. It is for us to be, therefore, very careful to feel fully and strongly this responsibility to God and to the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made us overseers.

The Apostle goes on to say that the Holy Spirit made us overseers for certain purposes -- with a certain object in view. What was that object? Was the object of the Holy Spirit in making us overseers of the flock that we might entertain the world? No. That we should feed the world? No. That we should tickle the ears of the Church? No. That we should show off ourselves, and flash? No. What was the object of the Holy Spirit in making us overseers? The answer of the Apostle is that the Holy Spirit made us overseers that we might feed the flock. What is it to feed the flock? It is to give them the meat in due season, to give the nourishment. Now, there are some who have a feeling that they must give the flock the kind of food which would glorify the giver most, and unless they can find some way of glorifying themselves in connection with that they are not going to feed anybody. That is all wrong. We all know that is wrong. They know that is wrong. They have not thought upon the responsibility of their position. The proper attitude, dear brethren, I am sure you will agree with me, is this: God wishes his flock to be fed; he has given you and me the opportunity of service in this direction; he expects us to lay aside self entirely and to devote ourselves with every energy to do all we can to feed the flock, ignoring self. Never mind whether they have any respect for you or not; never mind whether they glorify you or not; go in and feed the flock -- let the other matter take care of itself. But my opinion is that the flock will ultimately know whether you have been feeding them or not, and the flock ultimately will appreciate you as a servant. They will not appreciate you as lord and master and as a king over them, and you should not wish to be so appreciated. The proper attitude for all the Lord's people is to be glad to be privileged to be servants of the flock, and, as Jesus said, he that is greatest amongst you, he whom you should esteem the most highly, who was it to be? The one who puffeth himself up? Nay, verily. Who was it to be? The one who serves most -- the one who most thoroughly lays down his life in the service of the Lord's cause. Now that is the lesson the great Teacher himself gave to you and to me, that if we would be pleasing to him what care you and I whether we are pleasing to any one else or not. Of course, we should all like to be pleasing to everybody, and especially to the flock of God; that is proper enough; but we should fix first in our own hearts and first in our own minds that we should be pleasing to our Heavenly Father and to our Lord Jesus. And if we find that we are pleasing to them, no matter what else may happen, we have every reason to be thoroughly satisfied with the result. Is not that what we all agree to? I am sure it is.

Therefore, the special exhortation I wish to give is, that we forget self entirely, except to see that self is hard at work, that the "old man" is thoroughly bending his back to help on the New Creature in all the work that the New Creature is engaged in; that you are working him for all he is worth -- making a regular slave of him if you please -- your old man, the natural man, the human body. I do not suppose there is any danger of anybody here going away and telling a story to the effect that they did not like the speaker because he spoke so disrespectfully of his father when he mentioned the "old man." We have the thought that our old man is the old nature, and that, as the

Apostle tells us, you remember, the old nature has been given to us as New Creatures to be our servant, and whereas some of us formerly lent our powers to sin and wrong doing, so now, as New Creatures, we are to take these bodies and use them for every kind of righteousness, that we may glorify God in our bodies as well as in our spirit which are his.

So then I hope I make clear, and that it enters into all our hearts, the very great responsibility of being representatives of the Church in service -- appointed to a service and not to lordship, and, secondly, appointed of the Lord to be his servants to feed the flock of Christ. We will honor our Lord and please him best to whatever extent we forget self and engage most thoroughly in the service of the truth. So that if the thought ever comes before your minds -- as it may, or might -- if I do this it will not glorify me, if I do that it would glorify me, you are to put such a thought entirely from you as being disloyal and unworthy of yourself as a New Creature. The whole thing you and I must have in mind in respect to our service is, What will please our Master whom we serve and whom we expect to join shortly, if found faithful, in his kingdom? If we seek to serve ourselves, then be assured that we will not be pleasing to him, and that we will fail of the great prize. We may be sure -- I am certain you will assent to this -- that the Lord will not have a single one in the kingdom class who is self seeking and selfish; that is contrary to the spirit of our Master; and so the Apostle tells us that God foreknew and foreordained the election of those who would be copies of his Son, and, therefore, if you and I would be copies of Christ and joint heirs of Christ in his kingdom we must be copies in this particular sense that he was servant of all; and to the extent that you and I can be servants of all, or servants of a few, as the case may be, we should be glad of the opportunity.

Now, another line of thought, if you please: When I use the word "preach" do not understand me to mean merely to orate as in a discourse or sermon. We are preaching in the sense of teaching. All **public speaking** is in the nature of preaching or giving forth the message, whether it be in holding Berean classes, or whatever other way; it is a preaching or sending forth the message of the Lord. And I suggest to you, dear friends, that the thing we are to preach, the message we are to deliver, is a very important one, and that the Adversary would like very much to get our minds diverted from it. Some he might tempt to go off on some side issue that was new, so that the class might think they were getting new light. I do not think you want any new light. I do not think the Lord wants any new light. I do not think there is any new light, my dear friends. Our great light was started 1800 years ago. The difficulty with us has been that that light has become obscured by the traditions of the elders, and we are trying to get the globe washed clean so the light can shine out. We are trying to get things so that the great truths that Jesus and the Apostles enunciated are understood clearly by ourselves and all the flock of God over which he has made us overseers. Hence we should avoid anything like trying to manufacture some new light, dangerous to ourselves and dangerous to the flock. Is there not plenty in the Gospel Jesus preached? Is there not plenty in the Gospel the Apostles preached? How much more do we want, I would like to know? I do not think, my dear friends, that it is necessary for you and me to turn in to be manufacturers of new light, and I think there is a danger in that direction, therefore I am seeking to guard you. I believe that the message of the Lord Jesus, the message that the angels announced, is the message that the world needs to understand -- the great love of God, and the great love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how he died, the just for the unjust, and the class he is now calling, and how we must make our calling and election sure, and how the ransom price that Jesus paid is the foundation for the entire scheme of salvation, that the death of Jesus is the foundation upon which every feature of divine grace is builded. Then all the philosophy connected with that can very well come in; it is all connected; but ransom, restitution, sacrifice, and the divine nature -- these are the fundamentals of the Gospel of Christ, so far as I can see. These are the things that Jesus and the Apostles taught and that set us an example respecting. I believe your course will be the most pleasing to God, and the most successful with his people in bringing them into harmony with the Lord and blessing them with the richness of his spirit, in proportion as you keep very close with the Master and to those twelve stars whom God appointed to be the circle, the crown, of the Church, as pictured in the 12th chapter of Revelations.

Another thing: Some of the dear brethren seem to find as much about Bro. Russell in the Bible as they find about the Lord Jesus, and I think that is a great mistake. I do not find it there. Some of them say that I am blinded on that subject, that they all can see better than I can. Perhaps they can, I do not know, but I think, dear friends, that there is a danger in that direction, and I would like to put you on guard. I think it is the Lord's will that we should recognize every agency God uses, but we are not to recognize any agency of God as being in any competition whatever with the Lord or with his divine arrangement. He is the fountain of blessing, he only is most to be praised. I think that is the right sentiment. I believe you all agree with that. And yet I think there is a danger of some dear friends preaching Bro. Russell. Bro. Russell would like for you not to do so. He thinks it would not be to the glory of God. Let me repeat, then, dear friends, that in my opinion we have so much of the Gospel of God, so much of his plan to study, so many opportunities of showing forth his praises, that we should employ all our time in that way. My advice, therefore, is that we give very little attention to anything outside of that. The Scriptures do indeed say that we may render honor to him to whom honor is due, and that is applicable to anybody and everybody; as for instance, we look back and we see Martin Luther, and he did a grand work, and we thank God for him; and we might say the same of John Wesley, and very truthfully; I am glad in God's providence he lived, and that he was a faithful man. And there were others of the Lord's people in the past. Let us be glad and rejoice in every one, and be thankful to God he has used various agencies in helping us, and in helping others, and in bringing forward his great cause; but let us not go into anything that would be at all like man-worship, for I am sure that would be displeasing to the Lord and injurious to ourselves. I remind you again of the Scripture in Revelations where the Church is pictured, which we called attention to, I believe, thirty years ago. John, the revelator, who was seeing things, fell down to worship the angel who showed them to him, and the angel said, "See thou do it not; worship God; I am thy fellow servant." And so, dear friends, if our Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Lord have used Bro. Russell in any measure he is very glad and very thankful to be used. And if the Lord is pleased to use him any more, he will be glad to be used down to the last breath, but he does not want any worship, he does not want any undue adoration, he does not want any praise. He is glad to have the love of all those who are brethren of the Lord and to be considered a fellow-servant with all, striving to bring to pass all the glorious things that God has promised, striving to tell the good tidings of great joy to as many as the Lord, our God shall call.

Now I thought, dear friends, after these few remarks, I should give you an opportunity for some questions pertaining to the work, or questions pertaining to the different classes. I think a few minutes thus spent might perhaps be profitable. You need not write them; oral questions will serve the purpose.

I WAS LONGING TO SERVE MY MASTER

I WAS longing to serve my Master,
But, alas! I was laid aside
From the busy and happy workers,
Who toiled in the field so wide.
They were few, yes, few in number,
And I could not understand
Why I should be kept inactive,--
It was not as I had planned.

I was longing to serve my Master,
I knew that the work was great,

For me it was easy to labor,
But, oh, it was hard to wait;
To lie quite still and be silent,
While the song was borne to mine ear
Of the reapers with whom I had mingled
In the work to my heart so dear.

I was longing to serve my Master,
Oh, this was my one fond thought,
For this I was ever pleading,
When His footstool in prayer I sought;
And the seasons of sweet communion
Were few and far apart,--
Not of Him so much as His service,
Were the thoughts that filled my heart.

I was longing to serve my Master,--
He led to a desert place
And there as we stopped and rested
His eyes looked down in my face,
So full of tender reproaching,
That filled me with sad surprise.
Did He think I had grudged my service
And counted it sacrifice?

"Oh, Master, I long to serve Thee,
The time is so short at best,
Let me go to the field," I pleaded,
"I care not to stay and rest!"
I knelt at His feet, imploring,
I gazed in His face above;
"My child," He said gently, "your service
Is nothing without your love."

I was longing to serve my Master,
I thought that His greatest care
Was to keep all His workers busy
In reaping the sheaves so fair.
But there on the lonely desert,
Afar from the busy scene,
It dawned on me slowly and sadly
Where the great mistake had been:

My mind was so full of service,
I had drifted from Him apart,
And He longed for the old confiding,
The union of heart with heart.
I sought and received forgiveness,
While mine eyes with tears were dim,
And now tho' the work is still precious,
The first place is kept for Him.

Part-5

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

R4121

WHAT CONSTITUTES TEACHING?

A PLEA FOR THE SISTERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Before entering upon this subject, I wish to apologize for writing at all.

This question with the impression to write has haunted me with great persistence for many weeks and will not be suppressed. I have striven to crush it, to forget it, to relegate it to oblivion, arguing that it in no wise concerns me anyhow: when "Am I my brother's keeper?" seems to ring in my ears, as it were; and it still follows me and will not be side-tracked. I have taken it to the Lord and prayed him to guide my pen.

First--There is a tendency (unconscious, no doubt) among some to make very frequent mention of the subjugation of the wife and the lordship of the husband, enlarging greatly upon these points, but utterly failing (at least in my hearing) to call attention to the duties of the latter, except, indeed, his lordship--always forbearing to point to the command, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church," "giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel," etc. This one-sided application of Scripture leads a certain type of man, unfortunately not rare, to become a petty tyrant, ever reminding the wife that she must *obey him*, swelling himself that he is lord over somebody, while ignoring entirely his side of the question, degrading her, if she be degradable, into the position of a slave. Having forced her there he ceases to respect her. It is such teaching that is developing men of certain mental calibre (and there are many) into characters such as "Tennessee" describes in his letter in the WATCH TOWER of Nov. 15th.

Lest it be inferred that I have a grievance along the above line, I beg to say I have not. My husband is one of the noblest of Christian gentlemen, fulfilling, it seems to me, as nearly as is possible for fallen humanity, the conditions of a typical head, crowning my life with tenderest love, protection and care.

Second.--All educators, even those of indifferent ability, are well aware of, and appreciate the value of questioning the students (my husband and I were both in this work for upwards of twenty years, he in the medical colleges, I in the public schools), yet in a simple class, which meets for Bible study with the DAWNS or Tabernacle Shadows, never a question is asked a sister. She has toiled, it may be, all the week, Sunday included, at tasks that would appal a masculine mind--washing, ironing, scrubbing, baking, garment-making, cooking for husband and children, half a dozen of the latter, more or less, and a thousand and one other things incidental to housework--with no leisure to read or study, yet when she is privileged to attend a Bible class this important aid is denied her. Never a question to lead her to think, to call out interest, or to draw out her mind and fix her attention. Think of it! No wonder the meeting drags uninterestingly, as one remarked to me.

Pastor Russell, I will not believe, unless I see it over your own signature, that you approve of thus depriving the members (a part of them) of Christ's Body of this valuable aid to gaining knowledge. Personally, it is of little or no consequence to me whether or not I am ever asked a question. I have leisure to think, read, study and pray, and, thank God, always have had, but I plead for those whose hands are fuller and for the principle involved.

Again, lest it be thought that I write as above because I wish for prominence in our meetings or for display of attainments, I beg to state that if I care for those things they are within my reach: it is not necessary to look for them in our little class. I have never wished for more privileges in the Church than are shown in the Scripture. Never thought a woman should be bishop or deacon; 1 Tim. 1:13 excludes her, also many men. There is likewise something inherent or God-implanted in the nature of womanly women which makes such usurpation repugnant to them. My work in the Church in the past, in which I know I had the Spirit and God's blessing, consisted in taking part in prayer meetings or evangelistic meetings ("praying and prophesying," as I see it) and teaching in the Sunday Schools.

Hoping attention will be called to the above-mentioned evils,

I am, yours in Christ,
M. E.

* * *

IN REPLY TO THE ABOVE

We must admit that there is much unmanliness and tyranny in some men, and much unwomanliness and tyranny in some women--as results of the fall. Even amongst those favored by the Lord with the High

Calling these ignoble qualities are manifest; because God is not calling chiefly the noble, but the mean. *Not many rich, not many wise, not many noble* hath God chosen, but mainly the mean things to confound the mighty, and things that are naught to bring to naught the things that are prominent. (1 Cor. 1:26-28.) We see the reason to be that the noble and the great usually trust too much in themselves and are unready to implore and accept forgiveness and aid through the only name. Hence the seeing of unmanliness and unwomanliness must not offend us, nor hinder our love for the brethren --for all whom the Lord has called.

But, on the other hand, all those accepted to the School of Christ have the greatest of all teachers, and should become the noblest of the noble in their sentiments; for it is written, "They shall be all taught of God." These lessons of the Spirit, inculcated through the Word, develop in all the Elect the graces of the holy Spirit, namely, meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness, love. Some grow these fruits of the Spirit more promptly and more luxuriantly than others, but all must attain them in heart (and hence, surely, in some good degree outwardly) ere they can be accepted as heirs of the Kingdom. As it is written, they must all be copies of God's dear Son, their Redeemer.

But, how comes it that amongst the more advanced there are sometimes acts, such as are referred to in the letter foregoing, which seem to some to be tyrannical? For instance, the passing by of the sisters in the asking of the Berean Study questions. We suggest that this need not be ascribed to an ignoble motive so long as we can think of a noble one that would meet the conditions. For instance, the leader of the meeting may have had in mind as a God-given rule the Apostle's words, "I suffer not a woman to teach." And possibly he reasoned that to ask a sister a question would be inviting her to teach, and hence be on his part a violation of the apostolic injunction. Possibly he thought that in giving the sisters a chance to answer by saying, "Has *anyone else* an answer to suggest?" he was going to the extent of his conscientious privilege--leaving it to the conscience of each sister to decide and act accordingly. This plan certainly does divide the *responsibility*. The chief difficulty about it seems to be that it *implies* an impropriety on the part of the sisters who answer, in the judgment of the more prominent brethren.

We trust that none of the brethren takes the view that the sisters have no good thoughts; nor that they are incapable of expressing these; nor that they cannot teach well their own sons and daughters. All must admit that women have displayed wonderful powers in teaching, reasoning, managing, etc. And all noble men, and especially all developed brethren, must desire to "render honor to whom honor is due"--and therefore must greatly honor noble mothers, sisters, wives and daughters, and womankind in general, for their many noble and gentle traits. This certainly is the writer's attitude of heart.

As for the noble Apostle Paul, we cannot think of him as a woman-hater or as a woman-despiser. Surely his epistles clearly show that he, too, honored true womanhood. Who ever expressed the esteem for woman more pointedly than he, when he wrote, "As Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, so ought men also to love their wives as their own bodies"? (Eph. 5:25,28.) His reason for writing as he did respecting woman's sphere of activity *in the Church* was undoubtedly loyalty to God--to duty. Our Lord declared of his apostles, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:19.) And surely the Lord used St. Paul more than any other Apostle to declare the loosing from the Law and the obligations and responsibilities binding upon the "New Creation."

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

After giving the subject considerable prayer and meditation we feel that a more moderate view than the above might be attached to the words, "I suffer not a woman to teach." It is as follows:

Teaching is not within the province of all the brethren, either; but only for those specially indicated by divine providence. This is shown by several Scriptures. For instance, to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus St. Paul said: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock over which *the holy Spirit hath made you overseers* [elders, shepherds, bishops] to feed [teach] the Church of God." (Acts 20:28.) Again, note the Apostle's statement that *God hath set* the various members in the Body as it hath pleased him, and that amongst those so set he mentions "teachers." (1 Cor. 12:18,28.) Again, note St. James' words, "Be not many of you *teachers*, brethren." (Jas. 3:1, Diaglott.) Again, one of the qualifications to be sought when electing elders was that they should be "*apt to teach*." (1 Tim. 3:2.) Again, respecting the priestly or teaching service we read, "No man taketh this honor to himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron." (Heb. 5:4.) The Lord, speaking through the Church his Body (including males and females, bond and free--all one in Christ), chooses for the eldership certain brethren "apt to teach"; and, as the Apostle indicates, there is a special

responsibility resting upon these as respects the feeding of the Lord's flock. Again he asks, "*Are all teachers.*"--*1 Cor. 12:29.*

Now, then, may we not interpret the Apostle's words, "I suffer not a woman to teach," to mean--I never sanction a female Elder in the Church. If we may, one difficulty is removed; and it would be well in accord with this view that we read, "If a woman pray or prophesy [speak publicly] in the Church...let her head be covered"; because, in the Church, the woman figuratively represents the Church, while the man represents the Lord, the Head of the Church.

This would settle the matter complained of in the letter above published. Then it would surely be as proper to ask the Berean questions of the sisters as of the brothers; because in this view of the matter, none of those answering would be a teacher nor considered as teaching, but a learner, reciting what he or she had learned or thinks had been learned from the Lord through his instruments or teachers.

To the Editor's mind this is most satisfactory and he trusts that it will be so to all WATCH TOWER readers. If some of the dear sisters have been pained in the past by a too rigid following of the Word, we trust they will be magnanimous and credit the strictness not to a lack of love for women, but to a greater love for the Lord and his Word. Whoever has been "rightly exercised" by the stricter view will, we believe, receive a corresponding blessing, for our Lord is able to make all things work together for good to each and all of his faithful.

"Let him that is taught in the Word *communicate* unto him that teacheth in all good things."--*Gal. 6:6.*

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WOMAN'S RIGHTS AND WRONGS

THERE are two sides to nearly every question, and the woman question is no exception to the rule. Women have their rights, men have their rights; every creature in proportion to its intelligence has certain rights which ought in justice to be respected. It is a fact, however, that very few men, women or lower animals obtain or can obtain their rights under present circumstances and conditions. In proportion as any one retains the original likeness of God, in which man was created, in that same proportion he will surely delight in granting to others their rights and in appreciating his own rights.

But, alas! all have fallen from that perfect image, that perfect likeness of the Creator. Hence there is in every member of the race a measure of selfishness, combined with various good and bad qualities of the mind, in such various proportions that the race as a whole is declared to be not of sound mind, unbalanced, unjust; and the Apostle declares the spirit of the world in general to be antagonistic to justice, righteousness. Anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, pride, ambition, etc., are all difficulties lying in the way of sound judgment. The Word of God, telling these things, admonishes us to seek the wisdom from above, the mind of the Lord; and that these can be obtained only by the subjection, the mortifying of our natural minds, inclinations, dispositions, and a regulation of our views, etc., according to the divine standards given us in the Bible. What we should seek, therefore, would be the highest Christian standard of thought on every subject, and the Lord's thought, the Lord's Word, should be accepted by all who are his followers as that standard. If we look out all over the world we find that practically nobody gets his rights--certainly nobody gets what he considers to be his rights, his dues, except the very humblest minded, who, overwhelmed with God's goodness and mercy, are ready to claim that they have already received of the Lord, and are continually receiving, far more than they deserve in every sense of the word. These are thankful and proportionately happy. The others, proportionately unthankful and unhappy, constitute the mass of the world of mankind, --including the majority of those who have named the name of Christ.

The Lord urges upon his followers the full "*sacrifice*" of all their earthly rights, assuring them that this will be pleasing in his sight as a testimony to their devotion to him and the rules which he prescribes, assuring them also that it will be to their advantage even in the present life as well as to their eternal advantage. Christians, then, male and female, are those who have made a covenant with the Lord to the effect that their rights as natural men and women will not be considered, not be claimed, not be sought after, not be fought for; but that they will accept from him as an exchange a new nature, with new hopes, new ambitions, whose rights, honors, privileges and dignities will come in completeness at the First Resurrection, when that which is

perfect shall have come and that which is in part shall be done away, when they shall be glorified with their Lord.

OUR SYMPATHY AND ADVICE

Few have as good opportunity as has the Editor of this journal to know something of the difficulties which beset the New Creation in their contact with others. He is continually in receipt of confidential communications explaining circumstances and asking advice as to how to best meet the severest trials and difficulties of life which come to the Lord's consecrated ones. As he perhaps has a larger contact with the consecrated than others have, he has proportionately a better opportunity for sympathizing not only with the groaning creation, the natural man, but also with the New Creation. He well knows, therefore, that injustice is frequently heaped upon wives by their husbands, and almost if not quite so frequently heaped upon husbands by their wives. His general advice to those thus unjustly treated is in the language of the Scriptures, "Have patience, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord,"--the establishment of his Kingdom of righteousness, the change to his glorious likeness, draweth nigh.--Jas. 5:7.

After kindly forbearance with gentleness and expostulation, if the condition is at all bearable, endure it, asking the Lord for wisdom and grace necessary. Seek to show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light; seek to show to the companion, by love and gentleness, patience, long suffering and endurance, the power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us richly; seek to take as little offence as possible, and learn more and more to go to the Lord as the great burden-bearer. "Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds," remembering that the time is short, and heeding the admonition of the Scriptures that we resist not evil with evil, nor railings with railings, nor slanders with slanders, nor sword with sword, but that on the contrary, we seek to be fully submissive to the trials of life, in the realization that the Lord himself is at the helm, and will bring a blessing out of each for us if we are in proper condition of heart to receive it.

It is certain that every child of God who is seeking and expecting his rights under "the prince of this world," and from his fallen and blinded neighbors, is walking in darkness on this subject. So surely as the Lord's people are "taught of him" they will speedily learn not to strive for their rights nor to expect them, but to be patient, long suffering and kindly toward the unjust. While properly enough seeking other paths in which they would not be oppressed, and to the extent of their ability and the proprieties of their case fleeing from those who persecute them and unjustly treat them, they will learn to not only love their enemies but to do them all the good in their power, and to sympathetically realize that much of the viciousness and selfishness and meanness of the world is the result of ignorance and inbred sin--the results of the fall. Proportionately they will be longing and praying, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth," and thus will their present trials and difficulties be working out for them a deeper interest in the coming blessings, assisting them in making their calling and election sure, and in obtaining the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

WOMAN'S SPHERE IN THE CHURCH

At a time when both men and women are becoming exercised more and more upon the question of their rights and their wrongs, and when the popular side, therefore, is opposed to every restraint of liberty, he who would be loyal to the Lord and his Word on this question is in serious danger of being misunderstood-- of being thought an opposer of liberty and rights and an upholder of wrongs. A test of the loyalty of the servant of God occupying a public position is thus forced upon him, and "It is required of a steward that he be found faithful." The Editor of this journal occupies some such position, and desires to be thoroughly loyal to the Master and to his Word. For the doing of this a few have been inclined to consider him an opponent of Woman, and as on the side of those who would degrade and demean the sex. This is most untrue and unjust every way.

Every true-hearted, noble-spirited man is sure to have a high esteem for the opposite sex, especially when the combination includes true womanly gentleness combined with natural talents and gifts and largeness and ability of heart. The natural disposition of a noble man under such conditions would be to bring forward such sisters in Christ to great prominence in the Church. And any refusal to do this is sure to awaken suspicions of a meanness of disposition amongst both men and women, until the voice of the Lord is distinctly heard from his Word. Then all the true sheep hearken to the voice of the great Shepherd, lose their own wills and sentiments on the subject and accept his message, "My sheep hear my voice and follow me; a stranger will they not follow, for they recognize not the voice of a stranger."

This is the position which the Editor has been obliged to take in the sixth volume of MILLENNIAL DAWN, Scripture Studies. Patiently and particularly he has therein set forth, not his own sentiments, but those which in many respects are the opposite of his own inclinations. He has submitted his will in the matter to the will of the Lord, and as a mouthpiece of the Lord has repeated the message of God's dear Son given to the Church through his specially appointed apostles. Hearing the Father's message respecting his Son, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him," the Editor hearkened also to the voice of the Son saying, respecting his inspired apostles, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth is bound in heaven, whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In other words, the Church is instructed to accept the teachings of the apostles as the direct inspired word of the Son of God himself,--as the Father's Word. Hence, when the Apostle speaks to us respecting the position of Woman in the Church we are not at liberty to dispute his word, nor to controvert it, nor to ignore it. Whoever does so is ignoring the voice of the Spirit and will surely suffer in some manner as a consequence.

We have presented no teaching of our own on this subject. As we have heard the Lord's voice through his apostles we have *merely called attention to their very pointed statements respecting the position of the sisters* in the Church, which is the body of Christ. But while pointing out that the public ministry, the teaching function, was not bestowed upon the sisters, but, on the contrary, was specifically withheld from them, we have in no sense of the word implied that the ministry of the sisters in the body of Christ is an unimportant one. Quite to the contrary, we hold that they have a very prominent place in the Church, and wield a very wide influence either for good or evil--almost an immeasurable influence--and that they are responsible for that influence as a part of their stewardship, that it be used in harmony with the divine Word and not to the contrary. That in the divine order the males in the Church figuratively represent the Lord, the Head, while the females figuratively represent the Church, the Bride.

This is the course of faithful obedience; and we remember the Scriptural statement that in God's sight "obedience is better than sacrifice,"--better than many arduous labors of a public kind contrary to obedience. We trust that all the Lord's consecrated people, both brothers and sisters, will reread very carefully the fifth chapter of DAWN, Vol. VI., bearing upon this subject. We are confident that this question is intended of the Lord to constitute a part of the testing of his consecrated ones in this harvest time. Let us resolve that our own sentiments on the subject, and our expressions and influence with others concerning the matter, shall all be to the best of our ability *the mind of the Lord*, in full accord with the teaching of *his Word*. "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."--***Isa. 8:20.***

CONFUSING SOPHISTRIES EXPOSED

It is proper that we should here uncover some deceptive sophistries which are being circulated--that we may assist the Lord's true people to take their proper stand on the subject. One element of these sophistries is the claim that what the Apostle wrote to the Church at Corinth was in view of the degradation of the women of that metropolitan city, the argument being that he would not have used the same language and expressed the same limitations of the liberties of the sisters in public services of the Church to other congregations, and that his words therefore do not apply at the present time. This is sophistry, false reasoning. The epistles to the Corinthians were not written to the debauchees, neither male nor female, of that time, but to the saints at Corinth, both male and female; and a saint at Corinth meant exactly the same thing as a saint elsewhere, namely, one whose life had turned from sin to righteousness, and who, accepting Christ as his Savior, had made full consecration of all to him.

Indeed it would appear that the Apostle's strictures on woman's sphere came from the opposite quarter--that the Church at Corinth seemed to feel itself superior to the other congregations, and desired to grasp liberties for its women which the other churches never thought of. Hence the Apostle after rebuking them asks, "What? came the Word of the Lord out from you? [Did it originate with you? Are we to look to the Christians at Corinth as the expounders of the message?] or came it unto you merely? [Did you not receive the Gospel as others received it? Do you not admit that you were not the originators of it? You have, therefore, nothing whatever to do with adding to or changing its regulations. As you will see this matter in its correct light you will agree that you should receive the message of the grace of God in the line in which he sent it, and should obey it without thought of alteration or emendation to suit some supposed preferential teachings in your midst]. (***I Cor. 14:36.***) "The faith once delivered to the saints" is not a variable but a fixed one. Hence the Apostle urges "that ye all mind the same things."

MAN AND WOMAN IN GOD'S ORDER

[We devote considerable space in this issue to the consideration of woman's sphere, as viewed from the Bible standpoint; especially in the light of the Apostle Paul's teachings. A very general misunderstanding of the Apostle's words has fostered a spirit of doubt as to his divine inspiration, and thus proved a steppingstone to Infidelity. Such doubts having once gotten control of the mind are apt to lead to the very extreme of so-called Woman's Rights --forcing some to an extreme on that side of the question as others have gone to an extreme on the opposite side: making women mere slaves, drudges or entertainers for men--erroneously supposing that the apostles so taught. These articles may therefore be considered as supplemental to our defense of the apostolic authority and inerrancy, presented in our issue of May 1st, and are called forth in response to many inquiries.]

WHILE we recognize the fact that, as spiritual new creatures in Christ Jesus, we are not esteemed of God on account of pedigree, station or sex; that, in his estimation of worthiness for the heirship of the coming Kingdom, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for we are all *one* in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28), and are "all called in one hope of our calling" (Eph. 4:4), it is nevertheless true that we are still in the flesh and that we have to do with earthly conditions; and, further, that upon our proper attitude in the various relationships of life, and our faithful observance of the teachings of the Scriptures with reference to them, our worthiness or unworthiness of divine favor is judged. While every question of moral rights and obligations is pushed to the front in this "day of preparation" (Nahum 2:3), this subject is coming forward for consideration and ventilation, as many Infidels and even Christians are claiming that the Bible teaches domestic slavery.

It will therefore be our endeavor to present as briefly as possible what we believe to be the Scriptural view of this subject, assured that, whatever may be the human prejudices of various individuals, God's Word is the only safe guide to the truth. His Word is by no means silent with reference to it; and an examination of all its testimony on the subject will, we believe, entirely silence in the estimation of all fair minded Christians the above mentioned charge against the Bible.

The first testimony of the Bible on this subject, aside from the statement that the man was made first and the woman subsequently as his capable helper and suitable companion, is found in God's statement to the woman after the eating of the forbidden fruit--"Thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall *rule* over thee." While authority to rule is naturally implied in the headship of the man (1 Cor. 11; 1 Tim. 2:13), yet, it is not difficult to see that the Lord referred to something more than this; for its mention is in connection with the penalty put upon woman, because of her share in the original sin. The implication is that her husband's rule would be tyrannical, and that she would suffer injustice under it, which she would not have suffered otherwise. And such has been the case: the rule or headship of the husband, which in perfection would have been a rule for the protection and in the interest of all the members of his family--a rule of love, a guidance rather--has in a majority of cases become, through the fall, a rule of selfishness, and fear, and general imposition. Indeed some men will use this very Scripture as a justification of their course of selfish tyranny.

But while facts fully corroborate the Lord's testimony on this subject, it is a great mistake to suppose that God's *will* is done by those who thus misuse their natural headship. On the contrary, we should see in the expression God's prophecy of the evil that would come upon womankind by reason of the fall of man from his original likeness of God. And, be it noted, the more degraded the man the more unfeeling will be his treatment of the one whom he should love and cherish as his own body.

Man's sphere in the world is pretty clearly defined as the *head* or chief of the creation, while the woman's sphere as a help, meet for him, is a much more debatable one. The question is, "To what extent may she help him?" While we believe that, according to the Bible teaching, she may help him to the extent of her ability and opportunity--in the home, the church and the world--we hear many dissenting voices in favor of very considerably circumscribing her influence, if not in the home, at least in the church and in the world. Let us hear, therefore, first, What saith the Scripture concerning--

WOMAN'S PLACE IN THE CHURCH

Peter, addressing the whole Church, without respect to sex, says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,... that ye [*all--male and female*] should *show forth* the praises of him who hath

called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Pet. 2:9.) And again we read (Isa. 61:1), "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, *because* he hath anointed me to preach," etc. See also Luke 4:18-20, where our Lord quotes and applies only a part of this prophecy to himself, leaving another portion of the commission which was not due in his day for the body of Christ--male and female--to declare. The word "*because*" shows that the anointing is for the very purpose of fitting those so anointed --whether male or female--to preach the good tidings. Therefore *all* of the anointed, male or female, Jew or Greek, bond or free, are *anointed to preach*.

In Heb. 5:12 Paul upbraids the Church, making no distinction of sex, for *inability to teach* on account of neglect of opportunities to fit themselves for the work, saying, "For when for the time [spent] ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat." Again we read (1 Pet. 4:10), "As each one [male or female] has received a free gift, so minister the same one to another as *good stewards* of the manifold grace of God." "Moreover," says Paul (1 Cor. 4:2), "it is required in stewards that they be found *faithful*." There is no distinction of sex here: *each one, male or female*, who possesses a talent or gift, becomes a steward of the same; and in the reckoning day the Lord will require each steward to give an account of his stewardship. Faithfulness is required of *all* in the use of all talents possessed.--Matt. 25:14-30.

In harmony with the teaching of these scriptures, that women, as well as men, are accountable to God for the use of their talents in the Church, be they many or few, and also with the teaching of Paul, that the activity of every member of the body of Christ is necessary to the general health of the whole body, we have numerous precedents established in the Scriptures. Thus (1) the women who were the first at the sepulcher on the morning of the resurrection were sent by the Lord to bear the first message of his resurrection to the apostles. (2) The woman of Samaria with whom the Lord conversed, and to whom he was pleased to reveal himself as the Messiah, was not forbidden to go into the city and declare the news to many--which she did at once, leaving her water-pots and going in haste. And the result was that many believed through her testimony, however she may have declared it.-- John 4:28-30,39.

We find, too, that women, as well as men, shared the gift of prophecy, which the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 14:3,4) defines to be "speaking to edification, exhortation and comfort"--*i.e.*, teaching or exhorting according to the measure of the gift of God. (See also 1 Cor. 12:31.) And in 1 Cor. 11, Paul admits the propriety of women publicly praying and prophesying, provided they do so with becoming modesty, of which the covering of the head was in those times a special mark, particularly among the Greeks, here addressed. To ignore such a custom, as some seemed inclined to do when they began to realize the *liberty* of the gospel, would have brought reproach upon the cause of Christ, and also upon "the angels," messengers or ministers of the Christian faith --the apostles and others.

We have some examples of prophesying, by women,--for instance, Anna (Luke 2:36-38); Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:8,9); Miriam (Micah 6:1-4); Huldah (2 Chron. 34:21-28) and Deborah (Judges 4:4-24). And, further, we have the remarkable prophecy of Joel 2:28,29, of which Peter claimed there was at least a partial fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, when the holy Spirit descended in power upon all present. (Acts 2:17,18.) Paul also mentions with evident appreciation the activity of certain females in the early Church--notably Priscilla, Tryphena, Tryphosa, the mother of Rufus and Julia, the sister of Nereus. (Rom. 16; also Phil. 4:3.) And in every instance, except 1 Cor. 16:19, where Priscilla and her husband Aquila are mentioned, Priscilla is mentioned first, as if she were the more prominent and active of the two. (See Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19; Acts 18:18,26R.V.) She and her husband also accompanied Paul on one of his journeys from Corinth to Ephesus, where they met Apollos and were both diligent in instructing him more perfectly in the truth. (Acts 18:18-26.) Although the Scriptures are not addressed to the world, they utter no voice and establish no precedent contrary to female activity in the various legitimate pursuits of life for which nature and education have fitted her. And though in times past female education was at a very low ebb, and women were seldom fitted for other than domestic pursuits, we have a worthy example of one efficient female Judge in Israel--Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth (Judges 4:4-24; 5:1-31) who was also a prophetess and evidently a woman of great ability and influence. Huldah, the wife of Shallum (2 Kings 22:14-20), was also a prophetess to whom the king of Israel sent.

From all these indications we gather that God, who is no respecter of persons, requires faithfulness on the part of *female* as well as *male* stewards in the use of *all* their talents, with no other restrictions than that they do so with that modesty which is specially becoming to their sex; and that, if God gives to any female member of the body of Christ a talent or special ability for teaching or prophesying, as she has done in the past, it is her privilege, and not only so, but her duty, to earnestly cultivate and use that talent as a wise and

faithful stewardess. This the Apostle Paul also clearly teaches in 1 Cor. 12:28-31, when, after naming teaching as one of the best gifts, he urges all, without distinction of sex, to "covet earnestly the best gifts."

WOMAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO MAN

Let us next note what some consider a direct contradiction of the foregoing Scriptural findings in the words of the Apostle Paul (1 Tim. 2:12) --"I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" [*hesuchia*, quietness]. But the Apostle proceeds to give his reason for the restriction; and in doing so he refers us back to the original relationship of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, saying, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, became a transgressor." Turning to Genesis (2:16-18) we see that, *before Eve was created*, "God commanded *the man*, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

It is plain, then, that the Lord did not communicate directly with Eve, but with Adam, and that Eve received this warning from God through Adam. Thus Adam, under God, was the teacher, and Eve the learner. And it was right and proper, in this instance at least, that the woman should "learn in silence with all subjection," as the Apostle counsels in 1 Tim. 2:11. What right had she to object? God had taught her husband, and in giving her to him had imposed upon him the duties of a husband (a care-taker and provider for her), and in fulfilling this obligation Adam had communicated to Eve this knowledge which was necessary to her preservation and her harmony with God. Thus God taught the headship of man, which the Apostle would have the Corinthian Church distinctly understand.-- 1 Cor. 11:3.

In addressing himself to Eve the Adversary tempted her to disregard the warning of God through her husband. This she did, and that without even consulting Adam as to the propriety of heeding this new and strange instructor, who was evidently out of harmony with God. In acting thus, independent both of God and of the natural protector which God had provided, the woman became a transgressor; and since she thus ignored God, she was left to her own judgment entirely, and was *deceived*; not, however, as to the unrighteousness of her course, but as to the *result* of that course, which she presumed would lead to greater blessing (knowledge), instead of to death. And not only did she thus ignore Adam and the instruction of God through Adam, and act entirely upon her own judgment, but she further assumed to lead or teach Adam her *new doctrine*, thus reversing the divine order of headship. And in following this reversed order of headship, Adam, though not deceived, also became a transgressor.

It is for this reason, says the Apostle, that I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to *usurp authority over* the man. But how to harmonize this restriction with the seemingly contrary scriptures already referred to still remains a difficult question to many; one, however, to which there surely must be some solution. First, we would inquire, Does this order of headship inhere in mankind as a class, distinct from woman-kind? or does it apply merely in the relationship of husband and wife? That the former is true, is, we think, quite evident from 1 Cor. 11:3, which reads, "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

What, then, we would inquire, is implied in this office of headship? The figure, we see, is drawn from that important member of the human body, the head, which is the chief member--the member in which inheres the right of leadership and authority. And this interpretation is borne out by the perfect illustration of headship in the relationship of Jehovah to Christ. In the one inheres the legislative, in the other a delegated executive power. In accordance with the illustration, therefore, the relationship of man to Christ and of woman to man should be that of subserviency; and if men and women were perfect the beautiful harmony of such a relationship would yield perfect satisfaction to both. Man would be in harmony with Christ, woman in harmony with man, and all in harmony with Jehovah. Thus the divine order of headship would unify all in the bonds of mutual love and peace.

But the question arises, How is this idea of headship compatible with the idea of individual liberty--the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Is the illustration of head and body to be pressed to its utmost limit here? The human body in health never performs an act except by the authority and consent of the head; and the mystical body of Christ (the Church), in health always delights to know and to do the will of Christ; and Christ has ever sought to know and do the Father's will. And so likewise if the human family were unimpaired by sin woman would enjoy her station and man would not misuse his strength, mental or physical, tyrannically. Looking again at the perfect illustration of this relationship between Jehovah and Christ, we see that the order of headship, *rightly* exercised, is entirely compatible with the glorious liberty of sons of God.

For although Jehovah is the head of Christ we see him delighting to honor his Son, making him in turn the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:10; 1:16; Eph. 1:10--*Diaglott*), and calling upon all men to "*honor the Son, even as they honor the Father*" [for he is the Father's representative and the express image of his person]. We see him also committing all judgment unto the Son. He first proved him and found him worthy of confidence; and then, having made known his plans to him, he committed to him their execution. And so we read, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22), and, again, that "all power in heaven and in earth" is given unto him.-- Matt. 28:18.

Surely there is no semblance of bondage in this relationship of Christ to Jehovah; but under Jehovah's supreme headship there is the fullest liberty and the widest scope for the development and use of all Christ's noble powers. And Christ, on his part, as subject to Jehovah, his head, is in all his works subject to those principles of action and that plan of work which the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah have decreed. Within these metes and bounds of Jehovah's headship, then, is the glorious liberty of the only begotten Son of God. Thus should man also be subject to his head, which is Christ, whose supervision, like that of Jehovah, is also sufficiently generous to admit of the widest range and development of all his manly powers. And thus, also, should the headship of man be exercised toward woman-- not to degrade and dwarf her powers under the bondage of tyranny, but to elevate and ennoble her; granting to her, under his leadership and encouragement, the fullest liberty for the legitimate use of all her powers.

But to return to Paul's statement, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over a man," we see that, in harmony with the reason given for the restriction, and also with the fact that they did teach on numerous occasions mentioned in the Scriptures, we must interpret the former clause of this statement in the light of the latter, viz., that the woman is not to usurp the natural position of the man as leader and teacher, and, disregarding his headship, to take that attitude herself--an attitude contrary to nature, incompatible with womanly grace, and unlovely in the eyes of all right-thinking people. With this interpretation of the Apostle's language here, his teaching elsewhere, for instance in 1 Cor. 11:5, is in entire harmony.

The idea is not to debar woman from her privilege and duty of making good use of all her talents as a wise stewardess, and as one who must give an account of her stewardship, nor to prohibit her from teaching the truth to others, but rather to point out to her the excellent and most effective ways for the use of her influence in life. Nature would, doubtless, generally indicate to both men and women their proper spheres for usefulness; but alas! none can be found in a natural condition-- all are fallen, mentally, physically and morally; and some more than others and in different ways. No womanly woman takes as her ideal a noisy declaimer, an assertive debater, an obtrusive public speaker, nor an ambitious leader. And yet, on fitting occasions, where the interests of the truth require it, she may, in a womanly way and without the least assuming the manly prerogatives of headship, declare the good tidings of great joy to as many as will hear her, whether male or female; and on some occasions the interests of the truth may necessitate her debating a question, which can often be just as effectively done in a suggestive, as in an assertive, way; and generally much more so, as some men, as well as women, have learned. Those who understand human nature best, know that frequently more can be done in the way of disarming prejudice and establishing the truth by the latter, than by the former method.

A woman may thus, in the full exercise of her liberty as a child of God, bring forth all her strong reasons before as many as desire to hear, and may clearly state her own convictions of the truth, but always with that moderation and candor which, acknowledging the natural headship of man, would avoid even the appearance of dictation or usurping of authority; and if there be a man present who can and will relieve her of the responsibility of so prominent a position, her natural modesty should decline the undertaking. The "silence" or quietness enjoined by the Apostle in the above text, is not to be understood in an absolute sense, but rather in that relative sense which would harmonize with his admission of woman's right to pray, or prophesy, or explain the truth, as they evidently did in the apostles' days, when they had ability and opportunity. In 1 Thes. 4:10,11 the Apostle similarly exhorts the *brethren* to *quietness* saying, "We beseech you, brethren,...that ye study to *be quiet* and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands as we commanded you." The same word is also used in 1 Tim. 2:2.

The expression of the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 14:34,35, we need to remember, was addressed to a class of Greek converts to Christianity whose habits were altogether different from the civilization of to-day, as well as from those of the Hebrew and Roman civilizations of that day. While Greece was the center of learning in its day, the women of Greece were very degraded and ignorant, so that it was necessary to speak to some of them with a degree of force which the Apostle never used in speaking to either Hebrew or Roman Christian women. From this epistle, we see that the Church at Corinth was in a very disorderly condition, and

that their assemblies were often confused and unprofitable. The Apostle, in this chapter, is laying down some very necessary rules and regulations, so that all things might be done "decently and in order" (*verse 40*); and the disorderly women as well as men (*verses 28,30,33; chap. 11:17-22,31-34; 6:5-11; 5:1-13; 3:1-3*) came in for their share of the needed reproof. It was a shame for those women to speak in the Church, first, because any publicity of their women was so regarded there and then; and, secondly, because they were unfitted to do so intelligently, and so it was better that they should listen in silence at the meetings of the Church, and inquire further of their husbands [*literally, men*] at home. To force the application of this instruction upon the whole Church during the entire age, would do violence to the general tenor of Scripture teaching with reference to woman's sphere of action and responsibility of service as man's worthy and suitable help-mate, which the Lord pronounced her to be. As well might we bind upon the entire Church the obligations of literally washing one another's feet and greeting one another with a holy kiss, which are repeatedly enjoined (See ***Rom. 16:15,16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 1 Thes. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14***), but which we instinctively recognize in spirit, but not in letter; the courtesies and civilities of our times being somewhat different from the customs of that day, although equally hospitable.

In order that all may see clearly the conditions which necessitated the Apostle's seemingly harsh language to the women of the Corinthian Church, we make a few brief quotations from noted authors, showing the state of society in Corinth, Ephesus and the principal cities of the Greek civilization of that time.

In the *Contemporary Review*, Vol. 34, March 1879, page 700, in an article on "The Position and Influence of Women in Ancient Athens," Prof. Donaldson of St. Andrews University, Scotland, says:--

"In Athens we find two classes of women who were not slaves. There was one class who could scarcely move one step from their own rooms, and who were watched and restricted in every possible way. There was another class on whom no restrictions whatever were laid, who could move about and do whatever seemed good in their own eyes. The citizen women [the wives] had apartments assigned to them, generally in the upper story. They were forbidden to be present at any banquet. The men preferred to dine with themselves rather than expose their wives to their neighbor's gaze. Seemingly the education of girls was confined to the merest elements. It is scarcely possible to conceive that such a marvelous crop of remarkable men, renounced in literature and art, could have arisen if all the Athenian mothers were ordinary housewives. [But they were not: multitudes of the mothers were not wives, but were of the educated though dissolute class, above mentioned, who were granted every liberty.] But though there never was in the history of the world such a numerous race of great thinkers, poets, sculptors, painters and architects in one city at one time, as in Athens, not one virtuous Athenian woman ever attained the slightest distinction in any one department of literature, art or science.

"We pass from the citizen women [the wives] of Athens to the other class of free women-- the strangers or courtesans. These stranger women could not marry. They might do any thing else they liked. The citizen women were confined to the house and did not dine with the men; but the men refused to limit their associations with women to the house. Accordingly they selected these stranger women as their companions; and '*Hetairai*,' or companions, was the name by which the whole class was designated. The citizen women had to be mothers and wives, nothing more. The stranger women had to discharge the duties of companions, but to remain outside the pale of the marriageable class. *They were the only educated women in Athens*. Almost every one of the great men in Athens had such a companion, and these women seemed to have sympathized with them in their high imaginations and profound meditations.

"But the Athenian women, even the citizens, had no political standing. They were always minors. Such, however, was the force of character of these '*Hetairai*,' or such their hold on powerful men, that not infrequently their sons were recognized (by special decree) as citizens. The names of virtuous wives are not to be found in history; but the influence of the '*Hetairai*' comes more and more into play. They cultivated all the graces of life; they dressed with exquisite taste; they were witty. But it must not be forgotten that hundreds and thousands of these unprotected women were employed as the tools of the basest passions, seeking only, under the form of affection, to ruin men and send them in misery to an early grave."

Every statement here quoted from Prof. Donaldson is amply supported by citations from Greek authors in the writings of Prof. Becker, of Germany, who is quoted by all recent writers as unquestioned authority upon ancient Greek and Roman life. In his "Charicles," page 463, he says:--

"At this time, and in the very focus of civilization, the women were regarded as a lower order of beings; naturally prone to evil, and fitted only for propagating the species and gratifying the sensual appetites of man. There were no educational institutions for girls, nor any private teachers at home. They were excluded from intercourse, not only with strangers, but also with their own nearest relations, and they saw but little even

of their fathers and husbands. The maidens, especially, lived in the greatest seclusion until their marriage, and, so to speak, regularly under lock and key." Page 287--"At Athens it was a thing unheard of for any free woman to make purchases in the market."

In a work on "Old Greek Education," by Prof. J. P. Mahaffy, of Trinity College, Dublin --page 11--he mentions the frequency with which children were exposed or left to die of starvation and neglect, and says:--

"We cannot really doubt that the exposing of new-born infants was not only sanctioned by the public feeling, but actually practiced throughout Greece. Plato practiced infanticide under certain circumstances in his ideal state. Nowhere does the agony of the mother's heart reach us through their literature, save where Socrates compares the anger of his pupils when first confuted out of their opinions, to the fury of a young mother deprived of her first infant. There is something horrible in the allusion, as if, in after life, Attic mothers became hardened to this kind of treatment. The exposing of female infants was not uncommon."

The bearing of this general condition of woman under the Greek civilization upon the language of the Apostle Paul to some of them, is still more clearly seen when we consider that Corinth was one of the worst of the Grecian cities. Prof. Becker says:--

"Corinth seems to have surpassed all other cities in the number of its *Hetairai*, to whom the wealth and splendor of the place, as well as the crowd of wealthy merchants, held out the prospects of a rich harvest."

From these observations it is clear that when Corinthian men became Christians, and, disregarding the prevailing public sentiment, brought their wives with them to meetings of the Church, the women were very ignorant and lacking in essential decorum and were inclined to disturb the meetings by asking unprofitable questions, which the Apostle instructed them to inquire of at home of their husbands, who could give them the simple instruction which they needed; for it was an improper thing for those women to speak in the Church and to disturb its proper, orderly worship, etc. We must remember, too, that Christianity then, as now, did not generally make its converts among the great men and philosophers, but among the poorer classes--the common people.

This condition of the Corinthian women also makes very clear the necessity of the Apostle's instructions in *1 Cor. 11*, about the covering of the head, which among that people specially was an indication of modesty. To have suddenly disregarded the custom, when they began to see the liberty of the gospel, would have been misunderstood, and would probably have cultivated in them, in their ignorance, a disposition to ignore the headship of man, and to become self-conscious and self-assertive.

When we note the very different conditions of the Roman and Hebrew women, we can account for the absence of any such instruction in the epistles to the Roman and Hebrew Christians.

Dr. Smith, in his Greek and Roman Antiquities, says:--

"The position of a Roman woman after marriage was very different from that of a Greek woman. The Roman wife presided over the whole household, and shared the honor and respect shown to her husband."

And Prof. Becker says:--

"The Roman housewife always appears as the mistress of the whole household economy, instructress of the children, guardian of the honor of the house, and equally esteemed with her husband, both in and out of the house. The women frequented public theaters, as well as the men, and took their places with them at public banquets."

The freedom of women in Hebrew society is so manifest from the Scriptures as to need no further proof. They freely conversed with the Lord and the apostles, and other male disciples, attended the meetings of the Church and Synagogues, and went about with entire freedom. Consequently, when Christianity took hold of them, it found them ready for Christian work without being hampered by the restraints of hereditary custom, which among other peoples must be measurably adhered to until a gradual reconstruction of public sentiment could be brought about, lest otherwise reproach be brought upon the cause of Christ.

R5922 [sel]

INTERESTING LETTERS

DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL:--

Enclosed are four questions which have caused a good deal of division of thought among us of the Panama Class. I am aware that all of them have been treated by you time and again. But we are so dull of comprehension and so leaky!

Questions. (1) When the Apostle Paul says, "Let your women keep silence in the Churches" (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11,12), does he include giving thoughts in a Berean Study?

ANSWER TO ABOVE LETTER AND QUESTIONS

Replying to your questions: We understand that there would be no violation of the Apostle's injunction in the Sisters' taking part in a Berean Study. If there are no consecrated or competent Brethren present, I see no reason why the Sisters might not *lead* a Berean Class.

Your brother and servant in the Lord.

R5161 [sel]

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

I am a stranger to you, having come into a knowledge of Present Truth only last spring; but as I had for long been Truth-hungry, I accepted all of the SCRIPTURE STUDIES with the avidity and zeal only known to those who have for long been starving for the Bread of Life.

I have consecrated, taken the Vow, and symbolized both by immersion.

At the time I came into the Truth, I was talking to a class (of women only) on Sociology, having previously given a course of lectures on History, Philosophy and philanthropic subjects. Indeed, for the past twenty-five years I have given the most of my time to giving talks on subjects in the line of humanitarianism, to women.

As I am very deaf, and as the only one talent I have is the gift to make clear the subject I am talking on, my friends have believed that my work has been useful and uplifting. Now, at the advice of our dear Sister Calkins, I wish to ask your advice upon a problem I have now for solution. Immediately upon my consecration I testified to my class as to the marvelous light that had come into the darkness of my life, and that as I considered the "Kingdom of God" was the one and only solution to the problems of present-day questions, hereafter I could not talk upon any other subject than that of the Kingdom.

In pursuance of this plan I invited some of the sisters "in the Truth" to come to my house for a study hour, thinking that gradually I would invite those outside who might manifest an interest in our subject. Then, learning of the Scriptural teaching regarding woman's sphere in the Church, I felt that I should like your advice as to my future work.

As I was perfectly willing to consecrate all, I had in this also meant *my only gift, or talent*--but I could not keep still --every one I met I talked to--I gave the "Divine Plan" into the hands of no less than twenty women; and many people formerly in utter darkness are coming to see the light.

And now, the women of my class of last winter and the winter before are begging me to talk to them again. I may choose my own subject, and I want to give some "Talks on the Bible." I have

consulted a dear brother and sister here, and they advise me to give the talks--they think it is a wonderful opportunity. But we finally decided we would submit the question to you.

The situation is, I know, unusual, and as I told Sister C., it is so difficult to make the situation understood in all its details. But I think I have stated the main facts. Of course, my whole object will be to endeavor to have those who listen to me read the SCRIPTURE STUDIES for themselves.

I know, dear brother, you are a busy man, and I am sorry to trespass so much upon your valuable time, but I am so anxious to do whatever work I can at this time; for "the night cometh in which no man can work." And at the same time I do not wish to be disorderly or bring any reproach upon the Ecclesia. Now, will you please tell me what I ought to do?

If you would like to have me, I will give you a list of my subjects and a little synopsis of each.

I am praying only to be guided in this and in all things by the Spirit of Truth.

Your sister in Christ,
CHARLOTTE C. HEINEMAN.--Cal.

REPLY

DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST:--

Yours of recent date is at hand and contents are noted. We rejoice with you in the fact that the Lord has found you worthy of receiving a knowledge of the Truth. May His continued guidance and blessing be with you, enabling you to profit by every experience which comes to you.

My thought would be that the Lord would be pleased to have you use the talent you possess. Apparently He has given you a constituency in which you can work and regarding which you have responsibilities toward Him. I would recommend, therefore, that after you have thoroughly familiarized yourself with the Truth, you resume your lectures to women, discussing nothing but the Truth, and stick close to the teachings in the volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. The restriction that St. Paul makes regarding women's teaching refers to meetings of the Church, and these usually include both men and women. The meetings such as you would have would not be meetings of the Ecclesia, and to my understanding you would not in any wise come under the restriction mentioned by St. Paul. In such a case, even if some men should take upon themselves the position of women and attend one of your lectures, this would bring you under no condemnation.

Not only would it be proper for you to resume your lectures, but if your finances would permit, and the way should open for you to again meet and address women in other cities, whom you had formerly served, or whom you could reach, I would recommend that you extend your work accordingly.

Praying for you the Lord's guidance, wisdom and richest blessing in your endeavors to glorify His name, I remain,

Your brother and servant in the Lord.

R1902 [sel]

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

NEW YORK

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER RUSSELL:--

You are entitled to a little report of our "Dawn Circle for Bible Study." We have been longing for a Sunday afternoon meeting, and have prayed for a brother in our midst to be touched with the

spirit of truth to take the care of such a meeting. At one time it looked as though our requests were to be granted, but every hope of a present answer was taken away as we found unwillingness or faintheartedness among all the good men we thought interested. So the meeting must be abandoned or I must take the forward step, which, in the strength of the Lord, I did, and announced a series of Bible studies on the Plan of the Ages with chart illustrations. Last Sunday we began with but ten present; nevertheless the Lord was present to fill all the vacancies, and we spent a blessed time. All expressed themselves as greatly interested and enlightened, and purposing to attend regularly and to bring others. It was all the Lord's doings.

I was led in opening to give a little of my experience in Bible study, past and present, and the dear friends seemed very much touched, so much so that when I came home I thought I would try to express the same in verse, and wrote the enclosed, which I know is too long to be used in the TOWER; and which please return to me, as I have no copy.

We have a table at the meeting place, containing tracts and books and TOWERS, which we urge the attendants to take with them; and last week they did so very generally; so we hope for good results from this mode of circulating the truth. You must count us now as really a little Church, and pray for us daily. Remember especially the poor earthen vessel the Lord has to use, that his may be all the glory.

Your sister in His service,
F. G. BURROUGHS.

[We are well pleased with the report of your "Dawn Circle for Bible Study." We think that under the circumstances there you have done right to step forward and take the initiative, which we perceive you have done in the spirit of meekness with all deference to the Lord's will in the choice of brethren generally for the more public service. But if there be no brother in the company sufficiently or equally competent to lead, then the interests of the flock should not be permitted to suffer from that cause, when a sister with the necessary qualifications stands ready with consecrated talents meekly and faithfully to serve them. We call to mind that once God raised up a female judge in Israel; and if in these days of more general education and enlightenment he should bring forward some sisters with marked meekness, faithfulness, sobriety and ability to serve his flock with a little more prominence than others, we may not despise these indications of the Lord's will. No brother who is a mere novice in the knowledge of the truth, or a mere babe in Christian experience, should be asked to take a leading part merely because he is a brother. If a sister have preeminent talents, by all means use them. You did well, too, in starting the class with a Chart exposition]

R1034 / R1539 [set]

WHO MAY IMMERSE

There is no limitation placed in Scripture as to who shall perform this ceremony of baptizing believers in water, except that only *the church* was ever commissioned, either to teach or to baptize. The faith and knowledge of the one performing the ceremony does not count, but the faith and knowledge of the one immersed. Sometimes the one performing the ceremony may be far inferior every way to the one from whom it is performed (John 3:14) and might even, if necessary, be a believer not of the kingdom or church class. (Matt. 11:11.) Certainly all who are authorized to *teach*, are equally authorized to *baptize*; and that includes every true follower of Christ --"even unto the end of the age," according to the general call to the ministry, commission, and ordination of Matt. 28:19,20 and John 17:14-18-23. And this commission evidently does not exclude from this service the females of the "body of Christ" (Gal. 3:28), only that modesty, convenience, etc., indicate that they should avoid such public services except in rare necessary cases.

WORLD-WIDE PASTORAL WORK

ABOUT five hundred Classes of Associated Bible Students have voluntarily elected the Editor as their Pastor, and have notified the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY of the fact--requesting that in addition to his expositions and pastorals through THE WATCH TOWER columns, he would remember them in prayer and also from time to time send them such advice as he might believe would be for their profit and the Lord's glory through representatives and by mail.

We have rejoiced to note activity in the Lord's service amongst the Brethren, and have done our best to open up ways and means by which they could render service to the great King and assistance to His followers. But only of late has the Lord deeply impressed upon our attention a considerable work in which the Sisters might engage with profit both to themselves and to the Cause.

Before suggesting the matter to outside Classes, we made a trial of it in New York City. The resulting success was so pronounced that we felt justified in calling it to the attention of all the Classes which have notified us of our election as their Pastor, sending to each Class copies of the following letters--one to the regular Class Secretary for the benefit of the Elders and the Class in general, and the other for the special use of the Sister chosen to be the Pastor's lieutenant in this work. The publication of the letters here will make the whole matter the better known to each member of such Classes, some of whom may not have heard the reading or may have forgotten the contents:

PASTORAL WORK IN WHICH SISTERS COOPERATE

Some months ago we called the attention of THE WATCH TOWER readers to an important Follow-up Work possible in connection with addresses received at Public Meetings, DRAMA Exhibitions, from Colporteur Lists, etc.--persons who supposedly have some interest in religious matters and who presumably would be more or less amenable to the Truth. We have since been attempting to classify and arrange these addresses, but there are so many of them and our time is so limited that we have gotten comparatively few into the shape originally intended. Rather than delay the important work further, we purpose sending lists of addresses to those who will be collaborators in this Pastoral Work, at once, that they may be copied and classified by the workers of each district.

While this branch of the work is intended for the Sisters only, because we find that usually they are more successful and additionally have more time to invest in the work, nevertheless we are not proposing anything which would ignore the Classes of the I.B.S.A. Indeed, so far as we are able to designate, we are suggesting this work only to Classes which have informed us that they have chosen me as their Pastor.

The plan is to bring together the Sisters of each class who have time at their disposal and the desire to engage as Pastoral Workers under this plan. In such a group, of course, there would be some with more and some with less talent for the service, and some who could do one part of the work, but who would be totally unfit for another part. Hence it is desirable that the Sisters choose from their number a Lieutenant having considerable time at her disposal and considerable executive ability, and that breadth of mind which would enable her to appreciate and use the position properly, dividing the work wisely amongst the others and herself. Before the Lieutenant would be elected, prayer should be made for wisdom and guidance in the matter. I have already asked the Lord for special blessing upon such arrangements and will continue so to do. Any Sister not qualified for the service ought to rejoice that she has the privilege of setting herself aside for the good of the cause, and might take pleasure in helping another Sister who possesses the necessary tact and other qualifications for the work. The Lord will look at our hearts and reward us according to our faithfulness to Him and to the Truth, and not merely according to the amount of our work.

The activities of this Committee, elsewhere detailed, will in a general way consist of visiting the addresses mentioned, ascertaining interest, removing prejudice, loaning STUDIES, etc.; and the culmination of the project is to interest as many as possible to the extent of gathering them into classes-- first to hear Chart Talks, and later to become regular Berean Classes. When the matter is worked up sufficiently, the Lieutenant will call upon the Elders of the I.B.S.A. Class to appoint thoroughly competent Brethren to give the Chart Talks. Meantime the Elder Brethren should be qualifying along this line. Shortly we will have a new edition of "Outlines of Chart Discourses," which will be helpful to them and which we will supply free. We will also be prepared shortly with a good supply of Cloth Charts for such service.

After the Chart Talks have been given and the Study Classes arranged for, the Elders of the Class will be expected to see to it that the Classes are supplied regularly with efficient teachers. Remember the Apostle's instructions as to the qualifications of a teacher--"apt to teach." Do not spoil the Lord's work by any favoritism or by seeking either to give or to receive honor according to the flesh. Let our motto in everything be "God First," and self and every way of the flesh subordinate.

The plan is already in operation in several of the large cities with astonishing success. We think it strange we did not sooner realize the importance of this work and get it into operation. But perhaps it is a part of the work of the present hour--perhaps in some way it is connected with the smiting of the waters with the mantle of Elijah. We would not suggest that it would fulfil that type, but merely that it may be one of the features connected with it.

With this introduction to the work we leave the matter in the hands of the Lord's people, praying Divine blessing upon all who are disposed voluntarily to cooperate.

With this we are furnishing some suggestive hints as to method of procedure. With Christian love,

Your brother and servant in the Lord,
C.T. RUSSELL.

HINTS TO PASTORAL WORKERS IN LARGE CITIES

The Pastoral letter, sent sometimes through a special representative and sometimes through the Class Secretary, being read to the I.B.S.A. Class, constitutes a call for a meeting of all the Sisters of the Class who have the time and strength to invest in the work described. Their first meeting should be for the purpose of choosing from their number one whom they believe to be the Lord's choice, to serve as Lieutenant, and another to be the Pastoral-Work Secretary and Treasurer.

(We regret that through some misunderstanding our representative *appointed* Lieutenants at some of the Conventions; and that when our Pastoral Letter arrived directing the election of the Lieutenant and Secretary a little confusion ensued. The Society's representatives are properly appointed, but in all matters connected with the Classes their choice or their sanction of our choice is the rule. So in this case: while we doubt not that very suitable Sisters were appointed, we request that the Sisters of each Class vote on the question and advise us of the results.)

The Class will doubtless consider it a privilege to supply the moderate expenses that will be incidental to this branch of the service, but should it not be so disposed, and should the matter be neglected, refer the same to the below address before it has run longer than a month, in the regular monthly report, calling attention to it very particularly.

All reports should be signed by the Lieutenant and the Secretary-Treasurer. Of course, we should be notified immediately after you have had this first meeting--the number present and your selection for Lieutenant and Secretary-Treasurer.

Your first meeting will help to make you acquainted with each other and to enkindle your enthusiasm respecting this part of the work, and enable the Pastor's representative (if present) to form an estimate of the material she will have to use and how it can best be used. Wherever possible we are sending Sister Genevieve Sanford to assist in the organization and classification and explanation of what we have found to be the successful methods of work. If she be with you the explanations here will be the less important, except as you shall wish to have them for reference when she has gone. But if for any reason Sister Sanford cannot be with you, remember that all the more you will need to depend upon the Lord and to exercise your own best wisdom, justice and love in all arrangements. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory."

AT THE SECOND MEETING

This meeting should not be long deferred--"Weld while the iron is hot." Our representatives are first to remember that system is necessary to the best results in anything. Before the second meeting the Lieutenant should procure four city maps as clear and distinct as possible, and four directories of city streets; a red pencil and a blue pencil and a couple of pads of stiff writing paper. The Lieutenant should prepare the first map herself--afterwards give it as a sample to helpers that they may prepare the other three maps.

Using one of your colored pencils, divide your city into sections of approximately ten blocks one way and fifteen the other; or 12 x 12, or 5 x 25, as may be most suitable to the shape of your city. After thus dividing the map, number the different districts with the other colored pencil.

Some of the names furnished you by the Society will be on cards, addresses on which some of the Sisters can be set to locating on the maps. When they find the district to which they belong, that number, in colored pencil, should be marked on the card plainly. Others of the names sent to you will be in lists, and each of these will need to be written off on a small pad-paper and in turn each address will need to have its colored figure representing the district to which it belongs.

Cheap file cards may be made by cutting stiff letter paper into convenient sizes, approximately like small post-cards. Do not immediately transfer the names from the DRAMA card or other memorandum or address to the file cards. Merely locate the addresses and district them. When interest is confirmed the address can be transferred to the file card.

Secure address of every Sister in the congregation, and let these be the start of the file cards, a red cross in the corner indicating that she is in the Truth. Her district should be indicated also on the map, and a small "x" should indicate approximately the location of her home.

The Lieutenant should select District workers according to supposed efficiency and without partiality. Give each worker preferably the district in which she lives, as her field of activity, or a district near, or otherwise the nearest district possible.

If you have an abundance of helpers, one in each district might attend to the Book-loaning, and another to making calls on the addresses, but if the workers are not sufficient in number let the calling be done first and the book-loaning be a subsequent work, except as the person called upon might not have the books, but be willing to accept a volume on loan.

The Sisters should report to the Lieutenant within a week. You may find that some of them have been hindered by sickness, or others have not found the time they had expected, or others may have broken down and proved inefficient, while still others may need further explanations and assistance. Write a kindly letter to any sister who fails to report in a week, encouraging her, expressing appreciation for what she already has done and hopes respecting her future progress, and assuring her that you will be pleased to have a call from her in respect to anything she does not fully understand. Keep each branch of the service up to its full capacity.

As the Sisters complete their visits in their districts the cards or other addresses showing no interest at all should be destroyed by the Lieutenant. Then three copies of addresses of all showing any interest should be made on the file cards, one copy for your file, one to be sent to the Brooklyn office, and the other copy to be retained by the District worker for further use. Impress upon the Sisters the need of care in handling cards, lest any addresses should be lost. This copying should be done as promptly as possible.

Some of the districts should be ready for Chart Talks within two weeks after the opening. With much Christian love,

Your brother and servant in the Lord,
C.T. RUSSELL.

N.B.--We will supply you monthly report blanks, which please send to Brooklyn at the close of each month, addressing

"PASTORAL WORK DEPARTMENT,
c/o Mrs. Genevieve Sanford,
122 Columbia Hts., Brooklyn, N.Y.

HINTS TO DISTRICT WORKERS RE PASTORAL WORK

Arrange your address cards and memoranda alphabetically. Copy them in this order--alphabetically--into a book, leaving room for four or five names under each letter. Then you can rearrange your cards according to convenience in calling. If any of the cards are not sufficiently neat in appearance, they should be copied, rather than use anything unsatisfactory.

Wherever possible, these cards or memoranda should have a notation of what the individual called upon has already had in the way of Truth literature, as a guide to you in respect to what you shall say when you call. Arrange the cards so as to economize your time in making the visits. After each call write a brief history of that call on the card; for instance, "Interested, will attend Chart Talks"; or, "Not Interested"; or, "Moved," etc. This information on each card you should give to the Lieutenant every two weeks, that she may transfer the information to her file, destroying those showing "Moved" or "No interest."

While the meetings to be held will be supervised by the Elders of the I.B.S.A. Class, we wish still to keep well in touch. Hence please report weekly by post-card to the Lieutenant the numbers in attendance at the meetings, and anything else that would seem to be helpful, as also the names of any who purchase the books. Remember, however, that while it is desirable that the people should buy the books-- because they will then give the more earnest heed to the reading of them--yet nothing that would give any suggestion of merchandising the Truth is to be sanctioned. Rather than give the impression of trying to sell books, we would offer to loan them; but if the person prefers to purchase, of course we would be glad to have it so.

DISTRICT WORKERS' CANVASS

"Good morning! Is this where Mrs. Wood lives?"

"Yes."

"I am making some calls respecting a Circulating Library for Home Bible Study. I think you indicated an interest in this work some time ago. I would like to talk the matter over with you, if agreeable."
After being invited in, continue:

"At that time, Mrs. Wood, I believe you purchased a set of books called STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. May I inquire whether or not you found in them something that interested you?"

This is merely a supposed start to the conversation, which of course should vary according to the circumstances of the case, which you have noted on the card. What you shall say further must depend on circumstances as you find them. Possibly you will get a suggestion or a statement that the party found nothing to interest her, but that she knows of some people who are much interested. You thus have the opportunity of learning the address of others; and perhaps, by a little wise conversation, you may awaken interest in the one whom you are interviewing. Or the trouble may be prejudice, slander or misrepresentation. Such opportunities for correcting false impressions are valuable. Each worker should pray earnestly and continuously for wisdom from Above to say the right thing, and for grace from the Lord-- meekness, patience, love in the heart--that her words might be like perfume and an anointing oil to all who are in sympathy with righteousness.

If the lady has not the books, offer to loan her a volume, and tell her of the proposal soon to have some Chart Talks on "The Divine Plan," given in that district. Explain to her how the CHART OF THE AGES helps to open the Bible to our understanding and to make it a new book. Assure her that the volume you offer to loan her will awaken her interest keenly, because it is different from other religious books and gives the chapter and verse, showing that it is really the Message of God's Word, even though different from what some of us had supposed. Inquire whether she would like to be notified respecting the Chart Talks when arranged for. Elsewhere we give some remarks especially on book-loaning, which see. On leaving, express the hope that your next call will find that she has read considerably and is deeply interested.

Write a brief history of this interview on your address memoranda, before going on to your next call. While covering your district note especially those who indicate sufficient interest to attend a Chart Talk. Be on the lookout also for the Lord's guidance for a place in which to hold the meeting --someone who has expressed interest and whose large parlor or sitting room would seem to be a favorable place. In such a case you might remark, "I was just thinking how convenient this room would be for such meetings, if you would like to have them here. I could not say definitely whether this would be considered the most suitable place or not, but would be glad, if you thought well, to make a memorandum that you would like to have the meetings here."

Confer with the Lieutenant respecting what you have found and the most suitable time for holding the meeting and the most suitable place--the Lieutenant, in turn, keeping in touch with the Elders of the Ecclesia before deciding definitely on the subject.

As soon as the decision respecting the Chart Talks has been reached, call again upon those who seem favorable. Tell them about the arrangement and ask whether you may expect to see them there. Additionally, write a post-card to each of them so that it will reach them the day before the meeting. It might read something like this: "Just to remind you that we are to meet tomorrow, Thursday evening, to hear a talk on the CHART OF THE AGES at the home of Mrs. Wood, 122 West Charles St., at 7:30. I note that your home is about nine blocks from Mrs. Wood's home and suggest that the Fulton Street car, running east, will take you within one block. Get off at E Street. Yours, etc."--Signed.

You should be sure to be in attendance at every Chart Talk in your district, and should call on the interested to keep the interest alive, though the call need not be a lengthy one. Send also a post-card reminder each week.

At the close of the series of Chart Talks, a Question Meeting on the Chart will be in order, and should be announced by the lecturer himself. It is to be hoped that the Elders will select only wise and capable Brethren for this important service. If a considerable number of those present so desire, it might be intimated at this meeting that a First Volume Berean Study could be started.

Meantime, ascertain some other friendly one who would like to have the Berean Study in her home, provided the one who has volunteered the apartments for the Chart Talks should not seem anxious to have the Berean Study follow in her home. Other things being equal, the Berean study should preferably be held in the home of one of the Bible students. Let the vote for Berean Study of First Volume be taken on the night of the Question Meeting, the fourth night of the Chart Talks--the fourth week.

After the Berean Class has gotten properly started, you may consider it as weaned and, if other important work presents itself, may feel free. Keep in touch with the Class; and should any of its members fail to attend for two weeks, be sure that you call upon them before the third meeting.

These Classes should be notified respecting all public lectures, and should be made acquainted with the meetings of the I.B.S.A. Class as soon as their interest begins to develop. It is preferable that not many of the regular Bible Students attend these Chart Talks and Berean Studies at first, lest the newcomers should be embarrassed and lest the parlors be too crowded; and that the newcomers may the more freely ask questions and be in less danger of being stumbled--all of the lecturing and leading being done by the one experienced Brother chosen by the Elders.

We advise that no singing be done at the Chart Talks, nor at first at the Berean Study Lessons. Every meeting, however, might be properly opened with a brief prayer. The meetings should begin promptly and not continue longer than one hour. Please call this to the attention of the leader.

Never sell anything at Chart Talk meetings, considering that those in attendance are your invited guests. If they do not have the books, their homes will be the proper place at which to suggest the purchase.

The Society will furnish, through the Lieutenant, question books for all such Classes, free.

Each district worker should have with her when making her first calls in the district a copy of Vol. I., SCRIPTURE STUDIES, so that she could refer to it, saying, "This is the Study which I hope will stimulate your interest in Biblical themes." Then will be an opportunity for you to give a talk on the book, offering to loan it if the listener is interested.

Report in person or by letter at least every two weeks to the Pastor's Lieutenant, and every week during the time that the lectures are in progress.

Should you need assistance do not yourself attempt to select an associate, but refer this matter to the Pastor's Lieutenant, who has the full responsibility.

Call upon the Bible Student Sisters residing in your district. They may be able to give you some information. Do not permit such calls to be of the ordinary kind, with minds diverted to chit-chat or gossip, but hold yourself strictly to your work and be an example. If the circumstances are favorable it would not be inappropriate to have prayer with such a Sister. If such a Sister is not engaged in any service, but has time for it, make a mental note of what you think she would be best suited for, and draw the matter to the attention of the Lieutenant, with full particulars as to the time at her disposal, health, activity, age, color, married or single, etc.; also in respect to her spiritual condition, and whether or not she is well posted in the Truth and apt at giving it out. Note whether the Sister is inactive or discouraged or new in the Truth. Let this information come to you as naturally as possible, without boring or close questioning. Note also if she is of a gentle spirit or the contrary.

This information may be valuable to the Lieutenant when at some future time selecting suitable persons to make calls, to read to shut-ins, to fold tracts or to distribute volunteer matter for Chart Talks, Drama, Public Lectures, etc.

Always remember your privilege in connection with the stimulating of the Sisters in the Truth, as well as all with whom you come in contact, with respect to the glorious things of the Divine Plan and our wonderful opportunities and privileges.

The book-loaning is a separate work entirely from what we have outlined above; yet where the helpers are numerous and the cards of the interested ones few, the district worker may obtain the consent of the Lieutenant to add the Book-loaning feature, which we elsewhere describe.

We suggest the importance of full consecration of heart and life to the Lord before undertaking such work--before it will be acceptable or pleasing to the Lord. Then the consecration should be kept up to date. Every morning Divine blessing and guidance should be sought; and every evening a report of our endeavors, failures and desires should be made to our glorious Head, that we may find grace to help in every time of need. Everybody called upon should be impressed with our manifestation of the Holy Spirit of Love, and with the fact that it alone has actuated our visit. We should sympathize with all who have good desires in any sense of the word; with those who are deep in churchianity, for we are glad to find them interested in higher things; with others who have turned away from churchianity, for we know how hard it is to retain faith under present church conditions; and with others who have been prejudiced, for we are not surprised, and much prefer prejudice to lukewarmness.

Very truly your Servant,
C.T. RUSSELL.

SOME QUERIES ANSWERED

We take this opportunity of answering publicly some queries that we have received about this work.

(1) Should Brethren also engage in this work?

We have not invited the Brethren to engage in this work because we believe that there are other things which they can do that Sisters cannot do. Besides, while there are tactless Sisters who might do more harm than good in this Pastoral Work, we believe that on the whole the Sisters are apt to display as much tact as the brothers or more; although there are some Brethren, of course, who are very resourceful, very wise. We are merely speaking in general terms and believe that the Sisters, on the whole, can render this service better than can the Brethren, and it gives them something special to do in the service of the King.

(2) Is it right, Scriptural, for the Pastor to select a Sister to be his Lieutenant in such a work?

We believe it to be in full harmony with the Lord's teachings that the Sisters might so be used. All who receive the Holy Spirit, as previously pointed out, are anointed to preach the Gospel. The Lord, through St. Paul, has seen fit to limit the conditions under which a Sister may preach--that her preaching may not be of a public character, and that she may not be considered a teacher in the Church. Nothing in this, however, interferes with her doing private Pastoral Work of the kind here suggested.

(3) After the Sisters shall have formed Classes for Bible study, what would be the necessary procedure if there were no consecrated Brother in the Class, or none qualified to give a Chart Talk or other address?

In such event, inquiry might be made of some nearby Class whether or not one of its Elders might be spared to render this assistance. If there be no nearby Class, or if none could be spared to render the assistance, the Pastor hereby authorizes the Sisters to choose one of their number as his representative to give the Chart Talk and, subsequently, to start a Berean Bible Study. She should perform her duties with head covered, explaining the significance of this to the audience, and declaring that she is merely serving because of the necessity of the case, until some consecrated brother shall have developed the necessary knowledge and qualifications to become the leader. Furthermore, she should remind all present that the Apostle's instruction is that the Sisters are not to teach in the *Church*, and that a class of inquirers is not understood to be an organized class of Bible Students or an Ecclesia or Body of Christ, but merely novices who, it is hoped, will develop speedily to maturity.

(4) Ought some of the younger Brethren be drilled into this work by having them occasionally address the regular Class?

Assuredly novices should not be introduced into this work. Good intentions count with the Lord as respects the heart; but more than good intentions are needed for His service, according to the instructions of the Word. Only those that have a talent for public speaking, and additionally have a clear knowledge of the Truth and an aptitude for teaching--only such should be assigned to the important work of interesting people who have only recently come to a knowledge of the Truth and to a limited degree, and whose minds are more

or less prejudiced with erroneous ideas. The very best talent that the Class possesses will be none too good for this service.

Let us say, additionally, that to invite novices to address the Class on Sundays or at other times in a public lecture would be entirely wrong. The Lord's people should not be bored any more than the public. Such Brethren as show some talent should be encouraged to study and to practise, but not to practise upon others than themselves. We have already recommended, and do so again, that the less experienced of the Brethren who feel that they have talents for the Lord's service might well be encouraged to have meetings by themselves, with perhaps some Elder Brother present as a moderator to hear them and to offer kindly criticisms--of manner, voice, tone, doctrinal intelligence, logic, etc. The members of the Class should be permitted to criticize each other, but not too severely, lest the humbler ones should be discouraged from making further effort.

We recommend Chart Talks as one of the best instructions for these novices and one of the most efficient ways of learning how to present the Divine Plan. They should be encouraged to follow quite closely the outlines of Chart Discourses. Following these three outlines, on the fourth night the audience should be invited to ask questions along every phase of the Divine Plan illustrated in the Chart, and a competent instructor should be able to answer every such question. To fulfil these requirements requires more than a novice; and even the mature of the Lord's people will do well to keep their minds continually refreshed by constant study.

R1075 [sel]

AS BECOMETH WOMEN PROFESSING GODLINESS

--(No. 1.)--

In recognition of the same principle, the headship of man, Paul further states: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over man, but to be quiet" (*1 Tim. 2:12*). Surely Paul does not mean that a woman's lips must be forever sealed that she may not declare the good tidings of great joy to others. Does not the same Apostle say: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus. And does not the prophet Isaiah teach that all the anointed, are anointed to preach the good tidings. It is in harmony with these, then, that we must understand the above words of the Apostle.

His idea, therefore, seems to be, that in no case, however important the truth we are commissioned to bear, is woman to assume a position of authority or headship over man. She may tell the blessed tidings of great joy and teach the principles of truth anywhere and everywhere, and to whomsoever she has opportunity; but always with becoming modesty, stating the truth so clearly that *of itself* it may carry conviction with it and her own individuality be lost sight of. This element of character is one which naturally belongs to woman, but is generally very soon lost by those who attempt to work in a public way. The work for the majority of women is the individual, quiet and none the less effective work. Her greatest influence is that exerted strictly within her divinely appointed sphere. If necessity, opportunity, and ability should indicate a more public sphere of usefulness, she may fill it as long as such *necessity* and opportunity lasts, if in so doing, she bears that modest, quiet demeanor, in action, word, and apparel, which becometh women professing Godliness. By emphasizing necessity, we mean that *never* should she seek or prefer publicity to the less obtrusive and equally effective ways of making her influence felt for truth and righteousness. It is the assumption of authority and dictatorship, which is so unbecoming.

Again, we see that in this relationship of husband and wife, is prefigured the beautiful relationship between Christ Jesus and the church. And as in the type, so in the antitype, the church, the bride of Christ is to be subject unto him in everything; earnestly seeking at all times to know, and then delighting to do his will. As the woman is not to assume authority and direct her husband, so the church is not to assume authority and to attempt to direct the Lord's work, but is to be "quiet," searching diligently to know his plan and methods, and then endeavoring faithfully to execute them.

When God's plan shall be brought fully into execution, we see that loving authority and joyful submission will fill the universe with blessed peace and everlasting joy--and "God shall be all in all"-- Head

over all--his will done in earth as it is done in heaven. (1 Cor. 15:28.) Seeing this to be God's ultimate design, it should be our endeavor, so far as it is in our power, to carry out and illustrate that purpose now. It can only be fully illustrated, however, by those who are "united in the Lord." The covering of the head by the woman (1 Cor. 11:10), signifies submission to authority; a recognition of God's order of headship. It symbolizes the relationship between the church and her head, Christ Jesus. The same thing was illustrated in the attire of the priesthood: the high-priest wore a mitre or crown and the under-priests (representatives of the church, the bride), wore "bonnets" or head coverings, indicating that they were not the head but *under authority* to the Chief-Priest.

The Apostle's high regard for woman and woman's work is shown by his mention of several faithful co-laborers and helpers among them--see Rom. 16:1-6,13; also Phil. 4:3: "I entreat thee... help those women which labored with me in the gospel...whose names are in the book of life." And Acts 1:14: "All continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women." And 1 Cor. 11:5: "Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth [teacheth]."

These scriptures show that women did a work in the Apostles' days which was approved and appreciated by them and by the Lord. Yet women usually spoke only at the smaller gatherings; and when Paul said, "Let the women keep silence in the congregations," he probably had reference to the public gatherings at which it was the custom to have more or less debating. In these public debates, Paul thought a woman's voice would be out of place, and this is the opinion of most thinking men and women to-day, though it has by many been carried to an extreme, forbidding them to pray or teach on any occasion, even in more private assemblies of Christians; which certainly is an error.

When Paul urged that the women keep silence in the churches, and if they would learn anything to inquire of their husbands at home, he must be understood as referring to a principle to be observed only so far as practicable--and possibly to curb some unwomanly women who were a disturbing element in the church then. To rigidly apply the rule would do violence to the general spirit of Paul's teaching. Where the spirit of Christ is there is liberty--not liberty to violate God's law and order as expressed both in nature and Revelation, but liberty to progress and to grow in grace and knowledge under the wholesome restraints of God's law and established order.

Because God has arranged that the man and woman are representative of Christ and his bride, the church, probably this is one reason that men have always been given the more active and public work of the ministry, and women the work of assisting and the more private teaching, which is equally acceptable to God. So Christ is the active agent in carrying out God's plan. He is the great minister of all, and we as his Church are permitted to be helps meet for his use: to do an humbler part, and yet an acceptable part, well pleasing to God.

-MRS. C. T. R.

WOMAN'S MISSION

THE rights of women--what are they?
The right to labor, love and pray;
The right to weep with those that weep,
The right to wake when others sleep.

The right to dry the falling tear,
The right to quell the rising fear;
The right to smooth the brow of care,
And whisper comfort in despair.

The right to watch the parting breath,
To soothe and cheer the bed of death;
The right, when earthly hopes all fail,
To point to that within the veil.

The right the wanderer to reclaim,
And win the lost from paths of shame;
The right to comfort and to bless
The widow and the fatherless.

The right the little ones to guide,
In simple faith, to Him who died;
With earnest love and gentle praise,
To bless and cheer their youthful days.

The right the intellect to train,
And guide the mind to noble aim;
Teach it to rise above earth's toys,
And fix the heart on Heavenly joys.

The right to live for Him you love,
The right to die that love to prove;
The right to brighten earthly homes
With pleasant smiles and gentle tones.

Are these thy rights?--then use them well;
The holy influence none can tell;
If these be thine--Why ask for more?
Thou hast enough to answer for!

Are these thy rights? Then murmur not
That woman's mission is thy lot;
Improve the talents God hath given;
Earth's duties done--thy rest in Heaven!

Part-6

MATTHEW 18: 15-17

THE SCRIPTURAL RULE FOR ADJUSTING MISUNDERSTANDINGS

WE CANNOT IMAGINE a case in which a brother with average intelligence would need comfort and counsel in a misunderstanding other than that for which the Lord has provided in *Matt. 18:15-17*. If he has been in the habit of seeking sympathy in a busy-bodding manner, the sooner he knows that his course is wrong the better. He should learn to use his own mind along lines where there is positive instruction in the Scriptures. The Lord says to any one who has aught against his brother, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him *alone*." If the matter is too small to mention to the brother, it is too small to notice and should be forgotten.

There are *no exceptions* to the rule laid down in *Matt. 18:15-17*; but there might be, under some circumstances, an *interpretation* of the rule. For instance, if the matter were in a family, there might be circumstances in which it would be proper to go to the head of the family. If it were in an institution, where the individual might be merely a representative of the Society, it would be proper to go to the head of the Society. Such a course would result from following *Matt. 18:15*, in its logical trend. But these are minor applications of the rule, which is neither voided nor avoided, but in applying which wisdom is being used in determining how the matter may be carried out.

There is no doubt that much of the trouble in the world is the result of misunderstanding. It therefore behooves every one of the Lord's people to "put on love, which is the bond of perfectness," and to overlook much of what others do. (*Col. 3:14*.) And yet it would be proper for one who thinks that he has been wronged to go to the offending brother and have a clear understanding. To do so would result favorably in nearly every case.

The instruction in *Matt. 18:15-17* is given, of course, only to the brethren, the Church, and is not, therefore, to be applied outside. But whoever learns to apply this rule to the brethren will find that it commends itself to his best judgment as a wise course of conduct in all the affairs of life. Thus his natural inclination will be to apply the same principles in connection with worldly matters and worldly people. He must, however, use wisdom in considering which would be the wise way to deal with the world. Some of the deep and precious things which belong to the Church the world would resent. So the Lord admonishes that we should not "cast our pearls before swine."

While we are endeavoring to do good to all men, yet in the case of the brethren there should be no discrimination in this matter. We might say, however, that some of the Lord's people seem to be unduly and unreasonably exercised along some lines. For instance, if a brother should find another brother in the Truth who seemed to discriminate in his feelings and apparently to be more appreciative of another than of himself, he should not take offense. He should say, "There are differences of character and temperament; and Brother B. might commend himself to Brother A. more than would another. All that I may ask is that Brother A. shall love me; that he shall not hate me; that he shall not do me injury." Nothing in the Word of God indicates that the brethren are all to be esteemed alike!

Our Lord Himself showed just such a discrimination in His love. He did it, however, "without partiality and without hypocrisy." But because of the differences in our fallen human nature some of the brethren are more congenial to us than are others. We should, therefore, be content to have the love of the brethren, and should endeavor to merit more of it--and to have our words and conduct such as to become more lovable to the brethren and thus to draw more of their esteem. The way to do this is, not by finding fault with those who do not love us up to the highest degree, but by trying to develop that character which would merit a fuller measure of love.

If such a question as this be raised and is not treated along the lines of *Matt. 18:15*, one should advise thus: "Brother A. seems to have none but the kindest feelings toward you, dear brother." Then if Brother B. says that he does not receive Brother A.'s love and companionship as does Brother C., one might reply, "Well, my dear brother, have we not the right to have a special

fellowship with *one* if we do no injury to *another*? I think that we have, and that we have the Lord's example in this direction. This does not mean that I should treat you unkindly. It is not wrong for a brother to have more or less of a *preference*, providing that he does not use this preference to offend another *intentionally*."

VARYING DEGREES OF LOVE

Love is not justice. Love cannot be *commanded*; it must be *induced*; and there must be a cause for the love. It would be thoroughly out of order for any one to tell us that we should love God if He were not a lovable Being. Similarly, how could we love any creature who is unlovely? We love the brethren because we see something of God-likeness in their good intentions, and in the fact that they have given their hearts to the Lord.

In a case where the brother's flesh is much fallen, we have largely a *compassionate* love, rather than a loving admiration; for only in proportion as we see character-likeness to Christ can we truly love His followers. But we should regard every brother and every sister with a sincere desire to do them good; and the same love, of course, should extend, as we have opportunity, to the world in general.

The great difficulty in cases of misunderstanding is that *the Lord's counsel is not accurately followed*. Good, honorable brethren, anxious to do right, who apparently would be quite competent to advise others, seem to think that *theirs* is a different case--seem not to exercise the proper judgment. Instead of going to the brother and saying, kindly, "Brother, I have come to see you in reference to a little matter, following the advice of *Matt. 18:15*," he, on the contrary, meets the brother and says, "Brother, you have done so and so." He goes to the brother, not to be reconciled, but rather, dictatorially, to show him that there is something wrong. This is not the right way to go about a matter. As surely as Justice is the foundation of God's Throne, just so surely are those who pursue this course failing to follow the principles of justice; they are failing to develop the Lord's character and will *fail to win the prize*.

The spirit of the Lord's injunction is to *help* a brother, not to twit him, nor to anger him, nor to tease him; not to entrap him into saying what he did not intend to say, nor to distort the meaning of what he has said. Such is not the right spirit. No brother should be approached in this manner. But the matter should be considered in the most kindly way; and if then--in spite of all that one can do--the wrong is continued, we should have nothing more to say. Some might say, "He did not apologize." The Lord did not say anything about his apology. But if he recognizes that he is wrong and fails to apologize, he is doing *himself* injury.

LET US BEWARE OF BUSYBODYING

If the second step in *Matt. 18:15-17* be found necessary, it should be taken only after very deliberate thought and prayer, with the desire to make sure of doing the Lord's will. First of all, one should make sure that the matter is of sufficient importance to ask the brethren to go along! and that it is something against *us*, not against *another*; that it is not *busybodying*; that it is something that is being done *now*. If this is the case, take two others along. Do not say, "If I ask you to go along, be sure to stand by me." *We may be the ones in error*; and if we are we should be more anxious to be *corrected ourselves* than to have the *other brother* corrected.

If we make sure that the matter is important, we should select two that we think would be friends of the brother injuring us--fair-minded, honorable people in the Church. Then, after the party has met with the offending brother and discussed the case, it would be proper for these brethren to advise us. If the advice were something that we could follow, we should do so and bring peace and harmony.

But if this course should avail nothing and the injurious actions should continue, then it would be proper for us to bring the matter to the attention of the Church. The two brethren who went

with us, and decided with us that it was impossible to persuade the evil-doer to alter his course, should say to the Elders of the Church that they had a case to present for a *hearing*; but they should not *make charges*. The Church is merely to hear the matter, to see whether there is any *real cause* of complaint. But at *this* stage of the affair they *know merely* that there is a case to be heard. Then the Elders should call a special meeting for such a purpose, saying to the Church that there is a case to be brought before the Class, and asking what time would be convenient for them to hear the matter. Then the Church should decide when to call a meeting to consider the case.

This would be the time for the one against whom the complaint lodges to say to the Elders, "It is true that there were charges made against me by the brother, and that two others afterward came with him. But I claim, brethren, that the charges are *not true*, that the matter is one of my private concern, and that others have nothing to do with it;" or whatever he wishes to say. Then there must be brought evidence to show that there is really a matter to come before the Church, that it is not merely a case of *busybodying*; for the Church must not meet together to participate in busybodying.

Then it would be proper for the Elders to learn enough to decide whether or not the Church would be busybodying in this man's affairs--merely enough to inform themselves whether it were a matter to come before the Church. If they thought that it was not, they should say to the offended one, "This brother is not doing you an injury." But if either of the parties still thought that it should be brought before the Church--that *Matt. 18:15-17* had been followed as far as possible to this point--and if the Elders of the Class were unwilling to bring it before the congregation, then it would be proper for the *congregation* to determine whether or not they would hear the case, and their hearing should be final.

HOW TO CONDUCT A CHURCH TRIAL

In any matter heard before the congregation there should be an opportunity for each one interested to present his side of the case--the one to state his trouble and the other to answer. At no stage of the proceedings should unkind words be permitted. The person who attempted to use them should be considered reprehensible on that account, and his conduct worthy of being judged a misdemeanor. This course is the one which the Lord evidently intended should be followed. The point, however, always to be borne in mind is whether people are really busybodying in other men's matters--a course which should not be encouraged, either by the Class or by the Elders. People waste a great deal of time in evil counsels, in a manner quite contrary to the Golden Rule and to *Matt. 18:15*.

If the congregation, after patiently hearing definite, positive charges of sufficient importance, finds that notwithstanding these various steps the brother against whom complaint is made has really been doing wrong and is continuing to do so, they should decide that he is guilty as charged. The vote of the Church should be unanimous, if possible; all partisanship should be ignored. Since they are not condemning any one to eternal torment, nor judging him in any way, their advice must not carry with it any penalty whatever. They are merely advising the brother that his conduct is contrary to the Scriptures; and that if he does not change his course, they cannot longer treat him as one of the Lord's people.

In disfellowshipping him, they are not to ill-treat him; for we do not act so with publicans and sinners. But we would not ask a publican or a sinner to take part in the service, either as an Elder or as a Deacon or in any other capacity; so the offending brother is not to be asked to offer prayer, or to do anything that an outsider would not be asked to do. *Thus* the congregation would withdraw their fellowship. He is a brother still, but not in the best of standing; for he has neglected to hear the voice of the brethren in the way that the Lord has directed.

It might be possible, however, for a whole class to go astray in its judgment in a matter, and to decide against a brother who was in the right. This brother might then say, "My dear brethren, I appreciate your view in this matter; and I am sorry that anything in my course should seem to be

worthy of condemnation. I promise you that I will modify the matter as best I am able. Although in justice to myself I cannot alter my view, nevertheless, in respect to your united voices I will not in the matter follow my judgment, which I feel is the *correct* one. And if, therefore, I suffer some injustice, the Lord will count it to me in the nature of a sacrifice for the sake of His Body, the Church. So, then, dear brethren, while thanking you for your kindly expressed sentiment, I still wish you to know that it does not do me justice. And I think that you will inform me of your change of mind on the subject if you ever should change."

If the brother were really in the wrong, he might say, "Well, then, put me out!" The Class might say, "We are not putting you out. Do not say that you will withdraw from us. We will not take your remark for your answer. We hope that the Lord will have you see that our action has been most kindly, brotherly, and that it is a part of our duty now to conform to the views of the Class. If the Lord shows us that we are wrong, we shall be very glad to acknowledge it. But in the meantime, dear brother, we do not wish to offend you, but merely desire to do our duty to the Lord and to His Word."

This course would be the proper one; we should not erect a barricade between brethren. But it would be very easy to do injury to such a brother by saying, "Well, never show your face here again unless you take back every word you have said." The majority of people have so much self-esteem that they would not go back after such a statement; whereas they might do so if the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of love and justice is manifested.

R5517 [sel]

CONTROL OF THE TONGUE A NECESSITY

"I say unto you, that every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment."--Matthew 12:36.

AN IMPORTANT LESSON FOR ALL

Although our Lord declared that men should give account for every pernicious word, yet He referred to the thoughts behind the words. It was the attitude of heart that distressed Him. He knew the attitude of heart displayed by the Scribes and the Pharisees would bring injury upon them.

Amongst the Lord's people there is nothing more important than that they should learn to be very just. While it is right to be loving, kind, generous, yet *justice* is the very foundation of character. All love and kindness not based upon justice are neither satisfactory nor pleasing to the Lord. In dealing with others, a child of God will not think, What will my fellow-men let me take from them? but, What are the rights of others, and what would my Heavenly Father have me do?

It is very natural for one to recognize his own rights in any matter, but the fallen nature does not so quickly perceive the rights of others. Therefore one of the most important lessons for the Lord's people to learn is to do unto others as they would have others do unto them-- simple justice.

We fear that many of the Lord's dear people have not fully realized that obedience to the rules which govern the New Nature means absolutely the "Golden Rule" on their part toward all others. They must not do to others what they would not have others do to them. It is the duty of the New Creature to bring the body into such subjection that justice shall rule in every act and word, and so far as possible in every thought. One must be just in his thoughts before he can properly be just in his dealings. Whoever thinks unjustly will act unjustly in spite of endeavors to the contrary.

CONSIDER HIM LEST YE BE WEARIED

"Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

TO "CONSIDER HIM" seems to be to take note of, to have in mind, to reflect upon and not to easily forget how our Lord endured various trials and oppositions of sinners against himself. In our own experiences we have, as the Lord's followers, endured some opposition of sin and sinners against ourselves; but we have not yet resisted unto *blood*. We have not yet passed through the trying experiences through which he passed. When we remember that while we are poor, imperfect creatures like our neighbors, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled," then it is good to reflect that he endured patiently the opposition of sinners. When trying experiences came to him, he did not consider them as being merely from the individual with whom they originated, but as being, on the other hand, under the supervision of the Father. If, therefore, the Father permitted such experiences to come to him, he was bound to prove his loyalty by patient endurance. As he said, "*The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*"--**John 18:11**.

So it is with us, Spiritual Israel, "*The Lord your God proveth you.*" (**Deut. 13:3**.) In proportion as we are able to take our Lord's viewpoint in our experiences in life, we may be calm. If the Father permits trying experiences for our testing, or for the testing or proving of others, in ways we may not understand, it is for us to rejoice to have his will done. The poet has beautifully expressed this thought when he says:--

"My times are in thy hands,
My God, I wish them there."

If we faithfully endure to the end, the reward will be ours. If we prove our loyalty and *keep our faith that God is supervising our affairs*, and that no good thing will be withhold from those who are walking uprightly, we shall some day hear his "Well done, good and faithful servant."

We know that our Lord endured *physical* opposition. But our English word "*contradiction*" properly translates the original, implying *verbal contradiction* of *his words*. As we consider our Lord's case, we see that the people opposed him, not physically, but *in his words*, his *teachings*. It was left for the high priest and Sanhedrin and soldiers to do him *physical* violence and put him to death; and he could have resisted them if he had so chosen.

WHEN HE WAS REVEILED, HE REVEILED NOT AGAIN

The Apostle, therefore, seems to refer to the contradiction of his words. This is implied by St. Peter, who says, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." (**1 Pet. 2:23**.) So when we consider the three and a half years of Christ's ministry, we find that his doctrines were disputed, and that he was slandered. The Jews said that he had a demon; that he performed his miracles by the Prince of demons; that he was a blasphemer. These contradictions and oppositions on their part might have called out from him some very just, truthful statements, respecting them. He might have given them as good as he got, and better. He might have told them that the *Devil* was working with *them*, etc. His perfect power of language would have given him ability to more than cope with them. When they thought to entrap him in his *words*, he entrapped them in *their words*. But he reviled not. He did not render evil for evil, nor railing for railing. This, the Apostle shows, is the proper course.

But in the daily affairs of life, when people say all manner of evil against us, when they revile us, it is natural to the fallen flesh to think of something evil to say in return. Thus these things become tests upon us. If we yield to such a spirit, we are following the course of the enemy and not that of the Lord. "*Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds*" when attacked by the Adversary--whoever may be his agents and

whatever may be their missiles. He cannot harm but will only increase our reputation in the Lords' sight, if we *endure faithfully*; and he can do no outward harm that God cannot overrule for the *good* of his cause--though that *good* may mean "siftings" of "chaff" and "tares" from the "wheat."

Evil speaking, backbiting and slandering are *strictly forbidden* to God's people as *wholly contrary* to his spirit of *love*, even if the evil thing be true. As a preventive of anything in the nature of slander, the Scriptures very carefully mark out *only one way of redress of grievances*. --**Matt. 18:15-17.**

PROFESSED CHRISTIANS OFTEN WORST SCANDALMONGERS

Many, among even advanced Christians, seem to be *utterly in ignorance of this Divine ruling*, and hence professed Christians are often the most pronounced scandalmongers. Yet this is one of the few *special, specific commandments* given by our Lord; and considered in connection with the statement, "Ye are my *friends*, if ye do whatsoever I command you," the constant violation of this, our Lord's command, proves that many are not far advanced in friendship--discipleship.

Let us look carefully at this rule, which if followed would prevent gossip, "evil speaking," "backbiting." See, as above cited, *Matt. 18:15-17*. Its first provision, for a conference between the principals *alone*, implies candor on the part of the accuser, who thinks that he has suffered. It also implies his thinking no evil of the accused. They meet as "brethren," each thinking *his own course* the *right* one, to discuss the matter; to see whether they can come to the same view. If they agree, all is well; the matter is settled; peace prevails; the threatened break has been averted, and no one is the wiser. In the great majority of cases, a frank, open discussion between the principals will bring about harmony. But both must be equally candid and governed by the Spirit of the Lord.

Thus did our Lord guard his true disciples from the insidious sin of slander, which leads onward to other and grosser works of the flesh and the Devil, and stops growth in the Truth and its spirit of love. Let us also note that those who *hear* slanders and thus encourage slanderers in their course of wrongdoing, are *partakers of their evil deeds*; guilty partners in the violation of the Master's commands. God's true people should refuse to listen to slanders and should point the offender to the Lord's Word and the *only* method therein authorized. Are we wiser than God? Experience teaches that we cannot trust to our own judgments and are on safe ground only when following the voice of the Shepherd implicitly.

WE SHOULD REFUSE TO HEAR GOSSIP AND SLANDER

If any Brother or Sister brings to you an evil report of others, stop him at once, kindly but *firmly*. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (**Eph. 5:11.**) Refuse to have any share in this violation of the Master's commands, which does great mischief in the Church. If the Brother or Sister be only a "babe" in spiritual matters, call attention to the Lord's ruling on the subject. (**Matt. 18:15; I Tim. 5:19.**) If the conversation is not addressed to you but merely in your hearing, promptly show your disapproval by withdrawing.

If, after having had his attention called to the Lord's command on this subject, the slanderer still persists in "evil speaking," "backbiting" and telling you his "evil-surmisings," reprove him more sharply, saying as you go, "I cannot, must not, hear you; for if I did, I would be as criminal in the matter as you are, violating the Lord's command. And even if I were to hear your story I could not believe it; for the Christian who does not respect the Lord's Word and follow his Plan for the redress of grievances, shows so little of the Lord's spirit that his word cannot be trusted. He who twists and dodges the Lord's words would not hesitate to twist and misrepresent the words and deeds of fellow-disciples." Then withdraw fellowship from such until his error has been confessed with promises of reform. If to any extent you listen to such conversation, or express "*sympathy*" with it or with the gossip or slanderer, *you are a partner in the sin and in all its consequences*; and if a "root of

bitterness" is thus developed, you are more than likely to be one of those "defiled" by it.--Heb. 12:15.

Be pure: maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men. Begin with the heart; harbor no thoughts that in any sense of the word would be evil. To make sure of this, have Christ Jesus as your pattern, well and much before your mind. When evil is obtruded upon you, either from without or from within, lift up your heart in prayer to him for the grace promised in every time of need. Keep constantly before you the prayer, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."--Psa. 19:14.

LET US CULTIVATE APPRECIATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE LAW

While seeking to follow the various specific commands of Scripture, let us seek more and more to understand and come in sympathy with the *principles which underlie* the Divine Law. These will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord's Word. Indeed, as we come to understand and sympathize with the principles of Divine Law, to that extent we are getting the spirit of the Divine Word. Note the testimony of the Psalmist on this point, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, *through thy commandments*, hast made me wiser than mine enemies, *for they are ever with me*. I have more understanding than all my teachers, *for thy testimonies are my meditation*. I understand more than the ancients, *because I keep thy precepts*. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, *that I might keep thy Word*. I have not departed from thy judgments, *for thou hast taught me*. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! *Through thy precepts* I get understanding; *therefore, I hate every false way*. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."--Psa. 119:97-105.

Shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit, or disposition of Christ--contrary to *love*. A certain amount of combative courage is demanded in overcoming the world, the flesh and the Devil and their various snares. This fighting disposition may become a valuable aid to ourselves and to the Master's cause if rightly and wisely directed against sin, *first in ourselves and secondly in others*; if used for the Lord and his people and against Satan and all his powers of darkness and superstition. This, in the Scriptures, is called fighting the *good fight*, and we all should be gallant soldiers in this battle for Right and Truth, lovingly defending our Captain's honor and his people's liberties.

THE POWERS OF EVIL WOULD MAKE COMBATIVENESS A CHIEF VIRTUE

But such a good use of combativeness is not pleasing to the Prince of this world, who will seek to *pervert* what he cannot directly *use*. Consequently, he attempts with some to make combativeness a chief virtue. He encourages them to fight everything and everybody; the brethren, more than the powers of darkness; nominal churchmen, more than the errors and ignorance which blind them and make them such. Indeed, his desire is to get us to "fight against God."

Let us be on our guard on this point. Let us, first of all, *judge ourselves*, lest we cast a stumbling-block before others; let us fight down in *our own hearts* the wrong spirit which seeks to make mountains out of trifles and disposes us to be captious and contentious over non-essentials. Greater is "He that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the Truth be, not from motives of self-glorification, but from love for the Truth, love for the Lord, for his people, the brethren. If *love* be the impelling spirit, or motive, it will show itself accordingly in a loving, gentle, patient, humble course toward all the fellow-servants. Let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God," which is quick and powerful, do all the *cutting*.

Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions of heart directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, hatred, strife. Give these no place in your heart even for a moment; for they will surely do *you* great injury, aside from leading to the injury of others. Keep your heart, your will, your intentions and desires full of love toward God and all his creatures--the most fervent toward God, and proportionately toward all who have his spirit and walk in the way of his direction.

DO NOT TRUST TO CONSCIENCE ALONE

If conscience were a *sufficient* guide you would have no need of the Scriptures. The majority of people have as good as no conscience; for they are blind to the principles and laws of God given to *guide* conscience; and still worse off than these are those mentioned in *I Tim. 4:2*. Hence the imperative necessity for carefully heeding the Lord's Word, and *walking circumspectly* according to its light.

We are not to faint in our minds nor become discouraged, feeling that so much has been said against us that we must give up the race. On the contrary, we are to feel assured like our Lord, that nothing can befall us except with the knowledge of the Father, who is working all things for our good. It was thus our Lord was prepared for his exaltation. So we, if we are rightly exercised by our various experiences and follow as closely as possible the commands laid down for our guidance, will find that even revilings, slanders, oppositions to righteousness, will work out blessings for us, as they did for our Lord.

But how many become weary and are in danger of losing the prize because they fail to consider what *the Lord* faithfully endured of opposition! If such would consider that the Lord, who was *perfect*, suffered in every sense *unjustly* for righteousness' sake, and that their own conduct is *imperfect*, they would not be weary in well doing, but would learn to fight and to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ"; they would continue to "fight the good fight of faith."*"We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we [the Church] are, yet without sin."*-- *Heb. 4:15*.

R5528

WHAT IS EVIL SPEAKING?

"Speak evil of no man."--*Titus 3:2*.

THE Apostle's injunction is very positive; we are to speak evil of none. The question then arises, What does St. Paul mean here? Does he mean that we should speak nothing of any man with an evil intention toward him? Or does he mean, Speak no evil, whatever the intention? We answer, we surely know that to speak evil with a wrong motive, a wrong intention, would be a heinous crime, especially in a child of God. But we think the Apostle meant, *No matter what your motive*, speak evil about nobody. If that be the Apostle's thought--and we believe it hardly controvertible--it places a very stringent requirement upon all of the Lord's people. If the motive for speaking evil were bad, all the worse; but *good or bad*, "Speak evil of no man."

Now another question comes up, What is evil-speaking? We answer, This subject has various sides. To speak evil is to speak that which is injurious; therefore one should say *nothing* that would injure any man. It is very easy to perceive the justice and the reasonableness of this requirement if we apply the Golden Rule. Would we wish any one to do *us* evil? Would we wish any to speak slightly of *us*, to comment on *our faults*, or on what the *speaker* considered faults, and thus lower us in the eyes of others? If the Lord's people would learn to apply the Golden Rule to every affair of life, it would surely be very helpful.

Some of the most conscientious Christians have difficulty along this line. In considering this matter of evil-speaking, some think, Is my motive right? They forget that their motive in speaking derogatively of others has *nothing to do* with the Apostle's injunction. No matter *what* the motive, we are *not to speak evil*. The question is not, Did I have a *good* intention or a *bad* one? but, Am I speaking *evil*? Am I *saying anything* contrary to the Golden Rule--something that I would not wish to have said of *me*? *We would that we could* instil this thought into the hearts and minds of every reader of this journal.

IS REPORTING VIOLATION OF RULES EVIL-SPEAKING?

Now comes another question, How should we apply the injunction of our text in the case of the home, for instance, or the office? Suppose that we are connected with an office or a home where certain rules are laid down for the government of that office or home. Would it in such a case be evil-speaking on our part to report any violation of those rules? We do not consider this evil-speaking. If we were ourselves violating those rules, the person who would report us would be doing right--not doing us evil or wrong or injury. By not reporting the misdemeanor or violation of rules, the person would be encouraging in us a continuation of the wrong course.

God's people are supposed always to have no other than good motives for any course pursued. To have any but a good motive in dealing with others would be to have a murderous motive. We are not, therefore, to take the motive into consideration. But a person who accepts a position in an office, a home or an institution accepts also the conditions and sundry rules connected with such a position. Doubtless nearly all rules and regulations in an office or home are made, not with the view of injuring any one, but for the general welfare of the business or the family or whatever it may be. Hence the observance of all these obligations should be considered a *serious* responsibility. One should not report an infraction of rules in an evil way, but merely as a *fact*.

It is not necessary for the one who informs to judge the heart of the one reported. It is not a question of a bad heart. If one has a foolish brain, or is forgetful or inattentive and violates important rules, it is not judging the heart to report such a case--and especially where there is a *rule* that such cases be reported. It is merely a matter of *duty*--a thing that is *required*, and is both necessary and proper. We see this principle laid down in God's workmanship in our bodies. If something occurs in the body--for instance, if a finger is being pinched-- the nerves immediately telegraph to the brain. If a foot is hurt, the fact is telegraphed to the brain at once. Suppose there were no means of communicating the injury of a member of the body to the brain. Suppose there were no nerves of sensation to convey the message. One might not know whether or not he had lost a finger or a toe. He would not know when he had lost a foot, until he stumbled and fell.

SUBJECT NOT TO BE DISCUSSED WITH THE OFFENDER

We should not be always looking to see if our own personal matters are being impinged. We know that we, as well as others, have imperfections. If others inadvertently tread upon our toes, we know that we are likely to sometimes tread on others' toes. But personal matters are different from those that belong to the family or to the office. It is not busyboding to report violations of the rules of the house or of the office. It is to the interest of every member of a family or an institution that the interests of the whole body be looked after, in a proper and reasonable way.

It would not be proper for any one in an office to attempt to set straight every one else in the office. It is not for any one to go around and correct others; this is not his business. But if another is breaking rules, it is his business to report the facts--the *facts*, without any coloring whatever. If we would do otherwise, if each one who notes an infraction would go to the one who violated the rules, and thus attempt to settle all the affairs of the office or the family, there would be continual confusion. The one who broke the rule would be disposed to defend himself and to say, "My course

was all right, and it is none of your affair whether that gate was left open or shut," etc. But if that gate is left open, it is your *duty* to report the matter to the proper authority, and thus you are relieved of the responsibility of the affair. This is not a personal matter, such as to be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-18. It would not be our duty to tell Tom, Dick, Harry, Mary or Jane about the matter. There is just one person to whom we should tell it; and the report should be made with all kindly feeling.

One would soon get himself into trouble if he were to try to run an entire house or office by going to various ones to endeavor to set them right. But if there were a new-comer, and he were unintentionally violating a rule, it might be well to say; It is a rule of the house to do thus and so. But it would not be proper to mention this fact to him more than once. A second violation should be reported, though in a loving spirit.

MISCELLANEOUS CASES

Applying the question to our proper course in the Church, in matters relating to ourselves personally, we see where our *individual* responsibility lies. "If thy brother trespass against *thee*, go and tell him his fault *between thee and him alone*." Our Lord does not refer to what he does against some one else, but against "thee." "Well," some one may object, "I think he was doing something against so-and-so." We have heard some one say: "I think Brother So-and-so does not treat his wife right." We reply, "That is *his business and his wife's business*; it is *not your business*. Your business is to look after your *own* wife or husband, your *own* parents, your *own* children, and let *other* people alone. We advise that you practise on *yourself*. Do your duty in respect to your *own* affairs, and refrain from comments on those of *others*."

But suppose we saw something radically wrong, suppose we were going along the street and saw a man cruelly beating a horse, should we say nothing? In such a case, if we saw a policeman, we might say, "Will you take notice of how that man is abusing that horse?" Or it might be reported to the humane society, if there were one in the locality. If a parent were brutally beating a child, or something of that kind, it would be proper to report the matter to the authorities. But it is not the business of every one to go about attempting to straighten out matters in general. The world is full of evil, and will be until the Kingdom shall take control.

We think that as far as the Church is concerned the number of difficulties we see in the world would better be let alone as a rule; for if we should start out to right everything that is wrong, we would not have any time left for serving the King of kings and Lord of lords. Our time is limited enough, at best. People already misjudge us; therefore we do well not to add unnecessarily to the opposition. If the time ever came when we were through with all our duties to the Church and to our families, then we might see to some of these outside matters. But we have very little time, and it leaves us very small opportunity to attend to any other matters except our necessary duties and our service for the Lord and the brethren. And for this we should be very thankful; for then if there is opposition against us, it will be only because we have been faithful to our Heavenly King.

Our King has not given us authority as yet to set the matters of the world straight. But we are instructed that we should, as we have opportunity, make known the principles of righteousness, without getting into any dispute. When our King comes in and begins His Reign, and we are exalted with Him, we will show the world what a government should be! But, indeed, it seems surprising how good the laws are even now. We are simply amazed as we think of the good laws of the State of New York, for instance. It is wonderful how the State tries to take care of the interests of the majority, and how much is done for the people; we are glad that the poor world has been able to do so well. We admire what they have done under such adverse conditions. What a grand time it will be, and what a grand world it will be, when everything is under the Law of Righteousness!

ANOTHER PHASE OF THE QUESTION

But coming back to this matter of evil-speaking in the Church; suppose that a brother has been nominated for the position of Elder or Deacon, and suppose that in our judgment he is unfit for such an office, for certain reasons known to us, but not known to the rest of the Ecclesia. What should be our course in the matter? We are admonished to speak evil of no man. Should we then get up and say, "Brethren, I consider Brother A. wholly unfit to be an Elder; I know that he did thus-and-so; that he cheated a woman out of a sum of money"--or whatever the charge might be. Shall we say this? No, indeed! Is it our duty to speak *evil* in the interests of the Church, to do *evil* that *good* may come? Certainly not! But the old creature always wants a chance to speak evil; give him half a chance and he will soon tell all that he knows!

Then what shall we do? Well, if we were ourself a member of that congregation, we think we would go over and speak to the brother thus nominated, and say, "Brother A., there are certain matters which I have learned about you which I do not wish to mention to anybody. I would not wish to speak evil of you at all, dear brother. But I believe that this feature of your life is wrong, and that it would not be right for this Congregation to elect you. I do not wish to tell them about this matter. I wish to ask you if you will refuse to serve. If you promise that you will decline to be elected, that is all that is necessary. Or if you think that my point is not well taken, just state the matter publicly to them. If you do not do this, and do not refuse to be elected, then I must state the matter publicly--I will have to tell what I know; for you know it is as I state it. I have come to you in kindness and have no desire to injure you."

If the brother answers, "Well, Brother _____, I will decline the nomination; and as regards the matter you mention, I am trying to get the better of it"--then we would tell him we are very glad. We believe that we would in this way do that brother good. We would also be preserving the Class from what would be hurtful or contentious, and would be keeping the peace. If, on the other hand, the brother should be disputatious, we would say to him, "You may be sure that I will explain this matter to the Church, if you do not decline the nomination; for thereby you are saying that you approve your course in life and are standing by it."

But if the matter were something that occurred in the brother's life long ago, he might be entirely changed by now--in the matter of a year, or two years, or five years, or whatever. We would be glad if he were changed from the old course. Then we might go to the brother and say, "Brother, I notice that you stood for election. Is your life entirely changed?" If he replied, "Yes, Brother; it is changed entirely," then we would be glad. But if he got angry and told us it was none of our business, we would say, "Now, Brother, I must make a report of this to the Church. You are indicating by your manner that you are advocating the same course that you took before. If I had done such a wrong, and continued to do wrong, I would wish to have my course checked. So I shall report this matter, that the Class may consider again whether they will have you for an Elder (or a Deacon)." But suppose that the Brother should not be nominated for office in the Church? Then we would consider that his past was none of our affair.

A CONCLUDING WORD OF EXHORTATION

Anything injurious to the real interests of another should never be spoken. We cannot be too careful of our words concerning others. There seems to be a tendency with some of the Lord's children to indulge in confidences with others of the brethren and to relate incidents that *reflect* upon another brother or sister, that *show up* certain manifestations of weakness in that one. The disposition that thus exposes the imperfections of the brethren is *surely not* the love that *covers*. (**1 Peter 4:8.**) We know some who have been long in the narrow way, who do not seem even yet to have overcome this disposition. Do they forget that they *themselves* have weaknesses perhaps as pronounced as the brother or sister whom they criticize? The very fact that they ignore the Master's injunction along the

line of our text proves their *own lack* of development. Yet these would probably resent the implication that they are guilty of evil-speaking.

The *sooner* every follower of Christ comes to see that all this is *slander*, that it is *besmirching* the good name of a brother or sister, that it is a *direct violation* of the repeated injunction of the Word of God, and that defamation is theft of another's reputation, the sooner they will see this subject as it really is, *in all its hideousness--as it must appear in the sight of the Lord*. Once seeing the matter from the Divine standpoint, the only true standpoint, the child of God must surely awaken to the greatest possible energy in overcoming *such works of the flesh and of the Devil*. Let *each one* who reads these words search his or her own heart and think over his or her own conduct, and then ask the question, "*Is it I?*"

Let every one who hopes to be accounted worthy of a place in the Kingdom, so soon to come, *purge out the old leaven of malice, envy, backbiting and strife*, if any yet remain, that he or she may become indeed a *copy* of God's dear Son. The flesh is very seductive, and is inclined to make all manner of excuses for itself. Let each one make this a matter of personal heart-searching. There is, we believe, only a *very little while remaining* in which to perfect our characters. Let us pray more earnestly than ever, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth! Keep *Thou* the door of *my lips!*"

R5122 [sel]

Those Christians who are Elders in the School of Christ and who are therefore qualified to teach others, are not only outwardly clean, but inwardly also. They are washed by the water of the Word from the meanness, the filthiness of the flesh. No longer the slaves of sin, they are not controlled by the desires and the weaknesses of the fallen flesh and the spirit of the world. They do not bear the fruits of unrighteousness--anger, malice, hatred, strife, slander, evil speaking, evil surmising.-- 2 Cor. 7:1.

R4770 [sel]

WHAT "CORRUPT COMMUNICATION" SIGNIFIES EPHESIANS 4:29

CORRUPT communication is the spreading of evil report or message instead of good. Our text might be understood to mean a corrupting communication according to the course of ordinary conversation. Our minds might get us into all kinds of difficulty with ourselves and with others, if we did not keep a rein upon them and hold them within certain bounds; but our tongues might do even more injury than our minds. What we may think injures only ourselves; but if our tongues come into the matter, not only are our own minds defiled, but there is contagion, there is rancor; for the tongue spreads the matter all around. And whether the matter be true or false, the influence is corrupting, degrading, tending, perhaps, at times even toward immorality.

It would appear that not only amongst the worldly, but amongst the Lord's people there is a tendency to relate little incidents or make little remarks which, while not necessarily sinful, tend to cause sprouts of evil to develop. It is along this line that the Apostle says we should let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth. If, by any mischance, any corrupting information has come to our attention, we should see to it that it goes no further. We have sometimes wondered whether it is the quality of the natural mind to use the tongue to the disadvantage of others, or whether evil spirits have something to do with it.

Let us, as the Apostle enjoins, drop evil communications; shun them, and hold fast only to that which is edifying--the word "edifying" having in it the thought of an edifice, a building, the up-building of each other.

R4597

TO WHAT DEGREE SHOULD WE CONFESS FAULTS?

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed."--James 5:16.

THIS text represents a general principle of humility and willingness to make acknowledgment when we commit a fault, particularly to the one against whom the fault or wrong has been committed, with due apology and reparation so far as possible. It is quite proper for us to freely concede that we are not perfect, and no one should attempt to pose as perfect, but rather to acknowledge what the Scriptures declare that "there is none righteous, no, not one"; that we are merely righteous in our intentions and efforts and are trusting for full covering in the sight of God through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There might be times when the confession of a fault should be made publicly to the advantage of others and if we feel sure that the telling of our own shortcoming would be of advantage to others, we should not hesitate to tell of the matter in a proper way with a view to assisting others; but our thought is that in general we do well, not only to hide our imperfections, but that it should be our daily endeavor to put our faults away completely.

In this passage, however, the Apostle has a deeper thought; he is discussing here the case of one who has committed a sin that has alienated him from God, causing a cloud to come between them. It has been a repetition of sins, or something to this effect. He is spiritually sick, whether physically sick or not. The prescription for him is that he call for the Elders of the Church that they may pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick" (the spiritually sick, we think), "and though he has committed trespasses or sins they shall be forgiven him." The brother is not in a condition to advocate his own cause with the Lord, and the Lord therefore arranged it so that we should feel a sympathy with our brother and go to his relief and make intercession for him. Not that our intercessions would avail of themselves; it must be the intercession of our Advocate that would avail for the wrongs and imperfections before justice; but our Advocate may at times thus withhold himself for the good of one in error and for the sake of drawing out the sympathy of the brethren who have knowledge of the case, that they may seek to assist, remembering themselves lest they also should be tempted, lest they also should fall from their steadfastness, and that therefore the spirit of sympathy and mutual helpfulness may be encouraged in the Church.

There is nothing that would be in the way of an Elder Brother in the Church praying for one of the fellow-members of the Body of Christ or against the members of the Church praying for each other in general without special request. This would be entirely proper. If one should see a brother taking a wrong course, he should not only pray for him, but should seek to restore such a one in the spirit of humility by calling attention to the course he has taken, as wisely as he may be able; but of course the matter could not go so far under such circumstances as under the circumstances above recited--that the sick one should call for the Elders to pray for him, realizing his own need.

Not merely should the Elders pray for those whom they see going astray, but the Lord has put a special responsibility upon every member of the Church, every member of the Body, to look out for all other members to the extent of ability and opportunity, yet there could not be the same degree either of responsibility or of propriety in a younger brother in the Church attempting to correct and

rebuke and exhort, etc., an Elder Brother. The Apostle says to Timothy, "Rebuke not an Elder, but entreat him as a father"; thus we see what a younger brother in the Lord's family might do, if he saw what he thought to be a deflection from the proper course. But he should feel a hesitancy about approaching the matter and feel also that he would be laboring under a disadvantage and would not be as likely to accomplish good results as if he were one of more experience. Therefore it would be wise for him to pray for the person in secret for a while, rather than be too free about giving advice. But if he finally thought it necessary, it would perhaps be wiser for him to speak to some of the Elders of the Church and ask them for their opinion; or if they thought it would be wise that the brother be spoken to by them.

We are not supposing that he is imagining evil--"evil speaking"--about the person, but that he has some absolute knowledge about some wrong qualities of disposition, wrong course of life, something he knows to be wrong, something that is outwardly seen, something that is not merely imagined. We realize that many of the things that comprise evil speaking, etc., are purely imaginary, such as, "I thought he was going to do so," and "I thought she was doing so," or "I thought she might have been intending to do" thus and so. These things are classed with evil speaking. In these cases the brother should make the subject a matter of prayer to see that he is not busy-bodying in other people's affairs; that he is not setting up his judgment in a matter that is of no great importance; that it is something really serious and disastrous to the brother and dangerous to his interests as a New Creature in Christ Jesus.

The general course, however, should be to go to the person alone, as our Lord instructed in Matthew 18:15; the going to an Elder would be only in the case of some very serious matter in which the person felt that his own power to set the matter right was entirely insufficient. It is our belief that those instances would be very few. If the matter is a trespass against himself, it would be his duty to go to the person alone; if it is something against the Church or that is outwardly immoral or wrong or a violation of some recognized principle of righteousness, it would seem to be on a little different plane and would call for someone who would be more in authority, since it is not the rights of the individual that are trespassed upon, but the interests of the Church or the Truth or the Lord's cause. In such cases the Elders would no doubt be the better able to judge and would know better how to approach the matter.

R2156

KEEP THY TONGUE FROM EVIL

JAMES 3:1-13

"Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile."--Psa. 34:13.

"BE NOT many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment" (Revised Version). Thus the Apostle indicates that what he has to say concerning the great influence of the tongue is directed largely to those amongst believers who attempt to be teachers; who have a greater responsibility than if they were not teachers. It is not his wish to deter those who have ability, a gift in this direction, but rather to caution all as to the responsibility of the position they thus take. If they possess an eloquent tongue it may be a channel for a great blessing, swaying large numbers to the Lord, the truth and the way of righteousness; or, on the other hand, if contaminated with error, the tongue can do almost untellable harm --injury to faith, to morals, to good works. It is indeed true, that whoever exercises the gift of teaching lays himself open to increased responsibility in the sight of God and men.--See Matt. 5:19; Rom. 2:20,21; 1 Pet. 5:3; Titus 1:11; 1 Tim. 1:7; 2 Tim. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:1.

The warning in this lesson is not against the tongue itself, but against the power which we exercise upon others by the use of our tongues. Probably every person of experience will fully agree

with the statement that the tongue is potent in its influence beyond any other member of the body, for either good or evil. Experience teaches also that with the vast majority it is easier to control any other organ than the tongue. So skilful a servant is it that every ambition and passion and inclination of the fallen nature seeks to use it as a servant or channel for evil. It requires, therefore, on the part of the Christian, increased vigilance, wisdom and care so to govern this member of his body and bring it into subjection to the new mind in Christ, that it shall be, not a hindrance to himself or to others, but, on the contrary, a help in the narrow way. As the bit in the horse's mouth will move and control his strength, and as the small rudder to a vessel will direct or change its course, so the tongue and the pen, its representative, may influence and turn about large numbers of people, for good or ill. How important, therefore, is the tongue, and how much more frequently do we find it employed as an agency for evil than as an agency for good, to pull down the faith rather than to build up the faith, to implant seeds of discord and discontent rather than those which will produce righteousness and peace! While this is specially true in the worldly, it is true to a considerable extent amongst God's people; and each should remember that to some extent he is a teacher, and day by day is either forwarding or hindering the cause of truth, righteousness and peace.

In the unregenerate world the tongue is indeed a "fire" causing no end of burning of wrath, envy, hatred, strife and everything that defileth the entire body, stimulating all the fallen passions and desires. No wonder the apostle declares figuratively that the tongue itself seems to be set on fire of gehenna--the second death. Its burning not only tends to bring its master but others to destruction.

In the statement, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made in the likeness of God," we should not understand the writer to refer to himself and to the Church as using their tongues for such unholy purposes, but as speaking for the whole world, some use the tongue to praise God and some use it to blaspheme his holy name and to curse their fellow creatures. It is a willing servant in whatever direction it is guided; and hence the importance of having so important a servant and member rightly guided. Apparently, however, there were some in the Church who out of the same mouth rendered thanks to God and curses to fellow creatures--perhaps not often curses in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but curses in the sense of injurious words, which would lead to a baneful or cursed or evil condition; for every false teaching is a curse to those who receive it. In this sense of the word at least, many out of the same mouth send forth both good and evil influences. This is a wrong condition, and hence the importance of the warning, "My brethren, be not many teachers." Whoever would be a fountain from which would go forth the divine Word, carrying blessing and refreshment and strength, should see to it that bitter waters, false doctrines that would cause a curse, an injury--dishonoring God and perverting his Word--should not find in them a channel of utterance.

In the choice of leaders for meetings the "tongue" qualification, as here laid down should not be overlooked. The *fiery tongued* should not be chosen, but the meeker, the moderate, who "bridle" their tongues and endeavor carefully to "speak as the oracles of God" only. Such tongues *constrain*, while others more frequently wound and repel. The Word of the Lord is quick and powerful and *sharp* and cuts "to the heart" without bitter and acrimonious and uncharitable human expletives to enforce it. Hence the divine instruction that we "speak the truth in love."

The lesson closes with an exhortation to those who have the qualifications of teachers in the Church (wisdom and knowledge) to manifest themselves not merely by words and teachings, but also by godly lives and good works in meekness of wisdom.

While this lesson is pointed specially toward "teachers," it should be regarded by all. It is an old and true saying that "Kind words can never die," and it would be equally true to say, "Unkind words never die." Indeed, the latter live much the longer in a majority of cases--in worldly hearts especially. Let us each and all redouble our energy in subjugating our tongues, that they may always bless and "minister grace to the hearers."--Read *Eph. 4:29*.

BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."--Eph. 5:15,16.

THE WORD "circumspect" is from *circum*, signifying *around*, and *spectus*, signifying *to look, to watch*. The true Christian pathway is so narrow, so beset with tests and pitfalls and wiles of the evil one that, if we walk carelessly even (not to say wickedly), we will be in great danger of mishap. It requires not only that we look all around at every step, but more than this, it requires that we be wise,--wiser than our fellow creatures of earth--wise with the wisdom that cometh from above, which is pure, peaceable, loving; yet first of all loyal to the Lord and his Word.

At a centre to which flow by mail the records of the trials and difficulties through which many of the Lord's people are called to pass, we are in position to know that their trials are now more numerous and more severe than for a long time at least. Appeals for prayer on their behalf and for counsel respecting the *way* of the Lord come by nearly every mail from tried ones who are anxious to "walk circumspectly." These are gladly answered, to the best of our ability,--pointing out the Scriptural lines that must guide all who would walk with the Lord.

We now wish to call attention to some general principles, applicable to every member of the body of Christ, at every time; and especially necessary to be remembered and practiced at the present time, because of the special activity of our Adversary;--"because the days are evil." For it would appear that, as in the "harvest" of the Jewish age, so in the present "harvest" of the Gospel age, opposition prevails not only in the synagogues, from the Scribes and Pharisees, but in the home circle--between parents and children, and husbands and wives--and among the Lord's people. And in proportion as the Adversary seeks to stir up strife, let each of the consecrated be the more on guard to give no avoidable offence either in word or deed. "Walk circumspectly,...because the days are evil," -days of special trial and testing.

HELPFUL RULES FOR OUR DAILY LIFE

The rules we have to suggest are as follows:--

I. Let each resolve to mind his own business.

The Scriptural injunctions along this line caution us not to be busy-bodies in other people's affairs. Everyone of experience in life has learned that this is a good rule; yet few walk by this rule, circumspectly. If we have not sufficient of our own business and of the Lord's service to fill our hands and moments and mouths, there is something wrong with us that needs careful prayer and study of the divine Word to set right.

This does not mean that we should be indifferent to the welfare of others under our care, or for whom we are in any degree responsible; but, even in doing for these we should be careful to recognize their rights and the rights of others, and specially careful not to exceed our own rights. Let us never forget that *justice* must govern in our interferences with the affairs of others, tho we may not require full justice in respect to our own interests, but exercise mercy.

II. We should exercise great patience with others and their faults--more than in dealing with ourselves and our own short-comings.

When we remember that the whole world is mentally as well as physically and morally unsound through the fall, it should make us very considerate for their failings. Since the Lord is graciously willing to cover our blemishes with the merit of the precious blood, we cannot do less than be "very pitiful" and of tender compassion towards others;--even tho their failings be greater or different from our own. This general rule is specially applicable to your own children. Their defects to some extent came from you or through you; hence, in dealing with their faults, you should do just

as in correcting your own faults,--earnestly, rigorously, for their correction in righteousness, but sympathetically, mercifully, lovingly.

III. Do not be touchy and easily offended. Take a kindly, charitable view of the words and acts of others. A trifling slight or rebuff could well be passed unnoticed--covered with the mantle of generosity and love. A serious offense should be assumed to be *unintentional*, and inquiry should be kindly made in words that would not stir up anger, but in "speech seasoned with grace." In a majority of cases it will prove that no offense was meant.

This rule in the Scriptures comes under the instructions not to indulge in "evil surmisings,"--imagining evil intentions and motives behind the words and acts of others. "Evil surmisings" is ranked by the Apostle as contrary to the words of our Lord Jesus, opposed to godliness, and of the same spirit as envy and strife--of a corrupt mind, works of the flesh and the devil.--**1 Tim. 6:3-5; Gal. 5:19-21.**

The other side of this subject is brought out by the Apostle's injunction respecting the elements of the spirit of love, of which God's people are begotten and which they are to cultivate daily,--the development of which is one of the chief proofs of their being "overcomers." He says, "Love suffereth long and is kind, ...is not easily offended, *thinketh no evil*,...beareth all things, believeth all things [favorably], hopeth all things, endureth all things."

It may be urged that such a disposition would be imposed upon frequently, by the evilly disposed. We reply that those who possess this spirit of love are not necessarily obtuse nor soft: their experiences in cultivating this degree of love have served to develop them and make them of "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." They will be *cautious* where there is even the appearance of evil, even while avoiding the imputation of evil intentions until forced to concede them by indisputable evidence. Besides, it would be better far to take some trifling risks and suffer some slight losses, many times, than to accuse even one innocent person. And the Lord who has directed this course is abundantly able to compensate us for any losses experienced in following his counsel. He is both able and willing to make all such experiences work together for *good* to those who love him. He places *obedience* to his arrangements first (even before sacrifice) saying, "Ye are my disciples, *if ye do* whatsoever I command you."

Whoever neglects the Lord's commands along this line of "evil surmisings" weaves a web for his own ensnarement, however "circumspectly" he may walk as respects other matters; for, a heart impregnated with doubt, and suspicion toward fellow creatures, is more than half prepared to doubt God: the spirit of sourness and bitterness implied is at war with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love. Either the one or the other will conquer. The wrong spirit must be gotten rid of, or it will defile the new creature and make of him a "castaway." On the contrary, if the new nature conquer, as an "overcomer," it will be along this line: if evil surmisings are overcome, half the battle against present difficulties and besetments is won. The surmisings are from the heart, and lead us either to good words and acts, or to evil words and acts.

IV. If you have been slandered, you may explain, to set yourself right, either publicly or privately; but surely avoid doing more than this. If you slander in return you make two wrongs out of one. Let no man render evil for evil to any one;--no, not even if what you should tell be the truth, while what your neighbor told was falsehood. And in contradicting and explaining false charges, remember not to go beyond this to make counter-charges against your defamer; for thus you also would become a slanderer.

This is the Scriptural rule. We are to do unto others as *we would* that they should do unto us, and not *as they do* unto us. The wrongs done toward us will never justify wrong doing on our part. God's true children are to have no sympathy with Satan's delusion --"Do evil that good may result." But while no Scripture forbids our explaining away the errors and false statements of slanderers, experience proves that, if we followed Satan and his deluded servants of unrighteousness around, to contradict every adverse criticism and evil report, we should be kept more than busy. And if Satan

found us willing to do so, he would no doubt lead us such a chase as would prevent our having any time to tell forth the good tidings of great joy; thus he would gain a victory, and we should lose one.

Rather let us commit our reputation to the Lord, as a part of the sacrifice we laid at his feet when we surrendered all in obedience to the "call" to run the race for the great prize of our high calling. If thus we suffer some loss of reputation, by reason of our resolution not to neglect the King's business to fight for our own tinsel, we may be sure that it will count with him as so much *endured* for Christ's sake; and so much the more will be our reward in heaven, when the battle is over and the victors are crowned.

Meantime, however, it behooves each of the Lord's people to be as circumspect as possible at every step of the way. Remember that in proportion to faithfulness and zeal in letting the light shine we will have the malignant opposition of our great Adversary, who seeks to turn and twist and maliciously distort and discolor our every word and act;--because the accuser of the brethren can find no real charges; and because he is exceeding mad against the humble servants of the truth, as he was against the Chief Servant--our Lord. He, let us remember, was crucified as a law-breaker, at the instance of the prominent ones of the church, and betrayed to them by one of his own disciples.

"Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds" when attacked by the Adversary,--whoever may be his agents and whatever their missiles. He cannot harm but will only increase our reputation in the Lord's sight, if we endure faithfully; and he can do no outward harm that God cannot overrule for the *good* of his cause--tho that good may sometimes mean "siftings" of chaff and tares from the wheat.

V. Evil speaking, backbiting and slandering are strictly forbidden to God's people, as wholly contrary to his spirit of love--even if the evil thing be true. As a preventive of anything of the nature of slander, the Scriptures very carefully mark out *one only way of redress of grievances*, in *Matt. 18:15-17*.

Even advanced Christians seem to be utterly in ignorance of this divine ruling, and hence professed Christians are often the most pronounced scandal-mongers. Yet this is one of the few special, specific commandments given by our Lord; and considered in connection with the statement, Ye are my disciples *if ye do* whatever I command you, its constant violation proves that many are not far advanced in discipleship.

Let us look carefully at this rule which, if followed, would prevent gossip, "evil-speaking," "backbiting."

Its first provision, for a conference between the principals *alone*, implies candor on the part of the accuser who thinks that he has suffered; and whom here we will call A. It implies his thinking no evil of the accused, whom we will style B. They meet as "brethren," each thinking his own course the right one, to discuss the matter; to see whether they can come to the same view. If they agree, all is well; the matter is settled; peace prevails; the threatened break has been averted, and no one is the wiser.

If they cannot agree, A may not start a scandal by relating his version;--not even to confidential friends may he disclose the matter, saying, "Don't mention it; and especially don't say I told you." No; the matter is still *"between thee and him [A and B] alone."* If A considers the matter important, so as to wish to prosecute the subject further, he has but one way open to him, namely, to ask two or three others to go with him to B and hear the case from both sides and give their judgment respecting its right and wrong sides. These should be chosen (1) as persons in whose Christian character and good sense and spirit of a sound mind A himself would have confidence, peradventure they should favor B's view of the matter. (2) They should be chosen as with a view to B's appreciation of their advice, if they should give their judgment of the matter in A's favor.

It would, however, be wholly contrary to the spirit of justice as well as contrary to the spirit of the Master's instructions here, for A to "talk it over" with several friends from whom he desired to select these "two or three witnesses," to make sure that they favored his story (without hearing the other side) and would go to the conference *prejudiced*,--with their minds already determined against

B. No; the matter is between A and B *alone*, until the two or three friends are brought in to hear both sides of the dispute in the presence of both parties.

If the judgment of the "brethren" is against B, he should hear them, should accept their view of the matter as the just, reasonable one;--unless it involves some principle in which he cannot conscientiously acquiesce. If the "brethren" see the matter from B's standpoint, A should conclude that in all probability he had erred; and, unless conscience hindered, should accept the position and apologize to B and the brethren for the annoyance caused by his poor judgment. But none of the parties are at liberty to turn scandal-mongers and tell the matter, "confidentially," to others.

If the decision went against A, and he still felt that he was injured and had failed to get justice through a poor choice of advisers, he might (without violence to the principles laid down by our Lord) call other advisers and proceed as before. If their decision were against him, or if he felt that he could not trust to the judgment of any, fearing that all would favor B, he should realize that part at least of his trouble is self-conceit, and would do well to fast and pray and study lines and principles of justice more carefully. But A has gained no right to tell anything to the Church nor to anyone, either publicly or privately. If he does so, it marks him at once as disobedient to the Lord and exercised by a bad spirit, a carnal spirit,--contrary to the spirit of the truth, the spirit of love.

If the committee decide partly against B, and only partly in favor of A, the brethren (A and B) should endeavor to see the matter thus, and to arrange matters amicably. In this case there would be nothing respecting the matter to tell;--nothing that is anybody's business.

If the committee decide wholly against B and wholly in favor of A, and if B will not heed them and make reparation for the wrong or cease from injuring A, the latter is still not at liberty to become a scandal-monger; nor are the brethren of the committee. If A considers the matter of sufficient importance to justify further action, there is just one course open to him: he with the committee may lay the matter before the Church. Then the Church shall hear the matter, both sides, and *whichever* (A or B) shall refuse to recognize the advice of the Church shall be thereafter considered and treated by all as an outsider --as not of the Church, not to be fellowshiped; as dead, until such time as he may repent and reform;--a not very likely thing after rejecting such faithful treatment.

Thus did the Lord guard his true disciples from the insidious sin of slander which leads onward to other and grosser works of the flesh and the devil, and stops growth in the truth and its spirit of love. And let us note, too, that those who *hear* slanders and thus encourage slanderers in their wrong course, are *partakers of their evil deeds*; guilty partners in the violation of the Master's commands. God's true people should refuse to listen to slanders and should point the offender to the Lord's Word and the *only* method therein authorized. "Are we wiser than God?" Experience teaches us that we cannot trust to our own judgments and are on safe ground only when following the voice of the Shepherd explicitly.

If any Brother or Sister begins to you an evil report of others, stop him at once, kindly but firmly. "Have *no* fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather *reprove* them." Refuse to have any share in this violation of our Master's commands, which does great mischief in the Church. Supposing the Brother or Sister to be only a "babe" in spiritual matters, call attention to the Lord's ruling on the subject, *Matt. 18:15*, and *1 Tim. 5:19*. If the conversation is not directed to you but merely in your hearing, promptly show your disapproval by withdrawing.

If, after having his attention called to the Lord's command on this subject, the slanderer still persists in "evil-speaking," "back-biting" and telling you his "evil surmisings," reprove him more sharply, saying as you go,--I cannot, must not hear you; for if I did, I would be as criminal in the matter as you are--violating the Lord's command. And even if I were to hear your story, I could not believe it; for the Christian who does not respect the Lord's Word and follow his plan of redress for grievances, shows so little of the Lord's spirit that his word can not be trusted. He who twists and dodges the Lord's words would not hesitate to twist and misrepresent the words and deeds of fellow-disciples. Then withdraw fellowship from such until his error has been confessed with promises of

reform. If to any extent you listen to such conversation or express "*sympathy*" with it or the gossiper or slanderer, you are a partner in the sin and in all its consequences; and if a "root of bitterness" is thus developed, you are more than likely to be one of those "defiled" by it.--Heb. 12:15.

A slanderer is a *thief* according to worldly standard: as Shakespeare wrote, "He who steals my purse steals trash; but he who *steals* my good name takes that which doth not make him rich, but leaves me poor indeed." According to the Christian standard, still higher, as voiced by the Great Teacher, slanderers are *murderers*. (See Matt. 5:22; 1 John 3:15, Revised Version.) Thus seen, the very suggestion to slander is to be shunned, as of the spirit of Satan.--Jno. 8:44.

VI. God's people should beware of pride as they would avoid the most deadly plague.

This rule, always good, and well backed by Scripture, seems doubly needful to those who are blessed with the light of present truth. This may seem strange: it may be reasoned that the receiving of so much grander views of God's character and plan would make his people feel the more insignificant and humble, the more dependent on divine goodness, and the more trustful of God and the less trustful of themselves. And this should be the effect, always and ever: but alas, with very many it is not so.

Many get to feel that the knowledge of the plan of the ages proves them specially wise or great or good: they seem to forget that God hides the truth from the wise and great--that no flesh should glory in his sight. They love the truth selfishly, as dealers love their merchandise, for the sake of what they can get for it. If they cannot hope for wealth in exchange for the truth they can hope for small notoriety--to appear wiser than others, that they may dole it out in fragments and thus perpetuate their notoriety for wisdom, and gratify their pride or vanity. Such people do little to help circulate the present truth. If they cannot avoid it, they may mention MILLENNIAL DAWN or ZION'S WATCH TOWER or *Tabernacle Shadows* or *Food for Thinking Christians* or *About Hell* or *About Spiritism*; but when they do so it is usually with some disparaging remark; as for instance, that they "disagree in a good many things;" or that "they pin their faith to no man's coat sleeve but go to the Word of God direct;" or that "the author isn't much, merely reprinted what wiser people had written, and was endeavoring to make himself famous at their expense."

Beware of all such people; sooner or later they will fly the track entirely, and injure more than they ever helped. God does not wish such people to serve his cause, and will surely permit their vanity to stumble them,--however much their natural ability--and it is generally people of real or fancied ability who are thus afflicted with the spirit of pride and vanity. God opposeth the proud, but showeth his favor to the humble. We call every reader of our publications to *witness* that the author has never boasted of his *wisdom* or *originality*, either publicly or privately. We have boasted in the *truth*, and shall continue to boast of it--that no human philosophies can hold a candle to its brilliant electric ray; but we have never boasted of being its originator. On the contrary, it is because we did not manufacture it, but because God has revealed it "in due time" as "meat in due season," and because it is so much more wonderful than we or any other human being could originate or concoct, that we have confidence that none other than God is its Author and its Revealer.

If by the grace of God we have in any degree been used by him in serving present harvest truths to others, we rejoice in the *service*, and will continue to strive to be faithful to our stewardship: but as for vanity on this account, we see no room or reason for it. We are well aware that our Master could readily have found many others as fit and worthy of the service, and many more capable naturally: we can only suppose, therefore, that herein as previously--"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty,...and the things that are despised...to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."--1 Cor. 1:27-29.

We therefore caution all who by the grace of God have been translated out of darkness into God's marvelous light, that they walk proportionately the more humbly before the Lord: because, if the light received should become darkness, how great would be the darkness, and how hopeless the

condition. It would, as the Apostle declares, be better for such never to have known the way of life. If salt lose its flavor it is good for nothing more than sand.

VII. Be pure: maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men. Begin with the heart--the thoughts: harbor no thoughts that in any sense of the word would be evil. To make sure of this, have Christ Jesus as your pattern, well and much before your mind. When evil is obtruded upon you, either from without or from within, lift your heart to him in prayer for the grace promised to help in every time of need. Keep constantly near you the thought and prayer, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

VIII. While treasuring and seeking to follow the various specific commands of Scripture, let us seek more and more to understand and come into sympathy with the *principles which underlie* the divine law: this will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord's Word. Indeed, as we get to understand and sympathize with the principles of divine law, to that extent we are getting at the spirit of the divine Word.--See *Psa. 119:97-105*.

IX. Shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit or disposition of Christ-- contrary to love.

A certain amount of combative courage is demanded in overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil and their various snares, and this fighting disposition may become a valuable aid to ourselves and the Master's cause if rightly and wisely directed;--against sin, first in ourselves and secondly in others; if used for the Lord and his people, and against Satan and all his powers of darkness and superstition. This in the Scriptures is called fighting the good fight: and we all should be gallant soldiers in this battle for right and truth, lovingly defending our Captain's honor and his people's liberties.

But such a good use of combativeness is not pleasing to the Prince of this world, and he will seek to pervert what he cannot directly use. Consequently he attempts with some to make combativeness appear a chief virtue: he encourages them to fight everything and everybody;--the brethren more than the powers of darkness;--nominal churchmen more than the errors and ignorance which blind them and make them such. Indeed his desire is to get us to "fight against God."

Let us be on guard on this point. Let us first of all *judge ourselves* lest we cast a stumbling block before others: let us fight down in our own hearts the wrong spirit which seeks to make mountains out of trifles and disposes us to be captious and contentious over little and nonessentials. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the truth be not from motives of self glorification; but from love for the truth, love for the Lord and love for his people, the brethren. If love be the impelling spirit or motive, it will show itself accordingly, in loving, gentle, patient, humble efforts toward the fellow-servants; and let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the spirit, the Word of God," which is quick and powerful, do all the *cutting*.

X. Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, strife, hatred. Give these no place in your heart even for a moment; for they will surely do *you* great injury, aside from leading to the injury of others. Keep your heart, your will, your intentions and desires full of love toward God and all his creatures,--the most fervent toward God, and proportionately toward all who have his spirit and walk in his directed way.

XI. Do not trust your conscience. If it were a sufficient guide you would have no need of the Scriptures. The majority of people have as good as no conscience; for they are blind to the principles and laws of God given to guide conscience. And still worse off than these are those mentioned in *1 Tim. 4:2*. Hence the imperative necessity for carefully heeding the Lord's Word, and walking *circumspectly* according to its light.

XII. Do not be bold, except for the right, the truth. So far as yourself is concerned preserve a reverential *fear*--of sin, and of displeasing the Master, and of losing the great reward--"the prize of

our high calling." Nearly all who "fall away," first lose all fear and become *self*-confident. They forget that it is only "If ye *do these things* ye shall never fall." (2 Pet. 1:5-10.) "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) Partly because of the loss of this proper *fear*, "It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance."

GOSSIP

Don't listen to gossip — you may be the next one.

He who tells on others shows his own lack of trustworthiness.

A gossip is one who can give you all the details without knowing any of the facts.

No glue can match the stickiness of rumors once they get a hold.

The difference between gospel and gossip is that the gospel is good news, while gossip is bad news.

So live, that if anyone speaks ill of you, none will believe it.

* * *

Part-7
MEETINGS

THOUGH YE BE ESTABLISHED

"I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth."--2 Peter 1:12.

WHAT things are here referred to? Assuredly the necessity of giving all diligence to add to our faith virtue [fortitude]; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance [self-control]; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity [love]:... For if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.--*Verses 5-11.*

To be established in the truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by "the law and the testimony" (*Isa. 8:20*), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its verity, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable: we know whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with him; we have partaken of his spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fulness of his grace as manifested in the wonderful divine plan of the ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fulness of the appointed times. This is what it is to be "established in the present truth." It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.

But though we be thus established in the present truth, we need to bear in mind that our election to the high position to which we are called is not yet *made sure*. The race for the prize of our high calling is still before us, and we are yet in the enemy's country, surrounded by many subtle and powerful foes, so that if we would be successful we must "fight the good fight of faith," remembering, too, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but [God's Truth is] mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds" of error and superstition and of inbred sin; and remembering, also, that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."-- *2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12.*

It is in view of these facts--of the warfare before us, of the subtlety of our temptations and of the weakness of the flesh--that the faithful Apostle Peter urges all diligence in the cultivation of the Christian graces and a continual calling to remembrance of the precious truths we have learned, that we may be strengthened thereby to make our calling and election sure. Faith is a good thing; but faith without virtuous works is dead; and to hold the truth in unrighteousness is worse than never to have received it. The truth is given to us for its sanctifying effect upon our hearts and lives. Therefore let it have free course and be glorified. Let its precious fruits appear more and more from day to day. Add to your faith virtue--true excellence of character, such excellence of character as will mark you as separate from the world and its spirit. In all such the world will see those moral qualities which they must approve, however they may oppose our faith. Add sterling honesty, truth and fair dealing in all business relations; moral integrity, in all social relations; manifestly clean hands and a pure heart, and a bridled tongue that works no ill to a neighbor. All of these the world has a right to expect from those who call themselves Christians; and all of these are indispensable features of that virtuous character which must be added to our faith. The clean hands will not dabble in anything that is not virtuous: they will have nothing to do with unrighteous schemes or projects in business. The pure heart will not devise evil things, or harbor evil thoughts, or plot mischief. And the bridled tongue will not be given to evil speaking, but will hold its peace when it cannot speak well and wisely. But the promptings of virtue go further than merely these negative features which refuse to do anything which would work ill to a neighbor; they incite not only to passive, but also to active, goodness--in

benevolent charity which seeks to alleviate suffering, to sympathize with sorrow, to comfort those in distress and to elevate and bless others --to assist "all men as we have opportunity."

To such a virtuous character we are counseled to add knowledge--the knowledge of God's character, that we may the more thoroughly imitate it, and of his truth, that we may more fully conform to its teachings: and to knowledge, temperance--moderation, self-restraint, in all things. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." We are not to be hasty and hot-tempered, or rash and thoughtless. But we should strive to be evenly balanced, thoughtful and considerate: our whole manner should be characterized by that carefulness which would indicate that we are ever mindful of the Lord's pleasure, of our responsibility to him as his representatives, and of our influence upon our fellow-men, to see that it always is for good, never for evil.

"And to temperance, patience." "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Yes, this grace smooths the way for every other, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline. Not a step of progress can be gained without the exercise of this grace of patience; and not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, or wins the approval of the world's conscience, or glorifies the God of all grace whose truth inspires it. It is long-suffering meekness earnestly striving to stem the tide of human imperfection and weakness, and endeavoring with pains-taking care to regain the divine likeness. It is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of truth and righteousness, and prompt to walk in them: it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

"And to patience, godliness"--a careful study and imitation of the divine character as presented in the divine Word.

"And to godliness, brotherly kindness"--an exercise and manifestation of the principles of the divine character toward our fellow-men.

"And to brotherly kindness, charity"--love. Kindness may be manifested where but little love exists toward the subject of such kindness; but we cannot long persevere in such acts of kindness before a sympathetic interest is awakened; and by and by that interest, continually exercised, deepens into love. And even though the subject may be unlovely in character, the love of sympathy for the fallen and degraded grows, until it becomes tender and solicitous and akin to that of a parent for an erring son.

Peter indeed describes a most amiable character, but who can consider it without feeling that to attain it will be a life-work. It cannot be accomplished in a day, nor a year, but the whole life must be devoted to it; and day by day, if we are faithful, we should realize a measure of growth in grace and of development of Christian character. It is not proper that we know the truth, and are contented to hold it in unrighteousness. We must see to it that the truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character. And if the truth is thus received into good and *honest* hearts, we have the assurance of the Apostle that we shall never fall, and that in due time we shall be received into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Hence we see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into its inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing, but to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the spirit is quite another.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

Feeling as we do the necessity of a deeper work of grace, both in our own hearts and in the hearts of all of the dear household of faith, the thought has occurred to us that more special effort in this particular direction on the part of us all would probably be of great benefit. We do not know through what discipline of faith and patience we may yet be called to pass in the approaching dark night of which we are forewarned, but "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and also, thank God, sufficient unto the day is the grace thereof, if we earnestly lay hold of it and patiently continue

in it. As each day brings its trials, so, if we have been rightly exercised by the trials, each day should bring its victories--thus leaving us strengthened and more firmly established in character, as well as in faith.

With the end in view of specially promoting the growth of Christian character, our suggestion, which has already been made and adopted by the congregation in Allegheny and many other places, is that wherever a few of the consecrated can arrange to meet together, it would be well to appoint a midweek meeting for this special purpose. Such a meeting should be devoted to worship, prayer and praise, and to brotherly exhortation, conference and counsel, but not to Bible study or controversy. All discussions of doctrinal matters should be eliminated from such a meeting, and such subjects as would elicit controversy avoided, leaving such matters for another meeting, at an appropriate hour on the Lord's day, when all meet together; the object being, not to ignore doctrine, nor to discourage Bible-study; but, while meeting this necessity at the one meeting (on the Lord's day), to devote the other (the mid-week meeting) to the other equal necessity, without distraction.

Our arrangement here in Allegheny and Pittsburgh is as follows: As our congregation is much scattered, we have them parceled into as many neighborhood gatherings as is necessary for the accommodation of all desiring to attend; and a leader is appointed for each meeting, discretion being observed as to capability. They should be brethren established in the faith--sound in doctrine, faithful and pious. These meetings are held on Wednesday evenings at the residence of some member of each little group. The meeting is opened with a hymn and prayer, the reading, by the leader, of Sunday afternoon's text; then each one is asked to give his or her personal experience as to progress in the narrow way--as to how he or she is growing in grace and striving to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. Here they may humbly tell of their victories, or speak of their trials, or ask for Christian counsel and sympathy in hard places, speaking more freely in such little gatherings than would be possible or proper in larger assemblies. Here they can hear each other's petitions for each other, and Christian love and sympathy flow the more freely from heart to heart.

The object kept in mind at these meetings is a fresh, living, weekly and daily experience with the Lord and in his service, and not merely a stale experience of the remote past. A clear past experience is good, but a clear present experience is better;-- much more vitally important. Doctrine is ignored at these meetings except as the word doctrine applies to all Scripture teachings, including hope, trust, obedience, godliness, prayer, etc. Too many, we find, have been contenting themselves with *knowing* the truth, without making special efforts to live it, daily and hourly. As honesty of heart and faith in the Redeemer's finished work and consecration to his service are necessary to a full entrance into the "holy," where the deeper features of the divine plan can be discerned and fully appreciated, so these qualities must remain, must abide, or the light will become darkness--you will be cast out of the light into the outer darkness in which the world and the nominal church grope after the phosphorescent glimmerings of error--Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy and Universalism.

The leader of such a meeting should study to adapt his counsel, correction or encouragement to the special needs of each of the little group over which he is placed, and his reverent piety and personal interest in each should inspire the confidence of all. We believe that such mid-week meetings prove steppingstones to higher attainments in the divine life, and that thus all may be greatly blessed and profited; and the whole body will be able the more effectually to minister to one another in spiritual things. On the middle Wednesday evening of each month the prayer feature is given more attention and an opportunity granted for all to address the throne of grace two or three in immediate succession. At a quarterly Sunday evening general meeting of the same character, we hear of the spiritual progress of the various little groups both from the leaders and the various attendants, and quarterly the leaders are transferred to other groups.

May the blessing of the Lord go with the suggestion, and may the outcome be a strengthening of the bond of Christian love and mutual sympathy and fellowship everywhere.

DAWN CIRCLES FOR BIBLE STUDY

IN our issue of Sept. 15, we commended these as profitable for the upbuilding of the Church by establishing each one in the general features of the complete plan of the ages, whereby alone all Scripture can be rightly divided and appreciated. This method has four specially commendable features. (1) It brings into use and study the entire range of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, instead of confining the attention to a few verses of one chapter. It is a *topical*, instead of a verse and chapter, study of the Bible. (2) It leads the mind and heart to refreshment in that which we all have proved to be rich and nutritive food from the Master's storehouse, and away from vain speculations which neither satisfy nor strengthen the heart. (3) It accustoms each one to think for himself, and to study to arrange his conceptions of the truth in harmony with all the Scripture statements bearing thereon, and also to express to others the truth which he sees. (4) These are the objects of all teachings in the Church, as the Apostle states them--"For the edifying of the saints *for the work of ministry.*"

We notice, however, that a few, very few we are glad to say, have totally mistaken the suggestions made respecting this kind of meetings, and understood us to advise the abandonment of the Bible and instead that the MILLENNIAL DAWN be *read*. Nothing could be farther from our thought. As for the mere *reading* of the BIBLE or the DAWN, that can be better done privately, each for himself.

On the contrary, the suggestion is to make Bible studies general; and as the light has come to us all by studying God's orderly plan as set forth in DAWN, so it will continue to become more and more clear in all its minutiae as we continue to study it from the same standpoint. If the Plan of the Ages gives the *only true outline* of the divine plan, and if we have learned that *outline* thoroughly, let us use the same helping hand, observe the same divine plan and order, in continuing the study of the minutiae of God's plan of the ages.

It is for this purpose that we advise "Dawn Circles for Bible Study;" and as an illustration of the proposed method we offer the following as a sample analysis of the first paragraph of DAWN, VOL. I., viz.—

- What constitutes the divine revelation?--2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16,17.
- When and how did sin come into the world?--Rom. 5:12; etc.
- Who is the "Sun of Righteousness"?--Mal. 4:1,2; Matt. 13:43; Dan. 12:3.
- When will this "Sun" arise?--Acts 3:19-21; Col. 3:4.
- What will its shining effect?--Mal. 4:1,2; Isa. 60:18,19; 25:7-9; Acts 3:23.
- What will be its "healing," and how performed?-- Rom. 5:18,19.
- Do sin and death, directly or indirectly cause present "weeping" and trouble? How?
- Upon what sure ground can we hope for the "morning" and its "joy"?--Rom. 5:6-8; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:3,21; 2 Pet. 1:16,19; Prov. 4:18; Job 14:13-15; Psa. 49:14,15.
- Will that "glorious day" be followed by a night?-- Rev. 21:21-25; Isa. 60:20,21.

Other Scriptures might be brought forward profitably, but all will see the necessity for not permitting too much latitude, and the leader of the class will exercise his best judgment in kindly reminding any who might be disposed to digress considerably. The class should contain several

Bibles, and we recommend that all meetings be opened and closed with praise and prayer. The plan of some of having pencils and noting the references in the margins of their DAWNS is also commended. It will be of great help to all when endeavoring again to prove the truth to the skeptical.

A Bible-study more interesting or more profitable than the foregoing could scarcely be imagined. In this everyone can take part; all can thus be assured of the firm foundation upon which the good tidings of great joy rest; all can edify and build *one another* up in the most holy faith; the "meat in due season," now provided by the Lord for all who feast at his table, is thus with an open Bible before the entire class, and each one may pass to the others refreshing portions.

A class of three would find abundant and rich Bible food for an hour, suggested by this one paragraph; and a larger class of say a dozen would scarcely get through with it at one meeting. We commend to all the little companies of the Lord's flock these "Dawn Circle Bible Studies" for one meeting in each week. They will tend to make *all* proficient in the understanding of God's Word which is a prerequisite to the required "work of ministry," serving it to others. (*Eph. 4:12*). It is a much safer plan than to meet to speculate and try to make types out of every person and every thing mentioned in the Bible, a plan that has led many (into pride of skill in making something out of nothing and thence) into "outer darkness." And it will generally be found much more profitable than to take any *chance* subject, or to be without some previously appointed subject. Each lesson should be thought out by all and especially by the leader or "elder." However, each class ought to be willing to consider any Bible topic suggested by any attendant, and considered by a majority of the class to be a profitable topic. For this purpose the DAWN lessons could be temporarily discontinued or, preferably, extra meetings could be appointed.

R1866

CONCERNING PROFITABLE MEETINGS

WE have received a number of requests from friends of the truth for advice as to the most profitable methods of conducting meetings. One Brother writes:

"A few brethren who have been reading DAWN express their willingness to meet somewhere to study in consecutive order, and I ask suggestions for a plan suited to beginners. Pray for us, that we may commence this study in the right way, and be the recipients of many blessings.

"Yours in the faith,
J. W. McLANE."

Another Brother recently removed to a new neighborhood says:

"I find in this locality a fine field for labor. Several here to whom I have given tracts already manifest interest. I have conversed freely with them on Bible subjects, and have their promise to attend meetings at my house. So if you can aid me by suggestions I will be thankful.

"I am, dear brother, yours in the service of the Master,
"JOSHUA L. GREEN."

Another Brother writes:--

"We have a number of persons here who wish to assemble themselves together for worship. We would be pleased to have some instructions from you as to how to go about it.

"I hope you can give us some way which will be satisfactory. Some of us have left the churches and are now free from all precepts of men. To speak for myself, I left the Presbyterian church.

"Yours in Christ,
C. C. FLEMING."

We are glad to note the increasing desire for the study of God's plan of the ages; and also to see that the importance of method and order are recognized in this. We give our advice as follows:--

(1) You would best first re-read some things already written which bear upon this subject--in our issues of May 1, '93, page 131; Sept. '93, page 259; Oct. 15, '93, page 307; Mar. 1, '94, page 73; April 1, '95, page 78; May 1, '95, page 109.

(2) Beware of "organization." It is wholly unnecessary. The Bible rules will be the only rules you will need. Do not seek to bind others' consciences, and do not permit others to bind yours. Believe and obey so far as you can understand God's Word to-day, and so continue growing in grace and knowledge and love day by day.

(3) The Bible instructs you whom to fellowship as "brethren;"--only believers who are seeking to walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Not believers of any and every thing, but believers of the Gospel record--that mankind is *fallen* into sin and its penalty, death, and that only in Christ is there salvation, "through faith in his blood" "shed for the remission of sins", as "a *ransom* [a corresponding price] for all." Any who merely believe in Christ as a noble and good person, a grand example of righteous living, etc., may be agreeable as neighbors or business acquaintances, but they are not "believers," and hence are not "brethren," any more than are Jews, Mohammedans, Infidels, publicans and sinners--for practically these also so acknowledge him.

(4) You come together, then, as God's children, bought back from sin and death with the great price, and resolved henceforth to live not unto yourselves, but unto him who died for you. (2 Cor. 5:15.) Your meetings should have certain objects in view, viz:--

- a) Worship, praise and prayer.
- b) Mutual helpfulness in waging victorious warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil within and without.
- c) And to these ends you meet also for the study of God's Word, which he provided for our instruction and help in the narrow way which leads to those blessings prepared by him for those who love him and who demonstrate their love by their efforts to serve, honor and obey him.

(5) Thus seen, a *knowledge* of doctrines is not our ultimate object in meeting, but the building up of characters, which, as attempted copies of the character of God's dear Son, will be "accepted in the Beloved." But God declares that *knowledge* of the doctrines which he has revealed in his Word will be of great value to us in our endeavors to grow in his grace.

Hence, after worship, praise and prayer, Bible study should be recognized in its two parts,--
(a) The study of God's plan,--what he tells us he is doing for us and for the world; what he has done; and what he will yet do; that we may be enabled as sons to enter into the very spirit of the great work of God and be intelligent co-workers with him. (b) The study of our duties and privileges in God's service, toward each other and toward those that are without, to the end that we may build up such characters as would be pleasing and acceptable to God now and in the age to come.

And since for general convenience these meetings should not last much longer than from one and a half to two hours, it will generally be found best to have at least two meetings per week, one for the consideration of Christian graces and testimony and mutual helpfulness; and the other for Bible study. And at every meeting our songs and prayers of thankful worship should ascend as incense before God; and in this worship all should share.

Amongst us, as in the early Church, the preaching of formal discourses is the exception, rather than the rule. The exception should be where some brother has the necessary qualifications--clear appreciation of the truth and ability to set it forth so as to be helpful to the Lord's flock, with qualifications also of voice, education, etc., and withal, surely one who is meek and not likely to become puffed up, or to preach himself, rather than the cross of Christ.

But, whether there be preaching or no preaching, the other meetings, in which all can and should take part (both brethren and sisters), should be kept up; and each of the saints (consecrated "believers") should seek in them to do good, as well as to get good.--See Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:11-32; 1 Thes. 5:11.

(6) What shall be our Standard by which we may know the truth and prove it? We answer, The Word of God "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect [-ed in knowledge and conduct], thoroughly furnished unto all good works.--2 Tim. 3:16,17.

But how shall we understand the Bible? For centuries good men as well as bad men have searched its pages. The former have found therein blessings, it is true, but so far as doctrines are concerned only confusion; satisfactory plan, order, justice and wisdom none have ever found there in all that time. The due time for the mystery of God's plan to be finished had not yet come; and it was "sealed up," "hidden," until that due time. But now, we who are living in the time of "the cleansing of the Sanctuary,"* and particularly since the time of blessedness at the end of the 1335 days+--in the present harvest, and in the beginning of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet--we have a very different experience from the saints of past times. To us it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, which many prophets and many righteous persons of the past were not privileged to see. Thank God for the light of present truth! Now we can see *a plan* of God--a plan which covers every detail of history past, and of revelation future; a plan that is complete,--lacking and disjointed at no part; a plan that is in strictest conformity with divine Justice, Wisdom, Power and Love, and with every text of the divine Word; and which thus proves itself to be not only a reasonable plan, but *the* plan of God, in comparison with which all other theories and plans are defective and evidently erroneous, out of harmony with the divine attributes and with the divine Word

Those who have come to an understanding of the plan of the ages, recognize it as of divine and not of human origination. It is the key to the mysteries of God which God himself has provided, and for which we all unite in rendering to him all praise. Its light is that of the millennial dawn, bringing with it peace and joy to thousands. We give all praise and honor to the Divine Author from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, and who thus, according to his promise (Luke 12:37), continues to feed his Church with spiritual "meat in due season." God, still our Teacher, uses as heretofore instrumentalities, and has provided for his people's instruction and use the orderly presentations of MILLENNIAL DAWN to point out to them his plan of the ages and the duties and privileges of this "harvest" time; because the "due time" has come for "the mystery" to be finished. (Rev. 10:7.) And those who have received instruction in the Word, in private, through the use of MILLENNIAL DAWN as a teacher sent of God (Eph. 4:11-14) have no more reason to ignore it as God's mouthpiece in united study than in their own private study;--no more, either, than they would a living teacher.

And should any be disposed to worship the humble human instrumentality chosen of God as the channel for this blessing of present truth, we say to such,--"See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow servant [not thy Lord], and [fellow servant] of thy brethren the prophets [all true teachers or mouthpieces of God]:...Worship God." (Rev. 22:9.) The water of life and the Giver of it, and not the earthen vessel through which it is sent, are to be revered. The earthen vessels have naught whereof to glory. What have we of ourselves that we did not first receive of the Lord?--1 Cor. 4:6,7.

The God-given plan of the ages is what we should all use in the study of the Bible, if we would get the treasures of wisdom, and grace, and strength for service in these perilous harvest times, for which it is divinely provided. Each one who recognizes this as a God-given light should

use it in the study of the Word. Each should make it his own light as God intended. Each should become so proficient in its use as to be able to answer every question that could be asked respecting the general *plan* of God. But alas! some seem to feel that this is Brother Russell's plan, and that they should originate their own. But this is a great mistake. It is not our plan, but God's. If not God's plan, it is of no value. We do not want any human plans. Surely men cannot make plans for God that he will recognize; for his own plans have been since "before the foundation of the world." God has but one plan, and it is unalterable; and now that he has revealed it, we confess that it is wonderful, yet as simple as it is beautiful. It is a plan, however, that men could not conceive or arrange. Its thoughts are higher than man's thoughts; and hence in all the centuries past men have never even approximated this divine plan of the ages.

So then the Bible, the standard, should be studied in the light of this God-given teaching, until each one is proficient --an able teacher of it. Then each should let his light shine--humbly serving it to others.

Some, alas! when their eyes are opened to see God's loving plan of the ages, while surprised, and thankful to God for the present truth, neglect to do more than hastily taste of it; and then they hasten on, as they say, to "hunt for *more*." What they should do would better be to use well what God has already given us as his people. There is a famine in the land; not for bread, nor for water, but for the Word of the Lord. (*Amos 8:11*.) Our Lord and Master has come to his waiting people, and spread for them a bounteous table of truths, new and old, in order. (*Matt. 13:52*.) We certainly have no right to ask for *more* or *other* blessings, until we have feasted to the full on what has been set before us. Then we should exercise ourselves, using the strength received in serving the feast to others. Neglecting this, it would certainly be with bad grace that any would attempt to break open any parts of the storehouse not yet unlocked. Remember the illustration of the time-lock++ which opens easily, without burglarizing, at the appointed time.

"Thy words were *found* [not made, nor gained by human skill or labor], and *I did eat them*." (*Jer. 15:16*; *Rev. 10:10*.) Our Lord has always provided for his Church the food necessary to her welfare; and he always "giveth liberally." The proper attitude for the Church is to be active in eating the food already received and in using the strength derived from it. She is not to leave the table bountifully spread to pray for *more*. When more would be beneficial more will be sent by the hand of some "servant" of God and the Church. Nor will the true "servant" find it necessary to make the food; for it will be given him by the great Householder. It will be "found" by him, and when he presents it to the Lord's family, they will be able to discern upon it the stamp of divine truth. And after partaking of it liberally they will dispense it to others.

Sufficient *labor* for all comes after we have "found" the truth,--*labor* in eating it, studying and appropriating it, and labor in serving it to others. The labor and bitterness of experience come not with the *getting* and first tasting of the truth, but with the conflict of the truth with our own and other people's prejudices. Then comes the pleasurable but often painful labor of serving it to others that they may *find* it easily and eat it. The eating of the truth (the proving of it, and then the appropriating of it to strength) is no small task. When a new food comes to us, our eyes first criticize it. If it looks good, we handle it and smell of it; and finally, still approved, we judge further by biting it with our teeth; and then our palate judges by the taste, while our teeth prepare it for nutrition. So every child of God has considerable labor in the way of proving and eating his spiritual food, after the Lord has provided it and he has "*found*" it. The proving is a necessity because Satan through his agents is permitted to offer us poisonous food. God would have us exercise our spiritual senses and judge or prove all we eat by the standard, and thus to learn to distinguish good from evil. This searching and proving and appropriating, opposed by the world, the flesh and the devil, require considerable energy and overcoming quality, and leave little enough of time and energy to help others.

Let us remember, however, that we cannot break open any secrets which God may wish to conceal as not yet appropriate "meat in due season"; nor should we wish to do so. The small boy

who bangs away at the unripe apple until it falls get food which makes him very sick: the ripe apple is very easily plucked. The unripe chestnut burr is difficult to pluck and very troublesome to open, and when open its fruit is unwholesome; but the ripe burr will fall and open of itself and its meat is sweet. Our diligence should be rather to watch the ripening processes of divine providence, and to hold our minds and hearts in humble readiness for all the rich fruitage of the advancing seasons, assured that our Master knoweth what things we have need of and will supply them to us in due time --directly or indirectly, it matters not so long as it is truth, from him and for us.

In the study of the Word of God in the light of the DAWN, let each one make use of concordances and marginal references and various translations of the Scriptures as he may have opportunity; remembering that nothing is to be accepted as truth which does not harmonize with the letter and spirit of God's Word. It is the Word of God that is to be eaten; the DAWNS and TOWERS are divinely provided helps for the cutting of the food into eatable portions,--enabling us to "rightly divide the Word of truth," and thus facilitating the eating of it.

Such meetings for the study of the Word in the light of the now revealed plan of the ages have been termed "Dawn Circles." The plan originated with Brother Rahn, of Baltimore, several years ago, and he and the other members of the class report much profit therefrom. The same plan has been pursued in perhaps a score of other cities, and always with success when rightly conducted. In illustration see letters from Brother Townsend in our issue of Dec. 15, '94 and Bro. Jeffery in issue of Jan. 1, '95. Since the "Circles" are no longer an experiment, but have practically demonstrated their value, it seems advisable to announce the matter so that all the students of the truth can have the benefit of the experience of others. We advise the holding of these Circles everywhere, and suggest that you invite to them only such as are believers in the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, and of genuine Christian character. But any one should be welcomed who is desirous of learning the way of God more perfectly. As the Apostle says, "Him that is weak in the faith [not fully committed to Christ] receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations"--you do not meet to discuss the unbeliever's doubts, but to confirm the believer's faith.-- **Rom. 14:1; 1 Cor. 14:24,25.**

It is advisable that the leader be a good reader, and that he begin at the beginning of Volume I. He should pause at the end of each sentence, if necessary, to give full opportunity for questions or remarks; and at the close of each paragraph a general discussion of its contents should be encouraged, together with an examination of texts cited therein, and any other texts *that appertain to the subject*. His object should be to draw out expressions from all, and to see that each person present understands the subject thoroughly. An entire session might profitably be spent sometimes upon one or two pages, or sometimes on one or two paragraphs. Each one of the Circle should have in hand some translation of the Bible or a "Dawn."

At the close of each chapter each one of the Circle should endeavor to give his own brief review of its subject, to see how clearly he has grasped it, and to impress it upon himself the more deeply. Having in view that all are preparing themselves to impart the truth to others, each should be encouraged to attempt a statement of the subject discussed, in his own words, but preferably in the *order* set forth in "DAWN."

In considering this method of Bible study note how much of interest and profitable conference could be drawn from the first chapter of Vol. I. The first paragraph calls our attention to and applies **Psalms 30:5**--"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." How many suggestions this will call up to each child of God present! (1) The long, dark night of the reign of Sin and Death each could contrast with the longer glorious day, just dawning, in which Righteousness and Life shall reign through Christ's great work. (2) The *cause* of the Night, the withdrawal of divine favor because of disobedience, could be contrasted with the cause of the Morning-- "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." (3) The cause of the weeping and pain, in the Night,--the curse or righteous sentence--"dying thou shalt die," could be contrasted with the cause of joy and rejoicing in the Morning,--"Thy dead men shall live," when "times of refreshing shall come--times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken." (**Acts 3:19-21.**) Each should

be encouraged to tell what he knows experimentally about the dark night of sin's control, and also his appreciation of the rays of light from the Sun of Righteousness now shining, and of the glorious prospects which are thus revealed to his eye of faith.

The second paragraph is built upon Isaiah 55:8,9; and it has much food for thought and profitable converse. These two paragraphs might well fill the time of one session; and if the Circle be a large one it might require two sessions to fully digest them.

The third, fourth and fifth paragraphs consider what should be our *object* as truth-seekers, what we should seek, and what God promises we shall find--John 16:13 and other references coming to mind. Then the sixth paragraph considers the proper methods for Bible study, and refers to Eph. 4:11-16; besides which many other references will occur to the Circle. Paragraphs eight and nine contrast proper and improper methods of study, and call up an entirely new set of interesting scriptures. These paragraphs --third to ninth--would give a grand and helpful Bible and plan study for a second session of the Circle.

The next seven paragraphs, 10 to 16 inclusive, treat of the present religious condition of the world, and would make a wonderful third lesson if rightly used. A TOWER article on the same subject (Feb. '90, page 3) might also be introduced here with profit. How many interesting questions and suggestions come to all minds, some correct and some incorrect, and how helpful each could be to the other in building one another up in the most holy faith; and on leaving for home, how many would appreciate more fully than ever the general darkness of the world and the value of the *light* and of open eyes to see it. And thus we might progress, every lesson being full of instruction and of correct applications of Scripture. The Circles will be all the more interesting if there be present some "believers" not long in "this way." It would be well to tell your Christian friends, who show even a little interest in the truth about the Circle, and invite them to attend from the first. But should new inquirers come in after the Circle has advanced some distance, it will not be necessary to go back for their benefit, for they can at home read up to the present with such additional brief explanations as the leader may deem advisable.

But some one will say, At that rate we would be fully a year in going through the first volume of MILLENNIAL DAWN, and the three volumes would require three years! All the better, we answer: if we are furnished with spiritual refreshment for years, it is far better than if only for a day: it is not a case of business rush to "get through with it" that is our aim, but spiritual refreshment in the study of God's Word, that we may see clearly for ourselves and be able to give to him that asketh us a reason for the hope that is in us. At the close of the series you would have had under particular, critical examination hundreds of the most noteworthy texts of Scripture --words of the Lord's *inspired* mouthpieces, brought forward in their appropriate places to illuminate the various subjects which constitute the burden of divine revelation-- the divine plan, spanning ages. Surely, if the Bible required nearly two thousand years for its preparation, we should give it reverent study, and not merely a casual glance and thought. Besides, when you would have gone through the subject thus thoroughly, you would doubtless be so proficient that you could answer promptly any question respecting it and be prepared to quote the Scriptures fully in support of your statements. Not only do all need such thorough study to prepare them "for the work of the ministry," but each needs such study for his own protection from the perils which will increase more and more during this "evil day."

The method suggested is not merely a reading of the DAWNS; for that each could do as well at his home and alone. Our proposition is for a general study of God's great plan of salvation--a comprehensive study of theology--the use of the DAWNS merely steering the minds of all into the same Scriptural channels and assisting in rightly dividing the Word of Truth. There are no scriptures which cannot be brought into these studies; for all scriptures are directly or indirectly related to God's plan. The design includes a study of the whole Bible in the fullest sense, and the cooperation of all in bringing forward every text and thought which could throw light upon the subjects considered.

Knowing the "downwardness" with which all our race is afflicted, we should, whenever we come together, guard ourselves and each other by resolving that no communications shall proceed out of our mouths except such as would serve to edify one another, and to build one another up in the most holy faith. This would bar out "gossip" and idle talking, and insure our thinking and talking of "whatsoever things are just and true and pure and of good report." If each comes to the meeting praying for the Lord's blessing upon himself and on the others of the Lord's body, near and far, it will be found helpful. And may grace, mercy and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be with us all who thus seek, more and more, the way, the truth and the life.

R5918

GOOD, BETTER, BEST IN BIBLE STUDY

EVERY influence which makes for respect for the Bible as the Word of God is commendable. The Bible Study practiced in Great Britain and Ireland fifty to a hundred years ago; namely, the committing to memory of verses and chapters and the use of the Book as a reader in the Schools, had its advantages. Those who thus became familiar with the text of the Bible had a valuable store of information, if later they became Christians and sought the meaning of God's Messages.

Other Bible Study attempts were made in various denominations in so-called Bible Study Classes. These, however, were hampered by the denominational Creeds. Occasionally able teachers informed their Classes respecting the historical setting, discussed the writer of the Epistle, the journeying experiences, etc. Sometimes he ventured off into doctrine; but on such occasions, unless he was very discreet and held down the Class, the result of the lesson was somewhat of a dispute and a general tangle, which left the Class more confused than before.

Another style of Bible Study which for a time found favor, consisted of a number of Christian people reading a chapter, verse about. Each, after reading his verse, would make such comment as he pleased. If there were forty verses in the chapter there were as many little comments. When the meeting closed there was a feeling of a measure of refreshment in having handled the Bible, having read some interesting verses, and having communed with each other; but very little knowledge of God or His Plan of the Ages was gained by such Bible Study.

It is only of late--within the past ten years practically-- that the Bible has been studied after the manner we mention as Berean Studies--searching the Scriptures. Now all over the world Berean Classes are in operation. Great blessing and great enlightenment are resulting. For this kind of Bible Study, a textbook is used and also a question-book. The textbooks are the various volumes of **STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES**. In these volumes the teachings of the Bible have been collated and brought into an assimilable form. For instance, if the lesson appertains to the Holy Spirit, the study on the subject brings together the teachings of the Bible from every part and sets these in orderly array before the Class. If the subject be "The Man Christ Jesus," it is similarly treated. If the subject be "The Logos," it is treated in like manner. If the subject be "Justification," "Sanctification," "The Glorification of the Saints," each subject is treated systematically--brought to the minds of the Class and laid open for discussion, with references to various parts of the Bible in which these things are stated.

It does not surprise us, therefore, that those of God's people who have learned the value of this method of Bible Study and who follow it have a clearer understanding of the Word of God than others. While, therefore, we commend any kind of Bible Study, we especially commend this form which the Lord has blessed above all others for the enlightenment of His people in this Harvest time. This method is for the advantage of the entire Class. An able leader is not so indispensable. One

danger with able leaders with any other method of Bible Study is that their ability sometimes goes in a wrong direction and misleads.

These Berean Studies, however, place the entire Class in a position of advanced scholarship in the Word of God, because they have the entire subject under discussion open before them. Nevertheless, even in a Berean Study and when the questions are used, a skilful leader, who is humble-minded, will prove a great assistance to the Brethren. And this is the case in nearly every Class the world around. We want the dear readers of THE WATCH TOWER to know just why we so earnestly recommend to them this Berean form of Bible Study. Nor should we wonder if the Adversary would work against a method which has been so blessed of the Lord. We urge upon all a comparison between the results in their minds, their hearts, their lives, as between Berean Bible Studies and all other kinds of which they may have knowledge or have tried in the past.

R5142

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEREAN CLASSES

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

In sending current report to Tabernacle I feel constrained to express anew my hearty Christian Love for you, as I perceive the activity of our opponents increasing in their efforts to overthrow the work committed to you. You have our prayers, as well as our sympathy, in the trials incidental to the various attacks being made in the public press against you. I feel confident the same Grace which has held you up in the past will prove sufficient to the end.

Most of the classes seem to be leaping forward in the things of the Spirit, as though trying to make amends for past slackness.

I notice a few classes making the serious mistake of thinking a constant change is essential to "keep from getting into a rut." Thus in one class the Lord evidently saw a more competent leader was needed, and He sent a brother to work here who had the necessary qualifications. After serving two six months' terms *that spirit of change refused to elect him*, or, rather, prompted him to think he ought not to be elected again. The present Elder is a good brother, but the two as Elders together would be able to accomplish manifold more.--*Eccle. 4:9-12.*

That same idea causes *this class to shift its meetings around, even including the Sunday services*, until some of the irregular attendants are discouraged from going out for fear they will go to one home and find the meeting is not to be held there. *That is one reason why they never become regular attendants.*

Another thing, some of the classes need advice upon the *conduct of Berean classes, as quite a few places where they think they have Berean classes they really have preaching services.* The Elder asks the questions, one or two of the friends give a very brief answer, and then *the Elder preaches a 10 or 15-minute sermon; this is repeated with next question, and so to the end.*

There are some very small and weak classes where I can imagine this might be allowable, but in every case where I have found it to be their method there *seemed to be no excuse for it.*

We have been enjoying very precious fellowship with the Brethren in Illinois, and are greatly rejoicing in the privileges of service in the cause which has as its object the glory of God. With much Christian Love,

Yours in His Precious Name,
BENJ. H. BARTON.

THE EDITOR'S REPLY

I embrace this opportunity to endorse the statement of Brother Barton, given above. We need to keep well balanced. While the Classes are to retain the full control of their own affairs, this does

not mean that they should ever speak or think slightly of those whom they have chosen, under what they believe to be Divine Guidance, to be their Elders or leaders. Let us remember the Apostle's words, "Obey those who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account."--Heb. 13:17.

A faithful leader, who does not attempt to take the control from the hands of the Class, can be, and should be, trusted greatly. His is a labor of love, and not for filthy lucre; and the love of the whole Class should be freely paid to him as in a measure a reward for his faithfulness in the service. This does not mean that the control should be left in the hands of one Elder, nor that he should feel offended that others should be brought to the front, even if he be the most competent one. As Elder brethren the leaders should be on the lookout to help, encourage and instruct all the younger brethren, and to prepare them for the work of Deacons, and, subsequently, for Eldership.

Some of the Lord's dear people seem a little inclined to run to the extreme. Strong characters are always in danger of going to extremes. The Apostle exhorts, "Let your moderation be known to all." To have our affairs conducted decently and in order is not Babylonish in any evil sense. Can we imagine Heaven as without rules, regulations and order? Do we not recognize that order is Heaven's first law? Does not the Apostle intimate that the Lord is setting the various members in the Body as it pleases Him? Could it be wrong for us to co-operate with God in the recognition of His will and in carrying it out? Surely not! It is just as bad, or even worse, for a small minority to tyrannize over the majority as it would be for a reasonable majority to tyrannize over the minority. The spirit of love bids us remember the Golden Rule, and be as generous to others as we would have them be to us.

I quite agree with Brother Barton's suggestions respecting too great a desire for change. Recently we learned of one Class which rotates its leaders every week. This would not be so bad, of course, for prayer and testimony meeting, though even then it would appear as if a month or a quarter would be better for each leader; but in the case of the Berean Studies a weekly change seems *very injurious*, both for the leader and for the Class. Continuity, connection with previous lessons, is very desirable. We recommend at least three months' incumbency for Berean Study leaders.

RESPECTING BEREAN STUDIES

Brother Barton's suggestion is good, that a successful teacher is one who draws the answers from the Class. It is in this very particular that the Berean Studies are helping the Lord's people more and more. Now, it is true that some persons who have a talent for talking or preaching have insufficient talent for teaching--for drawing answers from the Class. In such a case it might be well to give different Elders an opportunity to show whether they possess aptness to teach, which the Apostle explains to be one of the qualifications of an Elder.

Many Class leaders report that it is impossible for them to get the friends to study the lesson in advance. It is a pity that this is so, but it would not be wise to cause offense to any or to hinder any from attending the meetings by berating them for failure to study the lessons. We advise another course: At the beginning of each study let the pages of Studies in the Scriptures referred to in the lesson be read by some one capable of reading clearly, distinctly, forcefully; and then shut the books and discuss the subject along the lines of the questions. A very helpful way is for the leader to assist by gathering up some of the fragmentary statements of an answer and helping to put them together. The effect is to encourage the answerers for another occasion and to make the answers more valuable for the time. On the whole, the Berean Studies, we are sure, are doing very effective work in grounding and establishing in the Truth.

We urge all the dear brethren that they keep up the regular reading of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, ten to twelve pages a day, wholly regardless of the Berean lessons. What will be read will be so much of aid in connection with the lesson studies.

WATCH YE! STAND FAST IN THE FAITH

BEREAN SCRIPTURE LESSONS,--SUGGESTIONS AND OUTLINES FOR PROFITABLE CLASS STUDIES

FOR some time past we have been receiving letters inquiring how little gatherings of the Lord's people can use the hour of their Sunday gatherings most profitably. Some of these letters are from brethren chosen as Elders or leaders, saying that they are quite incapable of getting up a "sermon" and find it impossible to prepare even a Bible Study in an attractive and interesting form, though the dear brethren, full of love for the Truth, do not complain, but rather encourage them.

Other letters are from those who take no public part and who, while sympathizing with their meeting-leaders in their endeavors to imitate nominal church purveyors, are wishing and praying for the opening of some "door" of help which will make the "assembling of themselves" more profitable to all.

It was in response to this "cry" of the Lord's people that we prepared the WATCH TOWER Bible, in the margins of which, in addition to the Scripture references, we gave DAWN and TOWER references. In the front of that Bible, which so many of you possess, we gave some suggestions on "Berean Bible Study," and in the back part we gave extended references and also a *Topical Index*. It was our hope that these would meet the requirements, but we find that they do not. Many of the Lord's earnest ones have so long been used to "swallowing" whatever was offered them as spiritual nutriment that they had never learned how to feed themselves at the Father's table. Others who knew how to get at the food properly found their time so consumed in the "things needful" and pressing that they had little time to prepare lessons of a profitable kind for themselves or others, even after the matter had been outlined as in the *Topical Index*.

THE BEREAN STUDIES NOW PROPOSED

Appreciating the needs, we requested some of the "Pilgrim" brethren to give examples of these Berean Studies at the various places visited. However, even this did not serve the purpose, because the visits of the "Pilgrims" being few and more like those of the apostles of old, the friends begrudged the time of even one service--particularly since it requires several meetings of the Berean type to demonstrate its value and arouse the proper enthusiasm.

Now as meeting all these requirements we are having prepared Outline Lessons for each month of this year, beginning with March. One peculiarity about these lessons is that they do not *teach*, but merely question, and refer the student to the Scriptures and the WATCH TOWER publications bearing thereon. Thus thought is stimulated and the Truth the more clearly impressed.

The thirty questions of the March Lesson following might serve for thirty Sundays; but having so much good food we can afford to fare sumptuously and take several questions for each meeting. As to how many, would depend somewhat on the number in attendance, and how accustomed they are to analytical study, and how expert the leader of the meeting. It might be well for the classes to appoint several of the seemingly capable brethren to lead in turn, that the most able in this respect might be discerned. These will probably be found amongst those you have already chosen as Elders.

If the class be a small one, of say seven, it might be well to apportion to each *one* question for the *following* Sunday. The Elders, for instance, might be requested by vote to make such apportionment of the questions. A week for the examination of the one question should enable each one to bring on the next Sunday thoughts and texts and WATCH TOWER and DAWN quotations that would be helpful, interesting, profitable to all. As all are WATCH TOWER readers assignments can be made by number, thus: Brother A--, question No. 4; Sister H--, No. 5, etc.

Where the class is larger, say twenty to forty, the questions would best be apportioned to seven or eight of the most capable members of the class to present the answers to the questions. In any event, each subject or question should be open to *general* discussion after the presentation of the formal reply by the one appointed to that service.

So used the thirty questions below should furnish abundant food for profitable study by the largest classes for nearly or quite a month. Our prayers go with these suggestions, that the result may bring praise and honor to our Lord and strength and victory to his people.

CONCERNING FAITH--MARCH LESSONS

(Following each question are texts of Scripture in reply, then references to page numbers of DAWN and WATCH TOWER giving comments; the first six letters of the alphabet represent the respective DAWN volumes, and the TOWERS are designated by the letter "Z" and the year. The mark par. refers to paragraph in article containing comment.)

1. What is faith? **Heb. 11:1**; **1 Jno. 5:4**; E.125, par. 1; F.689 (1st line).
2. Name the two component elements of faith. Z.'95-134.
3. How does faith differ from credulity? F.689, par. 1.
4. What is the importance of a *proper* faith? **Heb. 11:6**; F.315,693, par. 1; Z.'94-329 (2nd col. par. 1-3).
5. What is the relation between faith and knowledge? **Rom. 10:17**; A.13, par. 1; A.20, par. 2; A.21, par. 1; Z.'94-329 (1st col. par. 2); Z.'99-3 (2nd col. par. 1).
6. How is faith "the gift of God"? **Eph. 2:8**; Z.'98-107 (1st col. par. 2); Z.'01-156 (1st col. par. 2,3).
7. Is faith in Christ necessary to salvation? **Acts 4:10-12**; **Jno. 3:16,36**; A.102, par. 3; Z.'97-278. (See Topical Index,--"FAITH.")
8. What is the immediate result of faith in Christ during the Gospel Age? **Rom. 5:1**; A.231, par. 4; Z.'00-188 (1st col. par. 3, and 2nd col. par. 1,2).
9. How is Jesus the "author and finisher of our faith"? **Heb. 12:2**; Z.'95-147 (1st col. par. 1).
10. Is a simple confession of faith necessary? **Rom. 10:10**; Z.'00-149, (2nd col.); Z.'00-180 (1st col. par. 5); Z.'02-270 (1st col. par. 1,2,3).
11. Is *feeling* an essential part of faith? Z.'92-267.
12. Explain the difference between faith as a basis for justification and faith as a fruit of the Spirit. F.688-692.
13. What is "the good fight of faith"? **1 Tim. 6:12**; Z.'98-153,158, (2nd col.)
14. How should we fight the good fight? Z.'95-201,202; Z.'98-158, (1st col. par. 2); Z.'98-159 (2nd col.); Z.'01-72 (2nd col. par. 3).
15. For whom and against whom do we fight? **Phil. 2:12**; **1 Jno. 3:16**; **Eph. 6:12**; Z.'98-153-155; F.599-658.

16. What does it mean to "walk by faith"? 2 Cor. 5:7; F.631, par. 2,3; Z.'00-57 (1st col.); Z.'95-92,93; F.142, par. 2.
17. Why are trials of faith permitted? Jas. 1:3,4; 1 Pet. 4:12,13; F.642-644; Z.'96-54; Z.'95-134,135.
18. What are some of the present rewards of faith? 1 Cor. 2:9,10; F.689 (par. 2) to 692; F.686, par. 3.
19. What is the future inheritance of faith? 1 Jno. 3:2; Rev. 2:10; F.693,694, F.721 (par. 1,2) to 729.
20. What is the "rest" of faith? Heb. 4:1-11; F.392-394; Z.'95-168,169; Z.'99-253 (1st col. par. 1).
21. Define "full assurance" of faith and hope. Heb. 10:22; 6:11; Z.'00-169, par. 1.
22. How may we *attain* and *retain* full assurance of faith? Z.'98-247; E.249,250.
23. What are the hindrances to full assurance of faith? Z.'00-169,170.
24. How may we increase our faith? F.691, par. 2; Z.'96-86 (2nd col. par. 3).
 - a. By prayer. Z.'96-162,163.
 - b. By study. F.315.
 - c. By repeating and *claiming* the promises of God. Z.'00-170 (1st col. par. 4).
 - d. By watching our experiences. Z.'00-170 (2nd col. par. 1,2).
25. Name some features of "present truth" which have increased your faith.
26. What is the relation between faith and *works*? Jas. 2:14,17,18,22; Z.'00-343 (1st col. par. 1,2); Z.'01-231 (2nd col. par. 2,3).
27. Who constitute the "household of faith"? Gal. 6:10; Z.'00-368, (2nd col.)
28. Explain Jas. 5:14-16. F.631-638.
29. What is the significance of the symbols, *shield* and *anchor*, in connection with faith and hope? Eph. 6:16; F.657, par. 5; Heb. 6:19; Z.'02-345 (1st col.)
30. What will be the relation between faith and knowledge in the Millennial Age? Z.'00-238 (2nd col. par. 1,2) to 239; F.106, (par. 3) to 107.

R3800 [set]

BEREAN BIBLE STUDY ON LOVE

WE are hearing good reports of blessings from the use of these Berean Studies in the Scriptures. We urge that each little group have one special session for these lessons and that one leader be selected for at least three months;--a leader who will enter into the spirit of the studies and who knows how to draw the answers from the class and then can briefly summarize at the close of

each question. Following this course the Allegheny Church has adopted these studies for every Sunday evening, and the interest is shown by the fact that the attendance has about doubled during the past eight months.

If good readers are numerous in the class, assign one reference to each; if few, several references to each. (The reading must be clear and distinct or the profit of the lesson will be sacrificed.) The Scripture references come first, then the DAWN references: the six volumes of DAWN being indicated by the first six letters of the alphabet, A, B, C, D, E, F. Similarly, T represents "Tabernacle Shadows," and S "Spiritism." The letter Z represents the WATCH TOWER, '02-152 signifying page 152 of the year 1902. The columns and paragraphs are indicated thus: col. 2, par. 3.

JULY 1

1. What is love? Z.'03-55 (2nd col. last par.); Z.'03-58; (1st col. par. 2).
2. How does the Apostle describe love? *I Cor. 13:1*, Z.'03-56 (1st col. par. 1). *I Cor. 13:2*, Z.'03-56 (1st col. par. 2). *I Cor. 13:3*, Z.'03-56 (1st col. par. 3; 2nd col. par. 1). *I Cor. 13:4*, Z.'03-56 (2nd col. par. 2, 3); Z.'03-57 (1st col. par. 1, 2); Z.'97-247 (1st col. par. 1-4). *I Cor. 13:5*, Z.'03-57 (1st col. par. 3 to 2nd col. par. 3); Z.'97-247 (1st col. par. 5 and 2nd col.) *I Cor. 13:6*, Z.'03-57 (2nd col. par. 4); Z.'97-248 (1st col. 1 to 3). *I Cor. 13:7*, Z.'03-58 (1st col. par. 1); Z.'97-248 (2nd col. par. 1 to 3). *I Cor. 13:8*, Z.'03-58 (1st col. par. 3); Z.'97-248 (2nd col. par. 4). *I Cor. 13:9-12*, Z.'03-58 (2nd col. par. 1, 2); Z.'97-249 (1st col. par. 1 to 3). *I Cor. 13:13*, Z.'97-249 (2nd col. par. 1).
3. -----

Each one appointed for reader should have his BIBLE or DAWN or TOWER on hand, previously read, and should be prepared to respond at the leader's call without stopping to hunt his place. All of course have BIBLES and DAWNS, and some one in each company is likely to have old TOWERS and will be glad to loan them for the benefit of the class.

Opportunity for discussing each question should be given *after* the references have been read and before the leader makes a brief closing summary of the answer and proceeds to read the next question. It is urged that the questions as printed be strictly adhered to until they have all been discussed. It will generally be found that *all questions* are included on the subject. The reason for care on this point is that if the questions are intruded that come later the subsequent lessons are considerably spoiled thereby. The leader should be expected to kindly, gently, but firmly *hold* the class to *the question under discussion*, and in this he should have the cooperation of all who recognize the value of order in the study of the Divine Plan of the Ages.

R3769 [sel]

BEREAN BIBLE STUDY FOR MAY

--For Explanation See Preface Of Watch Tower Bibles And Watch Tower, March 1, 1905.--

EVIL SPEAKING AND EVIL SURMISING

IT is suggested that leaders of Berean Classes endeavor to hold the discussion of each question to its legitimate domain. Otherwise later questions will have been found partially discussed yet not thoroughly digested and much less satisfactory.

The leader should STUDY the entire lesson and each member of the class should STUDY the portion or question assigned to him or her, if the largest possible good would be derived. The DAWNS and booklets and TOWERS cited should be at hand, and so marked as to be readily referred to without a moment's delay. The DAWNS are referred to by the first six letters of the alphabet, the booklets by initial letters and the WATCH TOWER by Z.

R5703 [*sel*]

BEREAN BIBLE STUDY CLASSES

From various quarters we learn that the Berean Bible Study Classes are increasing in number. This is very gratifying, of course, but at the same time it is leading into a certain difficulty. Where Classes exceed twenty or so in number, they become unwieldy and proportionately less of a blessing and an aid. No matter how skillful the leader, it is impossible to do justice to larger Classes within reasonable hours. We offer a suggestion: namely, that the entire Class have a special time or times for meeting on Sundays when a part of the service might be in the nature of a short address, or several of them, from different Brethren manifesting ability along that line. Then, during the week, have Classes in homes in various parts of the city or town under different brethren manifesting ability as Class leaders. These new Classes, ranging from ten to fifteen, will have the opportunity of growing somewhat and then, later, develop into additional classes. Thus the witness of the Truth will reach larger numbers, and various districts will be served, each and all having opportunity of participating at every meeting.

This same rule, we believe, will be found advantageous in respect to the Wednesday evening prayer, praise and testimony meeting. Let us never forget the importance of furnishing an opportunity for each consecrated Brother and Sister to participate in the Class Studies and in the testimonies. "If thou believe in thine heart and confess with thy mouth" is the Lord's suggestion of proper faithfulness. It is those who are thus faithful who usually reap the greatest blessing.

R4008

ADMONITIONS FOR THE CONSECRATED

"I write unto thee...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."--I Tim. 3:14,15.

IT is one thing to make our consecration to the Lord, to be his and to serve him even unto death, and another thing to carry out that service day by day in all the little details of life. Our Lord's words --that he that is faithful in that which is least would be faithful also in greater things--is well illustrated by the fact that it would be comparatively easy for us to finish our sacrifice by suicide, or even by going to the stake, and a much more difficult thing to day by day hold our sacrifice on the altar in all the little affairs of life--in self-denials, in patience, in perseverance, in brotherly kindness, in gentleness--to receive reviling and revile not again, to be smitten mentally or physically and not to retaliate; this endurance of a lingering crucifixion-death is much more difficult. But we can readily see that the Lord's plan is greatly to our advantage, in the sense that while the consecration evidences a right spirit, will or intention, the gradual carrying out of that consecration tends more and more to develop the character-likeness of our Lord in us. Hence the Apostle urges that we learn to rejoice

even in tribulations, knowing that they will work out in us various fruits and graces of the Lord's Spirit, as we receive them in the proper attitude of heart and seek to learn the lessons they teach.

GOOD BEHAVIOR IN THE CHURCH

Recognizing that we are all defective according to the flesh, that none of us come up to the divine standard of perfection, and that our only perfection is that of the heart, the will, we must not wonder if occasionally we have trials and testings, aggravations, one from the other, though it must be the will, the desire, the intent of each to provoke one another to love and good works and not to anger, hatred and evil works. (Heb. 10:24.) For ourselves we must recognize the very highest standard of God-likeness, and as for others of the Body we must be prepared to allow our love for them and for the Lord to cover a multitude of blemishes should they appear to us. And each one, in proportion as he or she follows this course, is pleasing to the Lord, is pure in heart--a copy of God's dear Son-- and, covered with the robe of the Redeemer's merit, is considered from God's standpoint, not according to his imperfect flesh, but according to his perfect-intentioned heart or will. To us, "in the Church" does not signify in a meeting-house, but amongst the Lord's people. Neither does it mean merely when we are assembled together, but it includes all of our dealings with them, every day and all the time. And we all should desire to learn the lesson how we ought to conduct ourselves in or amongst the members of the Church, the Body of Christ, the tabernacle of the holy Spirit amongst men.

Everywhere in the Bible the Lord sets before us perfect Love as the standard, and we must therefore suppose that all who have passed the standard of babes in Christ, and have come to some measure of knowledge of the Lord through his Word and Spirit, recognize this love standard and are seeking to conform to it. We must therefore suppose that the difficulties which from time to time arise amongst such are largely because of imperfect development of knowledge and experience in applying the love standard, as well as because of imperfections of the flesh. Hence the Scriptural exhortation that we grow in grace as well as in knowledge, and that we be more and more filled with the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of brotherly kindness, the spirit of meekness, the spirit of patience--the holy Spirit.

ARE CONTENTIONS NECESSARY?

We reply that they are sometimes, but not nearly so often as they occur. There is just one ground of contention authorized, and we find it in the words, "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." (*Jude 3.*) But since the spirit of contention is everywhere in the Bible reprehended, we must understand the Apostle to mean that only the important points of our faith are to be contended for. We must not give place to any who deny the personality of the heavenly Father, and who would teach in the Church that God is a great big nothing, merely a principle of good; and if there is anything good in the sense of useful in the piece of iron or wood or stone or in any other substance, there is that much of God in it. We must contend earnestly against such vain philosophies, as being not only foreign to the faith once delivered to the saints, but antagonistic to it to the last degree. We must contend also for the ransom, because it is the very foundation of the faith once delivered to the saints --that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that he rose for our justification. This would imply a contention against various false claims, such as that our Lord was not made flesh but remained a spirit being, to whom death was quite impossible--that he merely assumed for a time the human body, pretending that it was himself, and pretending that he died when it died.

We must hold to the faith once delivered to the saints, that our Lord left the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, that he humbled himself and was made flesh, and that he did this not as an example, but that he by the grace of God "tasted death for every man"--that he might die the Just for the unjust to bring us to God. This means additionally that we must contend

that his death was a real death, the Just for the unjust, else our faith in him as a Savior and Redeemer would depart. Furthermore, if we did not believe that he really died, really gave himself as a corresponding price for father Adam, thus purchasing him and his race, how could we believe in his resurrection from the dead? How could anyone be resurrected from death if he had not gone into it? We must also hold to and contend earnestly for the great fact that God's work during this Gospel Age is the selection of the Bride of Christ--the Church of the First-born-- and that this election, completed at our Lord's second coming, will have its consummation in the resurrection of the little flock to glory, honor and immortality in the Kingdom, as the Royal Priesthood under Christ their Royal Head and High Priest, that as the Spiritual Seed of Abraham they may fulfil the Abrahamic Covenant, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." For all these fundamentals of our religion, including the declaration that sin entered into the world by Adam's transgression and that we are all partakers of his sin and of its penalty, and all need redemption--all these first principles of the faith we must stand for, contend for. To be indifferent to these and to allow error to creep in and to be promulgated, taught in the Church, would be a serious sin and show unfaithfulness on the part of those who had pledged themselves as soldiers of the cross to defend it.

But aside from such fundamentals, the Lord's people should seek to exercise great moderation amongst themselves upon any point of doctrine not clearly enunciated--upon the meaning of any parable not explained in the Scripture itself. Neither should there be any dispute or division as respects Brother Russell or any other brother. Each should be allowed to exercise his own judgment in respect to things not specifically stated in the Word of God. Each should feel a delicacy or reserve about promulgating any doctrine or matter not specifically and clearly taught in the Scriptures, and above all he should be sure never to teach or attempt to teach speculations if he himself is not thoroughly convinced respecting the same. Each one has enough to contend with in the twists and kinks of his own imperfect judgment without having others add to his difficulties by the rehearsal of matters which they admit they do not clearly understand. There is so much in God's Word that is simple and plain and well substantiated that we can talk about and think about, that we are well nigh inexcusable for far-away speculations. The Scriptures declare, "The secret things belong unto God, but the things revealed belong unto us."--Deut. 29:29.

PATIENCE AND FORBEARANCE COMMENDED

If some dear brother has a peculiar theory or hobby and feels that he cannot rest until he has presented it to the Church, there should be some opportunity given him to let off steam--even if it would not be advisable to hear him in the most public manner lest visitors should conclude that his fancies represented the general thought of the Church. But if after he has been heard on some occasion, and it be the judgment of the Church that his theories are unreasonable, unscriptural, he should be content with having given his view; and if he be not content, but desires to ride his theory continually as a hobby, to the annoyance of others and to the interference with the general spirit of worship and progress in study, it would seem to be the duty of the elders to call his attention to the fact, and to remind him that he has been heard, and therefore his urging the matter is in the nature of a contention, not for a fundamental of the truth, but for a theory, and that such contention is reprov'd throughout the Scriptures as contrary to the will of the Lord and to the good of his people, themselves included, and that therefore they cannot permit the matter to continue.--Titus 3:9.

The Apostle speaks of those who are "contentious and obey not the truth." (Rom. 2:8.) The intimation is that the contentious spirit or disposition is generally to be found amongst those who are not living up to the spirit of the truth which they have already recognized. They have been attempting to grow in knowledge without growing in grace--in love, in kindness, gentleness, meekness, patience, etc.; and those who are right at heart will be pleased to note this as their difficulty, and to correct the same, because what would it profit us to contend for our theories and cause confusion in the Church of God, and be ultimately reprimanded by the Lord and be unable to pass the examination for perfect love and Christ-likeness, and therefore be counted unworthy a place in the Bride class!

Surely such contentions, such theorizings, are well worthy of the Apostle's reprimand, and well worthy to be heeded by us all.

The Apostle's exhortation that "nothing be done through strife or vain-glory" gives another suggestion along this line, namely, that some have naturally the spirit of strife, and therefore more to overcome along this line than have some others. Some, it is intimated, have a vain-glorious spirit, the spirit of pride and ambition, which gets themselves and others into difficulty. But are we to reject those who are naturally combative, naturally ambitious? Are we to say that they therefore are not of the Body, and cut them off? By no means; rather we should seek to so exemplify the proper course in our own conduct as to impress a lesson upon them and upon all with whom we have contact. Wherever we see a wrong spirit in another our first thought should be, Have I any of that disposition myself? and our first correction should be in our own hearts and conduct. Thus casting the mote or beam out of our own eyes we would be the better prepared to approach our brother with gentleness and kindness, and unobtrusively to render him assistance in getting the better of his difficulties.

BEREANS WHO "FIGHT TO A FINISH"

Some of the Lord's dear brethren of excellent heart and noble intention seem to get the improper thought in connection with the Berean studies. They seem to say to themselves, There can be but one right thought on this subject, and that one the truth; and everyone else here should want the truth, and we should contend and dispute on this question if necessary all night and fight the matter until some one gives up and sees that he is wrong. This is an evil thought entirely, and is productive of great discomfort and disadvantage, and a hindrance to spirituality in various classes. On the one hand we are to appreciate more those who do some thinking of their own about a subject than those who do no thinking, and who merely swallow a statement set forth by others. But there is a proper limit to be observed: the Lord has had great patience with us all in our slowness to learn, and surely we should be patient with each other. He lays down line upon line, precept upon precept, and is slow to anger and plenteous of mercy, and very generous toward all those who give evidence of desiring to do his will.

We certainly are not authorized to do less than this in his name and as his representatives. Rather our realization of our own obtuseness in the past should make us very sympathetic with others who are slow to see, slow to hear, slow to understand. Each therefore should be content if he have a reasonable opportunity for presenting his view on any question, and should not attempt to enforce and crowd it in upon another. If the Editor has stated his view, and one or more do not see the matter exactly so, and the question is not fundamental, then it would be the proper course to let the matter rest there, and to allow the Lord eventually as the great Teacher, through his providences to gradually bring us to where we could the more completely see eye to eye. In this we have the opportunity for learning the lesson of patience and forbearance, brotherly kindness, meekness, gentleness--Love.

CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER TO PROVOKE

If anyone of a contentious mind would set himself about it, he would have no difficulty in provoking in others resentment and evil works; but the Apostle urges, that having the holy Spirit of love dwelling in our hearts, we should consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. We should study one another's natural dispositions from a sympathetic standpoint, with a view to helping each other over difficulties and weaknesses. And how much of this is possible! Frequently it is possible by speaking a kind word, gently, sympathetically, lovingly, to help some dear brother or sister to keep balanced--to overcome some of his or her weaknesses, the expression of which would be injurious to himself as well as to the Church or others. How we should all study this spirit of helpfulness and recognize it as the spirit of love, the Spirit of the Lord! Let us remember that a soft answer, a kind and gentle word, may be helpful and turn away anger, but that grievous words and

strifeful words, cutting words, sarcastic words, are almost sure to stir up anger. (Prov. 15:1.) Let us therefore study more and more to be gentle toward all and kind and affectionate one toward another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.--Eph. 4:32.

Another point upon which forbearance and consideration seem very necessary is in respect to the choosing of leaders. Some very devoted brethren seem to get the impression that they should have no part in electing as an Elder anyone they could not endorse in every particular. We agree that no immoral person should be chosen to eldership under any consideration, and that if an Elder be found to be immoral his resignation should be immediately called for. But usually this is not the ground of difference: the Lord's people would never knowingly choose an immoral person as a standard-bearer or leader in spiritual things. But suppose that in a congregation there be one person whom the majority may consider vastly superior and better qualified every way than any other of their number to be their Elder or leader, and suppose that a minority of the congregation have a liking for the presentations or manners or what not of another brother, and suppose that another minority have a preference for still another brother, or at least a desire to see him brought forward into the public service of the Church, believing that he has talents that could be used of the Lord to his glory. What shall each party do?--fight it out on political lines and say, We have power, and therefore authority to elect our man, and you must either join in this or quit the company? By no means!

This might be "good politics" amongst the worldly, but it would be quite out of harmony with the spirit of love which must govern in the Church. In gaining *such* a victory we might wound one or more of the Lord's brethren, might offend our Lord, and do ourselves incalculable injury in our race for the great prize. Such a "victory" would be a *defeat* of our real aims and aspirations --a victory for our great Adversary. Are we not to consider one another, and seek not every man merely his own preferences, but seek to build one another up in the most holy faith? The spirit of love would therefore seem to dictate that more than one Elder should be elected in such a case--two or three or more, as the supply of material and the desires of the company could be reasonably interpreted, without violating the general directions of the Lord's Word. A fair and reasonable decision should be such as would be proportionate to the number of the brethren. Some might be found specially well adapted to the leading of one kind of meeting and others to the leading of another kind, and the Apostle points out that we have need of every member of the body, so that the eye cannot even say to the hand or the foot--I have no need of you. The thought we should have in mind is that there is plenty of room for all of the Lord's people to do service.

When the Apostle points out the qualifications of an Elder he mentions the ideal, just as our Lord mentions the ideal to us all when he says, "Be ye like unto your Father which is in heaven." We cannot be like the heavenly Father fully, completely, but we can have him as our standard or pattern to which we are striving to attain. Similarly, few elders may come up to the standard of qualification mentioned by the Apostle, but these qualifications should not be overlooked by any in their expression of a choice, or rather in their expression of what they believe to be the Lord's choice in the matter. "Forbearing one another in love," says the Apostle. O, how this forbearance and consideration of one another's preferences, tastes, views, would help to make us all more and more like the glorious Lord himself, and how it would smooth many of the wrinkles and difficulties, and bring peace in every little company of the Lord's people! We are not thinking of nor striving for the kind of peace and quiet that prevails in the graveyard or which prevails in the sleeping room, but the kind which the Lord would approve amongst those who are awake and alive and thoroughly consecrated to him, and forbearing and considering one another because of their love for the Head and for all those who are seeking to walk in his steps.

"LOVE SEEKETH NOT HER OWN"

All of the Lord's people should gradually come more and more to be ashamed of a self-seeking spirit and disposition and to appreciate more and more the spirit of love, which thinks not of

personal interests but of the good of others, especially those of the household of faith. If a brother thinks that he has some talents which he would be pleased to use in the Lord's service in the Church, it is proper for him to be on the alert for opportunity to use these, but also proper for him to avoid imposing himself or his services on the Church. While glad to serve the Church freely, without money or price, while glad to give time, strength, energy and every talent to the service of the Truth, the spirit of meekness as well as the spirit of wisdom should hinder him from crowding his services upon the Church more than the latter could appreciate. Better go gently, and trust to the Lord to guide and to eventually indicate who shall serve the Church and to what extent they shall serve and in what capacity. This, the Lord's way, the Scriptural way, will be found to be the wisest one--any other course will sooner or later bring difficulty to all concerned.

WHOM THE SON MAKES FREE

It is difficult for many of us to keep balanced respecting our personal liberties: we are largely influenced by the customs and practices of those surrounding us, and need continually to hearken to the voice of the Lord in his Word. Because in Babylon it is customary that nothing should be done without ordination, a feeling sometimes creeps in amongst those less developed in grace and truth that is somewhat in accord with that: the feeling, for instance, that no meetings must be held except as they are appointed by the Church and conducted by one of the elected elders. There are advantages coming from a recognition of the oneness of the Church, and the appointing of meetings when and where they may be most helpful and to be led by those esteemed to have superior qualifications. But we must never lose sight of the fact that neither the Lord nor the apostles placed any limitations upon the liberties of individuals, and hence we may not do so. Note our Lord's words--"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.) That promise is as true today as it ever was, and places no restriction upon any of the Lord's people.

If, therefore, any of the Lord's flock feel that their best spiritual interests are not served by the arrangements already made by the Church, they are fully at liberty to start a meeting that will be more helpful to them--any kind of a meeting not in conflict with the provisions of the Scriptures. In case of such a necessity seeming to present itself to any, our advice would be that they seek to appoint such meetings at a time and place that would not be in conflict with the appointments of the general congregation. If then it be desirable, as we hold that it generally is, that the Church should take a general supervision of such matters, it should recognize its responsibility and appoint a sufficiency of meetings and of the desired kinds, and under such leadership as will meet the necessities of the dear people--that all may be fed, that all may be strengthened, that all may progress, and that all may be maintained in unity of heart and in love and fellowship and cooperation.

This may be as suitable a time as any for mentioning again, what has already been emphasized in DAWN STUDIES, Vol. VI., namely, that in our opinion the Lord's dear flock grow most in grace and strength where testimony meetings and Berean classes and DAWN studies are given quite a prominent place amongst their meetings. In these social gatherings, especially in the meetings devoted to testimony, prayer and praise, the dear friends have opportunities for getting into sympathetic touch with one another, which is most helpful, and which binds them more together in the bonds of Christian love than perhaps any other meetings could do. In the Allegheny Church these meetings are held every Wednesday evening, and are eight in number, in various parts of Pittsburg and suburbs. The average attendance for last quarter was more than one hundred and fifty, and the influence going out from these meetings is, we believe, excellent. How glad we would be if all the dear company who are able would attend them and partake of their refreshing influences. Many, we are sure, if obliged to choose one kind of meeting only would vote for the testimony meeting, or else that the testimony feature be made an important part of some other meeting. Let us remember that

this is much of the kind of a meeting described by the Apostle in the early Church, as "When you come together."--*I Cor. 14:26.*

R5131

MORE ELDERS--MORE WORK

Some of the Bible Students' Classes are doing excellent service in the Class Extension work and, as a matter of course, report regularly. Often the attendance at the Extension meetings is good. Frequently the first three meetings lead up to the succeeding three, and are then followed by the establishment of new Classes. We recommend that wherever possible these new Classes have their local meetings on some week night, and that they endeavor to congregate with the Central Class at least Sundays.

We have been surprised that some large Classes containing numerous brethren well qualified for the work are doing little or nothing in Class Extension. We have been trying to think out the cause of this apparent lack of zeal in the Harvest work. Knowing the dear friends to be zealous, knowing that talent in their midst is lying dormant, we have been forced to the conclusion which we are about to present: that is, that the brethren who are capable of Class Extension work in such classes are too modest to suggest the work, lest it should seem that they are trying to have the Class elect them to the Eldership and authorize them to proceed with the Extension work. Modesty is always an excellent quality; but it must be especially hard for dear brethren of some ability to abstain from proclaiming the good tidings--to abstain from going out and starting little meetings themselves.

There surely are Classes deficient in material for Class Extension--Classes which need all the brethren of any ability in their midst. But there are other Classes which need to *wake up*, to take note of brethren having some ability, and to encourage them to use their time and strength in the Class Extension work. We urge, therefore, that the Classes regard as valuable assets the material which they possess, and seek to glorify the Lord in the use of these assets.

In cases where brethren possessed of ability to give Chart Talks see opportunities for Class Extension, and are financially able to manage the matter themselves, we advise that they proceed to hold meetings. We recommend, however, that they first mention the matter to the Class, so that, if possible, co-operation on the part of all may be secured, and that all may join in a good work and in the resultant joys and blessings.

R4821

BIBLE STUDY CLASS-EXTENSION

AS WE have recognized the growth of grace and knowledge amongst the Brethren in the various Bible Study Classes we have thought and prayed over the matter of their usefulness as laborers in the Vineyard. At first the Society encouraged and assisted several of the Brethren in outside work. However, as others made application for similar recognition we soon saw that the Society would be in danger of getting into trouble, either by endorsing and assisting some not worthy, or in failing to assist some who were worthy. And anyway, the attempt of the Society has always been to follow the Apostolic injunction, "Without partiality and without hypocrisy."--*James 3:17.*

We therefore withdrew all special co-operation outside the regular Pilgrim force, whose names appear on the last page of THE WATCH TOWER or are specially announced. We cannot shirk responsibility for these, and, without wishing to cultivate a captious or critical or fault-finding

spirit, we now say that we earnestly request that the dear members of the Society everywhere shall report anything in the conduct or teachings of the Pilgrims which to them may appear contrary to the instructions of the Word--at variance with the "faith once delivered to the saints." Do not discuss such matters slanderously, but report them kindly and lovingly to the Head Office at Brooklyn--"Pilgrim Department." It does not follow that we will agree with you and censure the Pilgrim. But as the Pilgrims represent the Society it is proper that we should know the influence of their lives and any peculiarity of their teachings. This would not be in the nature of slander unless the narrator attempted to color the facts and to make out a case of condemnation.

THE NEW EXTENSION PLAN

About six months ago a plan developed by which we believe the Society will be able to cooperate with hundreds of dear Brethren in the exercise of their talents in the spread of the Truth. This plan, so far as we can see, is as free from objection of every kind as any human plan could be. It will make the different classes responsible for the Extension Work, and the Society will thus be working through and in conjunction with the classes. It is not a plan by which one class will undertake to shepherd another or several classes indefinitely. It is our thought that we expect Divine Providence gradually to raise up in each class Elder Brothers who would be thoroughly competent to care for the local interests, and before long be able also to engage in the Extension Work. The plan we suggest relates only to Extension, as follows:

(1) Any class is invited to join in this Extension movement provided it has amongst its regularly chosen Elders a sufficient amount of talent available for outside work, without jeopardizing the welfare and prosperity of the class.

(2) If a class have a superfluity of ability amongst its Elders, more than is necessary for its own proper prosperity, it should consider its own surrounding territory in which there are no classes, and should select several fields for active service. The class should designate which of its Elders it believes to be well qualified for the giving of three Chart Talks, and which of its Elders would be qualified to give three Talks afterward on the Day of Judgment, Ransom and Restitution, and the Manner of the Lord's Coming. The Society is prepared to supply Charts for such use, and also a little pamphlet for such speakers, giving outlines for three Chart Discourses --the same to be filled out by the speaker. The three succeeding Talks could be given very much along the lines of the presentation in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, or those Chapters might be read after thorough study and practice, if that prove the most advantageous method.

At the conclusion of each discourse the following one should be announced and the hearers and their friends cordially invited. At the closing of the third Chart Talk, the speaker should announce the name and topic of the Brother who would speak on the following Sunday, making such interesting and voluntary comments as the situation would permit. At the close of the second speaker's three meetings it would be well to inquire how many of the audience felt sufficient interest in Bible Study along dispensational lines to come together regularly as a class of Bible Students. The speaker should explain the Berean Study Classes and should counsel as respects the most suitable time and place for such classes, and should promise that, if desired, the class sending him would send some one of their number to assist them until they should get started in these Berean Studies and be able to make progress by themselves, etc.

(3) The getting up of these Extension Classes would involve labor and expense. Sometimes court-houses, sometimes the school-room, sometimes the Church lecture-room, sometimes an unused chapel, sometimes a picture theatre, sometimes a conservatory of music--as the case may be--is obtainable. Quite frequently those in charge--learning that the meetings are for Bible Study, and that no admission fee is charged, and that no collection is lifted--are willing to give the premises free, or with a nominal charge for the janitor's service or light or heat, etc. Sometimes a small price must be paid. But in any event it should be thoroughly understood that from three to six meetings are purposed and are to be advertised for successive Sundays. And payment should be made in advance

and a receipt secured, so that there might be no misunderstanding before the advertising matter would be prepared for circulation.

(4) In connection with all such meetings the Society is glad to co-operate. It will furnish free copies of *Everybody's Paper*, on the back of which will be an announcement of the Chart Talks for each of the first three Sundays. Everything will be complete except the name of the meeting-place and the dates. These could be printed in by a local printer at a very small cost, or could be stamped on with a rubber stamp. The circulation of these papers will mean the distribution of many sermons, which may do good work, aside from those who will be drawn to the public gathering. We will supply these in proportion of one to every six of the English-speaking population of any town, district or city, upon application. The population figures include children, and one in six would generally represent the number of families.

The expenses for the meetings the classes are usually able to bear, and the traveling expenses for close-by towns is small. However, the Society will be pleased to co-operate with any classes not prepared to bear the full expenses of these meetings, provided the report sent in seems to justify the expenditure. In making such a report the class, through its Secretary, should give us particulars and say what proportion of expense the class is prepared to bear and how much money it would be necessary for the Society to contribute, in order to carry out the programme.

(5) The Society does not wish to deal with the speakers directly, but prefers that they should be responsible to the Ecclesia which sends them forth, even as Paul and Barnabas were sent forth, first by the Church at Corinth, and made their reports directly thereto. The Society prefers to have reports monthly, on the printed blank which we supply, through the duly elected Secretary of the Class.

(6) All correspondence (except such as is strictly personal and could be attended to only by Brother Russell) should be addressed International Bible Students Association, care of Extension Dep't. All correspondence on this subject should be addressed in America to the Brooklyn Tabernacle; in Great Britain to the London Tabernacle; in Australia to Melbourne, and in the Scandinavian and German countries to their respective offices.

(7) What we have said foregoing in respect to English meetings may be applied equally in respect to services in other languages in proportion as opportunities permit.

THIS WORK ALREADY COMMENCED

We have already made a trial along the above lines. Some seem not to have gotten our thought fully on some points. Nevertheless the good work has already commenced. We have already reports from 145 classes. And already 512 meetings have been held, with 16,392 in attendance, as shown by reports up to April 1. Let the good work go on wisely, moderately, lovingly, zealously! The harvest is great; the laborers are few in comparison to the great field to be reaped.

Let us emphasize again in respect to all communications on every subject--that the Society, and not individuals, should be addressed, and, if convenient, the Department should be indicated on the envelope. Letters otherwise addressed will be more or less likely to fail of prompt attention; individuals may be sick or absent, but the Departments remain, and always give prompt attention.

R5384

PASTORAL ADVICE ON PRAYER AND TESTIMONY

THE New Creation needs a special meeting of a devotional kind once a week for prayer and testimony. We believe that the friends would find it very profitable to set aside at least one night in the quarter as a prayer meeting in a very general sense. Our suggestion has been that the middle Wednesday evening of the quarter be the one selected for this purpose. This meeting should be

devoted to prayer rather than to testimony. It may be opened with a prayer by the leader, who could then call for two or three prayers. Afterward he might read the text for the week, and comment upon it for about three minutes; or if the Class were very small, comment about *five* minutes; if very large in numbers, about *two* minutes. The length of the comment would be according to the size of the Class.

Then the leader might say, This is the evening we have arranged to be especially for a prayer service. We have all found, no doubt, that it is a special privilege for the Christian to worship the Lord, to offer prayer, praise. With the heart, we *believe*; with the mouth, we confess. During this service we prefer not to call by name, but desire that all present participate. If you have only a few words, no matter. Indeed, we would rather encourage the thought that the prayer should not be too long. Now we will give opportunity for three to rise-- two brothers and one sister; after that we will have a hymn; following the hymn we will have another opportunity for prayer--one brother and one sister (according to the general make-up of the class), and thus give an opportunity all around.

We find that a great blessing comes to the Lord's people from the exercise of the privilege of prayer. They need to be encouraged, for many of them have not had such encouragement in their earlier life experiences.

We think that once a quarter for the special prayer service would serve the purpose better than once a month. More than once a quarter might prove tedious; and if such order has been followed in any Class, we recommend that it be changed.

A MODEL TESTIMONY MEETING

As a rule the mid-week meeting should be set aside for praise and testimony. As before stated, the Christian needs a special devotional meeting, with opportunities for relating his experiences. Up-to-date testimonies are very helpful. All the Lord's people have trials and difficulties, and by hearing of one another's experiences, we learn to sympathize with each other.

Such meetings should begin with a hymn or two, followed by one or more short prayers. The brother who is to open the meeting with prayer, should be instructed before the meeting what to do and what not to do. And the opening prayer should be merely a request for Divine blessing upon the hearts and the minds of those assembled, that they might be in the right condition to receive the Lord's blessing.

Suppose that the text for the evening read, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time." The leader would say something like this: Our text for the week reads thus (here read the text)...Apparently, in God's sight the quality of humility is one of the most important qualities for any one of His people to possess. The entire Scriptures seem to indicate that when we have humility we are pleasing in God's sight; and that unless we have this quality we could never be fit for the Kingdom. We can see the wisdom of this requirement, too; for if God should exalt to a high position those who are not humble, it might lead to further difficulty in Heaven.

We can see that Satan was not properly submissive to God. After he had gotten into this proud condition he probably thought that he could do better than God; and in his endeavor to show what he could do, he brought his own downfall and brought the human family into sin and death. No wonder, then, that God required Jesus to show that He had submitted Himself to the Father's will. We see the course of Jesus in this matter, and how the Father afterwards exalted Him. It is for us to submit ourselves to everything which God's providence brings to us. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

Now, dear friends, perhaps you may have something to tell us of your experiences this week, along the line of humility, or its opposite--pride. This is not to be a dissertation on Scripture. We already know what the text means. We want you to tell us of your own personal experiences. What experiences have you had that have tended to impress this Scripture on your mind? Let us have some little page from your personal experience. We will begin with Brother A, and then have Sister B, and

then will alternate between the two sides of the room, and thus progress. Will you give us your testimony, Brother?

HOW TO GET DOUBLE EFFECT

By following the method of calling upon one here, and one there, we get double effect. If the testimony begins at one end, some who are far away might think: Oh, it will not come my turn for a long time! But if the method is adopted of calling one here, and then one there, and there and here, it makes all more alert, and will keep them awake to the whole subject.

In leading a testimony meeting ourself, we keep the thought in mind that we want a good testimony to begin with and a good testimony to close with. So we start with some one who will give a good, wide-awake testimony, and thus give a good impetus at the beginning. When we are singing the opening hymn, we have in mind Brother So-and-so, or Sister So-and-so, to begin with or to end with. And thus we are sure of having a good beginning and a good ending.

If in the middle of the service there are some who seem to stumble a little, and do not seem to know how to proceed, we say, We understand, then, brother (or sister) that your experience has been thus and so. We would take what we surmise to be his real thought, and state it for him, if we think he is unable to complete it. We should be able to do this. Any leader ought to be able to do so, and thus kindly to encourage him.

We would be careful not to make it so rankly different from the thought that the brother or sister will feel like saying, Oh, *that* is not it *at all!* But we try to give his thought so that he could say, Brother Russell understands my thought! But if we should look sour and say nothing, the brother (or the *sister* more *especially*) might feel too much discouraged to try at all the next time, thinking that she might better keep quiet.

In a testimony meeting, where there are sixty to one hundred present in the Class, there is not the best opportunity for the most helpful meeting. The most profitable number would seem to be twelve to fifteen. Then there is sufficient variety, and none too much time to spare, yet enough time for all to testify.

If the first who testifies has a wrong thought or course of action, he may say: This week I had a conversation with a preacher who thinks that he knows a great deal about Scripture--I asked him several questions, which he could not answer; and all the people could see that he could not answer at all!

The leader might say to him, Brother, I have no doubt that you meant that well, but I am not so sure that you did it wisely. It might have been better if you had done it gently. We are not to be rude, but gentle, in meekness instructing those who oppose. You must remember that it would be a very difficult matter for a man of years, of standing, of education and reputation to see these things. You should, therefore, be doubly on guard not to arouse antagonism. So I would advise that in a case like that, we would simply drop a little word, and this word would be more in harmony with the suggestions of gentleness, meekness. In speaking as you did, that minister might have thought that you were not humble enough.

There might be another one who would have the thought all twisted in another way. The art of testifying well is one that the leaders of testimony meetings should cultivate in the class. They should have right ideas about these matters, so that the Class would get proper thoughts as to how to deal with what comes up. In this way they have something fixed in their minds.

TESTIMONY MEETING NOT FOR A DISCOURSE

If one attempts to give a sermon, the leader might say, Excuse me, Brother, but this is not a meeting for a discourse. This is a testimony meeting. Perhaps at some other time you can speak more at length.

It might be well for the leader to give in advance a definition of what a testimony is, something as follows: Presumably we all know what a testimony is. It is not a discourse or a dissertation on Scripture. This is a meeting especially for testimonies. I will give a dissertation myself on the text for the evening, now, at the beginning; but later we will wish to have the personal experiences of the friends.

We take it for granted that all the friends mean well; anything that is not just in order is not seen by them to be out of order. But by the leader's remarking that he would read the text and give a few words regarding its signification, and would then hear testimonies, they will see what is expected. By the leader's giving his own personal testimony at the close of the meeting, they will also get the proper thought.

Our thought is that it would not be best for the friends to depart for their homes with any unseemly haste, but to tarry for a word of greeting. That is our custom. We do not know any Scripture bearing directly upon this subject, and we would have no right to lay down a rule or law; we merely give the suggestion that nothing would be gained by entering into too much conversation at the close of the service. There is a danger of the after-meeting crowding out the benefits and blessings of the service. Of course, if they leave promptly the friends have not so much opportunity for fellowship, unless they come a little earlier--a little ahead of time--to the place of meeting. If some can do this it would not be amiss for them to have a little friendly interchange before the coming of the leader, and before the hour for meeting. This would seem to be a very profitable opportunity.

PROPER ATTITUDE IN PRAYER

Nothing in the Scriptures limits the Christian as to the attitude of his body when he goes to the Lord in prayer. Standing and kneeling are both mentioned. One would have to be guided by the spirit of a sound mind. If he were out on the street, it would surely be undesirable to kneel. If he were on a stone floor, it might also be undesirable to kneel. If he were in private, it would seem best to kneel in prayer. Some have told us, however, that when they get upon their knees they are likely to get very sleepy. We would wish to be in that attitude which would enable us best to think of what we are doing. If we found that on our knees we were apt to grow sleepy, we would assume some other attitude which would keep us awake and attentive to prayer.

As for congregational prayer, it is our thought that it can generally be best observed sitting, with the head bowed. Of course, the preference of attitude is largely a matter of education, of habit. It has been our thought to say to the friends everywhere, that in public service this attitude would best be observed during prayer. Where the gathering is small and there is a carpet on the floor, it might be as well to kneel.

As for testimony meetings, it is our opinion that unless the class be a large one, it is better that they sit when testifying; for by remaining seated the giving of a testimony is easier. A difficulty with some in giving a testimony is that they rise and, becoming embarrassed, forget what they are going to say. So it reduces the nervous excitement of some to remain sitting. In a large meeting, it would be better for the person to stand, so that the voice can reach all.

STANDING DURING CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

In the matter of singing, we believe that the custom of standing, which prevails in Great Britain, is a very good one. It would seem to be too much to stand during a praise service, where a number of songs follow each other. But standing in singing has its advantages generally. A person in standing is putting himself in a distinctive attitude; and he can sing better because of thus putting his vocal chords in better position. It is desirable, therefore, when a hymn is announced, that the friends stand.

The invitation to rise should always be given in an appropriate way and not in a peremptory manner. The leader should not say, The congregation will rise, but, Let us rise and sing. There might be some who are in such physical condition that they would better remain sitting; hence the invitation, Let us rise and sing, is particularly intended for those who wish to rise. We think it would be a great mistake to say, Let us rise and sing, and then add--as some do--Let us remain standing while Brother A offers prayer. This might in many cases be imposing a real hardship.

TOO MUCH SELF-CONCEIT

But in the closing hymn, if the audience rise, then instead of having them sit down for the closing prayer, it would be well to remain standing, and the prayer should be merely in the form of a benediction, which should not be distressing in length to anybody. If there had been one prayer before, there would not be further necessity for more than could be offered in a few words. Most prayers are too long.

One who is leading in prayer should not interfere with the liberties and rights of the entire congregation by the length of his petitions. We do not read that our Lord made very long prayers. It is true that He sometimes continued all night in prayer, alone; but He offered no lengthy prayers in public. The "Lord's Prayer" is quite brief and to the point. Those people who think they should tell the Lord all about how He should run the Universe, have too much self-concern, too much self-conceit. When we learn how poorly we are able to run ourselves, it should make us very slow to advise the Almighty as to how to manage His affairs.

FORMAL PRAYER OFTEN MOCKERY

A Boston newspaper, in referring to a prayer offered by a prominent minister, stated the next day that Rev. _____ delivered the most eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston audience! The Editor evidently knew that the prayer was not addressed to the Lord! We need to have much of the spirit of a sound mind. We presume the Lord sees that all our intentions are good. But He has not told us that we are to pray to be heard of men. We are to pray to the Lord.

In private prayer we are told to "enter into thy closet," and we suppose that no one should pray in a tone that could be heard outside the door. Prayer, either in private or in public, is to be addressed to the Almighty, in reverent terms, and should express the desire of the heart appropriate to the occasion. We should know for what we are going to the Lord. It would be better that we should not go to the Throne of Grace unless we have something that we wish to say.

At the close of any meeting we think it would be very unwise for the speaker to pray for ten or fifteen minutes, or even *five* minutes. Two or three minutes would be an abundance, we think. The Lord knows about all our needs, and we should have consideration for the congregation.

It is something of a matter to sit for an hour, and then to prolong the service by a lengthy prayer is unwise. Lengthy prayers should be offered in private. Some Christians, however, need to be encouraged along the line of prayer--some are not disposed to pray as much as they should. Prayer is a most wonderful privilege, but one that should not be abused by endless repetition of the same thoughts.

R5474

WELL-MEANING, BUT HINDERERS

WE FEEL sure that all of the Lord's people have only the best of motives. How could they have other than good motives and yet be recognized by the Lord? Selfishness may creep in and assert itself to some extent without being detected by the New Creature; but being detected, it is to be

restrained, demeaned, put to death. The entire course of the Lord's followers is one of experience in respect to personal imperfections of mind and body, and in respect to properly understanding the words and conduct of others.

We have two items which we desire to bring to the attention of such brethren as have to do with public speaking, introductions, funeral services, etc. Our suggestions and criticisms should be understood as intended to be helpful to the brethren themselves and to the Cause we all love to serve.

(1) We are informed that, when serving at funerals, some of the brethren, anxious to tell the Good Tidings respecting death and the wages of sin upon our race, and the redemption and the resurrection as the release from the penalty, are in danger of going to extremes. Sometimes they preach too long--attempting to tell more than is proper on such an occasion. At other times they are so intent upon presenting the Gospel Message and Bible explanation respecting death, that they forget to speak a word of comfort to the bereaved members of the family of the deceased, or to make some reference to the deceased, his character, his zeal for God, his devotion to the Bible--or some other truthful eulogy comforting to the bereaved family.

We are not wishing to intimate in any sense that ordinary funeral sermons, which are wholly eulogistic and give no attention to the Bible teaching respecting death, are right. We merely wish to suggest that a course of moderation is a wise one, bringing in an explanation of some of the Divine Plan, and making some reference to the deceased and his family, etc.

(2) Great care should be exercised in the selection of a brother to do the introducing of a public speaker. Far better is it that there be no introduction at all, than that a wrong one be made. The person who thinks the occasion a suitable one for showing off himself, his eloquence, his knowledge of the Bible, etc., should not be entrusted with any work of introduction. The person who thinks it an opportunity to tell all he knows of the Divine Plan and to inform the audience in advance what the speaker intends to tell them, is just as much out of place as is the person who, being invited to offer an opening prayer, stretches it out into a discourse, wastes valuable time and disgusts everybody with his lack of propriety. More harm can be done in two minutes by the person who introduces the speaker than the latter could undo in two hours.

Humility, modesty and brevity are grand qualities everywhere, but are especially appropriate in those who would introduce a speaker, whether at a Class Extension Meeting, Pilgrim Meeting or any other.

On such an occasion the one leading in prayer should make it merely an invocation. The audience has not come together to hear him pray, but to hear the address. His invocation should thank God for the privileges of the hour, for the liberty granted in our day, for the desire of heart to know the Truth and for an open Bible. Requests should be made of the Lord for a Divine blessing upon the meeting--upon the audience and upon the speaker, that the Lord's name may be glorified, that the Truth be advanced and all who love righteousness be blessed.

The introduction should be brief also. It should not say, "The speaker will tell you what we believe," as though making a distinction between the audience and the small group in the audience who profess to be teachers. With greater humility, it should be something like this: "It is my privilege and honor to introduce the speaker of the afternoon. He comes to us under the auspices of the International Bible Students Association, bringing, we believe, a Message from God's Word. We trust that it will be convincing, encouraging, helpful. Let us hear candidly, remembering the Master's words that we are to be sanctified through the Truth, and that His Word is the Truth. Let us therefore rejoice in proportion as the Word of the Lord is heard with the ears of our hearts. I now introduce to you _____, whose topic for the occasion is _____."

R2291 [sel]

Brother D. P. Jackson, M.D., in a letter recently received, after telling that four met at his house and partook of the Memorial, adds:--

I wish to submit for your consideration some things which have lately come to the attention of our little communion in this place, namely:--

One of the brethren here received an invitation to meet with the Church at M_____, on April 5th, to assist in the Lord's Supper. He declined because it would break up our own meeting at B_____, there being only the two families of us here. Brother A, of Y_____, in answer to an invitation, expects to go to M_____ to assist the Church there in the Memorial Supper, and Bro. M. goes to N_____ on a similar errand.

The invitation to M_____ was declined on the grounds above stated, but it also occurred to us, on further consideration, that perhaps it is not wise for the members of the Church to get into the habit of sending to the leaders and prominent members of other Churches for assistance in the Memorial services, for the following reasons:--

(1) The Passover was a family observance. This would have some bearing on the question, as showing that the Lord's Supper was not to be made the occasion of any special public display.

(2) We have no record that it was a custom of the Apostolic Church for one congregation to send to others for the services of an elder to officiate for them at the Communion service.

(3) The Lord's Supper has been made, in all apostate churches, a center around which the clergy have built a great deal of the worst ecclesiasticism. It is the principal means which the Protestant clergy of to-day have in their possession for magnifying the importance of the clergy over the laity. Last winter the Presbytery of Louisville, Kentucky, excommunicated a minister for teaching that it was proper for lay members of the church to celebrate the Lord's Supper without the presence of a clergyman--an "ordained minister."

(4) May not the practice of one Church sending to some other for a "leader," "elder" or prominent member to come and help them celebrate the Lord's Supper be the infinitesimal beginning of the same spirit of ecclesiasticism and sacerdotalism, which was the ruin of the early church? Would not the practice have a natural tendency to exalt the mind of the leader called away to assist a distant Church in this ceremony, and to awaken in the minds of the members the idea that it was necessary or at least useful and important to have "leaders" and "elders" present, *officiating* at the ceremony, and not only so, but that the leader's part was *so* important that their own home elder needed to be reinforced in the important duty by one from a distant Church? It is a natural weakness of human nature to consider a man who comes from a distance as a "greater" man than one of their familiar neighbors.

(5) This practice of getting a clergyman from some neighboring church to come and "assist" the pastor in holding the "Communion" is very common among Presbyterian churches, and seems to be designed to exalt the importance of the presence of clergymen at the ceremony, and is it not a custom which, to say the least, will "be more honored in the breach than in the observance" by the Lord's humble followers of the harvest period?

I am impressed that temptations to ecclesiasticism, and partisan bigotry and narrowness, are among the most subtle of our trials, the most crafty of the "wiles of the devil." These brethren who have given the invitations, and those who have accepted them, no doubt are acting with the best of motives and without the slightest thought of there being any danger in the practice, but on further reflection I am only confirmed in my first impression, and fear that there *is* danger in the practice, and that "as the serpent beguiled Eve in his *craftiness*, your minds should be corrupted from the *simplicity* and *purity* that is toward Christ," by this seemingly innocent and seemingly edifying practice, and I hope you will give it your thoughtful and prayerful consideration.

I would like also to know whether the practice is becoming general. It seems to have occurred to nearly all the Churches in this section. It would be interesting to know whether this was the case in

many other places or whether it was limited to this locality. If it has occurred in numerous Churches it would look like a concerted movement of the Enemy to plant the germ of the "mystery of iniquity" in the *reformed* churches, for if the custom should become general the more retiring and less gifted members would almost certainly get the impression that somehow these "leaders" had more to do with the Memorial than they had, and if time allowed, the difference between elders and members would widen until a clerical class would be differentiated.

Yours truly,
DAVID P. JACKSON.

* * *

We presume that none of the friends above mentioned had the slightest thought of encouraging "clericism." The churches supplied we believe celebrated the Memorial this year for the first time; and we think it was well that some of larger experience should initiate them. Besides, the little groups mentioned were gathered to a considerable extent through the efforts of the brethren of Y_____, who as Evangelists drew their attention to the divine plan of the ages. It would, of course be quite appropriate for such to meet with those whom they had already interested along other lines, to introduce to them the Memorial Supper observance.

However, we quite agree with Bro. Jackson respecting the necessity for guarding against the cloven hoof of clericy and everything which might tend to divide the Lord's people or abridge the liberties conferred upon us mutually by our dear Redeemer. The only ground for preference as to who shall serve the Lord's people on this or other occasions is *qualification* --mental, moral, physical or spiritual. We publish the letter because many of its points are well taken. The Passover was a *family* affair and the Memorial Supper superseding it is similarly a family matter;-- but instead of pertaining to an earthly family it pertains to the Lord's family; "the household of faith."

R1793

AS TO SERVING THE MEMORIAL EMBLEMS

A Brother writes, inquiring for an appropriate order of service in connection with the celebration of the Memorial Supper, and, as the subject may be of interest to many, we publish a portion of our reply, as follows:--

After opening the meeting, let as competent a one as is present give a little talk upon the import of the ordinance and then on the emblems, beginning with the bread and what it symbolizes--informally, and just as lengthily or briefly as circumstances indicate, endeavoring to set forth the real meaning of what is done. Follow with the remark that the Lord, in instituting the Memorial, first gave thanks; then either return thanks yourself or ask some one else present to do so. Then follow with some such expression as the following,--After having eaten the Passover Supper, the typical lamb, our Lord "took bread, and blessed it, and break it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." Suiting the action to the word, break a piece of the bread (preferably "unleavened bread" purchased from Hebrews, or else soda-biscuits, which are unleavened), and hand it to those who will serve it, or serve it yourself, according to the size of the company. It is generally well, we think, to have a little interim of silence for meditation--a few moments. Then let some one give thanks for that which the cup emblemizes. Then say, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is the blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (We advise, as preferable, either grape juice or a mixture of the latter with a very little wine and sugar,--so little that the flavor of the alcohol cannot be detected--as a safeguard for any who may have had in the past a craving for liquors.) After passing this emblem, again leave a little space for silent reflection, and then say: It is written, "And when they

had sung an hymn, they went out." Let us do likewise,--in thought following the course of the Lord during that eventful night in the Garden of Gethsemane, the prayer with the disciples and admonishing them to watch and pray, the betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, etc. Sometimes it may be found profitable, instead of speaking, to read from the WATCH TOWER--Mar. '91, page 36; March 15, '95, page 71.

R5255

BEREAN LESSONS AND TESTIMONY MEETINGS

WE HAVE REQUESTED the traveling Pilgrims to do what they can to assist the different Classes with whom they meet to a proper appreciation of the great value of Berean Study Classes and Testimony Meetings. While we have advised these and described their successful operation and method in SCRIPTURE STUDIES, Vol. VI., some of the dear friends seem not to fully appreciate them. We believe this is because they have never seen them in proper operation. With good Berean Study Classes and Testimony Meetings rightly conducted, the I.B.S.A. Classes will surely be prosperous in spiritual things--whether they have any preaching or not.

The Pilgrim Brethren are selected with care, and with the thought that they are well rounded out in Christian experience and along the lines of the Berean Studies and in leading Testimony Meetings. It is our thought, therefore, that if a Pilgrim visits a place where such meetings are not held, he cannot do the friends a better service than to give them a sample of how such meetings should be conducted to be interesting and profitable--along the lines indicated in Vol. VI.

In places where such meetings are already in vogue, and are successful and well attended by the interested, sample meetings by the Pilgrims would not be so necessary. Nevertheless, we have suggested to them that where they serve a class more than one evening, and one of those is the regular Testimony Meeting evening, it will be well for them to conduct the Testimony Meeting along the lines of Vol. VI., closing in an hour, and then taking an extra half-hour for a heart-to-heart talk along the lines which the time, place and circumstances may suggest to them as most helpful to the Class. We have urged all the dear Brethren who do public speaking to confine their discourse to sixty minutes--and surely not to exceed seventy minutes --and that if for any reason they speak longer than this, they will kindly explain to us the particular reasons therefor.

This is not done to hamper the brethren, but because uniformly long discourses are too strenuous for the public, and therefore apt to hinder the Cause we all wish to serve. Exceptions to this are made in the case of the two or three brethren who are generally used to open a series of meetings; for a special endeavor is then made to bring out an audience and a little extra time may be necessary, and in the case of especially interesting speakers, a long discourse may be wise. The average speaker, however, can accomplish more good in an hour than in two hours.

In these and in all suggestions and regulations, dear friends, be assured that our aim, object, motive, is the Lord's glory and the blessing of His people.

Part-8

WHAT PASTOR RUSSELL SAID

CHURCH

CHURCH--Submission to Elders.

Q102:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1--Would the principle of submission lead us to accept the form of prayer, for instance, if suggested by an elder?

ANSWER--In the order of the Church it would be very proper for us to submit ourselves to the arrangements of the congregation while worshipping together. If we are of those who are of the Lord's consecrated people it would be for us to say what the order of the meeting would be and proper for those worshipping together to say what it would be in the absence of such an elder. It would also be proper for an elder to say who should lead the meeting if he were going to be absent; and it would be proper for the one appointed by the elder to obey his suggestions kindly, as far as possible, as the Apostle says, "Submit yourselves one to another." For instance, if Brother Sherman opened this meeting and he chose to say "Shall we stand to sing such a verse?" barring any physical weaknesses we should arise, instead of saying:, "Who gave you liberty to suggest that we should arise?" Or for an illustration, suppose some one else should say, "Shall we bow our heads in prayer?" and some one else should say, "Well, I am in the habit of standing up when I pray. I am going to stand up." To have a certain amount of willingness to fall in line with everything that is not a matter of conscience is a good thing. The Lord's people have a good deal of combativeness, and unless we have this quality we will not be overcomers. But unless it is brought into control it is likely to make us contentious, difficult to get along with, hard to live with. We should submit ourselves as far as possible to every reasonable regulation. If each had his own right and will there would be confusion all the time. It is a good thing to have to submit ourselves one to another; it is a good thing to learn' to submit ourselves--but when it is a matter of conscience we are to have sufficient courage and manhood to stand by that conscience so we would not violate that conscience. There are a whole lot of things in the world that do not involve conscience at all.

CHURCH--God Sets the Members.

Q103:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1--In 1 Cor. 12:28, we read: "God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; . . . helps, governments." Who are the governors, and to what extent do they govern?

ANSWER--It does not say governors, but governmental rule, order or law. The whole congregation, by the direction of God's Word recognize's certain rules as proper, the orderly course of the conduct of meetings. Every one who is a child of God and makes any progress in the way of the Lord, ought to come to the place where he could see the wisdom of certain rules in the Church of Christ. Anybody who is not willing to recognize the rules and regulations made for the Church is to that extent an anarchist. We believe in the law of the land or of this city. It is better to have some rules or laws, even if they be imperfect, than to be without them. We admit that there might be too many laws and regulations and restrictions, but the Church of the Lord are to seek to know and appreciate and to use the liberty that God gives--everything must be done decently and in order. The object of each class should be to have as much liberty as would be good for each class. So God is the one we are to recognize, the one who has established the order in the Church.

CHURCH--Trouble in a Class.

Q103:2:: QUESTION (1910)--2--In case where some little bitterness sprang up between two brothers in the church, and they refused to speak to one another, and it is evident to all the class that

they are not in the right relationship, what should be the attitude of the elders in that case? Should they make the matter in any way public, or should the matter be allowed to drift along, especially if it does not interfere with the church in a general way?

ANSWER--My thought would be, brother, there may be certain matters that are individual, and that the Church had best not take any notice of, but do the way the Bible says God did with some things. We read of certain things that God winked at. And so the Church needs to wink at certain things--that is, not to notice them. Now where there is a little difference springs up between two persons, if the Church attempted to interfere, it would be busy all the time, perhaps. But each one should remember that it would be proper to bring it to their attention, and if either or both of these parties were causing divisions they should be noted or marked by the others, and not treated quite so cordially--not spurned as brethren, but not put into any place of office or service of the class, and just treat them a little more coolly, because they are not walking circumspectly, apparently, but are causing some division. Then it would also be proper for any of the elders, if they thought they saw a good opportunity, to have a little private conversation with either of those brethren, and say, "Brother, is there anything in your affair that I could help with? I notice you and Brother Brown are not getting along very nicely; I want to say to you that as an elder of the Church, do not forget Matt. 18:15; if Brother Brown has done you any harm do not forget that Scripture, and if I could be of any service to you at any time I will be ready."

"Well, I want to tell you about it--

"No, brother, I do not wish to have you tell me about it I think it would be wrong for me to listen to the matter; it would have to come to me in the regular Scripture way. If there is a difference between you and Brother Brown I do not wish to hear it, it would be wrong for me to encourage you in stating it. God has provided a way, as Jesus said, in Matt. 18:15-17.

He tells us how we shall do--go first to him, try to make it up with Brother Brown; if you fail to do that, and he is doing you some harm, and makes you feel as though you cannot be a kind brother to him, then come and get a couple of brethren to go with you. If you want to call me to go with you I will be pleased to serve you and do everything I can to bring about peace and harmony. But I do not wish to hear anything in advance; it would not be right; I would not be a suitable one if I did listen to anything you had to say. If Brother Brown has done you harm, go to him and then after you have been unsuccessful if it is still important enough in your mind to make a breach between you and him, then take, as the Scriptures say, one or two others and have a conference, and if it is still unheeded and if neither you nor he can see the thing harmoniously, then it may be brought to the Church if you wish, but not sooner than that."

CHURCH--Opposition in the

Q104:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--The strong ones in our Church are opposed to present truth, and those who are most faithful are not teachers and are younger in the truth. The opposers are holding on to the meetings, as they are principally elders. What are the faithful, weak majority to do?

ANSWER--Well, I have no idea from whom the question comes, so I can answer it with the greater freedom. I can see that there are certain principles involved in all that the Lord has laid down in respect to his people, and that they are to choose from amongst those for elders, or for elder brothers, those who are most qualified to represent the Master in the congregation. If any of those who have been long in the truth, and who have natural ability, have become such as this brother evidently thinks some have become, then they are to be considered from the Apostle's standpoint as heady, and it would be proper for the congregation to follow what they believe to be the Lord's will in respect to electing them or not electing them the next time. My thought would be that it would be injurious to any brethren who are really in this condition to elect them to any place of prominence. It would be to their good, and the very best thing as helpful to them, if they were allowed to remain

outside of any teaching capacity for a while, even though the apparent prosperity of the meetings would seemingly be interfered with. It probably would not be interfered with, because any who are in such a wrong attitude of mind as this question intimates would certainly be likely to do more harm than good every day, and every meeting, and to be getting more harm than good themselves. But, now, it does not follow that the brother who has written this question has the proper focus on the matter. Perhaps he has some wrong impression; I am not competent to judge; know nothing about the case, nothing about the elders, nothing about the writer of the note. But it would be his duty to try to look as calmly, and patiently, and benevolently, at the elders that have been serving as it is possible for him to do, and for all the congregation to so regard the matter. And perhaps it would not be unwise for the brother to call on each one of the elders whom he thinks is not quite right, one at a time, and kindly tell them what he fears, and suggest that he is not wishing to judge, but that he sees certain things, and ask them to consider these matters--whether it might not be the adversary is gaining some advantage over them, and have a nice kind brotherly or sisterly talk. Generally a good plan is, if they get angry with that, and you have been very kind and considerate in the way of presenting it, it shows that there is something wrong. They might not agree with it necessarily; they might say, Why, brother, you have misunderstood me. I did not mean that at all; you have been looking too critically at it; what I meant was thus and so. In any event, it should be a means of assistance to those who would be in this supposedly wrong condition. Before undertaking anything of the kind, I would advise that each one who would undertake to do anything in the way of correcting a brother or a sister, or even giving a suggestion to anyone, should first make the matter a subject of prayer, make sure that their own heart and mind are all right, that they had no bitterness, and that they were seeing things as generously as possible. Let us first get right ourselves--as the Lord puts it, first cast out any mote, or beam, as the case might be, from your own eye, and then with the clearer sight you would thus have you may be able to be a blessing to some brother who is having a mote or beam in his eye.

CHURCH--Proper Basis of Honor in the.

Q119:2:: QUESTION (1915-Z)--2--Matt. 20:27 reads, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Is it a proper desire to be chief among the Lord's people, and are we to understand that the positions in the Kingdom of Heaven will be assigned entirely on the basis of the amount of service we render here?

ANSWER--The Lord had been pointing out to His disciples a certain weakness on their part--a desire to be the greatest--a desire that is general in the human family--an ambitious spirit. The context says that amongst the Gentiles there are some who exercise a lordship and have others to serve them in a menial way, but that this was not to be the case amongst the disciples of Jesus. They were to be actuated by a different spirit. With the followers of Christ there is not to be a spirit to dominate, to rule others, but a spirit of love, which seeks to serve others, to do for others, a spirit which is willing to sacrifice personal interest in the service of others. On this basis we consider further the words of this text. There will be some among the Lord's people who will be chief. It is necessarily so in any company or class or association where people are not all equal in talents--where some are born with more talents and some with less. Some one is bound to be chief. An absolute equality is not possible. It is advisable, too, that there be some among the saints of God to guide the Church. What, then, is to be the standard as to who is to be chief? Shall it be the one who would browbeat the others? No; this is not the standard. Shall it be one who will have a masterful influence and pleasant words, who will dominate **merely** because of some talent, or because of superior education or wealth--something of this kind? No; this could not be the standard. What, then, will be the standard as to those who will be recognized as chief ones in the Church?

HAVE NO AMBITION FOR PERSONAL GLORY

We reply, We should look for those who have most of the spirit of service. He who renders the greatest amount of service and brings the greatest spiritual blessing to the Class--the one who tries most to **truly serve**--consider him your chief. While our Lord's words were addressed to all the apostles, and not merely to one individual, yet they are applicable also to the individual. The thought should come home to each of our hearts, that if any of us have ambition for service in some special capacity, we are not to do like worldly people. We should take the opposite track, and leave any honor of men out of the question entirely. We should leave God to attend to that matter as shall seem to Him best, and be content merely to be a servant to the brethren. Let the Lord see how willing you are to serve in any manner. The person without any ambition never amounts to anything. We need to have ambition if we are sowing or plowing or whatever we are doing--we need ambition to spur us on to do whatever we do in a satisfactory manner. And so if we have the opportunity of serving the Truth, we should seek to serve it in the most capable manner possible. Otherwise we should not be capable servants of the Lord. But we are to lay aside any desire to be chief so far as ambition for personal glory is concerned. We are to seek to serve **the Lord** the best we know how. If you can serve the Lord in some respects better than I, and I can learn something from you, well and good. And if afterwards you can learn something from me, so be it. True, we should be patterning after that which is especially commendable and doing all we can to further the Lord's Cause. And this service should be prompted by love. Any service not prompted by love is not acceptable in the sight of the Lord.

HUMILITY A PRIME REQUISITE

The Apostle Paul says that those who desire the office of a bishop are desiring a good thing. It is a noble service. The office in the Apostles' day was not the exalted official position it is understood to be in the nominal church systems of today. A bishop then was a humble, untitled servant of the Church, caring for the interests of the sheep. Every servant of the Church should seek to be efficient, should love to be, as far as he is able, a caretaker over the flock of God. Amongst these Elder brethren, pastors of the congregation, there will be those of different natural abilities. Each should seek to use his talents, his opportunities, in the service of the Lord, of the brethren and of the Truth. It is a pity that any of the Lord's people today forget the standard which the Master is here setting up. These seem to think that the office of Elder has become theirs by right, instead of realizing that the appointment to this office is by **vote** of the Ecclesia, the company of the Lord's people, and is to be the **voice of the Church**. We believe that the attitude of each one should be to be willing to accept the voice of the Ecclesia, the Church, implicitly. If he has become a member of the congregation by casting in his lot with the others, he has thus become subject to the rules that represent the **controlling majority**, whether it be a majority of **one** or of a larger per cent. Having done this, he should seek to continue in this attitude, whether chosen an Elder or whether another is chosen. Very frequently a congregation makes the mistake of selecting for Elder a brother who does not have the proper qualifications. This sometimes means dissatisfaction on the part of some of the class, and leads to the breaking away of some to form another class. We think this is not the wise course. We think that if the class made a mistake, the Lord is able to overrule it for good; and that therefore those who withdraw lose some experiences which would be valuable to them. We are not always sure, however, that the class made a mistake. How can we know but that the Lord has some lesson in this matter? If we have asked the Lord's blessing on whoever would be the choice, we should abide by that choice. If the one not chosen has ability for properly presenting the Truth and knows a number of places where he can be used and useful, we think that the brother should take advantage of whatever opportunities may present themselves. He need not leave the class, however. He could perform whatever service came to his hand. Perhaps he could use his time and talent in class extension work--not feeling restricted in this direction because he was not elected Elder. He

might go out and find opportunities for service. So the change in Elders might mean to the brother not elected or not re-elected that the Lord was indicating to him another field of usefulness. The Lord's providences might be leading out for wider influence and usefulness for him.

We should not be influenced by what men of the world shall say or think of us. This is immaterial; and it is immaterial what the Church shall think. We should seek to please the Lord. We should not esteem ourselves too highly, but rather give a preference to others in our estimation. Positions in the Kingdom of Heaven, we understand, will be awarded according to the degree of the development of the fruits of the Holy Spirit; and this means a love which will lead to zeal in the Lord's service.

CHURCH--Some Working Independently.

Q125:1:: QUESTION (1916)--1-- Should a group of Bible students work independently of the ecclesia of that locality, being members of that ecclesia.?

ANSWER--There is, of course, a certain amount of Christian liberty that we believe the Lord would be pleased that people always exercise. For instance, suppose a brother were to go to another brother's home, and two or three neighbors came in to spend the evening. Then suppose one should say, "Let us have a game of chess," and another would say, "No, let us have a Bible study." We do not think it would be the Lord's will to say, "No, we cannot have a Bible study, because it is not authorized by our class, but we will play chess." We might properly reason that, while no meeting had been arranged there by the ecclesia, there could be no objection to having a Bible study or to talking along Bible lines. The host might say, "We will ask in some more of the neighbors for another meeting next week. I have tried to tell them about these things and will be glad to have them hear you." I cannot see that there would be anything wrong in such a course. If those attending desired a regular meeting, it should be turned over to the I. B. S. A. local class, which would supply the leaders. But now suppose some of a class say, "We will start another regular meeting;" this would be a different case entirely. They have a right to form a new ecclesia, but in so doing they would be breaking away from the original ecclesia. They could not then properly go back to the other meeting and say, "We will vote here." There must be consistency in what we do. All who become members of an ecclesia more or less give up their **personal** liberties that they may have the advantages of co-operation. But this would not mean such bondage that we could not have a Bible study, but must spend the evening playing games instead.

CHURCH--Stifling Conscience Re Submission.

Q101:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1--How far may we stifle our judgment in connection with the principle of submission?

ANSWER--Stifling our judgment is one thing and stifling our conscience is another. If it is a question of stifling our **conscience** or our **judgment**, I would say it would be better to stifle our judgment, for **we must not stifle our conscience**. If it is merely a question of judgment and the responsibility of judgment doesn't devolve upon us, leave it to the congregation. Submit your judgment to the others—submit your thought for the decision of the others. If your judgment is better than the others you owe it to the others to tell them-- and then be quiet. Otherwise you might be like the juryman who said the other eleven men had no sense at all because they wouldn't see the matter as he did.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

ADVERTISING--Attitude of Elders and Deacons.

Q8:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--What should be the proper relationship between the duties of elders and deacons as to advertising small conventions and pilgrim meetings?

ANSWER.--As to advertising, who should supervise the matter--where should instructions be looked for? My thought is, that the proper course would be for the instructions on advertising to come from the home office, because there we have the largest amount of experience; not because we are wiser than other people, but because those who are entrusted to the work there are supposed to be and ought to be persons of exceptional ability and of wide experience, and since we have to do with so many advertising schemes and arrangements in so many parts of the world, it gives us an opportunity of judging that people otherwise might not enjoy. Therefore my thought would be that they would do well to look for special advice from Brooklyn on this subject. As to who would have it in charge: An elder is elected specially for spiritual things and to look out for the spiritual interests of the Church, yet the advertising is a part of the spiritual interests of the Church; it is so closely identified with the spiritual interests of the Church as to be worthy of the very best ability you have in any class.

You cannot give it into too good hands; and indeed the right spirit would be that all should join in together, and if the one who has the best ability be found, not amongst the elders, but amongst the deacons, then all ought to be glad to rather favor his taking the more prominent part in connection with the work. In other words, we ought to sink all personality in every service of the truth and try to get at the best methods and in the shortest and most satisfactory way, as far as our judgment will direct us and guide us, and look for more wisdom.

BACK SLIDERS--With What Greeting?

Q30:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1--How should we greet those who have left the class and call us worse than Babylon? Shall we give them a hearty greeting when they come to our meetings?

ANSWER--I think not, why should you? I am going to be specially hearty to those who are specially like my dear Redeemer, marked with the character likeness of my Redeemer. I would not be so hearty with those who have left the class, just to let them see that there is a difference, otherwise they might think they were better than those in the class; because they had become obstreperous in some way. They should be greeted according to the Apostle's words, "Mark those who cause divisions and offenses." Mark those who are tending toward division, and don't make them your bosom companions, don't elect them as elders, etc., for that is just the wrong thing. Don't encourage anybody who has a strifeful condition. Lay him on the shelf and let him have strife to himself. Let us be careful that we do not cultivate anything in our own hearts, of their spirit. Let us be gentle, but firm. If any such should approach me, I would shake hands with him. I would not say, No, I will not shake hands with you. But I would not make of them my bosom companions. We want to remember what they said of the Apostles in the early church, "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." We want to make our bosom companion our Lord Jesus. We want to be with Jesus, and those who have most of His character likeness will be most like Him. They are all those who have the spirit of Christ. He spent more of His time and chose those who should be near Him from among those who had most of His spirit, Peter, James and John. These three were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they were nearest Him in the garden of Gethsemane.

Counsel with those who have the spirit of the Lord.

CONSECRATION--Afterwards Fellowship With Outsiders.

Q148:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1-- What should be our attitude toward those who seem to be in harmony with all the doctrinal points of the Truth, yet continue to fellowship with those who no longer meet with the class on account of the Vow, Covenants, etc., and acknowledge that they are in sympathy with those who oppose the Truth?

ANSWER--I would think our attitude toward them should be that as outlined by the Apostle Paul in Romans 16:17: "**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned; and avoid them.**" Meaning that we should not treat them with the same hearty fellowship that we would if they were showing a different spirit. It would not be right to show them any angry spirit, or do them any wrong, or speak any evil about anybody, but that a proper attitude, in their interest, as well as for our own interest, and the interest of others could be shown by not sympathizing with their attitude. Avoid them and prefer the company of those who are in the spirit and fellowship of the truth.

Since the word "Vow" is mentioned in this question, I would say that in my opinion it would not be right and proper to make a discrimination against anybody in fellowship because he or she had not taken the vow--the vow is not a law; it is a privilege. If we take a vow and get a blessing from it, thank God. If they fail to do so and lose the blessing, then they are the ones that suffer from it. I would think there might be a little difference if it were an elder or a teacher in the church. An elder or one who is looked up to as a leader in any class might reasonably be expected to take the vow, or tell why he did not take it; otherwise the class would have reason to think that such a leader had something in his life or conduct which conflicted with the vow. My thought would be that any elder or brother who had anything in his mind or conduct in conflict with the vow would not be a suitable representative of the class. For my part I cannot see what any reasonably minded brother could have against the vow. We admit that it is not a binding obligation, but we expect a great deal of those who are elders and we are justified in finding in them a great deal of exemplary conduct. One who stands as the leader or representative of a class ought to be, as the Apostle said, above the average, and I cannot see what one who is above the average could find to object to in the vow. If anyone can find anything, I would like to have him show it to me.

CORRECTIONS--How to Make Them?

Q162:1:: QUESTION (1908)--1--What should be the attitude of those established in the truth, who have no desire to judge or criticise, when in Berean or other Bible studies they hear from the leader, or someone else, confused expressions which they know to be contrary to the Scriptures, but they are being received as truth by the babes in Christ? Should they be silent, or should they ask some question to bring out the truth? If the truth causes any to withdraw from association from the class, how should that be regarded by the consecrated?

ANSWER--I answer, dear friends, that there are some unimportant matters,--in one sense of the word no truth is unimportant,--but there are truths that are not as important as others, and which might be let pass by if they were infringed upon a little. The person addressing the class, whether a brother or a sister, or whoever may be speaking, may give expression to his or her view of the truth, and it should be understood by the class as his or her view, and that the one speaking does not claim to be inspired or infallible, but that he is expressing his view of the matter, and it should be understood by the class that each one can express his or her view of the matter. I should say that if I were present in such a case as here suggested, I would hope the class would be in such a condition that I could present the matter in question in a proper way, and I would try not to do it in antagonistic form and say, "Now I disagree with that." There are various ways of putting things. You might say, "Well, brother, might we not take this view of the matter? Is not this a consistent view to take? I will

give what I think to be right." And then state your view; he has stated his view and he cannot object to your stating your view, if it is given concisely, and in a kind manner. Then you have done your duty and it is not necessary to have a fight on the subject and determine that one must be laid on the shelf because of a little difference of opinion. As he has had his opportunity to express his understanding of the matter, see that the truth is always represented so far as you are concerned, and especially if it is any important matter; but if it is a matter of tweedle-de-de or tweedle-de-dum, don't pay any attention to it. I think of one brother now, who is a very good hearted brother I am sure, but he has the mistaken idea that if a point be brought up it must be fought out until one or the other dies. That is a mistaken notion, dear friends. All of the friends are to judge in their own minds, and you and I are to be content when we have made our statement of our view, and let other people take whatever they like. Is not that practically what we are doing anyway? You get something in the Watch Tower; you are not bound to believe it, and I will not get angry with you if you do not believe it. That is part of your business. I will go ahead and state in the next Watch Tower what I think again, and you have a right if you choose to write me and state that you do not believe it, and I will say, All right, you do not have to.

COVENANTS--Discussion After Division.

Q175:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--In studying on the covenants along the lines we have received from the Watch Tower, we find certain subjects seem to bring up a division in the class when we touch on the mediator. Would you think it wise to continue that service if we found that those divisions came up or should we drop the studies and take up something else?

ANSWER--I would think the subject of the covenants would be a very proper subject to discuss, and that if any regular brother of the class were present and had some different views, that it would be very proper to give him the opportunity to express what he had to say, but not with a view to his continuing to express it and continuing to interrupt the class at every session. If he has something to say, and is able to say it in a manner that would be interesting, allow him to have his way, because he would have that right you see, justly; as a member of the class he has a right to be heard, but if it be so that the majority of the class are not in favor of his presentation, and do not wish him to continue presenting it, then I think the brother should be asked to discontinue his side of the question, saying, Brother, we gave you a good opportunity and the class heard what you have to say, and they do not care to have it further considered, and you will please therefore not interrupt our studies on the subject. And I would go right along with the lesson and discuss the matter in harmony with the wishes of the class. If, however, the class, as a whole, wishes to discontinue the subject, I would know nothing else to do than to follow the instructions of the class, understanding that the class has the deciding voice in every matter.

DIVISIONS--The Unruly and Confused.

Q226:3:: QUESTION (1910)--3--In Rom. 16:17, we are told to mark those which cause divisions and avoid them. What rules will enable us to distinguish between such and those who are simply confused, or who are unable to quickly see some further point of truth.? What shall our course with those of the latter class be if unusually earnest about expressing themselves regarding their differences?

ANSWER--I would say that would be a matter of judgment, that you should use your own judgment, asking the Lord for guidance, that you might deal wisely with all the brethren, and always kindly and lovingly.

The marking of those who cause divisions, I would understand the Apostle to mean, that if any spoke differently from us, that we should not take issue with him and put him out. That would be

a harsh interpretation. The Apostle means that if they are those who are of a contentious disposition after having an opportunity to be heard, and then continually knocking and work to make a split, then they should be avoided. When he says, avoid them, I do not understand that we should avoid them as wild beasts, nor as those who necessarily are in opposition, but as those to whom we would not wish to express ourselves so fully and freely as to those who are in closer harmony. For instance, we are not permitted to avoid anyone and to denounce him as being a brother because of some difference of opinion over some passage of Scripture. There is the one procedure for disfellowshipping one who has been considered a member of the body of Christ, only one method, namely; go to him alone. If unable to have the right understanding of the matter take two or three others. If still unable to get into harmony, etc., it may then be told to the church, through its proper channels. It would be wise, in taking two or three others, that you take two or three elders of the church, for they would be very suitable ones to take along. If he refuses to hear these, then it may be brought to the attention of the church, and only in that way and by the voice of the whole company of God's people who might be meeting together, only by their vote in the matter could anyone be disfellowshipped as a brother. From amongst those whom you recognize as brethren there are some with whom you have more intimate fellowship than others, and to whom you show special attention, not on account of education, or social standing, or wealth, but because of their relationship to the Lord; and if you find then one who is causing division, do not give him so much of your fellowship; just be a little more cool toward him than if he were fully in fellowship and not causing divisions. The Apostle does not say to have nothing to do with him, and to brand him as a heretic. Avoid helping such a person to an office, or anything that would specially help him along, if you see him in an unsafe position. Don't push him away, but be ready to help him, and not injure him, I think is the Apostle's thought.

TEACHING--Enduring Unsound Teaching.

Q704:2:: QUESTION (1909)--2--To what extent should the brethren endure unsound teaching on the part of Elders or others, and how remedy such conditions?

ANSWER--Well, dear friends, there are some things to be endured, but the Apostle intimates that to endure unsound teaching is to participate in the wrongdoing, that we should not endure unsound teaching at all. If there are any enduring such, we feel that it is their duty to protest. Now, that does not mean that his view is right and everybody else's view is wrong. But, suppose I was here in a class in Denver, a member of the class, and suppose somebody, either in public or private, was teaching certain things which I believed were wrong and injurious to the household of faith, it would not be proper for me to sit by and simply say, "I am not teaching the error." My silence would be giving consent to it. It would be proper for me to see an opportunity to kindly, and patiently, and clearly, and positively to set forth what I believed to be the error and the Bible teaching on the subject, etc. After I have done my duty in that matter, it would not mean that I must insist that everyone must come to my view of the matter. I have had my say and if somebody else wishes to have his say, he should have his say also. The Church of Christ is not to be hidebound, but all should have the privilege to have the truth, but all things should be done decently and in order. My duty should end at the time of expressing my convictions and reasons for them, so that I should not need to get up half a dozen times. I should give Scripture reasons and they should give theirs. All the Lord's people should recognize those as the highest teachings. Suppose, then, that the majority of the class decided against my view of the matter, what then? Should I say: Here is a teacher that is not Biblical; shall I absent myself from the class and not meet with them? No. I would say, "I have done my duty thus far to the class, I will continue and perhaps another opportunity will come in which to present my views. If another opportunity came, I would hold to my position as long as I thought it was right, but I would not make myself obnoxious.

What about others not in the class? I would say, "Friend, neighbor, I thank you for your words, we have given them consideration and we have dismissed the matter, and you will please not trouble us again.

How remedy it? If the unsoundness was on the part of the Elder, if near the time of election, wait and see that you did not elect anybody that was not sound. If you knew it at the time you elected him, then you are at fault. **You have no** right to vote for anyone you do not know to be clear in the **truth**. You will find everything on that subject in the sixth volume.

I have found that sometimes the Lord's people feel a hesitancy, and say, "Now, I don't like to vote for so and so, yet I do not think so and so is fit for the position of Elder." You are doing wrong in keeping quiet and voting for him. God wants to have in His Church those who have character, recognizing principle, and who will act in accordance with that principle. It takes some overcoming on your part to overcome your timidity, and that is all the more reason why you should do your duty; because, none but overcomers are to be of the elect class. I admire that character that does not like to be quarreling and disputing and hurting others' feelings; we ought to have that disposition, and there is a kind and gentle way of saying things that are pretty plain, and you should let all know that you have nothing but the kindest intentions when doing your whole duty. The Church should take time and deliberate as to who should be your Elders. You are representing the Lord and you are representing Him in your vote. We want to feel the responsibility of our vote in the Church of Christ more and more.

PILGRIMS--Re Local Pilgrim Work.

Q534:3:: QUESTION (1910)--3--Where a brother starts out to do a similar work to the Pilgrim work on his own account and he reports to various classes, making dates, and asking them to arrange meetings, etc., I would like to ask what the attitude of the class should be in that respect?

ANSWER--The Society, wishing to be entirely free and to leave everybody else entirely free, has no means of doing other than it does, namely, to try to send forth as pilgrims only such as it believes would be especially qualified for the work. We do not doubt there are other brethren that have many of the qualifications for the work, and it is not for us to decide they have not, and that they could not do any good; therefore, we do not attempt to assert authority over any congregation, but leave the matter entirely to the congregation. The fact that the Society is not sending out the brother, implies that it has not seen him to be one that it believes to be especially favorable as a representative of the Society. Now that does not reflect against any one. I think of two cases. One is the case of a brother who is a very nice brother, as far as I have any knowledge of him, and believe he is very loyal to the truth, and a very good brother, but the brother has a deficiency of education; and while we do not claim at all that education should stand in the way of his serving, yet we believe it would not be wise, not be to the glory of the Lord, that we should send forth as a pilgrim a brother, even if he had other qualifications, who lacked ability to speak the English language with a fair degree of correctness. That is the only objection to that brother; nothing against his character at all. Another brother, who has opportunity of doing some service, and who is a very nice brother, and whom we would be very glad to have in the pilgrim work, if his family and home affairs permitted, but his home affairs are not in such shape that he can give his time to the service. We are very glad if he finds opportunity to run out on Sundays and serve the friends. All cases are not just like these two, but I am giving these two favorable illustrations so that you may have them before your minds. Our thought would be that each congregation must judge respecting any such person, and use their own judgment as to whether it would be to their profit to have these serve them or not. If they think it is, then notify them; if they think it would not be to their profit, let them not invite them. The Society merely says, those whom we send out we hold ourselves responsible for, and if they do not conduct themselves morally, and intellectually, and religiously, according to reasonable lines, the Society

wishes to be informed respecting the matter. We believe that those who are sent forth have special qualifications for this ministry and that is the reason they are sent; but that is not saying anything against others; it leaves the congregation free to do whatever seems to them best.

PILGRIMS--Proper Course for Entertainment, Etc.

Q535:2:: QUESTION (1913-Z)--2--Is it wise or proper for a Pilgrim en journey to be entertained by those who are out of sympathy with the Vow and with the work of the Society in general, even though he be an Elder of the Class?

ANSWER--Most decidedly not. Furthermore, the Pilgrims should make clear to the Class that they had greatly erred in selecting such a one for an Elder, and should help them to rectify the matter as quickly as possible.

If the Class likes that Elder who is out of accord with the Society's work, it should not make a request for Pilgrim service. Some of the Lord's dear sheep are very stupid. Meekness and gentleness are commendable; but there are times when they would mean disloyalty to God.

ORDINATION

ORDINATION--The True.

Q514:1:: QUESTION (1915-Z)--1--When, by whom and how were you ordained a minister of the Gospel?

ANSWER--Before answering this question, I would call attention to the Scriptural teaching on the subject of ordination. From what we believe to be the Bible standpoint, there are two ordinations proper. One is of God; one of men. The ordination of God is the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Without this no one is authorized to preach the Gospel. If any are preaching without this ordination they are, to our understanding, preaching without Divine ordination. They are doing something that they are not authorized to do.

Our Lord told how He was ordained to be a preacher; and the Scriptures tell us that we are to walk in His steps and to have experiences similar to His own in many respects. As ministers of the Cross, we are to copy our Lord Jesus Christ as fully as we are able to do. But He was perfect, and we are imperfect. Consequently we are to have the **forgiveness** of our sins, while he had no sins. He, therefore, constitutes the basis of forgiveness of all who come unto the Father through faith in His blood. He mentions His own ordination, saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He had anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek." (Isa. 61:1.) As that ordination came upon Jesus, it later came upon the disciples at Pentecost; and all down the Gospel Age it has come upon the followers of Christ, anointing them to preach the Gospel.--Luke 4:17-21; 1 John 2:27.

All who have received the ordination of God have the authority to preach according to their opportunities and abilities. Some of them may be deaf mutes and cannot preach audibly. Others may be limited by sex; sisters cannot preach as do the brethren; but they can preach, nevertheless, in "showing forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Pet. 2:9.) Moreover, they are fully ordained to make known the good tidings, but, according to the Apostle Paul's statement, not in a public way. There are some men who cannot preach publicly on account of lack of talent or opportunity, but all men, by their lives and conversation, can proclaim the glory and honor of the great and loving God who lifted them out of darkness into light, out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and placed their feet upon a Rock and established their goings.--Psa. 40:2.

There comes, however, another special ordination of those who are called ministers of the Gospel, in which class I count myself. This is ordination by the Church, and is recognized by all denominations everywhere. By some it is considered a mere form, by some it is performed with great ceremony, by others with less ceremony. But to our understanding, each congregation should have those whom it has chosen ordained in a Scriptural way--by the stretching forth of hands--by a vote.

The form of the statement in Acts 14:23, with other frequent references to elders in connection with all churches, justifies the inference that ordination was the **invariable** custom in the early Church. The term "elders," as seen in this text, includes evangelists, pastors, teachers, and prophets--public exponents. Hence it is important that we learn what is meant by the word "**ordained**."

At the present time the word 'ordination' is generally used in reference to a ceremony of installation; but this is not the significance of the Greek word *cheirotoneo*, used in this text. It means "to elect by stretching out the hands," still the usual form of voting. This definition is given in Professor Young's "Analytical Concordance to the Bible." As this may be considered a Presbyterian authority, we give also the definition set forth in Strong's "Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible," which may be considered a Methodist authority. The latter defines the root of the word--"**A hand-reacher, or voter** (by raising the hand)."

The Scriptural method of ordaining elders in all the churches is by congregational election--by stretching forth the hand in a vote. To insist upon such an election before serving is to follow Scriptural order; it fortifies the elder, and, additionally, reminds the congregation of its duties and responsibilities as appointees of the elders in the Lord's name and Spirit--as expressing God's choice, God's will. Additionally, the Scriptural arrangement interests the members of the congregation in all the words and deeds of the elders, as their servants and representatives. It opposes the too prevalent idea that the elders own and rule the congregation, and puts an end to their thinking of them as "my people"--rather than as "the Lord's people, whom I serve."

Whoever has not been ordained in these two ways is not an ordained minister of the Gospel in the Scriptural sense. First, the Divine ordination is necessary; second, the earthly ordination is necessary. By the grace of God I have both of these.

In the case of those who are doing a public work in the name of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, they are ordained as a whole. They are sent forth by the officers of the Society; and as a majority of the classes everywhere are recognized by the Society, and as they in turn recognize the Society, they therefore recognize this ordination through the Society.

ORDINATION--Authority For.

Q515:1:: QUESTION (1915-Z)--1--Where did the Society get the authority for sending out preachers?

ANSWER--It gets its authority **primarily** from the Lord, who authorizes all His people, who receive the Holy Spirit to go forth. **Secondly**, the Society is a business organization for religious work in the service of the Lord, by printing books, pamphlets, charts, etc., and by sending out its representatives to preach--by word of mouth and by printed page. This is its only business. It is acting in the same way as did the Church at Antioch, who especially chose Paul and Barnabas to do a missionary work, and who voted these to be representatives of that Church.--Acts 13:2,3.

When Paul and Barnabas went forth, they did not say, "We preach in our name." They would have had a right to go in the name of the Lord and preach; but, in addition, they had the financial backing, we understand, of the Antioch congregation, just as today our representatives have the backing of the Society. When they go to a place, they can say, "Here is a letter which shows that we are acting for the Society." So they do not go simply in the name of Christ, but they go as representatives of this Society, which is known to be doing an evangelizing work.

ORDINATION--Re Laying On of Hands.

Q517:1:: QUESTION (1915-Z)--1--How should we understand the Apostle's advice to Timothy to "Lay hands suddenly on no man?" Does not this imply a formal ordination?

ANSWER--The Apostle Paul's words to Timothy might be variously understood. If we should read in tomorrow morning's paper that some one suddenly laid hands on a man we would understand that he had been assaulted. We are to remember that this is not the way the expression would be understood in the Greek, but that the translators gave us what they thought the proper meaning. The early Church had a ceremony of formally laying hands on the heads of their elders, deacons, etc. When the Apostles did this, it was the indication of the impartation of the Holy Spirit. None but the Apostles could bestow this. The Churches may have had some custom amongst themselves in the way of appointing ministers, however, that in thus doing they might indicate that they approved of such persons.

There would be nothing improper in a similar ceremony, if a Pilgrim were sent forth by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society for a special service of some kind. The officers of the Society might step forward, lay their hands on the Pilgrim's head and say, "You are the representative of the Society." The priests in olden time laid their hands upon the head of the animal that was to be offered--to show that it represented them. So some one might be sent forth by the Society; but a ceremonial laying on of hands would be merely an appeal to the eye, carrying with it no other authority than the words, "You are appointed for such and such service," etc.

This leaves each little company of the Lord's people to use whatever ceremony they choose. Episcopalians and Catholics use a great deal of ceremony; other denominations use less. We believe that we also have the right to use as much or as little ceremony as we choose. The meaning of the word ordination is to authorize. True ordination is, first, of the Holy Spirit; second, of the association sending forth its servant with the Gospel Message.

ORDINATION--Of Elders and Deacons.

Q521:2:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--2--Are all Elders and Deacons chosen by congregations of God's people to be considered Divinely ordained?

ANSWER--No, no one can be considered Divinely ordained who has not received the begetting of the Holy Spirit. For a congregation to ordain any one who does not profess to be fully consecrated to God and to have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit is for them to do what they have not been authorized by the Lord to do. The person thus chosen would be merely the representative of the church thus ordaining him, but would not be a representative of the Lord.

But for a congregation to recognize the Lord's authorization of a Brother, and to recognize further his aptness to teach and his possession of the qualities fitting him for service according to the Divine Word, means the giving to that Brother of a **proper** election or ordination to be the representative of the congregation in the name of the Lord. No Brother should attempt to serve a company of the Lord's people without their request, and their request or their vote constitutes their appointment of him to that service--in other words, their ordination of him, or appointment, for the service, whether for a day or a year.

ORDINATION--Not of Men.

Q521:1:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--1--If it is proper that all Elders and Deacons should thus be ordained and should not attempt to serve regularly without ordination, what did St. Paul mean when he declared that he was an Apostle not of men nor by men, but by the Lord Jesus Christ?--Gal. 1:1.

ANSWER--No man or congregation is competent to appoint or elect an Apostle. No congregational vote would make one of the brethren an Apostle. That is a special office or function which is of Divine appointment solely. Thus the Lord Jesus appointed only twelve Apostles--"Twelve Apostles of the Lamb"--St. Paul taking the place of Judas, who lost his apostleship. (Rev. 21:14; Psa. 109:8; Acts 1:20.) It is in this particular that the Church of Rome, the Church of England, and the Greek Church do violence to the principles of God's Word, in that they claim to make, but do not really make, Apostolic Bishops--bishops possessed of apostolic power and authority. St. Paul did not desire us to understand that he took no notice of earthly appointment, except in respect to his apostolic office. On the contrary, the Church at Antioch **ordained** Paul and Barnabas and afterwards Paul and Silas, to be their representatives and apparently at their expense to carry the Message to others. The Antioch Church did not ordain the Apostle Paul to be an Apostle, but ordained him to be their missionary; and he accepted their ordination and rendered reports to them, as the account in Acts shows--Acts 14:26-28.

ORDINATION--W.T.B. & T.S. Workers.

Q520:4:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--4--Does the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society ever "ordain" ministers or representatives in connection with the Harvest Work?

ANSWER--It does. All the Pilgrims are thus ordained, appointed, or set apart for the special work of the ministry. Keep in memory always that ceremony is not ordination, but that appointment and direction are ordination. The Society ordains, authorizes, directs the course of the Pilgrims who are its representatives as well as the representatives of the Lord and His Word.

ORDINATION--Withdrawing Pilgrim Ordination.

Q520:3:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--3--Has the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society the right to withdraw ordination from a Pilgrim brother?

ANSWER--Yes, surely! If it has the power to appoint and direct, it has power also to withdraw its past appointment and direction.

ORDINATION--Re Society Withdrawal of Ordination.

Q520:2:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--2--Would the withdrawal of the Society's appointment or ordination mean that the Pilgrim thus suspended from its service would have no right to preach thereafter?

ANSWER--Surely not! In withdrawing its appointment from a Pilgrim the Society would merely be indicating that for some reason it no longer was represented by that Pilgrim, and that it no longer was responsible for him or his teachings or his conduct or his maintenance. The Pilgrim brother thus dropped from the Pilgrim List might still be a Brother and be so esteemed by the Society, but might not be any longer considered a suitable person to represent the Society, either by reason of showing some weakness of character or some lack of the aptness to teach or some other reason which the Society would believe should not be encouraged, or for which it would not wish to be held responsible, or for various reasons, illness, etc.

ORDINATION--Re Title V.D.M.

Q520:1:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--1--What is the meaning of V.D.M., and what would be signified by the conferring of the V.D.M. Degree?

ANSWER--The title V.D.M. is a very old one. Indeed, it has been out of use so long that comparatively few know its meaning. The three letters represent the Latin words, **Verbi Dei Minister**. The English of this is, "Minister of the Divine Word." When, during the Dark Ages, the Divine Word fell into disuse and creeds were substituted, this title was generally lost and ignored. There were no ministers of the Divine Word; for the Divine Word was not preached, but, instead, the creeds of men. Instead of these simple words so expressive of the proper thought in connection with all the Lord's public servants, we today have high sounding titles, such as Reverend and Doctor of Divinity, which are quite unscriptural. To confer the degree of Minister of the Divine Word would not mean to ordain, but merely imply that the Society in giving this degree had looked into the reputation, and so far as possible into the character and especially into the doctrinal development of the person to whom the degree was given, and that he was in the estimation of the Examining Board found worthy of being called a Minister of the Divine Word.

ORDINATION--Re Present Ministers.

Q519:1:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--1--Are there any such Ministers of the Divine Word, now?

ANSWER--Yes, assuredly! Every Pilgrim sent out by the Society is sent out as a Minister of the Divine Word, not a minister of creeds, nor of "isms"; but purely and simply a Minister of the Word of God. And in every case where a congregation of the Lord's people has elected a consecrated, spirit-begotten child of God to be an Elder, they have by their election ordained, or set apart, or indicated, that Elder as being a Minister of the Divine Word--one who serves, distributes, dispenses the Truth of God's Word.

ORDINATION--Object of Society's List of Questions.

Q518:2:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--2--What is the object of the Society in getting out a list of questions with the intimation that the person who could answer those questions in a manner satisfactory to the Society would be considered a Minister of the Divine Word?

ANSWER--Those questions are designed to fill a long-felt want. The questions are quite unsectarian; they are all Scriptural. The Society desires to know from the Pilgrims who are now in the service, or from any others who may at any time represent the Society as Pilgrims, what are their thoughts, their sentiments and their understanding as respects these fundamental questions appertaining to the Gospel of Christ. Any Brother not willing to answer those questions would be considered to be confused in his mind, unstable, and hence not qualified to teach--not "apt to teach." This would not imply that he might not still be a Brother, but that he would not be considered a Brother suitable for the Pilgrim service. Neither would it mean that the Brother must not preach, but merely that the Society **would not recommend** him as an exponent of the Divine Word.

Any Brother willing to answer the questions, but showing considerable confusion in his replies, would to us indicate that he needed further instruction before he could properly represent the Society and what the Society believes to be the Truth respecting God's Word. Such a Brother would probably be brought to Brooklyn and have an opportunity to participate for a time in other features of the service, as well as in the Bible Study classes held at every meal time; and, by fullest liberty, have an opportunity of asking any kind of questions on subjects connected with the Truth, that thus the whole matter might be thoroughly regulated and clearly seen and understood.

A FRIENDLY SUGGESTION

Many of the Sisters in the Bethel Family, learning about the questions, made a special request that they might have a list of these and give their answers, with a view to practice and instruction which they might thus derive. Elders and Deacons in various classes have similarly requested the

questions. We believe that it would be profitable for all of the classes of Bible Students everywhere, if they would choose to Eldership such as could answer these questions so as to be worthy of the Society's V.D.M. degree. This might make a good many changes amongst the Elders, but we believe that they would be profitable changes. Furthermore, we believe that all Elders earnestly desiring to teach the Truth, and the Truth only, would be glad to have the very assistance which these questions would bring to them.

We have been surprised, sometimes, how careless some of the dear friends seem to be in respect to those whom they elect or ordain as Elders--often novices, contrary to the direction of the Lord's Word, thus doing harm both to the novice and to the class. (1 Tim. 3:1-7.) Next to the importance of the election of only a consecrated, spirit begotten child of God to Eldership should be the question. To what extent has he availed himself of the privileges of study, information? It is our thought that it is unwise to choose as an Elder any Brother who has not read at least once the entire six volumes of Studies in the Scriptures, or who is not a regular Watch Tower reader. Let it be borne in mind that the Society exercises no authority, makes no criticism, but merely gives advice; and that in the interest of the Lord's cause and the Lord's people.

SISTERS

DEACONESSES--Election of.

Q200:1:: QUESTION (1912)--1--Do you recommend the election and apointment of deaconesses under any circumstances? If so, please state under what circumstances?

ANSWER--We have no deaconesses at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, at the present time, but we have had previously and thought some good was served by having them. There is no use in having servants, unless there is something for them to do, nor unless the persons are fitted for that work. The word Deaconess signifies a female servant. In the event of sickness amongst the sisters of a class it might be necessary for somebody to go and help and care for them. Or some in distress need to be visited and the brethren may not find time that they could give to that work. Sisters could render such services whether chosen Deaconesses or not. It is not contrary to the Lord's Word to elect Deaconesses. If a class finds that it has need of such servants there seems to be full authority in the Scriptures for electing them, but they should be very carefully selected that they would represent the Church fairly and favorably as to moderation in their judgment, in their demeanor and dress, marked examples of the Spirit of the Lord amongst the Sisters, and who fittingly represent the general interests of the Church in any work they might be called upon to do.

PRAYER--Re Sisters Leading In.

Q538:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1--Is there any Scripture to show that the sisters should lead in prayer and take any active part in the public worship, or is there any Scripture to the contrary?

ANSWER--The answer to this question would lead to quite a lengthy discussion of many Scriptures, and I think I will answer the question best by referring you to the 6th Volume of Scripture Studies.

SISTERS--Taking Part in Prayer Meetings.

Q660:2:: QUESTION (1905)--2--Do you advise that the sisters take part in prayer in our meetings?

ANSWER--What do the Scriptures say? The Apostle says that the sisters took part in prayer. "If the sisters pray with uncovered heads they dishonor the head." You will not find me taking away any power from the sisters that the Scriptures recognize.

SISTERS--Leading in Prayer.

Q662:2:: QUESTION (1911)--2--Is it unscriptural that a sister should lead in prayer in a Prayer meeting?

ANSWER--The Scriptures do not give sisters the same prominence in public worship that they do the brethren. The woman represents the church, while the man represents Christ; as the Apostle says, "The head of the woman is man, the head of the man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God." In this order, therefore, the Scriptures teach that woman as representing the church should hear the Lord. In other words, the least prominent place should be taken by the sisters in public service. This does not, to my understanding, mean that a sister should not engage in prayer. I would think that in a public meeting like this, it would be very improper for a sister to lead in prayer. If it were a cottage meeting, or a small meeting, a little circle, or a family circle, and she were asked to lead in prayer, I would understand that it would be entirely proper; and if I were asked any question then as to whether she should have her head covered, I would say that the apostle says "yes"--that if she engages in prayer, she should wear a covering on her head--"not merely her hair," as the apostle says, but if she wears a covering of hair that she also wear an additional covering. This, he says, is to indicate that she recognizes she is not the head, and in this sense of the word she is representing the church, which does not pretend to speak, but rather to hear, the Lord.

SISTERS-Restrictions in Sixth Volume.

Q660:1:: QUESTION (1910)--3--We should be glad to know if the restriction put upon the sisters in Volume Six has reference to Bible studies, where brethren are present. Kindly tell us to which meetings these restrictions are applicable.

ANSWER--It is, of course, dear friends, rather conjectural just what the Apostle had in mind when he referred to these. What we believe to be a reasonable interpretation of the word, is that he refers to meetings of a public nature, not those of the character of the Scripture studies. Our thought is that he has reference particularly to public, rather than to private or semi-private meetings. At the same time, if I were a sister in a Bible class, if it were a small one, I should feel free to ask any question as any opportunity came, and if any question before the class was not thoroughly stated in my judgment, I would feel free to express myself upon the subject in an indirect manner by saying something like this: How would this answer, how would this thought agree with such and such a question? Thus I should think I would be doing just as much as if I made a whole discourse upon it, and thus throw it open to others by asking a question. I do not understand that the apostolic restrictions were to asking questions. If I were a sister I should feel free to ask questions and I should conserve my influence, and feel that I were using it to good advantage in putting it in such a form rather than in saying, I do not agree, I think it is so and so. I would ask the question, How does it agree with this and that? If not fairly stated, I would say, How does it agree with such and such? If people would allow me to ask questions, I could go into all the churches and soon have them upside down. To my understanding it is no special restriction, but it is really in some respects to the advantage of the sisters, in putting them into this ladylike position.

SISTERS--Teaching Without Usurping Authority.

Q661:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over a man. Can this be meant to understand that a woman may teach if she does not usurp authority over a man?

ANSWER--Well, suppose I were a sister and moved into a neighborhood and desired to exercise my influence in scattering pamphlets, etc., and suppose some of my neighbors got together

and said, I wish you would tell us more of this, I would understand that it would be the Lord's will for me to tell all I knew, but as modestly as possible, which is appropriate for a brother also. I would try to bring out all the truth and facts that I was familiar with, and the fact that some of those in the neighborhood who had no knowledge of the truth were males, would not hinder me if they requested me to explain the matter. I would think it entirely proper.

SISTERS--Re Taking Part in Bible Study.

Q662:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--Should sisters take part in Bible study in chapter and verse, as you advocate?

ANSWER--If you find anything in the Sixth Volume that covers this point, I know of no change in my mind as written there. I would suppose that the general sentiment behind the Apostle's instructions seems to be this, that in the Church the male represents the Head and therefore is a type of Christ, who is the Head of the Church. Now the Church is not to teach Christ, but Christ is to teach the Church, so in connection with the picture of the male and female, it would not be for the woman to teach the man. That seems to be what the Apostle suggests. It would be a mistake to go to the extreme, as some of the friends, who say this refers to teaching in schools, or what not. The Apostle is speaking of the Church and not of the family. It is right that the mother should instruct the family, and it should be maintained and nothing that the Apostle says, to my mind, bears any contradiction, but in the Church "let your women keep silent," the Apostle says. I am not saying it. Some of the friends think that I am saying it. I want you to know I am not. I think I would rather have been inclined to have gone to the extreme, to have given them too much liberty. I am not left to choose in the matter, neither are you, my brother or sister. If I were in the place of a sister, I would like to do his will and he would be pleased if I did his will. Therefore I think that in the more public meetings in the Church, that the sisters would do well to take a secondary place and be comparatively quiet. I would understand that in a small meeting where questions were being passed around it would not be wrong for a sister to ask a question. I think that if I were a sister and were allowed to ask a question, if I had any truth to bring out, I would not have much trouble in asking such questions as would bring it out. If our friends of the various denominations would allow you and me to go to some of their meetings and we were allowed to ask them some questions, we would get a lot of theology in very quickly.

SISTERS--Answering Questions Without Being Called Upon.

Q663:1:: QUESTION (1912)--1--Is it scriptural for sisters to answer questions or give scriptural references unless specially called upon by an Elder?

ANSWER--My thought would be that this is not teaching. To answer a question in a Berean Study is not teaching. If any of the class in a school were to give an answer to the teacher, that scholar does not become the teacher, does he? It shows how very clearly he has understood his lessons. In this matter of the Berean Studies it would be entirely proper for every one of the friends present to take part. Some of the answers of the sisters are indeed very good. If we do some thinking on the lesson we will have an answer, and why keep it whether the one having the answer be a brother or a sister?

SUNDAY SCHOOLS--Should Sisters Teach?

Q685:1:: QUESTION (1911-Z)--1--Should sisters teach Sunday School classes?

ANSWER--Usually sisters are better teachers of the young than are brethren. Nothing in the Scriptures forbids their teaching such classes. The Apostle's words are: "I suffer not a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man." His words apply specially to the Church.

As for the advisability of having Sunday Schools! We have not changed our judgment from what we have written in Scripture Studies, Vol. VI.

We still believe that God holds the Christian parents responsible for the spiritual education of their children, and that they get a special blessing in fulfilling his requirement. If Sunday Schools are **ever** advisable, we believe they would be only for orphans or worldlings, or for children already taught at home.

TEACHING--Women Keep Silence.

Q704:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1--"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them; to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." (1 Cor. 14:34,35.)

Please explain and harmonize these Scripture statements with the statement of 1 Cor. 11:5, which reads:

"But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven."

ANSWER--You will find those Scriptures treated very elaborately, very perfectly, and a lot more on the subject in the Sixth Volume. I do not think you have been studying the Sixth Volume enough. Some want to know when the Seventh Volume is coming out, but I do not think the Lord will allow it until the Sixth Volume is more thoroughly digested.

PENNY--What It Represents.

Q530:2:: QUESTION (1916)--2--In Matthew 20,(Mat.20:2) the Parable of the Penny, -----
----- What does the murmuring represent, or signify?

ANSWER-----

----- So then, let us avoid any spirit of murmuring and let us be thankful for all our privileges given to us, and let us not think for a moment that, if the sisters be given an opportunity to serve we should murmur against them for having such opportunity!

PASTORAL WORK

PASTORAL WORK--Elders Not Directors.

Q525:3:: QUESTION (1916)--3--Should the sisters start the Pastoral Work without consulting the Elders; and should they go ahead with it even though one Elder is not in favor?

ANSWER--The Elders have nothing to do with the Pastoral Work. The Elders are Elders, and should therefore attend to the work of the Elders. The Pastoral Work is for the Pastor, and the Pastor should therefore attend to it. The letters of instruction pertaining to this work have not been sent to any except those who have indicated to me that they have chosen me to be their Pastor, and since they have invited me to be their Pastor, I am endeavoring to do that work for them. If the letters have been sent to any who have not this desire, please return them and I will have nothing to do with

them. But in all cases where I am the Pastor, I will use and co-operate with the sisters as I think best. Evidently the objector does not understand this matter. There is nothing in it that I know of to antagonize the Elders, and should there be any Elders who have not enough work to do to keep them occupied, it would be in order for them to be getting busy. There is an abundance of work for the Elders and Deacons to do and they should therefore be kept busy in doing the work which the Lord has committed to their care, but the case of the sisters is different, and we are now trying to find something for them to do, and are rejoiced that the way is now opening. If any of the Elders hinder and find fault with this work, our advice to the class would be that at the next election, they be dropped from the eldership. Each one should learn to attend to his own business, and not interfere with others, and in this way will the work prosper--by each one attending to his own part of the work. Should anyone try to stop the work of the Lord, they had better be dropped, because the class will get along better without them. "Let all things be done decently and in order!"

PASTORAL WORK--Co-operation of Elders and Sisters.

Q526:1:: QUESTION (1916)--1--Will you please explain a little more about the co-operation of the elders and deacons of a class with the sisters in the pastoral work?

ANSWER--I cannot explain any more than has already been explained in the letters sent out. To each class has been sent two letters bearing upon this work. The one is for the sister who will act as lieutenant and representative of the pastoral work, while the other is for the elders and class in general. These letters explain everything as fully as I know how to explain, and it would be useless for me to take time to explain what is not therein stated. I repeat that, these letters only went to such classes as had intimated that they had chosen me to be their pastor. These letters explain the matter fully. If you cannot understand the matter by a single reading, then read again, and if necessary, a second and third time, until it becomes clear to you. Take each part separately. One of them has nothing to do with the congregation in general, but simply contains instructions for those who will be carrying out this plan of work, while the other is to the elders et al to show how they can co-operate in it.

I believe you will find that when this work is gotten well under way, it will not only afford the sisters an opportunity for service that will be very encouraging to them, but additionally, that, it will open the way for the elders to do more than they now do, and will also open the way for well-qualified deacons to enter the eldership. There is so much work to be done that the question arises as to whether or not we are doing the work of the Lord? Just so surely as we are in the Harvest time, so surely will we be called to do what the Lord is giving us to do.

Should anyone inquire whether this would be a good chance to get other brethren into the work who had not previously had experience in this kind of service, we would answer, No; this is not the place for any inexperienced person. They should get their experience beforehand. We do not want to put mere novices in such a work. "Not a novice" either in doctrine or in speaking should be employed in any of this class extension work. Novices should indeed get experience, but, how? At one time in Pittsburgh (and some have tried it since in New York), (in Pittsburgh I had something to do with it), we started what we called a School of the Prophets, not that this name meant to us what it did when originally used, but still a name that seemed to us quite appropriate for the work in hand when considered in the light of the New Testament. A prophet in the Bible sense was one who was a public speaker, not especially one who was a seer and had revelations, but a public speaker, and it was in this sense that the Apostle Paul used this word when he said, "Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy," which would suggest the thought that we should choose rather to have ability as public speakers. Now, then, we perceived that some brethren had talents for public speaking and we suggested that they come together as a little class to hear and criticize each other in speaking. They did not speak to the public, or to the class, at all. They had no qualifications, especially, for speaking. Some had a disposition that might be drawn out and cultivated. But we did

not wish to impose upon a class by having them listen to unqualified speakers. No one should wish to bore a class or anyone else. Only those who were qualified and have shown talent and ability should be chosen to speak for the class or the public. Our instructions and training to that end should be given and received privately. In this class we had one appointed as a special critic, and then all present had the opportunity of criticizing the speaker. Some of these young men criticized each other pretty sharply until there was danger of them all being discouraged. It became necessary, therefore, for me to caution them against criticizing too closely lest there should be nothing left but skin and bones. I think it would be well to have such a school under proper control for the training of class and public speakers, and not impose upon the class or the public by giving them unqualified, inexperienced novices for speakers.

We believe this to be a very important matter in connection with the success of the Pastoral work, and would consider it to be one of the best and most efficient ways of cooperating with the sisters in this work.

PASTORAL WORK--Not For Brothers.

Q527:1:: QUESTION (1916)--1--Would you advise a brother and sister to quit the Eureka Drama and colporteur work to take up pastoral and colporteur work?

ANSWER--We would not advise the brother so to do for the reason that there is nothing in this line in connection with the pastoral work for the brother to do. The brother has evidently gotten the wrong view of the matter. This pastoral work is for the sisters. One reason is that the sisters have more time during the day than the brethren, who are generally employed otherwise during the day; and secondly, very many of the sisters have a great deal more tact in approaching people than the brethren have. Not that all the sisters are in possession of more tact than the brethren, but rather, it is a good opportunity for them to do their part of the work and thus increase the opportunities of the brethren for giving chart talks, and subsequently conducting first volume studies. We should not think of the start in this work as being the end by any means. The start will be the beginning indeed, but only the beginning. You will start in with the lists furnished you from Brooklyn of names that have come in from time to time through the Drama, public addresses and the colporteur service--that is the start--but my thought is, if the Lord is going to do the great work which we expect will be done within the next few years that, in all probability this smiting of the Jordan is going to arouse a great deal of interest throughout the whole world, with the inevitable result that larger crowds will be in attendance, a large number of names will be handed in, and consequently this phase of the work will expand and continue, so that the opportunities for chart talks and first volume studies will multiply as the time goes on. This I apprehend to be a part of God's great plan.

My advice to the sister would be that she remain in the regular colporteur service just as long as the Lord may be pleased to bless her in it, and this might mean that the brother continue also in the Eureka Drama work as heretofore. This would seem to be the best for the present, and then, in the future, should the Lord so provide, it may be their privilege either to enter the pastoral work or have their present field of service enlarged.

ELECTION

ELDERS--Re Authority in Church.

Q232:3:: QUESTION (1909)--3--Is an elder elected merely to do the bidding of the Ecclesia, and act as a moderator in the meetings, or has he greater responsibility?

ANSWER.--Authority cannot be greater than the giver of the authority. In other words, if the Church confers upon an elder his responsibility by electing him, the Church had the responsibility at first or it could not have given it to the elder, and the elder therefore should assume the authority so far as the congregation will allow. If his conscience will not allow him to do certain things, then it would seem to be the proper thing to tell the congregation his attitude of mind and to say that, if they wished, they could ask for his resignation and he would gladly give it. The elder is not to violate his conscience to serve the congregation, and the congregation is not to violate its conscience in having the elder serve them. The elder shall serve the Church, according to its wishes, up to the point where his conscience objects.

I might say further that the Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit makes the elder the overseer through the stretching forth of the hands; thus it is applied to the Ecclesia and operates through them first.

ELDERS--Holding Meeting to Discuss Interests of the Class.

Q233:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--Do the Scriptures favor and do you think it would be wise for the elders of each class, or different classes, to meet together for conference respecting the interest of the classes they represent?

ANSWER.--I think that the Scriptures do favor that, and I think that is advisable. That is the very case we have before our minds this evening, when the Apostle Paul called the elders of the Church at Ephesus. He called them together as a company of elders to confer respecting the interests of the Church. He, as an elder, or as a pastor, had charge, and was there communing with them respecting the interests of the Church. If it were wrong for the elders to meet together concerning the matter, it would have been wrong for the Apostle Paul to have held such a meeting, in my judgment; and I think we do well to consider that a safe criterion to go by and that it would be well for the elders to come together to consider the interests of the Church. But let me guard you on a point there. I think it would be injurious if the elders were to come together in the sense of determining or proposing to run the Church. That is another matter, you see. To come together to think about the interests of the Church, etc., and then to undertake to run the Church, are two different things. Suppose the elders were to meet, and they thought of something that would be good for the Church, in their judgment. I think that unless it was a matter specially entrusted to them by vote of the congregation and fully understood--if it was any new proposition about which there might be any doubt or question whatever it would be the right and the proper course for these elders to submit the matter to the congregation with a recommendation, saying, We, in considering the interests of the congregation, have such a thought in mind, and now we submit it to you and would ask your vote on it. That is the safe plan. I have found that some of the very best brethren, with the very best of intentions, and with very good suggestions, in attempting to put them into operation without conferring with the class, have run against the hair, so to speak--just as when you try to stroke a dog against the hair it goes rough, and the dog does not like it. So the congregation does not like it because it seems like ruling them, and doing something that they had not specially authorized. My thought is that it is always wise if you are going to stroke a dog, to stroke him the direction the hair grows. And so if you are going to deal with a congregation, remember that human nature runs in a certain line and try to keep in that line and not ruffle it up any more than is necessary. Every member of the Church has human nature; he has a mortal body, and has more or less combativeness in it, more or less desire not to be overridden; you will find that all those who are in the truth are especially large along this line. They must have some force of character or else they never could be overcomers. And this very quality that makes them what they are and has helped them out of Babylon, is the very quality that will be wanting to have a little spar, and sometimes a little battle, but if we say, Now then this is something new, this has not been voted on, and we feel sure they will

all want it, but let us submit it to the congregation with our recommendation--then you have the congregation going with you.

ELDER--Work of Presiding Elder.

Q234:1:: QUESTION (1913)--1--What is the work of a presiding elder?

ANSWER.--The work of a presiding elder is not defined in the Bible. No such thing as a presiding elder is mentioned in the Scriptures.

ELDERS--Non Election Re Disqualification Elsewhere.

Q234:2:: QUESTION (1914)--2--In a case a brother who had been an acceptable elder of a class for many years because of a difficulty in the class failed of election—would that necessarily unfit him for giving lessons in neighboring classes where known--if these classes chose to invite him, saying his lessons were helpful? Would he be unfitted for extension work? Would certain members of his home class be justified in using their influence to prevent such service, providing he was not proven unsound in doctrine?

ANSWER.--The elder having failed of election in the class which he had been serving would not be disqualified for service in other places, if the friends there, using their best judgment, thought he was a fit person to serve them as an elder. Every one is entitled to use their judgment. Suppose the class who rejected this brother did so for the reason of unsoundness in moral character or teaching. Then I think it would be quite within the brotherly privilege and duty of this class to call the matter to the attention of the other class who elected him. If they elected him, the first class might send word, "We wish to advise you as brethren, that there is such a matter against him and we thought it our duty to inform you on the matter."

As for the class extension work, it would be improper for anybody to serve the class in extension work if not an elder, because the class sends out, in co-operation with the Society, only those who are elders. If not, the Society does not desire to co-operate in their going forth in this manner. If, however, he went to the other class and they chose him as elder and they chose to send him out in the class extension work, that is **their business** and **his**. Or if he chooses to go without responsibility to the class or the society, that is **his** business. He is working on his own responsibility. **God has given us that right.** And if he has the talent of means and also of speaking, and wishes to use these, we believe he has a perfect right to do so. He would have the call if he has been begotten of the Holy Spirit. "**Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.**"

ELDERS--Why Should Elders be Carefully Chosen?

Q235:1:: QUESTION (1916-Z)--1--Why should elders be carefully chosen?

ANSWER.--Because the spirit of service should be the spirit, not only of the Pilgrims, or the Elders of the Church of Christ, but the spirit of every member of it; for in a large sense each one of us is privileged to be a minister, or servant, in writing the Message of God's grace in the hearts of others.

But let us not forget that we shall not know how to write in the hearts of others what we have not already had written in our own hearts. Hence the propriety of great caution in the choosing of Elders--to find those who already have the writing of the Lord in their hearts, and who therefore will be competent assistants, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, for the writing of the Lord's character-likeness in the hearts of the younger brethren.

And what is the Message, what is the Epistle, that is written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through various agencies? Is it the knowledge of chronology? Is it the unraveling of types and

shadows? Is it the cracking of hard theological nuts in respect to differently understood passages of Scripture? Is it the knowledge of the history of the Jews, the history of the world, the history of the Church? Is it the understanding and appreciation of the different Covenants, past, present, and to come? No, it is none of these. And thus with these characteristics of the Master deeply engraved upon our hearts, we shall be granted an abundant entrance "into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."--2 Pet 1:8,11.

All of these subjects have more or less of value, and are more or less used of the Lord in connection with this writing that is to be done in the hearts of His people. But writing the Epistle of Christ is different--the writing, the tracing of the character-likeness of the Master in the hearts of His people—His meekness, His gentleness, His patience, His long-suffering, His brotherly kindness, His love, His joy, His peace.

We might have all knowledge respecting chronology and history, might be able to quote every text in the Bible, and to cite it, too; and yet not have the Epistle of Christ written in our hearts. It is the Epistle of which the Apostle Peter says, "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren **idle, inactive**' nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;" for knowledge will have its place.

ELECTION--Women Teachers in the Church.

Q235:2:: QUESTION (1905)--2--Please inform me if women are elected as leader's in the Allegheny Church? If not, why not? It has been said that such are elected.

ANSWER.--No, that is not the case, there are no sisters elected in the Allegheny Church. The Lord did not elect sisters as apostles or as the seventy, and Jesus loved the sisters. He loved Martha and Mary, as well as Lazarus, their brother. The Lord never appointed the sisters as speakers in the church, and we have no authority to speak differently. I always think the Lord's plan is the best. By the time I begin to doubt the Lord's ability to run the church here I would doubt his ability to run heaven. It is for us to walk in His path, not to get a path of our own and ask the Lord to walk in our path.

ELECTION--Re Chairman.

Q236:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1--Is there any Scriptural reason against the election of a chairman of the elders in an Ecclesia, where there are from three to seven elders, and quite an amount of business to be handled at times?

ANSWER.--No. In fact, order is demanded. Unless the Church has indicated which should be the chairman, it is preferable that the elders themselves should choose the chairman.

ELECTION--Scriptural Qualifications.

Q236:2:: QUESTION (1909)--2--Give the Scriptural qualifications for the election of Elders and Deacons.

ANSWER.--See the Sixth Volume, which has more than forty pages on that subject. I think it would be well for the leader to call attention to the matter a month before election, and suggest the reading of the matter in the Sixth Volume so that all might have the matter fully in mind.

ELECTION--Number of Elders to be Elected.

Q236:3:: QUESTION (1910)--3--As a class, we are trying to elect according to the sixth volume of Millennial Dawn, but we could not all understand it alike. It seemed in one place that all

who were suitable for elders should be elected, and then in another place that it was to elect elders according to the size of the ecclesia; and we got up a disagreement, and wrote you on the subject and you did not seem to understand why the trouble came up. That was the trouble, that some understood that, say there was a half dozen who were equally suitable for elders, we might elect all, and that if the class only numbered a dozen or two, we should only elect according to the class we had. For instance, if we had ten, we could elect one; if we had twenty-five we might elect two, and so on.

ANSWER.--How about this matter of electing elders? Should all of those who have qualifications for an elder be elected, or only, say, about ten per cent of the number? Say if the class numbered fifty, ten per cent would be five, and if there were one hundred, ten per cent would be ten? My answer would be this: To my understanding, all of those who manifest the qualifications for an elder would properly be elected elders. So that if in a class of six they were all equally qualified to serve as elders, I would elect the whole six, and then as they would take turns in service it would give an opportunity also to go out and hold meetings elsewhere. God bless them--the more elders there are the better! But I think it is quite doubtful if out of a class of six they would find six that were well suited to be the elders but if there were six and all of them had qualifications for service I would be willing for all to serve. I understand it is God's will that everyone anointed of the holy Spirit is anointed to teach. You remember the way it reads in the prophecy of our Lord Jesus--The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the good tidings to the meek. Now whoever receives the Holy Spirit has an anointing from the Father to teach. That is what the anointing is for. That is his authority to teach. That is his ordination, if you please, to teach. Then if he has a good voice that is something; if he has a good memory that is another thing; if he has other things that are harmonious with these, all of them go together, and he is authorized to teach in proportion to his talent. Now in case of a sister, there are limitations. A sister may not teach publicly, but a sister has many other ways of teaching. She has plenty of opportunities of helping along and preaching the good tidings. We can all preach by our daily lives--not only those who occupy the platform have the opportunity of preaching, for we are all preachers--and are all preaching I hope.

Someone asked me one time, How many preachers have you amongst you? I said We have about twenty odd thousand. "My goodness!" he said. I said, brother I do not want to misinform you. To my understanding, all of the Lord's people are anointed to preach. Sometimes we preach publicly and sometimes privately. Sometimes we just preach to one person and sometimes to a congregation of two hundred, and sometimes to a congregation of ten thousand.

ELECTION--The Lord's Will Expressed.

Q237:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--We understand in election of officers the ecclesia expresses the voice of the Lord. After we have elected a brother to serve us as an elder, and we afterwards find out he does not prove what we thought he was, do we understand that it is a mistake of the class, or a mistake of the Lord.?

ANSWER.--It is not necessary to think it would be a mistake of either. It would seem to imply that the class had not exercised a sufficiency of care. They should have known better before they elected anybody to be an elder. The Apostle says not to elect a novice. You have no right to elect a novice. If you do, it serves you right. Perhaps you will get a good lesson from having a novice in for a while, and if the friends in that class have done something of that kind, perhaps it will be profitable in the end and they will learn to be more careful the next time. Now for the Lord to allow them to get a lesson in that way is not proving that the Lord did not know better, but he has allowed them to suffer for not following his directions but electing a novice. A novice is one who is new at the matter, and if he was new at the matter they should have known about it, because they should have known what he was before they voted for him.

ELECTION--Re Appointing Chair-Woman.

Q237:2:: QUESTION (1910)--2--When an election is being held, and an elder wished to put somebody in the chair for the purpose of carrying on an election, would it be proper to put a sister in the chair for that purpose.?

ANSWER.--I do not think I would be inclined to do so, unless it was a case where there was some misunderstanding in the class, where the brother or brothers would be unacceptable. It would only be under some very peculiar circumstance that I would favor asking a sister to act as the chairman of such a meeting. I would not say there would never be such a case, but I would think it would be an exceptional one.

ELECTION--Re Both Consecrated and Justified Voting?

Q238:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--In the election in the ecclesia, should it at all times be understood that only the consecrated believers should vote, or should justified believers also vote?

ANSWER.--We said just a few moments ago, that we think it should be definitely stated before the vote is taken that only the consecrated are entitled to a vote at all times on any Church question, because none others are members of the Church, which is the Body of Christ. If the congregation ever wish to ask some question about where the meeting shall be held, that would be a different matter. There would be a question, and you would say, We are thinking about moving from this meeting place to another meeting place, and we will ask all the friends--not merely the consecrated, because all are interested in that--we will ask all the whole household of faith to express themselves as to time and place. But on any question like electing servants of the Church, or any such matter as that, it would be for the consecrated only.

ELECTION--Re Colporteurs Voting.

Q238:2:: QUESTION (1910)--2--How about colporteurs who are in town for a short time, ie, if they meet with the class should they vote?

ANSWER.--I should think that if he had no knowledge of the condition of the class, that he would be wiser to say, Brethren, I have not sufficient knowledge here to justify me in offering my vote, therefore I think I will decline. But if the colporteur had been there a few days, or a few weeks, as the case might be, and expected to be there for some more weeks or months, I should think he was as much entitled to a vote as anybody else. He is not debarred by reason of being a colporteur, but rather it would be something in his favor. He is one who is showing his consecration by the devotion of his life.

ELECTION--Re Visiting Brethren Voting.

Q238:3:: QUESTION (1910)--3--As to the qualification of the voters, you stated one who is consecrated had a vote. How about those visiting an ecclesia? Does a certain amount of time, or a declaration that they intend to remain, tend to qualify them?

ANSWER.--Our thought would be that it would be proper enough in calling for the vote to say that all of God's consecrated people here present tonight--or whatever time it was--who have the expectation of meeting with this class are earnestly invited to vote, and it is hoped that any who do not intend to meet with some degree of regularity with the congregation will not vote, and that any

who are not fully consecrated will not vote, because this seems to be the will of the Lord in the matter. It is to be an expression of the Church at a certain place and the Church at that place is the number who are consecrated. The fact that a brother or sister had only recently come to live in the city, in my judgment, make no difference, because we are all one in Christ, whether we live in Jamestown, or Brooklyn, or Pittsburgh, or New Orleans, or some other place.

ELECTION--Attitude of Elders Not Approved.

Q239:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--I would like to ask in case of a brother who had been elected an elder and who had been found fault with, if it would not be a wise plan at the end of his time, to decline re-election?

ANSWER.--I believe if I were in that position, I would do about this way. I should think out some other brother in the congregation and I would nominate him; but if I were nominated, then I would say, Now, brethren, I have served you to the best of my ability and I know I have come short of pleasing you, and I want you to know I did the best I could for you, but I did not please you, I know, for several of you told me I did not, and I tried to improve on it all I could, but apparently I did not improve enough, because you still found fault--at least some of you did. And I am not finding fault with you--I presume the fault is with myself. I am sure I am not all I would like to be, and I cannot serve you as I would like to serve you, and so I think it would probably be better for you to take my advice. I have nominated brother so and so, and I advise that you elect him for a period of time—three months, or six months, or whatever you choose--and perhaps he can please us all better. I assure you I will try to support him and do all in my power to uphold his hands. I would earnestly try to get the other brother elected, but if, in spite of everything they said, No, we are going to elect you, even if we did find fault with you, I would say to them, perhaps I cannot do any better the next time than I did the last; the responsibility is with you, because I am telling you I am doing the best I can now. So do not feel hard at me if I do not please you all. I would tell them squarely and they would know where to find me, but if they chose me by anything like a large majority, say ninety per cent or so of the congregation preferring me, why I would count that the voice of the Lord, and would say, I must not decline now. I certainly would not decline in any offensive way and say, No, you found fault with me and I won't have it now. That would be wrong, I think. We do not want to have that spirit. We would want to think the brother, no doubt, had good reason to find fault (supposing this to be so); I am sure that none of us are so nearly perfect they would not have room to find fault, occasionally, any way, and if they do find fault let us bear it and try to get good out of it and be humble about the matter, and perhaps that will keep us from getting heady and falling over.

ELECTION--Re Nominations.

Q239:2:: QUESTION (1910)--2--In the election of elders would it be your thought that it would be proper for one of the present acting elders to make a nomination instead of one of the class making the nomination?

ANSWER.--I would understand that when the period of time for which he was elected elder has expired, he is not an elder any longer, therefore he is just as much one of the class and could make a nomination just the same as anybody else, for he is the same as any of the others. He does not hold over. And I want to say right here that I think it a very unwise proposition for anyone who has been an elder to occupy the chair and to hold the election if it is possible to have it otherwise.

It is always desirable, if possible, to ask some intelligent brother to act as chairman who will be perfectly fair and honest, and one who perhaps would not have, or would not likely be considered to have, the qualifications for an elder. And thus anyone would be saved from any imputation of having favored himself, and the congregation would be saved from having to vote against the man

who was nominated and who was right before them in the church, and he would be saved the embarrassment of putting the vote in his own case and also the embarrassment, if not elected, of seeing the majority against him and saying so. It might not always be possible, but if possible, I think it desirable to have somebody else other than the one who is likely to be nominated as an elder in the chair.

ELECTION--Electing by Ballot.

Q240:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--Would it lead to greater harmony to elect elders by ballot without nominations at all, and let those who had the majority of the votes be so elected?

ANSWER.--Well, our opinion would be perhaps a little bit confused. I could say something in favor of either way, but the thing I do think of is, that the Lord did not arrange it that way; the Lord arranged it through the stretching forth of the hand. I admit it may be an easier way sometimes to just ballot, say nothing, and let nobody know how you voted, but is it wise to depart from the way the Lord has directed? If the class decided to vote by ballot, it is not my business to override the class, and even if I gave them the advice and they did not wish to take it, it is still not my business to overrule the class. I am not to be like the juryman who said the other eleven jurors were very stubborn. So it is not for us to feel that the other were all stubborn because they would not think as we do; having expressed ourselves, let us leave it to the judgment and vote of the class, and leave that result with the Lord and if they find they made a mistake they will know it the next time and be more careful; they will learn a lesson; and if we did wisely we will learn a lesson, but I believe, brethren, I would always use my influence in favor of the method that seems to be outlined in the Scripture and it has this to be said in its advantage, that it teaches the class to have a kind of moral courage. Will I hold out my hand in favor of some person that I do not believe is suitable for that office, simply because he is a relative of mine? No, to my God I must be true.

ELECTION--Discussing Nominees.

Q240:2:: QUESTION (1910)--2--Where a brother is nominated for Elder, how much should we be inclined to discuss him before the election? Where should we draw the line?

ANSWER.--I would hardly think it would be proper to give much discussion to those who are candidates for service in the Church. The Apostle, you remember, gives suggestions that if we bite and devour one another we might be consumed one of another. Should you stand my brother up before the congregation, and find fault with the way he parts his hair or with the color of his clothes, and the number of children he has in his family, and one thing and another, you might find plenty to discuss, and by the time you had him thoroughly overhauled and curry-combed it might be your turn. So the whole class might have an experience of that kind, but it would not be very profitable. Now my thought would be this: that it is not necessary to have very much discussion of the characters of the brethren, because the suggestion is that each one in voting for a brother for any service in the Church should have some knowledge of him, and if he has not the knowledge by personal acquaintance, then he should guide himself by the judgment of another brother. As, for instance, if I had come recently into a class of say, a dozen, and I had only become partially acquainted with the friends in that class, and I did not know anything against any of them, but knew something in favor of all of them, and suppose that the time came for election, and I noticed one or two brethren whom I saw to be very clear and very straightforward and that I had a great deal of confidence in, and if this brother made the nomination of another brother, and I had not a particular acquaintance with that brother, but simply did not know anything against him, I think I would feel justified in voting for him, because this brother who nominated him apparently knew something in his favor. If I had acquaintance with the brother who nominated him, I would thus be having a second-hand

acquaintance with the one who was nominated. I hope I make myself clear. Now I believe, without special discussion of anybody's character, it should be understood before the vote is taken that each person who is going to exercise the power of voting is first of all a believer in the Lord, and has turned from sin and made a full consecration of himself, that only that class are to vote and those voting are to seek to vote as they believe the Lord would have them vote, and not otherwise. I believe that would be all that would be necessary, that a sufficient weight or responsibility would rest upon them so they would not likely vote irreverently for somebody they know nothing about, but they would seek to be guided by the judgment or counsel of others whom they had reason to believe or know. And if a mistake apparently was made, if apparently the wrong person were elected, what then? Well, I would conclude that the wrong thing had been done. I think the proper thing would be to think that a lesson was going to be taught the class of greater care in whom they should elect, and if therefore they did rashly in making a selection that would be a good lesson for them, and the next time when the matter of election would come up perhaps they would learn to be more careful, and perhaps the Lord's will would be that just such a lesson should be learned by that class to make them more careful. In any event, I would cast the weight of my influence in any class against any such thing as tearing any of the Lord's people to pieces. I have known some cases in which brethren perhaps had things that could really be said against them and yet perhaps these things belonged to an early period of their lives and they were entirely changed from the time these things were true of them and therefore my thought would be that that might be so in other cases, and I would cast my influence against any such ripping and tearing amongst the Lord's sheep. I would think it would cultivate the spirit of the wolf in the sheep and therefore should be discouraged. If, however, a brother who was prominent in the congregation were asked by the others, What do you think about this nomination? or if he thought it proper to in any way give an intimation, it would not be improper for him to say, My dear brethren, the nomination you have heard and I have been asked to give some advice, and all that I will say on the subject is, that I think it would be God's will that I should vote thus and so. That puts him straight, and that will carry to some extent with those with whom he has influence and if he has no influence it ought not to carry.

ELECTION--Record of Those Not Voting.

Q242:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--Should we keep any account of those who fail to vote?

ANSWER.--Well, my own practice is to try to set the matter so fully before the vote is taken that every one present will feel that he and she has responsibility--a responsibility to vote for or against the candidate; that if one has a sufficiency of knowledge to permit of a vote, or is of the consecrated class, intending to meet with the congregation, he has a responsibility to vote; that it is not merely optional whether he will vote or not, but it is his duty to express himself thus. I think if that is emphasized in advance of taking the vote and all the dear friends can see the responsibility, very few will be inclined then to shirk. It needs to be stated beforehand very plainly.

ELECTION--Following Apostolic Custom of Electing Seven.

Q242:2:: QUESTION (1911)--2--In appointing elders for an ecclesia, should we not follow the apostolic Pattern, and appoint seven? If not, why not?

ANSWER.--I know of no apostolic pattern of appointing seven. If there is any pattern of that kind, I would be one of those most pleased to find out all about it. I remember about the apostle appointing seven deacons. I never heard anything about seven elders; it is news to me. Besides, if we are thinking about deacons it would have no bearing, because they elected such deacons as were considered necessary under the circumstances. Suppose there was a congregation that only had about six in it; how could they appoint seven elders and seven deacons then? The Lord says that a church

may be as small as two or three--"where two or three are met in my name, I will be in their midst." You have our views on this subject more particularly set forth in the sixth volume of Scripture Studies.

ELECTION--Qualified Except Not Immersed.

Q242:3:: QUESTION (1911)--3--If a brother were qualified according to the New Testament to be chosen an elder, but had not been immersed by anyone, would that, in your understanding, be a sufficient reason or cause for not appointing such a brother as an elder?

ANSWER.--It would be. Not that we think water baptism is essential in the sense our Baptist friends would say--not that we think it is anything more than a symbol, but the brother who had not yet been able to see so simple a symbol as baptism, must be blind on that point, anyway, and if blind on one point, how many more might he be blind on? I would wait until he would begin to see on that point before I would put him in to teach anybody else, who, perhaps, had seen more than he already. Understand, we do not make water baptism a test of brotherhood at all, and such a brother not having been immersed, should be made welcome, according to our understanding at the Lord's table, or as a brother in the Lord in every sense of the word; but it is one thing to recognize one as a brother of the Lord, and a member of the body in every way, and another thing to recognize him as competent to teach. My opinion is that one competent to teach is one that has already seen one of the simplest points in the New Testament, that the Lord and the apostles all practiced water immersion in symbol of the real immersion--consecration.

ELECTION--Any Time. No Special Date.

Q243:1:: QUESTION (1911)--1--What is your opinion in regard to placing a brother of ability on a program for a discourse on special occasions, providing he has not been elected an elder, and yet has the spiritual requirements, some earthly circumstance having hindered his election?

ANSWER.--Well, I should think it would be very easy to have him elected if the class thought well. Make a proposition of it and take a vote; that would settle it very quickly. He could be elected any time. It is not necessary to elect an elder at a certain, particular date. He could be elected in the middle of the year or the next month after, or any time, if it is found to be necessary, and if the class considers he is a suitable person. I should think it would be very well in such a case as this to have the matter brought to the attention of the class, consider it for a month or so, and on a certain Sunday ask the class to vote on the question. That would be giving them full opportunity, and if they voted, then the vote would decide.

ELECTION--Serving Without Appointment.

Q243:2:: QUESTION (1911)--2--We read some place that no brother should assume public duties in the church as leader, teacher, representative, etc., without an election, even though assured that there is no question respecting his acceptability. And also it is made positive in other places the same thing. Now in the face of this, is it not wrong for our elders of the ecclesia to meet separate from the nineteen deacons and separate from the church and appoint a deacon, or a teacher, or representative of the ecclesia to the position which the Lord says must be occupied by a regular ordained elder?

ANSWER.--In considering this question we should remember the Apostle's words and also the Scriptural illustration given. We have the case of Saint Stephen, you remember who was a chosen Deacon in the church as recorded in the Book of Acts, and Saint Stephen got a good chance to preach and he did not say, "Now Brother I was not chosen an elder, and therefore I cannot say anything

here" but he went right ahead and preached, and the Lord blessed him a great deal, and he had a fine time--and got stoned to death. And he got the good mark of being the first Christian martyr next to his Lord. Then let us remember what the Apostle again says--I will read a little between the lines here--he says that one who is a deacon and serves his position well and shows humility in his service, purchases to himself a good degree. That is to say, a good degree of liberty and of privilege, and of opportunity. In other words, the congregation should notice, when voting with respect to those who shall serve as elders, those whom they have previously selected as deacons, and see how careful they were, and how faithful they were, because if they were not faithful as deacons in doing some secular part of the work, there would be no reason to expect they would be properly faithful as elders. That they would be purchasing to themselves a good degree of preferment, and honor in the church by their faithfulness as deacons is the thought of the Apostle. My thought is that in the early church the arrangement was that deacons would be a class who would be gradually making more progress toward eldership, and a more prominent service of the truth, in the manner that the deacons primarily would be chosen for some other kind of service, but they would be there as a sort of reserve supply, so that if there were an elder short for any service there would be a deacon, and a proper committee would look over the deacons and say, "Suppose we try that brother with such a meeting tonight"; and then another time this committee might say, "Suppose we try that other deacon for the meeting tonight"; we have need of someone for the night, try him." Thus they would be trying them to see to what extent they would have ability. Otherwise the deacons would have very little opportunity for ever attaining to anything or for manifesting any ability they might possess in respect to the service of the church. Anything therefore that is written in the Scripture Studies was not intended to be in conflict with that thought, for that is the thought we have always entertained, and which we believe to be the Scriptural one, and which is practiced in Brooklyn and other places.

I am not sure that I understand the brother's point well, but this would be a further answer, perhaps more in comportment with his thought. I would not think it would be a proper thing that if the congregation choose just four or five as elders that these four or five men should then come in and select another one from amongst the deacons and make him practically an elder. I would not think that to be their province. If the church wanted that brother for an elder, and regular servant in that capacity, it would be their duty to say so. If the elders find they had not a sufficient supply, they might very properly at another meeting of the church inquire whether the church would be pleased to elect another elder, as there was need, apparently, for another; but if it were only a temporary need, and if it were understood with the congregation that they wished the elders to select from time to time deacons from here or there who seemed to be showing some ability to fill a temporary necessity I would think it a very proper thing; but not for him to be put in as an elder when the congregation did not put him in as an elder.

ELECTION--Voting Over Again.

Q244:1:: QUESTION (from the audience) (1911)--1—In case a person should receive within two or three votes of the seventy-five per cent, would it be wise to vote a second time on the person so as to bring the votes up to the number required to elect him?

ANSWER.--I would think there would be no objection to that or even making it unanimous. What we want to get at is not merely some little catch matter, but to get the sentiment of the class and to have the full expression of the mind of the class. Anything that is merely a friction arrangement should be avoided as much as possible. If a class decided they would make a seventy-five per cent rule in their election, that would not be binding for another election, but it might be merely binding for that one time. If they choose the next time to have the same seventy-five per cent rule, and if someone came very near having it, but not quite, and it was moved to reconsider this vote and take it again, and it was found then to be larger than the amount decided upon, the class has a perfect right to regulate the matter as it pleases.

ELECTION--Re Jury Rule.

Q245:1:: QUESTION (1911)--1--In the sixth volume of Scripture Studies we read that majority is not sufficient, but the jury rule should prevail in the choosing of elders in the church. Now if so, is not that the wisest course to pursue in electing deacons? We read there that the same order shall prevail in the choosing of both elders and deacons.

ANSWER.--In this matter we were not seeking to lay down a law; we would have no right to make a law; we were merely offering a suggestion of what we believed would be a wise course for the church. For instance, in a class if a bare majority were allowed to dictate the policy, there might be a very large minority, nearly as large in number as the majority, that would be wholly dissatisfied; and a majority of but one, for instance, might rule such a class in a very arbitrary way; and our suggestion was that a class should try to arrange by its voting and should so select elders as, if possible, to please and satisfy everyone in the class. Therefore, as far as possible, the mere majority rule should be ignored and as far as possible the so-called jury rule should obtain--not that we would say it must be a jury rule--but that as far as possible a unanimity of sentiment in the class should be obtained. It is not always possible to get the whole class to think just the same on the subject of who should be deacon or elder in a congregation, but whatever rule is observed would be equally appropriate to observe in respect to deacons as in respect to the elders. Whoever is elected for any service, the congregation should see to it that as far as possible they yield little points to each other where no principle is involved, so as to try to have everybody satisfied and pleased in those who will be the servants of the congregation.

ELECTION--Absent Member Voting by Letter.

Q245:2:: QUESTION (1912)--2--Where Elders are elected by stretching forth the hand--nominations having taken place two Sundays previous, would it be permissible where two or three members of the class are not able to be present, to send their vote by letter to the chairman?

ANSWER.--There is nothing objectionable in it. In politics there is a party spirit trying to take advantage of the other party. It is not so with you, however. When you meet to have an election of Elders you want every brother and sister to have the fullest opportunity of expression. You are not merely willing but you want them every one, to give expression of themselves. We do not want to have their own opinion merely, but we want to find out what is the Divine will for the Ecclesia. Let us all express what we think to be God's will in the matter. I see no objection to those who are absent sending their proxy or vote to the chairman of the meeting. If you are present you can give your vote for whomsoever you care, but it would be no proxy for you to give another brother or sister power to vote for you as he or she thought best. That is my opinion in this matter.

ELECTION--Foreign Brethren for English Meetings.

Q246:1:: QUESTION (1913)--1--Do you advise electing a foreign brother, German or Swedish, who speaks the English language imperfectly, for a public speaker?

ANSWER.--I would advise, if there be enough in the class of that foreign language to constitute a class, that such a speaker would be a preferable one, and might very properly be elected. As, for instance, in the Brooklyn congregation as an illustration, we have a French brother who is very well qualified to lead a class in French. We have an Italian brother who is well qualified to lead a class in Italian. We have a Swedish brother, also. Not that these friends do not understand something of English, but they prefer their own tongue a little bit; they would rather have somebody who is familiar with their own tongue. We think that is very proper. So with the colored brethren; we

have colored classes--different nationalities. It is remarkable how many different kinds there are in that congregation.

ELECTION--Re Non Qualified.

Q246:2:: QUESTION (1913)--2--Where one does not seem to be competent to fill the qualifications of an elder would you advise not electing elders and electing Pastor Russell as elder?

ANSWER.--Such questions are rather delicate ones to discuss, and it is hard to know just what is best to advise. My advice in general is that the friends act as wisely and discreetly as possible. I think one difficulty has been and perhaps still is that the Lord's people do not realize fully the will of the Lord in such a matter. They get the impression that the Apostle in laying down the qualifications of an elder in writing to Timothy and Titus is laying down hard and fast rules, and that every elder must come up to the very highest notch in all of those requirements. Now such would be a perfect man, a very good elder surely, no doubt about that. And so would all other Christians if they could come up to all the Apostle writes there. You say, Why did the Apostle make such definite statements if he really did not mean to be understood in the absolute essence of all that? We answer, He was stating the matter just the same as Jesus did on another occasion when He said to all the church, Be ye like unto your Father which is in Heaven. Now, are you like your Father in Heaven? Well, you say, I am trying to be. Very well, my dear brother, that is right. Well, are you like your Father? You are in some respects--you are in your mind. Well, are you in all the words and actions and thoughts? No, I am not like the Father in everything, but I am trying to get more and more of the character-likeness of God. Good. Now just so the Apostle here holds up before the church the standard of an elder; that is what an elder should be. When you are thinking of elders, look at that, and have that in mind when you are measuring the brethren that are available, and those who do not to some extent have these qualifications would not be fit at all, and then select to the best of your ability. If we wait until we get perfect elders we will never have any elders at all. So I would not say either that Brother Russell would make a perfect elder, nor any other person. But I believe there might be cases in which the conditions would be such that it might be better not to elect anybody for a time to be elder. There are such cases, but I think they ought to be very rare. I would hope so. It is one of those cases that are very difficult to advise in. There are so many things that bear on the subject, and each little class and each member of the class must be as wise as possible, as thoughtful and considerate as possible, loyal to God and the principles of righteousness as much as possible, and pray and seek to follow the Divine leading. And then if a whole class, or a goodly majority of the class, decide on a certain course, do not feel as though the class might vote, but your will must be done, but say, "Well, all right, the class has voted, and it was fairly stated; I stated my opinion, and they do not think the same as I, and I am not the one to coerce the class; I am in the minority and I will be subject to the others in the class, and I will co-operate with them, not work against them to show that what I said was the right way, and if it did not go my way it would be all wrong. No, I must be in harmony with God and must do to the best of my ability now with whatever the class has decided on, co-operating to the best of my ability to permit peace and righteousness and forward the cause of the truth, and be a peacemaker." Do not forget that. All of God's people want to learn that Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." And remember that necessarily all of the Lord's people in order to be overcomers will have more or less of the combative disposition; you could not be an overcomer without a little of it. You will have to be combative enough to overcome the world, and peacemaker enough not to fight with the brethren. Do not fight with the brethren any more than you can help, but be just as kind, sympathetic and helpful to them as you can be.

ELECTION--Who Are to Vote?

Q247:1:: QUESTION (1913-Z)--1--Who are entitled to vote in the church?

ANSWER.--It should always be remembered that none are to vote except those professing full consecration, manifested by the usual symbol--immersion in water. Such as have not symbolized their consecration are not to be disowned as brethren, but should be considered so immature as not to be competent to express an opinion in respect to who would be qualified to serve the Church, and, of course, would not be qualified to be servants themselves.

ELECTION--Choosing Elders and Deacons.

Q247:2:: QUESTION (1913-Z)--2--Should a bare majority rule in our elections?

ANSWER.--Numerous inquiries have come to us indicating that some of the brethren have difficulty in applying the suggestions given in Vol. VI, on the subject of election of servants for the Classes--elders and deacons.

It was not our thought there to lay down an invariable rule on the subject. The Bible gives none, and no one else has a right to establish such a rule. Our suggestion was that wherever possible the election should be unanimous, and unless seventy-five per cent of the Class, or more, favored a brother's election, it would be rather unwise for him to accept the office--the service. We did not by this mean that a minority of twenty-five or thirty per cent should be encouraged to obstruct the Class and hinder an election.

Strictly speaking, a majority of one in a Class would decide any matter except as love might come in to urge a consideration of the sentiments of others. If, for instance, a Class numbered one hundred, fifty-one of these would have a **right** to decide respecting who should be the servants of the Church, and the other forty-nine should very quietly acquiesce, recognizing the fact that they constitute only a minority, and should loyally strive to support the will of the majority.

Only the spirit of love and the best interests of all in the Class suggests more than fifty-one per cent. Love should strive for a unanimous vote. But how might this be obtained we will offer a suggestion.

Suppose that in a Class of one hundred six Elders were considered necessary for the service. A, B, C, D, E, F would represent available candidates of more or less ability. A might have a hundred votes; B, ninety; C, eighty; D, seventy; E, sixty; F, fifty. Under a strict voting on the lines of preference only two would be selected on a ninety percent basis; but our thought would be that the entire six might be unanimously elected, if they were on the average as good material as the Class possessed, and if nothing were known derogatory to their moral characters.

It is a mistake to think that the standards established by St. Paul are to be taken literally, for no one would be found fully up to all the requirements. The Apostle has stated what the **ideal** Elder would be. Each voter should have this ideal before his mind in thinking of the will of the Lord; but the Class is not to be left without an Elder unless there are serious blemishes.

Our Lord similarly set a perfect standard before us when He said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) Who is perfect in the sense that God is perfect? "There is none righteous; no, not one." (Rom. 3:10.) The Master evidently meant that we should not measure ourselves by a low standard, but by the perfect standard, that thus we would be assisting ourselves up to the grandest ideals in respect to our own lives and characters and in respect to those chosen to be Elders and ensamples to the Flock.

ELECTION--Proxy Voting.

Q248:1:: QUESTION (1913)--1--When a consecrated brother of the church is absent on account of sickness from meeting when an elder is to be elected, can he write them his choice of an elder, or vote by proxy?

ANSWER.--There is nothing in the Bible says he can, and there is nothing in the Bible that says he cannot. What are you going to do? Leave it to the class. Let the class decide.

ELECTION--Percentage to Elect.

Q249:1:: QUESTION (1913)--1--In a church election are we to understand that such rules as the class may adopt governing the percentage of vote required to elect shall apply to the vote on the candidate for deacon as well?

ANSWER.--Surely. The arrangement of the Bible in respect to the government of affairs of the church throws all the responsibility upon the congregation. I do not mean the congregation in a general sense, but the church, the gathering which is the Body of Christ; namely, the consecrated ones. The Lord has not given definite rules to govern every feature, so that leaves the responsibility to the whole church to seek to build up in the most holy faith, using the Word of the Lord, and the example and illustrations of the Scripture. If the Lord has left the matter so simply and plainly in the hands of his people, it would be entirely wrong for you or I to attempt to divert it into the hands of some individual or clergy class. There is no authority for that in the Bible. It is very natural that people might fail just the way governments fail. For instance, certain governments feel they can govern certain islands better than the people there can govern themselves. So it is very likely that if the people would submit to it, a certain class called clergy would arrogate to themselves power, lay down laws and rule. But this is simply because the congregation does not know that the Lord has put the power in its hands, and never authorized any clergy class at any time. The Lord himself was to be the Master--all ye are brethren. There should be no distinction amongst the brethren, except that distinction be recognized by the class as a company of the Lord's people, and if they shall choose certain persons for elders, the responsibility is with the class. The individuals comprising the class are, therefore, to use all the more judgment and discretion, and to remember that they are voting and acting for the Lord in the matter. In the 6th Volume of Scripture Studies we have attempted to point out what the Scriptures lay down respecting the proper mode of order in the church--not by way of law, but by way of suggestion, because the decision of the class respecting its own leadership, etc., is the final decision in the matter. We have suggested certain things about percentages; not that anything in the Scriptures say anything about percentages, but in an ordinary meeting of worldly people they might have, for instance, a vote taken on a question and a majority of one would decide; and suppose the congregation numbered 100, and 51 would decide, and the other 49 would be left practically without representation; our thought is, that is not the spirit of the Lord. The spirit of the Lord would be that the whole church should feel a oneness of interest. But suppose that the 51 who would constitute the majority would say, "Well, this is our wish, we would like to see Brother So-and-so an elder, we think he is best qualified, but here are 49 of our brethren that we will pay no attention to their wishes whatever." That would not be the spirit of love. We suggest, therefore, there should be an endeavor made not only to suit the 51, but also the 49 who are in the minority; not merely each one doing as he wishes, but trying to be considerate of one another, esteeming one another, having an interest in one another. Suppose in a congregation of 100 it is decided a certain number might be found eligible to the position of deacons. As one of the congregation I might have very positive ideas that Brothers A, B and C were much better qualified than Brothers D, E and F, and I would have a right to vote for those three; and then if some one else thought well of D, E and F, I would say to myself, Well, this other brother would like these others. Do I really know anything

against them? And if I knew nothing against them, then because so many of the other brethren like them is the best kind of a reason I would like to see them have them. If I were going to be an elder I would very much rather be one that would represent the whole congregation than one who had been elected by a mere majority. I would like to have the whole congregation pleased, satisfied, contented in their minds. I would be willing to put myself in their places. The Golden Rule requires that I do to the minority as I would wish the minority to do to me. If I were in the minority and they were in the majority, how would I like them to consider me? I would like to have some show, too. Then we ought to be equally as generous as the others. This would not mean we would be lax or careless, respecting any really important matter. If it was a bad man, or unconsecrated man, or a man who was in some way totally unfit for eldership, then I would withstand him face to face, and would say right out, I cannot vote for Brother So-and-so for certain reasons. Now I would try my very best to avoid giving reasons, but if it became necessary to give the reasons I would do so in as kindly a way as I could, and I would try previously to have the confidence of all my brothers and sisters to such a degree that they would know I would not say a word unkindly, or speak a word of evil about any brother; that it would be an absolute necessity to even take a position of opposing a brother--a duty toward God and toward the church. When we get that confidence in each other we will have all the more power and weight in whatever we would say.

ELECTION--Closing Nominations.

Q250:1:: QUESTION (1913)--1--In appointing an elder to lead a certain class study, is it proper after the nomination of one to move that the nominations be closed without giving time for further nominations? This, of course, applying to a class where three or more brethren are serving as elders?

ANSWER.--There are what are termed parliamentary rules. That is to say, rules such as apply to the action of a body like the House of Parliament; and these rules are used in connection with Congress and also little meetings and large meetings. They are very good rules, not to be objected to in a general way. They are generally very wise and considerate rules for fairness in a general way. At the same time the Lord's people, as they are to go beyond mere justice and administer according to love, and to know that love is the fulfilling of the law, and more than merely the right and justice of the matter, in this matter of election and rules for meetings should not hold each other too strictly to merely the letter of the law which might apply in a public assembly of another kind. Their sympathetic bond of love should be such that they would like to please all. Suppose this were a meeting and we were going to elect some elders here. Suppose I knew some here had a great deal of esteem for Brother A, and some for Brother B, and some for Brother C, and some for Brother D, and for my own preference I would say, Now out of all these I believe I prefer Brothers A and C; I do not think so much of Brothers B and D. I might say, I will nominate Brothers A and C, and move the nominations close. So some of those who are more timid would not have a chance to vote. Would that be loving? No. Love is our rule, and love gets in ahead of all the parliamentary rules in the world. Love says, I want that brother over there, and that sister over there, and all the brothers and sisters, to have a good and fair show and to have their voice in this matter. I do not want to take from them rights that belong to them under the Lord's arrangement. I might be of sharper practice, more experience, and twist them all up, but that would not be a proper elder brother's place on my part, to get the younger brethren all mixed up so their will would not be done, and they would vote for something and they didn't know they were doing it that way, and then be dissatisfied afterwards and say, If I had understood that matter right I would have done differently. That is not a satisfactory meeting at all. The kind of meeting for election of elders of a class would be a meeting in which everything would be done so openly and fairly that everybody's rights would be considered and everybody would feel happy and contented with the results. Well, we all had our chance, and if the thing was not done as I thought was the preferable way, it was done in a good way anyhow, because

everybody had a fair part—not an effort to tear each other to pieces. I do not think that is what we should do. If you do not know him, and nobody vouches for him that you do know, you had better not vote at all. If there is somebody present that you have great confidence in and he vouches for this brother, and says, I nominate that brother, then you should say, The fact that Brother Russell nominated Brother "W" means that he knows him or he would not have nominated him. I do not know Brother "W," but the fact that Brother Russell nominated him and Brother Hirsh seconded it, and I know them, therefore I know that Brother "W" is all right. We have a right, you see, to lean to a certain extent upon our knowledge that is indirect. We might not be well acquainted with Brother "NW" and know all about his affairs well enough to vote for him unless there is something to indicate for us. But if someone would vouch for him, it would be the same as in a bank. If you go in a bank and your name is Smith, they would say, "We do not know you, Mr. Smith, at this bank; and we are not to pay any checks unless we know the parties. Do you know Mr. Hirsh?"

"Yes, he will vouch for me."

"Mr. Hirsh, do you vouch for Mr. Smith?"

"Oh, yes, that is Mr. Smith, I will vouch for him; I will guarantee that is all straight."

The bank then says, "All right, Mr. Smith, Mr. Hirsh says he knows you and so we are acquainted."

The same way in a class. Somebody vouches for Brother Smith, and then you say, I know persons who will vouch for him. That means you ought never to nominate a person you do not know; never nominate merely because somebody says Smith. Do not be silly and say Smith or Brown just because somebody else says so. Know what you are doing or do not do it.

Another thing: When we have such an election of elders, suppose I say, "I like Brother A and Brother C and to my mind these two brethren are very much superior to the other brethren, and I would really think the class would be better served if we only had Brothers A and C, and if we do not have Brothers B and D at all." I might try to force that, I might take advantage and wheedle them out of their vote. But that would not be right. On the contrary I should say, "Now I know quite a good many like Brother B very well, and some others like Brother D very well, I do not think either of these brethren have as good qualifications as Brothers A and C, but some others do like them and claim they get profit from them, and I do not know anything against their characters, and since others get a blessing from their service, I am glad they should serve." I would be pleased to nominate any and all of them, knowing them to be men of good, reputable character. It would not prove I thought them better ones, but I would rather nominate the ones I preferred, and if the others were nominated and there is any lack of someone to second the nomination I would say, "I will second Brothers B and D also." Why? They are not your preference. No, but I know they are the preference of some of the other brethren, and I want all the class to be served. I would not want them merely to have the ones I thought better, but some of the ones they thought better. I ought to have love enough for all the brethren that I would want them all to be pleased, and not merely to please myself. That is the spirit that ought to be in every church and in every election, and I think there would be less confusion.

Suppose there are some others who would like to have someone else. Suppose some were nominated that I thought quite unsuitable; I would feel afraid some might vote for them. I would say, "Now, dear friends there is Brother 'W' that is nominated. I do not wish to have a word to say against him, or pose as an enemy of his, but in my judgment I thought it better we should not have him as one of the elders. Therefore I will state while the motion is under discussion that I am not going to vote for him. Now, Brother W', I am not opposing you in any way except as I ought to oppose you when I think you would be better not serving as an elder." I would be perfectly frank with him and would not say a word against him, and say, "I oppose him because he owes several bills downtown, and they know him all over town as a man that runs bills, and he is a disgrace to our class." I do not need to talk about Brother "W" at all. I would just say, "I cannot vote for Brother W' as an elder, and I would like to not see him an elder; I believe the Lord's cause would be better served otherwise."

We do not need to tear one another to pieces. It might or might not be true about Brother "W" owing bills all over town. Perhaps if we would ask him, he might be able to give some good excuse.

ELECTION--Of Elders who do not attend Meetings.

Q253:1:: QUESTION (1913)--1--What do you think about a class leader who never attends a week-day afternoon meeting, nor all the night meetings, even when a pilgrim brother is present?

ANSWER.--I would think perhaps he could not get out to the afternoon meeting because he had work of some kind. I would think, though, that a brother who had been elected elder who would only come to a meeting where he was to speak had better be left out until he would come to the meeting all the time. If he did not come to the meeting except when he was going to speak I would think that would indicate he was not qualified for eldership, it would indicate to my mind that he did not wish to be taught, did not wish to hear anyone else, but merely wished to hear himself talk, and thought he was above the rest of the class. "All ye are brethren." Whenever one gets to thinking he is not one of the brethren, that he ought to come only when he is to speak, then I am afraid for that brother. For his own sake I think it better not to elect him. We would not want to help a brother do something that would keep him out of the Kingdom. We are to consider the brother, and his interests, as well as the class and its interests.

ELECTION--Is it Wrong Not to Vote, When Perplexed?

Q253:2:: QUESTION (1914)--2--A sister, perplexed and grieved in regard to affairs in the class attended the election meeting, but took no part in the voting. Those whom she WOULD have voted for were elected. Was this wrong? Was it a sin?

ANSWER.--I suppose the sister used her best judgment so we may know it was not a sin. You are never wrong in following your conscience, even though it might lead you astray. You would be doing the right thing to follow your conscience at any cost. So God would not hold anybody responsible for sin, who had done the best he or she knew how. Dismiss it.

ELECTION--Proper Servants of the Church.

Q253:3:: QUESTION (1915)--3--A man of high social standing became interested in the Truth, but did not consecrate. Through the influence of a well-to-do sister, and her husband, who is no longer in the Truth this man was elected our Class Leader. They rejected another brother because he was not so intelligent. This influence in our Class is too often felt and the ordering of our Class is not according to the Sixth Volume of Scripture Studies. What would you advise?

ANSWER.--We think, dear friends, that the Sixth Volume is in full accord with the Bible. If you believe it is in harmony with the Bible, then it will be your duty to carry out those suggestions as fully as they represent the Word of God. In my judgment it would surely not be the right order of things to elect a person to any office, either as Elder or deacon, where there would be any teaching responsibility whatever, who had not professed full consecration to the Lord. He would not be a member of the Church of Christ at all, and therefore could not hold any oversight in the Church; and to put him into such office would be contrary to the spirit of the Word and be a wrong thing for the Class. What should they do at the next election? They should not vote for this man.

I do not know to whom reference is made, but if I were the person myself it would make no difference. I would think they should not elect me under such conditions no matter how much influence I had. Suppose it should disrupt the Class to choose another Elder. Then let it disrupt the Class. I do not mean by that that we should be careless as to the disruption of the Class, and careless

of others' feelings; but after the matter has been fully set before the Class, those who do see the right course should stand for the fact that no one should serve in any capacity except one who is professedly a child of God; and no one should vote for any except those who are fully consecrated. If this cannot be made the voice of the Church, then those who are faithful should withdraw, and I think, according to the Bible arrangement, they would have a greater blessing.

ELECTION--Re the Vow.

Q254:1:: QUESTION (1915-Z)--I--Should any one be chosen as a servant of the Church who has not taken the special Vow which so many of us have found very helpful, and which has been recommended to all?

ANSWER.--We cannot make this simple Vow a test of brotherhood; for, even though we believe that the Lord has especially brought it forth at this time and that to a certain extent He intends it to serve as a test amongst the consecrated, nevertheless the Bible does not authorize us to make this a test of brotherhood. It is a matter of judgment rather than of Divine direction, just as the candidate's misuse of the English language, or uncouthness of manner might properly enough be taken into consideration, although not mentioned in the Bible amongst the qualifications for eldership. It would rejoice us greatly to know that all the dear Elders and Deacons amongst the Lord's people everywhere could see eye to eye with respect to the reasonableness of the Vow, and its harmony with the Divine Word and with our consecration Vow, to which it is, as it were, a blue fringe, or border and finish. One can scarcely refrain from wondering what objection any Christian brother or sister could have to that Vow. To some of us it seems as though it would imply either something wrong as respects their heart intentions or something defective in their reasoning faculties. However, we are not competent to judge so closely. The Master said, "Judge not." Our thought is that in selecting Elders or Deacons a preference might well be given to those who have taken the Vow and who see eye to eye on this subject. Nevertheless, if the brethren who are competent to lead Classes are acceptable in every other way and are not opposers of the Vow, they might be chosen. This would be especially true of those who declare that they are living up to all the requirements of the Vow to the best of their ability, and merely decline to take it because of fear that somehow or other the taking of this simple Vow might injure them while helping others. We may not understand the processes of their reasoning nor the attitude of their hearts, but we may under such circumstances pass over what we cannot understand nor appreciate.

ELECTION--Rules for Selection of Elders and Deacons.

Q255:1:: QUESTION (1915-Z)--I--What are the rules for the selection of Elders and Deacons?

ANSWER.--Numerous inquiries have come to us indicating that some of the brethren have difficulty in applying the suggestions given in Vol. VI. on the subject of election of servants for the Classes.

It was not our thought there to lay down an invariable rule on the subject. The Bible gives none, and no one else has a right to establish such a rule. Our suggestion was that whenever possible the election should be unanimous, and unless seventy-five per cent of the Class, or more, favored a brother's election, it would be rather unwise for him to accept the office--the service. We did not by this mean that a minority of twenty-five or thirty per cent should be encouraged to obstruct the Class and hinder an election.

Strictly speaking, a majority of **one** in a Class would decide any matter except as **love** might come in to urge a consideration of the sentiments of others. If for instance, a Class numbered one

hundred, fifty-one would have a **right** to decide respecting who should be the servants of the Church, and the other forty-nine should very quietly acquiesce, recognizing the fact that they constitute only a minority, and should loyally strive to support the will of the majority.

Only the spirit of love and the best interests of all in the Class suggests more than fifty-one per cent. Love should strive for a unanimous vote. But how might this be obtained? We will offer a suggestion.

Suppose that in a Class of one hundred, six Elders were considered as necessary for the service. A, B, C, D, E, F, would represent available candidates of more or less ability. A might have a hundred votes; B, ninety; C, eighty; D, seventy; E, sixty; F, fifty. Under a strict voting on the lines of preference only two would be selected on a ninety per cent basis; but our thought would be that the entire six might be unanimously elected, if they were on the average as good material as the Class possessed, and if nothing were known derogatory to their moral character.

It is a mistake to think that the standards established by St. Paul are to be taken literally, for no one would be found fully up to all the requirements. The Apostle has stated what the ideal Elder would be. Each voter should have this ideal before his mind in thinking of the will of the Lord; but the Class is not to be left without an Elder unless there are serious blemishes.

Our Lord similarly set a perfect example before us when He said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) Who is perfect in the sense that God is perfect? "There is none righteous; no, not one." (Rom. 3:10.) The Master evidently meant that we should not measure ourselves by a low standard, but by the perfect standard, that thus we would be assisting ourselves up to the grandest ideals in respect to our own lives and characters and in respect to those chosen to be Elders and examples to the Flock.

Be it always remembered that none are to vote except those professing full consecration, manifested by the usual symbol--immersion in water. Such as have not symbolized their consecration, are not to be disowned as brethren, but should be considered so immature as not to be competent to express an opinion in respect to who would be qualified to serve the Church, and, of course, would not be qualified to be servants themselves.

ELECTION--Choosing Elders From Other Classes.

Q256:1:: QUESTION (1916)--1--Where there is sufficient available material in the class, is it for the best interest of the class to choose its elders from brethren of other classes?

ANSWER.--Where there is sufficient material in the class, it would not seem to be wise for the class to go outside to choose other elders. I think that goes without saying. But who is to determine whether there is sufficient material in the class? The class must decide that for themselves. Who is to say that they have sufficient material in the class? The class must decide that--not Brother Russell, nor anyone else. If the class thinks that it has no qualified elders, then let it go outside. If it does have a number of qualified elders, then let them use what God has provided and encourage the brethren at home.

ELECTION--Regarding Percentage.

Q256:2:: QUESTION (1916)--2--In a certain Tower, whose date I cannot remember, you suggested a method of election wherein all the nominees receiving at least a 50 per cent nominating vote should be unanimously elected. In a class where there is considerable difficulty and friction, would it be better to adopt this method, or to insist on a 75 per cent vote on each nominee for election as an elder?

ANSWER.--We should remember, first of all, that Bible does not tell us what shall be done. That being so, it is really a matter of judgment to find out what would be the most advantageous way

for doing this. It is a matter of judgment as to what would be the best way. Mine might not be as good as yours. When I offer any suggestions in the Watch Tower on any subject like this, it is merely my opinion. Brother Russell has no wish to give commands, or to be a dictator in any sense of the word. He merely endeavors to give his opinion in such matters--about which the Bible does not speak. If the class knows some better way than I do, then that will be satisfactory to me. God's will is to be expressed by the class, and anyone that gets rid of the will of the class will make a mistake and will not have the approval of the Lord. I have known those who would bring in some kind of wire-pulling, and thus the interests of the class would be interfered with for the time being; that is certainly not right. We should not try to go beyond what the Lord has arranged. The Lord would not be pleased with anything of that kind. We must be honest with God and with the brethren, and help all the brethren to get the right thought, as follows: Now, it is none of my business whether I am chosen as an elder or not. Let the class do what it thinks best. If they choose me, I will try to serve them as best I can, but, if they do not choose me, then I will try to serve them as best I can anyway. If we have such a spirit, the class will surely see it in due time. The Lord sees it all the time, and if you are right with God, it matters not how you stand with others. If you say we will have 80 or 75 per cent, or what not, there is nothing to regulate the percentage--nothing in the Bible. We would suggest that the desire in voting to please all the brethren in the class and to have an election that would be satisfactory to all, so far as you conscientiously could, would even be better than pleasing 75 or 80 per cent. There should be proper consideration for every one in the class, and yet each one, of course, should do what he considers to be right. Should it be figured out beforehand that all would not be entirely pleased, and the majority therefore should carry out their thoughts without any regard for the thoughts of the minority, surely that would not be right. If you think that a certain brother should be an elder and I see nothing wrong with the brother, the fact that you want him would be a reason for me to vote for him unless I knew something in his character that would disqualify him, in which event I would think it to be against the Lord's will to vote for him. I could not vote for him for a certain reason. (I am merely expressing my opinion in voting.) I would like our election to be unanimous, if possible, but, for a certain reason I cannot give him my vote. He ought to feel kindly about it, and should say: I admire your honesty and candidness; I will try to bring myself up to a higher standard. This would seem to be the right thought: to do the right and hope it may please the whole class; and yet, to do the right whether it please them or not. Not, however, in any independent spirit, but with the generous spirit of giving due consideration to the thoughts of each and everyone. I have known cases in which the 85 per cent rule was established, and the will of the class was not really done. How so? If 85 per cent were obtained why would that not be the will of the class? Because the 15 per cent might decide to be obstreperous and determine not to let the 85 per cent have their desire. The minority tried to rule the majority, and would not submit. However, the majority is all that should be required to determine the will of the class; 51 per cent would be the majority. If 85 per cent be required, it is a concession on the part of the majority to please the minority. Fifty-one per cent could say we will have our decision, we will have our way, but that would be ignoring the others and might cause a division. It would not be a wise or kind thing to do. The majority ought to think of the minority, and say we would like to have the 100 per cent, so as to include every person, if possible, but for the majority to knuckle down to the minority so that the minority might obstruct the work of the class and make it difficult, because the majority were willing to say 85 per cent, and then state, we will do what we can to hinder this 85 per cent, would mean that they had adopted the method of filibustering used in politics for the purpose of blocking the purpose of those in the ascendancy. This, in the case to which we refer, was altogether wrong. We want to get the right focus on these matters. In Brooklyn and New York we hardly ever have anything but an unanimous vote--hardly ever--because we are agreed that we want to do everything we know to assist in the work. If anyone wants to have a certain brother as elder or deacon, we would be glad to have him. I believe this is the mind of the classes nearly everywhere, but sometimes we get our minds twisted. When the minority say, you can't do anything unless you have 85 per cent, I would favor a change and make it

51 per cent, and then let the 51 per cent be as kind to the others as possible, but let the others know that we will not permit any method to obstruct the work of the Lord. God wants the majority of the class to rule the class and to determine its course, but the Lord also wants the majority to be very kind towards the minority, but, if they can be of one mind that would be better still.

PASTOR--Electing You If Not Able to Visit Class.

Q525:2:: QUESTION (1912)--2--Would it be proper or well for one to nominate Pastor Russell to be a Pastor of a class for a year or any set period, the class may decide to vote? The thought is that you would likely be present only as represented by the printed page, or through correspondence.

ANSWER--I do not quite catch the purport of the question, but would say, in some respects it might be considered rather a formal matter. As a matter of Providence, through the Watch Tower and through correspondence, I am practically Pastor in all the little Ecclesias represented in the Watch Tower lists. If the friends take a formal vote and elect me Pastor, I am pleased to have it that way, and if they prefer not to do so, they have their choice. And whether they make the election for a year or without limit is also for them to decide.

MEETINGS

MEETINGS--Number of in Extension Work.

Q476:1:: QUESTION (1911)--1--It was recently intimated in the Watch Tower in regard to the Bible Class extension work that not less than six meetings be held in any one town. Would it be well to have six meetings in one place when at the second meeting only two or three interested ones come out to the meeting?

ANSWER--No, I answer, if no people come out, I would not continue the meetings. Never hold a meeting if you are the only party there. You will have to judge as to how many would constitute a proper meeting.

MEETINGS--Re Elders at Brooklyn Appointing Deacons to Lead Meetings.

Q477:1:: QUESTION (1911)--1--Do the elders of the Ecclesia at Brooklyn appoint deacons to lead the classes without a congregation election as set forth, etc?

ANSWER--This is supposed to be a pastoral work and not a work for the elders. One of the elders of the congregation at Brooklyn is charged with the responsibility of looking over the meetings and being an assistant to the pastor in that respect, and, with the pastor's consent, now and then a deacon is selected for this work, and other work. That is supposed to be the very object in electing a pastor, that he may have that supervision of the needs of the congregation and fill in here and there according as the need might be. But it would not be the thought there, or elsewhere, that anyone would be appointed permanently to a service which is the same as if he were chosen by the congregation an elder. It would be merely a temporary matter to fill an emergency and to give the deacon an opportunity of being tried out.

MEETINGS--Choice of Teacher.

Q478:1:: QUESTION (1913)--1--Is it a wrong condition of heart for one to have a choice of a teacher for certain studies who would have ability for such studies, not from the standpoint of personality?

ANSWER--I would not think that would be a wrong condition of heart. There are some who might have a special talent as teacher. A person might have a preference for that one who could impart the largest amount of instruction. I see no wrong condition of heart necessarily implied in that, but I do say this, that the class ought to seek in its elections to find amongst the brethren those who have the special qualifications, and are apt to teach, because that is one element of the qualifications for an elder, as the Apostle says, and any one who is not apt to teach should not be elected at all. However, there would still be the thought that there would be a difference; therefore, our suggestion has been to the friends, and our practice in Brooklyn is, that these different leaders be more or less changed about; as, for instance, one who would be leading a class for a certain length of time would be changed to another class, then to another class, changing all around, so as to give all the classes a chance to have the best and the worst.

MEETINGS--Re Visiting Brethren Addressing Them.

Q472:2:: QUESTION (1910)--2--Should a visiting brother be asked to address a class when he comes?

ANSWER--My thought would be that it might not be best to invite a visiting brother other than those accredited by the society as pilgrims, or specially introduced to the class, because it would establish a sort of a precedent. And, secondly, that the elder is not put in that position to determine who shall lead the class, but merely that he himself was appointed to lead the class, unless he feels very sure that the congregation would like to have such a brother; then he ought to sink all personality and he should ask the class whether or not they would like to hear from such a brother at such a time. I think that would put the responsibility for the matter in the hands of the class and relieve any strained relationship there might be, and save the class sometimes from getting into trouble. Because if it were the custom that any visiting brother should always have the preference, then it might be disadvantageous, for the class has not elected that visiting brother, but the one that was elected, therefore the class should be the one to say whether or not any one else should be the one to address it,--unless it has given some special liberty to the leader.

MEETINGS--Method of Conducting When Brothers Are Not Present.

Q472:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--In case of a small class, where there is no brother to officiate, what is the method to pursue in teaching the Berean studies or Tabernacle studies—where there is no brother at the head of the class?

ANSWER--What do you mean by that, no brother at the head of the class?

The Brother.--That there is no brother in the class, just a class of sisters?

ANSWER--I think they should do without a brother. I have already suggested in the sixth volume, brother, in answer to a question like this, that if they like they can consider the author of the volume as being present with them, as represented in that volume.

QUESTION --2--Would it be proper for some sister to ask the question?

ANSWER--Surely. The only point about the sisters is this: It does not say a sister might not instruct sisters, but Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach, or usurp authority over a man." It does not say she may not teach children and sisters, but the Apostle is saying that when men and women are in the Church of Christ, side by side, it is an impropriety and out of harmony with the type and picture that Christ is the head, represented in the men, and the Church is the body, represented in the women; and that it would be improper for the woman to teach, as implying the Church was teaching

Christ. And so he has outlined this as being the divine will and we are following that. But for the sister to put the question and to open the meeting and engage in prayer, it certainly is entirely proper.

MEETING--Should Deacons Lead?

Q477:2:: QUESTION (1912)--2--Would it be proper to ask Deacons to lead meetings, instead of Elders, when they are much more competent?

ANSWER--Our thought would be the contrary of that, that the Elders are the ones chosen especially to be the leaders, and that Deacons would be appointed to hold meetings only to fill needs, This is following the Scriptural precedent. The Apostle says that a Deacon who serves in the office of a Deacon, purchases to himself a good degree. That is to say, that if he is faithful in temporal things in the Church, loyal and faithful in looking after the welfare of the Church, manifesting himself as a suitable person in that way, he **purchases a good degree of the confidence of the class**, and they should consider him with a view of sometime appointing him Elder. Meantime, however, there are times when an Elder might not be available, and it furnishes a good opportunity to try the Deacons. I think this should always be cultivated in all of the classes. Elders are the **elder brothers** in the Church, not necessarily in age, but especially in spirituality. A spiritual eldership of character is their qualification, no matter how old or young they may be. One part of the mission of the Elders in looking after the welfare of the class would be to look out for the younger brethren, who might be qualified to serve as Deacons, to coach them, and if they have ability, to bring them forward in readiness for Eldership. In some instances I have found apparently a jealous feeling on the part of an Elder, lest someone else should have some ability and share the service. Such a spirit would surely be displeasing to the Master, and to the Elder's disadvantage; for he could not have a self-seeking spirit without doing an injury to himself. His solemn obligation is to look out for the welfare of the class and not be self-seeking. Any brother having ability to serve should be elected. Don't be afraid that the work will run out. Everyone who has any ability to serve the Lord let him serve faithfully; let the Lord look out for the others. If we see anyone more competent to serve than ourselves, we ought to be glad of that better service for God. There is no danger that there will not be enough work. Class Extension and a hundred other ways of service are calling for laborers. God will use us in proportion as we have the humble Spirit.

MEETINGS--Pilgrim Meetings, Advertising, etc.

Q469:2:: QUESTION (1907)--2--What would you advise in regard to the Pilgrim meetings? Would it be advisable to spend much money for advertising and for hall rent at this period of the harvest? Or would it be better to give the service more especially to the interests of those already in the faith? To what extent should the Pilgrim direct in this matter?

ANSWER--I would answer, dear friends, that my thought would be, answering the last question first, the Pilgrim should not attempt to direct in the matter at all. That is not the Pilgrim's business. We do most of the directing of the matter from the Watch Tower office. Pilgrims are supposed to be carrying out an outline of policy that is there laid down, and their acceptance on the Pilgrim staff implies that they are pleased to do so. It does not imply bondage, but implies the taking up the staff under those conditions, and implies they are pleased with and recognize the regulations there made as being under divine supervision. So I would say that the Pilgrim would have nothing whatever to do with that matter. I am not aware that the Pilgrims do, but if any of them have done so, I suppose it was done inadvertently.

Now, as to what extent it is advisable to advertise, I would say this: We prefer to leave that in the hands of the friends themselves. Do as much advertising, or as little advertising for these pilgrim visits as you choose. Consider that a part of **your** stewardship; that is what you are to attend to. The

Society attends to another part, that of sending the Pilgrim, seeing to his expenses, etc., and the Pilgrim attends to another part. If each of these do their part, everything will be done right. So you see that leaves the responsibility with each party to do what he believes, according to his own judgment, will be the Lord's will.

Our advice would be that there be not very many public meetings, because the special object of these visits of the Pilgrim is, to minister to the household of faith, and the public ministrations are not always the most beneficial thing for the household of faith itself. So we always urge that if there be both public and private meetings, the public meetings be not allowed to take all the time, but rather be at least half or more than half given to the matters that are of special interest to the household of faith.

MEETINGS--Re Small Classes.

Q470:1:: QUESTION (1909)--1--Would you advise that a class of three or four have Berean Studies or Dawn lessons?

ANSWER--Well, I think it proper to have both. We have many opportunities and need not confine ourselves to one. The Berean lessons would, perhaps, be better for the more public meetings, and might be a little more orderly, and then you could have the Dawn Studies for the evenings. I would advise in this connection that none forget the prayer and testimony meetings, for they are amongst the most profitable meetings that the Church enjoys. In the proportion that they are prosperous, we can generally see that the spiritual condition of that class is good, and therefore as far as possible, don't forget the prayer and testimony meetings, but do not make the mistake of having the testimonies along the line of things which occurred years ago. We suggest that you have a subject for each week, and have the testimonies as far as possible along the line of the subject. In some places, they use the weekly sermons as a basis for the prayer and testimony meetings, and they try to see that their testimonies bear along the same line, and thus having it in mind during the week, they will look for some experience in harmony with that subject. In the New York church, they take for their weekly prayer and testimony subject, the Sunday afternoon discourse, and then they watch their experiences, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday--four days--along that line. If it is on patience, for instance, then they will note to what extent they have cultivated patience, and they generally find that there has been some experience during that time. Then after Wednesday meeting, they have the same thought in mind until the next Sunday, thus always having it fresh in their minds. There is an advantage in that, which is to bring us all up to date, and I think you will all find this in your experience that you drifted and hardly knew that you were drifting, so far as Christian experience is concerned, but now today, we want to have some Christian experience, it is practically a day lost. So, you see that, by looking for these experiences, we find that for which we look. If you do not have something of the kind before the mind, you will not have such an experience, and you will scarcely know how the Lord has cared for you, or what experiences you have had. **We have found these very profitable.**

MEETINGS--Order of.

Q471:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--In what order would you suggest that a class which has two meetings on Sunday and two during the rest of the week, making four meetings in all in the seven days, hold the meetings, and what line of studies and in what quantity would you suggest to them?

ANSWER--My advice would be that the middle of the week would be a good time to have the testimony meeting,--meeting for praise, Christian fellowship, and getting near to each other. It is not merely testimony, but it is the sympathetic union of hearts that is obtained at such meetings, it should be remembered. Then I should think that such Berean studies as we have suggested would be

all right. Then it would depend on the material in the class, and so forth, whether it would be best to have an attempt at a public discourse or not. In some cases that would be just the proper thing, and in other cases I think it would be very unwise. I think we should recognize there is such a thing as natural qualification for teaching, and that only those who are apt to teach should be put to teaching; that any one who has not an aptitude for it had best not attempt to teach, but to fall in line more with something like a Berean study. Even there it requires a great deal of teaching ability, and the leader needs to study how to bring out the class. I do not think it would be proper for me to enter into and give advice with any great particularity respecting the character of these meetings, more than I should think a testimony meeting is good for one meeting a week. Some of the Berean studies are also good in the way that the classes find to be most to their spiritual advantage, and the class should be invited to express themselves, and if necessary to test the different ways so as to find which is to them the most interesting and most profitable. And especially I advise the elders and deacons not to try to run the class and to rule over it, but to assist the class and to help it in the way in which the Spirit of the Lord seems to lead.

MEETINGS--Should Deacons Lead Meetings?

Q478:2:: QUESTION (1914)--2--A majority of our class wishes some of our deacons to lead the prayer meeting occasionally but some of our elders say it is unscriptural to have deacons lead meetings and that no one but elders should lead. Are they correct?

ANSWER--Go again to the Bible authority. In the Bible we find some of the deacons of the early Church doing a good Christian work, Deacon Stephen and Deacon Phillip and others. They were not Apostles. So we would say that the class on this occasion in our judgment, or rather the elders, erred in saying that none but an elder could lead a meeting. We think a very good plan would be that which the class suggested and the very fact that the class suggested it made it right and proper. The deacons are chosen for a service, and the Apostle said "those who use the office of deacon purchase to themselves a good degree" of what? Liberty in connection with the work. They are elected for a special kind of work but if **they manifest that they have other talents they should be encouraged to use them**, and the class should gradually come to know of them and might in time choose them as elders. **If they never had any opportunity the class would never know.** I think what the class suggested was the very thing they should do, and they might go even further and say that approximately so often a deacon should be called upon to lead the meeting or arrange it as the class sees fit, and the elders should be glad to help these younger brethren to use all of their talents and powers, and if they found that they had talents fitting them for eldership it would be quite proper at the election to say, I will nominate Brother So and So. He has been a very faithful deacon, and now I will nominate him as an elder. This would be a very nice thing for an elder brother to say. He should be helping his younger brother forward. There is always plenty of work. Don't be afraid of getting too many elders. The "Harvest is great and the laborers are few." Go out yourself and do all you can and when God sees you are trying He will open up to you other doors.

MEETINGS--Use of By-Laws.

Q482:2:: QUESTION (1916)--2--Would you advise the Class here at Los Angeles to formulate a set of by-laws to govern business meetings, etc.?

ANSWER--Some of the Brethren are very much given to by-laws, or rules. Now certain rules are, of course, necessary; for without them we would be anarchistic; and yet we must observe the law of love and justice. These two laws especially observed will regulate almost everything. Justice, however, must always come first. I am to be just toward you in everything; yet I am not to exact justice from you in return. However, you should not desire to do anything less than justice toward me, and surely I should do nothing less toward you. But while I hold **myself** to strict justice,

yet I am not to require it of you. I may require less. With these two bylaws, Justice and Love, operating, we shall not need very many more laws. We could have too many by-laws; but these two kept steadily in mind will help out in a great many cases.

MEETINGS--Kind of.

Q483:1:: QUESTION (1916)--1--What kind of meetings would be most advantageous?

ANSWER--That would depend very much upon circumstances. We have found one of the most useful meeting that we know anything about to be the Berean Studies; and yet there might be some exceptional cases where that might not be the most profitable. In some cases a preaching service on Sunday night might be the most profitable; in some cases two preaching services on Sunday. These, however, would be exceptional cases. As a general thing I think the most benefit is derived from the Berean Studies; for they require that each individual shall make his own preparation and give his own answers. I am not intending to give **specific** advice, but **general**, and would leave it to each class represented here to apply what I say in his own way.

The Bible says nothing about how many or what kind of meetings we should have. That is left to be decided by the spirit of a sound mind. We should have in mind the profit and benefit of each member of the Class. We should "consider one another." Some might think they need more. If they should arrange for too many, they will gradually find it out by the attendance becoming too small to justify their continuance, being fewer than the number that had originally been arranged for. My thought would be that about three meetings on Sunday would be sufficient. But each must use his own thought, and then grant the same liberty and privileges to others to think and act for themselves. This is just and right. This idea of justice should enter into all the affairs of life; for justice is the foundation of God's Throne and should be the foundation of every Christian's deportment; in fact, justice should be the foundation of everything we do. If some in the Class want five meetings, then I would say, "All right; but I can't attend them all. However, I will vote for five meetings, if you want five, and think they will be fairly well attended."

MEETINGS--Number of.

Q483:2:: QUESTION (1916)--2--The Los Angeles Ecclesia holds Sunday meetings as follows: 10:30 A.M., Sunday School Lesson in THE WATCH TOWER: 1:30 P. M., THE WATCH TOWER Study Article; 3:00 P.M., Lecture; 7:00 P.M., Berean Study Sixth Volume. Some say that we should have more meetings; some, that we have too many now; some say that we should have two discourses instead of one. What is your thought as to the best interests of the Class in this respect?

ANSWER--In every case each Class should decide for itself. As for me, I think there is such a thing as having too many meetings. In this instance, I should not be inclined to add to the number of meetings already being held. If I were here and voting on the subject, unless I knew more than I now know, I should be inclined to have three meetings rather than five. Four are about as many as you could manage. While it might be different, there are surely a goodly number of the Lord's people who have earthly obligations toward their husbands, wives or children, who are not in the Truth, and to whom they owe something on the one day set apart for rest and change of occupation.

To a husband not in the Truth, and whose only day at home is Sunday, to find that his wife would be away too much on that day, it would appear as though she were neglecting him; and I am not sure but that you would take the same view under similar conditions; and a wife not in the Truth, seeing her husband very little even on Sunday, if he were to be away at meetings most of the day, would have almost nothing of his society. Surely this would not be right. We have sundry obligations

of an earthly kind to our husbands or to our wives, as the case might be; and these ought not to be overlooked.

Now if the Class should hold ever so many meetings on Sunday, in some instances it would be wise for an individual not to attend all of them. Even in the case of an individual who might be able to give his entire day to the Lord, it would rest with him as to how to spend his time. He might desire to give a portion of it to the volunteer service, and another portion to some other part of the work--some to the Berean study, some to preaching. He would have to use his own best judgment in the matter. If the Class should have more than four meetings it would hardly seem wise; and even if all could get out to all these meetings, we should remember the Apostle's words, "Let your moderation be known to all." Moderation in respect to religious meetings, as well as in respect to other matters. We should remember that our strength is limited; and we should therefore have consideration for those who are dependent upon us—our husbands, our wives, our children, our neighbors, our relatives. We **may** have some obligations to all of them, but chiefly to the Household of Faith, and to our families, of course, for they come first.

MEETINGS--Elders in Court of Inquiry.

Q479:1:: QUESTION (1916)--1--Is it proper for the Elders to sit at a court of inquiry and cite any supposed to be walking in a disorderly manner to appear before them and explain their conduct? Or should the Lord's advice given in Mat. 18:15-18 be followed?

ANSWER--I agree with the suggestion of the question that it should be handled in harmony with the Lord's direction in the passage cited. The Lord's word does not authorize any court of the Elders, or anyone else, to become busybodies. This would be going back to the practices of the Dark Ages during the inquisition; and we would be showing the same spirit as did the inquisitors. The Lord has put the matter in a simple way and we could not improve upon it. The Bible says, "If thy Brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." That should end the matter. However, should it not be successful, the Scriptures give the next step. We read: "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established." If the wrong-doer will give heed to the admonition of the two or three and stop his wrong-doing, that would end the matter. It would not be within our province to make any demand upon him or to endeavor to administer any kind of punishment upon him. We should remember the Word of the Lord, which says, "The Lord will judge His people." If he should need any punishment, we may trust the Lord to give it to him and not take the matter into our own hands. We should have confidence in the Lord. If we stop the wrong that is as far as we can go. But if the wrong-doer should persist in his wrongdoing and not repent, and if the matter be of sufficient importance, then we are to bring the matter to the attention of the Church for correction.--Mat. 18:15-18.

We should not bring any small or trifling matter before the Church. It is my judgment that three-fourths of the things that are brought to my attention--matters of this kind--had better be dropped; and nothing at all be done with them. However, there might be an exception in case the matter had gone beyond the individual, and had somehow involved the whole congregation. In such event, it might be impossible to deal with the matter in an individual way. Then the Elders might constitute themselves into a Board or {Page Q480} Committee, and get one of their number to look into the case and see if the wrong could not be stopped, or adjusted. When the matter gets beyond the individual, we have no advice beyond the Word of God. Let us be careful not to become like Babylon, and hold inquisition and mix ourselves up. The Word of God is our sufficiency, and we should follow it closely and thereby avoid confusion.

MEETINGS--Deacons Voting.

Q482:1:: QUESTION (1916)--1--Is it proper for the Deacons to vote at such meetings on such questions, or should this be left to the Elders as overseers? If there should be a larger number of Deacons than of Elders and all should vote, then might not the Deacons, instead of the Elders, control the business affairs of the Church?

ANSWER--The Elders should have to do with the spiritual things and should cast the vote; but the Class has to do with the number of meetings. Have as many meetings as can be properly led and attended. Some may not have been willing to give their consent to the addition of another meeting, but it would be well to consider the convenience and the prosperity of others. They might have need of another meeting, while you might have no need of it. Therefore it would be well to consent to have as many meetings as the congregation might think necessary for the development of the individuals of the Class. In Brooklyn, if another meeting is desired, a report is made of it, sometimes to me and sometimes to others. In considering the matter we try to find out how many would attend the meeting. Unless there were enough to attend we would not recommend the meeting. We would not think it well to recommend a new meeting unless there were some seven or eight who could attend, and we should hope that this number might increase to fifteen. But should the number reach to thirty, we should then think it well to divide the meeting into two, so that a better development of each individual might be obtained. There are some of the Lord's people who are naturally backward; and where too many are present these would be neglected; whereas if there be few present, they receive more attention, and this tends to their development.

MEETINGS--Arrangements for.

Q480:2:: QUESTION (1916)--2--When a congregation is large in number and it is deemed advisable to delegate to others a certain portion of the detail work--such as arranging for meetings, fixing time and place of meeting, and appointing the leaders for the various meetings--should such work be delegated to and performed by the Elders alone, as the overseers of the Ecclesia, or should the Deacons perform such duties with the Elders?

ANSWER--The Lord's Word gives us a great deal of latitude in such matters. It does not specify particularly what shall be the work of the Elders and what shall be the work of the Deacons. It leaves it largely to the convenience, we may suppose. The Elders should have in charge the spiritual work of the Church--the meetings and everything of that kind. They should be brethren suitable for public speaking; as the Apostle says, they should be "apt to teach." Now some are apt to teach in public, and therefore should be appointed for such work, whereas others are apt to teach in a private way, and should therefore be assigned to Berean Studies and meetings in the homes. Aptness to teach should be given a rather broad interpretation. It does not mean simply to give a declamation from the platform, but it means to be apt to teach in any way. Some think that if they are chosen to be Elders it means that they must speak in public. But this is not the case. Aptness to teach should include both the public and private teaching; and some should be given the private work, and some the public work, whereas all should be apt to teach.

The Elders should lead all the meetings; for all the meetings are spiritual. If a person is not suitable to be an Elder, then he is not suitable to be a leader of meetings. Where, then, would the Deacons come in? The word Deacon means servant, and signifies one who can do any kind of service. As, for instance, he might have charge of the house in the way of janitor work, or he might have charge of the book department, or have charge of the volunteer work. Very many things could properly be given to the Deacons, and in many cases they can attend to these things better than any others can attend to them. Give them, therefore, the specific work which they can handle well. Sometimes business men can be used as Deacons, although they are not apt to teach. Such a one

might properly be put in charge of the Volunteer work, being appointed Captain of that work, although he might not be able to do it as well as the Elder. This work, however, should not be given to the Elders; for the Elders will have enough work of a spiritual kind to do to keep them busy.

Now in regard to whether the Deacons and Elders should meet together. I would think it a very pleasant arrangement if the Deacons should always be made very welcome by the Elders at all their meetings; for a good Deacon is one who by his faithfulness to the various duties assigned him, may become approved and "purchase to himself a good degree." (1 Tim. 3:13); that is, a good degree of liberty. And he should be looking toward the possibility of being made an Elder, provided he should show growth and development for the work of an Elder. There is a work for the Deacons to do. Not merely should they serve the Elders but they should serve the congregation also. There are many branches of service in connection with the congregational work, just as there is plenty of work to do in connection with the Convention. There was much preparatory work incidental to this Convention; such as securing rooms, the making assignments of them, looking after interests of the Conventioneers, etc.

No doubt there was a committee appointed in connection with the Convention, and on such committee it would be well to have both an Elder and a business man. The Elders might do this work themselves, or the Deacons might do it. It would rest upon those who had the ability to perform the work. Some Brethren have a great deal of ability and some have very little. Take for instance the newspaper work. A Deacon might very well do that, if he were qualified.

The responsibility for spiritual things, however, properly rests in the hands of the Elders. Even as the inspired Apostle Paul, on the way to Jerusalem, stopped at Miletus and sent for the Elders of the Church at Ephesus. He said to them, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased by the blood of His own (Son)." (Acts 20:28). Their work was that of feeding the Flock of God. The Deacons could do other kinds of work. In all the Elders' and Deacons' meetings, the Elders should take charge of all the spiritual matters; whereas the Deacons might well have charge of the temporal matters. They should give advice one to another in temporal matters. They should give advice one to another in such a combined meeting. One could give advice on business matters, and another could give advice on spiritual matters. Although the responsibility would be in the final vote be upon the Elders, yet they should be glad to have any suggestions of the Deacons before them at the time of voting. But while the temporal affairs of the Class should be in the hands of qualified Deacons, the Elders should be those well capable of giving them advice. The vote could be a mutual one, although the Elders are responsible for the outcome.

I understand you have separated your business meetings from all other meetings. This is well. Business meetings should ordinarily be separated from others. Do not leave the interests of the Church entirely in the hands of the Elders; for they might run away with the meeting. Keep certain matters in the hands of the congregation; for the responsibility of all the affairs of the Church rests finally in the hands of the congregation, though there are a great many things that may well be left the Elders and the Deacons.

MEETINGS--Re Others Than Elders Leading Meetings.

Q473:1:: QUESTION (1910)--1--Would you advise that different brethren of the class do some leading, aside from the elders?

ANSWER--It would be the class that should decide. That matter is to be left with the class. Now, if the class only selects one elder, then that is the class's responsibility; that means that the class did not find others whom they thought were qualified to be elders. For that elder in turn to say that he knew better than the class, and to appoint somebody else, would be discounting the judgment of the class, for the class said it did not find anybody else fit to be an elder. It said that when only electing the one elder. But if the class said we will only elect the one elder but we wish that elder to

use his judgment and bring forward some of the other brethren of the congregation and to use them in different ways, or invite them to serve in a different capacity, then the congregation has turned that much responsibility over upon the elder and he may use just what the congregation gives him and no more. It would be the proper thing, however, for the congregation in that case to elect the others to be deacons and then say to the elder brother of the congregation, please consider that these deacons are to be brought forward as you are able, for in electing them as deacons we thought we saw qualifications that are calculated to bring them forward, perhaps by and by to some still more important service of the Church. And Saint Paul says they that use the office of a deacon faithfully purchase to themselves a good reward; that is to say, in being faithful as deacons or as servants in watching out and serving, whether it be the luncheon or something else, they are showing the proper spirit for service in the Church, and thereby they are showing that they might be trusted with some other service. But if any deacon is ashamed to serve the congregation in passing fruit, or milk, or something else at a luncheon, he is not suitable for a deacon, and he would be unsafe to be an elder.

MEETINGS--Duties of Elders and Deacons.

Q480:1:: QUESTION (1916)--1--In a large Class, in case the Elders are fully occupied with service and the Deacons are all serving to the fullest extent their circumstances will permit, and there still remains a Class without a leader, would it be proper for the Committee on Class leaders--consisting of three Elders--to appoint as assistant a brother from the Congregation, known to the members of the Committee to be clear in the Truth and otherwise well qualified to act as leader?

ANSWER--I should think that would be the proper thing to do under the circumstances. It is proper for the Congregation to decide upon the number of Elders who are qualified to lead the meetings. However, should there not be enough provided, the Committee could hardly act otherwise than to select some one whom they thought qualified to meet the situation. However, they could not go outside of the appointed number by the congregation, except in the case of an emergency. Ordinarily, the appointed Elders should lead all the meetings; but in some cases a qualified Deacon might be appointed in an emergency, such as was indicated above. But it should be kept well in mind, that the number of qualified Elders should be designated to the Congregations, and their voice should regulate the meetings under ordinary circumstances. No departure therefrom should be made except in the case of an emergency.

MEETINGS--Most Important for a Small Class.

Q473:2:: QUESTION (1910)--2--May I ask you which you consider the most important meeting for a little ecclesia that is just starting?

ANSWER--What would we consider the most important meeting for a little class of Bible students just beginning? I would think, brethren, one of the most important meetings would be a prayer and testimony meeting once a week. I know that will not strike all the dear friends, but I will tell you what our experience was at Pittsburgh, that you may have the benefit of that. Some thirty years ago, or twenty years ago at least, I saw the apparent need of the Church for more of spirituality and I saw that there was a greater disposition to eat strong meat than to take some of the nourishment of the other kind, and I suggested to them that I thought it would be very advisable if they would set apart one night in each week--Wednesday evening I suggested--as being a proper night for a praise, prayer, and especially a testimony, meeting; I suggested that the testimony be not as we have been in the habit of having perhaps in previous times when we were in the various denominations, but that the testimony be fresh, up to date, the experiences of the week--not the experiences of the past. What experiences have we had during this week? What effect has the Sunday text had in our lives? To what extent have we been able to put it into practice? What experiences that stand related to it--either failures or successes--have we had? The dear friends, I could see, were not very anxious for it; they

doubted that to be the best kind of a meeting; they were afraid it would be very stale and monotonous, and they would say everything one week and would have to repeat the same thing the next week. They did not see the point you see--keeping it a fresh, up-to-date, testimony meeting, but through appreciation of your servant, the speaker, they voted as I suggested, that we would have it for a while, or for three months at least, and we would have nothing else than the testimony meeting every Wednesday night, and at the end of that time we would have a vote as to whether we wished this continued. The result was this: When we came to take a vote, they had come to love the meeting considerably but still they were not any too enthusiastic, but when a year had gone by they were very anxious, and now I am sure that very many of the dear friends of the Pittsburgh class would tell you that if any meetings in the whole week had to be dropped out, they would rather hold on to the testimony meeting and lose all the others rather than that one, so helpful did they find it. I believe that is the experience of many others, and I know that it is contrary to what many of you would be inclined to think at first. But I believe you will find it so; that there is a kind of spiritual feast which we get through communications one with another in testimony meetings, if they are up-to-date, and the leader may make it interesting by bringing out the question and letting each one have his turn--beginning at one end, for instance, and giving each one present an opportunity to testify; that they all get to appreciate it and it brings a great blessing to all of their hearts.

Now, secondly, my thought is that the next most important meeting would be something in the nature of a Berean study. Why? Because there we have questions brought out that if there is a good leader will be very interesting to the class. Now that is all a leader is for. The class might get along without a leader unless he has some aptitude in the matter of bringing out things, and a leader that does all the talking is not the successful leader, but it is the leader that can get the others to talking; and there is the danger of his feeling he is not talking enough, and that he must do more talking. Well, that is a little ambition; a little pride perhaps is there; now he should sink all individuality, and all pride and ambition, in his desire to do good to the flock; and whoever succeeds in getting all of the Church enthused and interested in the questions and getting them all brought out, so they will get a thorough understanding of the questions and of the answers, and after he has had the expressions on the question from the class, then sum up the answers, or have them read from the book, or whatever way is found to be the better one--that is the successful leader, and that will be a successful class, because they will come to understand the subjects and to appreciate them. But it is another matter altogether if you do not have a proper leader. If he wants to talk all the time, or does not know how to draw out the class, he is not a proper leader for such a meeting. That is the part to be studied. If any of us have been unsuccessful in the past, let us study how to interest people, to put the question this way, and that way, and to get them interested, and not to brow-beat them. I know there are some who take the other way and say, "Well you do not understand your lesson at all, you have not studied this lesson." They are not there as children to be brow-beaten; they are there as brothers and sisters of the Lord; they come there and want to be helped maybe; some of them have not had a sufficiency of time to study. Let them feel that by the next meeting they want to know something about the answers to the questions, so they will be prepared, and not have to say "I don't know." You see there is a different way of getting at the matter. Now it is for the leader of a meeting to study as the Apostle says, "Study to show thyself approved"--as a leader. Paul was not writing to all the class, he was writing to a leader, Timothy. "Study to show thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed"--bring the matter out properly, rightly divided, and not only rightly divide the word, but also in respect to the lesson, bringing everything out. All of that goes in, you see, as part of a leader's proper course. And it is for him to study this and see how best he can get at it, how he can enter sympathetically with all the class into the whole question, and not stand aloof from them and treat them as if they were lower but as brethren. You will find that those who go right in as one of the brethren have the most influence with the flock. That is what you are. Are we not all sheep? Certainly. We are not merely shepherds, doing a shepherding work, but we also belong to the sheep. The fact that the Lord has given us the privilege of speaking for him, as his representatives in

the flock, does not alter the fact that we are still sheep. We are not lords over the flock, nor over the heritage. We are still sheep and want to still continue to have the sheep-like nature, and to manifest it. So then I would think that the second meeting in importance would be a Berean study. Now the Berean studies, you know, can be of different kinds. As, for instance, we are running a series of Berean studies in the Watch Tower, a number of questions each Sunday. I find that a good many of the classes are not keeping up with the lesson. I think they are making a mistake. Some of them have said to me, "Well, we are away back, Brother Russell, in the fifth volume, we were back in some other volume. Then we caught on and we have been going along keeping about a mile behind." That is their business; I am not going to find fault; it is not within my province to do so; it is for the class; if that is what they want, God bless them, let them have it; but my advice would be that they keep up with the procession. There is some advantage in marching near the drum corps. You get the step better, and the whole thing moves better. The band is at the head and you are going on all together, and it is nice, you know, to think that all of the dear Lord's people, wherever they are, are right along in the same lesson.

Now perhaps that is merely a matter of sentiment, perhaps it is of no real importance, and yet every little matter of sentiment has its weight and influence in the whole matter. My advice would be not to skip lessons that are in between where you are and where the published lesson is, but that on the contrary you have that for another vening and get caught up with the other. Start in on a lesson with the present subject and keep up with it, letting the other one come along in another meeting until you have finished the fifth volume. I believe you will find that good advice. But I say, it is not for Brother Russell to dictate, nor for anybody else to dictate. Do whatever you think is the Lord's will. If you think the Lord wants you to do the other thing, do it. And in any event let us remember that it is neither for Brother Russell to decide what the class shall do, nor for anybody else of any class to decide what they shall do, but it is for the class itself to decide. And I think there is an important point that some of the dear brethren overlook. They feel too much the importance of the eldership, in the sense of ruling. That is natural, you know; they cannot help it; but keep it down; it is the old man who is trying to get up; keep him down; we are all on a level as New Creatures; and we would say, "As New Creatures I want all the Lord's flock here, all of this class, to have their say, just as much say as I have; we all have a right." And you will find, again, that even if the class would not rebel against what you do, yet they will appreciate it if you watch out for their liberties and their rights, and if you consult them they will appreciate it. Now I do not suppose there is a class anywhere that will do more for any elder, or submit to more from any elder, than the Brooklyn congregation would submit to if he tried to over-ride them; but they have the first time to find, either at Pittsburgh or at Brooklyn, where Brother Russell ever tried to over-ride the congregation. He never did it, so far as he knows. He has given them his advice, just as I am now giving it, but not attempting in any manner to coerce, but simply to have the congregation, after being informed, to vote according to their judgment, and to accept the judgment of the congregation as being the Lord's judgment in the matter.

CONVENTIONS--Do You Sanction Fifth Sunday Conventions?

Q161:1:: QUESTION (1912)--1--Do you fully sanction the Fifth Sunday Conventions? Do you also believe a class ought to have so many meetings that only a few attend each?

ANSWER--I have been a little perplexed about the Fifth Sunday Conventions. But the rule with me is, When not sure stand still. It is pretty nearly a balance with me whether they are an advantage or a disadvantage, but not being sure I have said nothing about it. I remember that I did publish a letter in the Watch Tower in which the Fifth Sunday Conventions were mentioned. That was understood by some to be an endorsement. I think I would not have published that part of the letter had I noticed it. However, so far as I can see now, my advice would be, Let each class seek wisdom from above on the subject. If they prove profitable spiritually, continue them. If you doubt

their profit discontinue them. If I were to give any definite advice, it would be against them, but I am not prepared to give adverse advice, not being sufficiently informed.

As to having so many meetings that only a few could attend: I think it would be preferable to have studies that the class would generally attend. Usually Bible Study classes are not too large. Besides the Sunday meetings, I always encourage the friends to have Prayer and Testimony Meeting on Wednesday night. They tell me they are having a great blessing in using the Manna Text for the following Thursday as the central thought for the next meeting. The week's experiences furnish abundant and helpful testimonies the following Wednesday. We are glad to note that the friends are observing these mid-week meetings so generally.

As for other meetings. I do not advise the reading of the Scripture Studies in the public meetings. Each should do his reading first at home or on the street car, etc. The class study is a different matter entirely. Of course you could use the questions in your private study and might get much good out of them, but the questions are more helpful when used in the class. Our vessels are so leaky that we can afford to read the Bible over time and again. And the Studies in the Scriptures are merely the Bible in a classified form, a topical arrangement, so to speak. When reading the "Dawns," you are reading the Bible. Those reading the Bible in this way are getting much more knowledge of the Bible. A desultory reading of the Bible does not give as much information as a topical study.

Some of the brethren tell me that they have formed a Dawn Study League in their several classes. Each member agrees that if possible he will read so many pages every day. I understand that is working pretty well. You remember that someone suggested that in a letter published in the Watch Tower. It has been taken up by a great many, who are reading the six volumes through in from six to twelve months--reading twenty-four or twelve pages a day respectively. The reading of the series every year keeps the Truth fresh and clear in the memory--and in the heart. This plan, followed by many individuals, will doubtless work well in the Class League.

PRAYER--Re Testimony Meeting.

Q538:3:: QUESTION (1911-Z)--3--What would you suggest as a topic for the Wednesday evening testimony meeting?

ANSWER--We have had many suggestions relative to the advisability of unanimity of topic for these meetings. We take this opportunity of reiterating the counsel in Studies in the Scriptures, Volume VI, namely, that we know of no meetings more helpful than the testimony meetings, where they are properly conducted, and after the friends have had about a month's experience with them. Testimonies as to one's conversion years before, or as to how one first received the knowledge of the Truth, may be very good in General Conventions, etc., but such testimonies we certainly believe very tedious and tiresome in a weekly class. It would be tiresome also for the friends to tell you what they ought to do and what experiences they ought to have. What is desirable and refreshing is crisp, up-to-date testimonies touching the events and experiences of the preceding week. Such meetings tend to make all of the classes holding them more attentive to note the providences of God and the lessons of life daily and hourly. Thus more valuable experience is gained daily than when such things are passed by with little or no attention.

We recommend this plan for Wednesday evening and that Thursday's Manna text becomes the topic for each new week ending with the Wednesday night meeting.

There is nothing in the nature of a bondage in this suggestion. But those who approve might accept it, and those who do not approve may do otherwise. It is the affair of each class. It would be, however, very nice to know, not only that the Vow and its prayer daily draw all of the Lord's people close to the Mercy Seat, but also it would be pleasant to know that all are thinking of God's providences along the same lines each week.

TESTIMONIES--Should Weak-Voiced Brethren Testify?

Q709:2:: QUESTION (1915)--2--Would it be selfish for a brother or sister to take up time in testifying at a meeting when he or she cannot be heard, and when there are others desiring to speak who can be heard? (Laughter.)

ANSWER--That is quite a little rap on those who do not speak loudly enough. I think this would be a proper way of putting it. We should consider it to a certain extent selfishness to arise and merely whisper a testimony, especially of any length, and which can be heard by only a few and perhaps by none. When the dear friends have gathered together at considerable expense from all parts of the country for the purpose of getting a blessing, it seems too bad to have any time wasted. This same principle holds good also in the home meetings. We might sympathize with those who do not make themselves heard, but they might just as well whisper to the Lord in private; the friends would be just as much benefitted as when they don't talk loud enough to be heard. You know the Apostle Paul said that he would rather speak five words and be understood than to speak ten thousand words that no one could understand (1 Cor. 14:19). That is a good lesson. We should speak language that can be understood; and we suggest that all try to learn to lift up their voice like a trumpet. Some need to put on three or four trumpets.

But, dear brethren, nothing that we are saying is with the thought of discouraging any of you; for we believe that a great blessing comes to the Lord's people from giving a testimony. Therefore it is our hope that every one will find some opportunity of giving a testimony. But if you cannot speak so as to be heard, speak about six words and sit down, would be our advice. Then you will have the opportunity of standing up for Christ and thus receiving a blessing, and also will know that you did not hinder someone else. Give your testimony, but make it brief.

TESTIMONY--Not Exhortation.

Q710:1:: QUESTION (1911)--1--Should the brethren exhort one another to good works at a testimony meeting, or confine themselves to their own experiences, blessings, etc.?

ANSWER--Well, I think exhortation is one thing, and testimony is another thing. A testimony meeting is not to be strictly intended as a meeting for exhortation; a testimony is more given with the supposition that when you have told your testimony that the testimony itself would constitute, without saying so, an exhortation to others to strive in the right way. And this is one of the most forceful testimonies that can be given. The man who lives his religion, and whose experience testifies to that religious life, is giving one of the best exhortations possible to others to live a good life. At the same time I do not think that any could properly find fault with one who, after giving his testimony, should just add a word or two of exhortation. But I think it is true, as the question seems to imply, that a great many err, supposing that exhortation is testimony when it is not, and err in giving too much exhortation. Testimonies, I think, are better.

MEETINGS--Re Testimony Meetings.

Q471:2:: QUESTION (1910)--2--In reference to that first meeting you recommend. In going from place to place, find that the brethren hardly understand it. They take a subject and discuss that subject for a testimony meeting. Is that the proper thought, or what is the thought?

ANSWER--About a testimony meeting--what is a testimony meeting? Our suggestion to the friends at Allegheny, for instance, at that same meeting I referred to before, was, that they would have in mind the Sunday afternoon discourse as being kind of a seed thought for the week; that when they would come together on Wednesday evening for the testimony meeting, they might have as much experience as possible circulating round the text of Sunday afternoon, so as to get all the

benefit of what they heard on Sunday—all their own experiences interweaving with that subject, so it would be very thoroughly before their minds by Wednesday night. And when they would meet on Wednesday night, whatever incidents or experiences of life they had, whether with the grocer or butcher, or what not, in their business or in their private study, whatever would be interesting along the lines of the subject of the Sunday afternoon discourse, that would be the testimony they give as a part of their Christian experience; and if they had no experience that interlaced with the Sunday afternoon subject, then they could give whatever they did have; but preferably if it were related to the Sunday afternoon subject, so that subject might be impressed on the heart and stay there forever. Then after the Wednesday evening meeting the same thoughts could be continued in mind up to the next Sunday, thus getting the benefit of the whole week's concentration of thought, and getting it thoroughly masticated, and digested, as it were. And that is the way they found it profitable. Not merely taking up the subject and discussing it--that is not a testimony meeting at all. A testimony is telling of one's own experiences in connection with some subject.

Part-9
STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES
VOL-VI

CHAPTER-5 (*sel*) & CHAPTER-6

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW CREATION [SELECTION]

APOSTLES, PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS, TEACHERS

According to the general thought of Christendom, the Lord left the matter of Church organization with provisions which were entirely inadequate to the ends he designed, and has expected his people to use their own wisdom in the matter of organization. Many men of many minds have favored more or less strict organizations, and so we find Christians throughout the world today organized on various lines and with more or less rigidity, and each claiming advantages for his particular denomination or system of government. This is wrong! It is not reasonable to suppose that God, foreknowing this New Creation before the foundation of the world, should be so negligent of his own work as to leave his faithful people without a clear understanding of his will and an adequate arrangement or organization for their well-being. The tendency of the human mind is either toward anarchy on the one hand, or toward tight organization and bondage on the other. The divine arrangement, avoiding both of these extremes, marks out for the New Creation an organization simple in the extreme, and devoid of everything akin to bondage. Indeed, the injunction of the Scriptures to each individual Christian is, "Stand fast, therefore, in the *liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Gal. 5:1

In showing forth this divine arrangement we must confine ourselves wholly to the divine records, and must entirely ignore ecclesiastical history--remembering that the predicted "falling away" had begun to work even in apostolic times; and that it proceeded rapidly after the death of the apostles, culminating first in the Papal system. In taking the Bible account we may include with the New Testament records the typical arrangements under the Law, but must continually remember that those types represented not only affairs during this Gospel age, but typified also arrangements for the coming Millennial age. For instance, the Day of Atonement and its work represented, as we have seen, this Gospel age. On that day the High Priest wore not his glorious garments, but simply the holy garments, or linen robes--illustrating the fact that during this Gospel age neither the Lord nor the Church occupy a place of distinction or glory in the sight of men--their whole standing being represented simply as one of purity, righteousness-- typified by the linen robes which, in the case of the Church, symbolize the righteousness of her Lord and Head. It was after the Day of Atonement that the High Priest put on his glorious robes, representing the glories, dignities, etc., of Christ's authority and power during the Millennial age. And the Church is represented with her Lord in the glories of that figure; because as the head of the High Priest represented our Lord and Master, so the body of the priest represented the Church; and the glorious garments, therefore, represented the dignities and honors of the entire Royal Priesthood when the time of exaltation shall have come. The Papal hierarchy--claiming falsely that the *reign* of Christ is being accomplished by proxy, that the popes are his vicegerents, and the cardinals, archbishops and bishops represent the Church in glory and power--attempt to exercise civil and religious control over the world, and counterfeit the glories and dignities of the elect New Creation in the gorgeous robes of office which they wear. The true Royal Priesthood, however, still wear the white robes of sacrifice and wait for the true Lord of the Church, and for the true exaltation to "glory, honor and immortality," when the last member of the elect shall have finished his share in the work of sacrifice.

It is to the New Testament that we must look particularly for our directions respecting the organization and rules of the Church during the days of her humiliation and sacrificing. The fact that these rules are not laid down in a compact form must not deter us from expecting and finding that they are, nevertheless, a complete system. We must fight against the natural expectations of our perverted judgments in respect to laws, and must remember that the Church as sons of God are given a "perfect law of liberty," because they are no longer servants, but sons, and because the sons of God

must learn to use the liberty of sonship and thereby show the more particularly their absolute obedience to the law and principles of love.

The Apostle sets before our minds a picture of the New Creation which illustrates the entire subject. It is a human figure, the head representing the Lord, the various parts and members representing the Church. In 1 Cor. 12 this subject is grandly elaborated, and with great simplicity, the explanation given being that, "As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ [one body or company composed of many members]. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into *one body* [whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free]." The Apostle proceeds to call attention to the fact that as the well-being of a human body depends largely upon the unity and harmony and cooperation of all its members, so also it is with the Church, the body of Christ. If one member suffer either pain or degradation or disgrace, all the members are affected, willingly or unwillingly, and if one member is specially blessed or comforted or refreshed, proportionately all others share the blessings. He points out (verse 23) that we seek to cover and hide the weaknesses, blemishes, etc., of our natural bodies and seek to relieve and help them; and that thus it should be with the Church, the body of Christ--the most blemished members should have special care as well as the covering of charity--love; "that there be no schism [division] in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another," for the most humble as well as for the most highly favored member--Verse 25.

According to this the Lord's organization of the Church is a very complete one indeed; but, as in nature, so in grace--where the organization is complete there is the less necessity for splints and bandages. A tree is thoroughly organized and unified from tips to roots, yet the branches are not held on by patent fastenings or cords or screws or printed rules and laws; and so with the body of Christ. If properly adjusted and harmonized and united on the lines which the Lord has laid down, there will be no necessity for cords, splints or screws to hold the various members together --no need for laws and creeds and human spectacular appliances to bring them together or hold them together. The one Spirit is the bond of union, and as long as the spirit of life remains, a unity, a oneness of the body must remain also, and this will be a strong or a weak union, according as the Spirit of the Lord abounds.

The Apostle goes further, and points out that God is the superintendent of the affairs of this organization, the New Creation, which he himself devised and inaugurated. His words are, "Now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular. And God hath *set* some in the Church [*Ecclesia*, body], first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." It will be a new thought to many who are used to setting themselves and setting each other in places of glory and honor and trust and service in the Church, to realize that God has promised the superintending of this matter amongst those who are looking to him for guidance and are directed by his Word and Spirit.

If this were recognized how few would dare to seek the chief seats and to wire-pull after political fashion for honorable stations! To realize the divine care over the true Church means first of all to distinguish the true Church from the nominal systems; and then to seek reverently and humbly to know the divine will in respect to all of the true Church's arrangements, services and servants.

The Apostle inquires, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" implying that it will be generally conceded that this is not the case; and that any recognized as filling any of these stations should be able to produce some evidence of his divine appointment, and should exercise his office, or service, not as a man-pleaser, but as pleasing the great overseer of the Church--its Head and Lord. The Apostle calls our attention to the fact that these differences in the Church correspond to the differences amongst the members of the natural body, and that each member is necessary and none to be despised. The eye may not say to the foot, I have no need of you; nor to the ear, I have no need of you; nor to the hand, I have no need of you; if they were all one member where were the body? "for the body is not one member but many." Verses 19,14

True, there is not now this same variety of members in the Church; for, as the Apostle pointed out, "Tongues were for a sign not to them that believed, but to them that believed not," likewise were the miracles. When the apostles, in whom resided the power to confer these *gifts* of the Spirit, died, and when those who had received these gifts from them died, these miracles--*gifts*--would, as we have already seen, cease in the Church. But still there would be in the Church a corresponding *work* for every man and for every woman--an opportunity to serve the Lord, the Truth and the fellow-members of the body of Christ, each according to his natural abilities. As those miracles discontinued, education in the Truth and in the knowledge of the Lord and in the graces of the Spirit took their places. Even while these inferior gifts of healing, tongues, interpretations, and miracles were in the Church, the Apostle exhorted the brethren to "covet earnestly the best gifts."

They could not reasonably covet or expect an apostleship, since there were only twelve; but they might covet or desire to be prophets (expounders) or teachers. "And yet," adds the Apostle, "a still more excellent way I show unto you." (vs. 31) He proceeds to show that far above any of these gifts or services in the Church is the honor of possessing in large measure the spirit of the Master--Love. He points out that the humblest member in the Church who attains to perfect love, has reached a position higher and nobler in the sight of the Lord than that of any apostle or prophet or teacher who lacks the grace of love. He declares that no matter what the gifts, if love be lacking, the whole matter is empty and unsatisfactory in the sight of the Lord. Indeed, we may be sure that no one could by the Lord's approval long hold the position of apostle or prophet or teacher in the Church unless he attained a standing of perfect love, or sought, at least, to attain to that standard. Otherwise he assuredly would be permitted to drift into darkness, and perhaps become a teacher of error instead of a teacher of the Truth--a servant of Satan to sift the brethren.

In his letter to the *Ephesians (4:1-16)* the Apostle reiterates this lesson of the oneness of the Church as one body of many members, under one Head, Christ Jesus, and united by one spirit--the spirit of love. He exhorts all such members to walk worthy of their calling in lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In this chapter the Apostle sets forth the various members of the body appointed to special services in it, and tells us the *object* of the service; saying: "he gave some [to be] apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers; *for the perfecting of the saints* for the work of the ministry [preparing them for the glorious ministry or service of the Millennial Kingdom], for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we,...speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth... maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." *Eph. 4:11-16*

We note the picture which the Apostle draws for us--that of a human body, but small and undeveloped. He informs us that it is the divine will that all of the various members should grow to full development, full strength and power-- "the full stature of manhood" is the picture which represents the Church in its proper, complete condition. Carrying the figure down through the age to the present time, we see that member after member fell asleep to await the grand organization of the Millennial morning in the First Resurrection, and that the places of these were being continually supplied, so that the Church was never without a full organization, although at times there might be greater weaknesses in one member and greater strength in another. However, the endeavor of each member at all times must be to do everything in his power for the upbuilding of the body, for the strengthening of the members and for their perfection in the graces of the Spirit--"till we all come to the unity of the faith."

Unity of faith is desirable; it is to be striven for--yet not the kind of unity that is generally aimed at. Unity is to be along the lines of "the faith once delivered unto the saints" in its purity and simplicity, and with full liberty to each member to take different views of minor points, and with no instruction whatever in respect to human speculations, theories, etc. The Scriptural idea of unity is

upon the foundation principles of the Gospel. (1) Our redemption through the precious blood, and our justification by demonstrated faith therein. (2) Our sanctification, setting apart to the Lord, the Truth and their service--including the service of the brethren. (3) Aside from these essentials, upon which unity must be demanded, there can be no Scriptural fellowship; upon every other point fullest liberty is to be accorded, with, however, a desire to see, and to help others to see, the divine plan in its every feature and detail. Thus each member of the body of Christ, maintaining his own personal liberty, is so thoroughly devoted to the Head and to all the members that it will be his pleasure to lay down all, even life itself, on their behalf.

We have already considered the special work of the apostles, and the fact that their number was limited, and that they are still performing their service in the Church, speaking as the Lord's mouthpieces to his people through his Word. Let us now examine something respecting these other services of the Church to which the Apostle refers as the Lord's gifts to the general body, or *Ecclesia*.

The Lord provides the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, for the blessing of the general body, as respects both their present and their everlasting welfare. It is for those who are earnestly relying upon the Lord as the Head, the Instructor, the Guide of the Church, his body, to expect, look for and notice his gifts in all these particulars; and to accept and to use them--if they would have the promised blessing. These gifts are not forced upon the Church, and those who neglect them, when offered, experience a corresponding loss. The Lord set these in the Church at the beginning and thus gave us the ideal Church arrangement, leaving it to his people to follow the pattern thus set them and to have proportionate blessings; or to ignore the pattern and to have corresponding difficulties and disappointments. Let us, as those who desire to be led and taught of the Lord, seek to learn how he set the various members originally, and what gifts of this kind he has been bestowing upon his people since, that we may thus appreciate whatever gifts of this character are at our disposal, and may the more zealously avail ourselves of them for the future.

The Apostle declares that it is the Lord's pleasure that there be no schism in the body--no splits, no divisions. With human methods divisions are unavoidable--except as in Papacy's period of triumph, when the nominal system became powerful and used drastic methods of persecution in dealing with all not fully in accord with itself. That, however, was a *unity of force*, of compulsion--an outward unity, and not a unity of the heart. Those whom the Son makes free can never participate heartily in such unions, in which personal liberty is utterly destroyed. The difficulty with the Protestant denominations is not that they are too liberal and, therefore, have separated into many fragments, but rather that they still have much of the spirit of the mother institution, without possessing the power which she at one time exercised for quelling and suppressing liberty of thought. We will, doubtless, surprise many by saying, that instead of having too many divisions or splits of the kind we now see on every hand, the real need of the Church of Christ is *still more liberty*--until each individual member shall stand free and independent of all human bonds, creeds, confessions, etc. With each individual Christian standing fast in the liberty wherewith he was made free by the Lord (*Gal. 5:1*; *John 8:32*), and each individual Christian united in loyalty to the Lord and to his Word, very quickly the original unity which the Scriptures inculcated would be discerned and all true children of God, all members of the New Creation, would find themselves drawn to each other member similarly free, and bound each to the other by the cords of love far more strongly than are men bound in earthly systems and societies. "The love of Christ *constraineth us*" [*holds us together*--Young's Concordance]. *2 Cor. 5:14*

All the members of the Aaronic family were eligible to the services of the priesthood; nevertheless, there were certain limitations, barriers, and disqualifications for service in this connection. And so it is amongst the antitypical "Royal Priesthood"--all are priests, all are members of the anointed body, and the *anointing* signifies to each a full *authority* to preach and to teach the good tidings, as it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath *anointed me to preach* the good tidings to the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted," etc. While these words applied specially to the Head of the Christ, the New Creation, the Royal Priesthood, they apply also to all the

members-- hence, in a general sense, every consecrated child of God has in his anointing of the holy Spirit, a full authorization or commission to preach the Word--"to show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9

But as it was required of the typical priests that they should be free from certain blemishes and should have attained a certain age, so amongst members of the Royal Priesthood there are some who lack qualifications for public service which others possess. Each is soberly (Rom. 12:3,6) to seek to determine for himself the measure of God's gifts possessed and, hence, the measure of his stewardship and responsibility. And likewise all the members are to take cognizance of one another's natural, as well as spiritual, qualifications and attainments, and to judge of the divine will accordingly. In the type, age was a factor; but this with the antitypical priests would signify experience, character-development; the blemish of crossed eyes in the type would signify in the antitypical priesthood a lack of clearness of insight and clearness of vision respecting spiritual things, which would properly be a hindrance to public service in the Church. Likewise also all the various blemishes which hindered the typical priesthood would represent various moral and physical or intellectual disabilities amongst the antitypical Royal Priesthood.

Nevertheless, as the deformed priests in the type exercised all the privileges of the others in respect to their own sustenance, eating of the shew-bread, sacrifices, etc., so with us in the antitype--those deformities which might hinder a member of the body of Christ from being a public servant of the Church and of the Truth need not hinder his spiritual development and his recognition, as possessing full rights with all the others at the spiritual table of the Lord and at the throne of grace. As none could exercise the High Priest's office except he were faultless physically and of full age, so those who would serve as ministers of the Truth in "word and doctrine" should not be novices, but members of the body, whose ripeness in character and knowledge and fruits of the Spirit would qualify them for such a service. Such were to be recognized as elders--not necessarily elders in years of natural life, but elders, or seniors, or ripe ones in respect to the Truth, and fitness to counsel and admonish the brethren along the lines of the Lord's Word.

With this understanding of the meaning of the word elder, we recognize the reasonableness of the Scriptures declaring that all who attend to the spiritual ministries of the Truth are properly described by the term "Elder"; whether otherwise they are doing the service of an apostle or prophet or evangelist or pastor or teacher. To fill any of these positions of service properly one must be recognized as an Elder in the Church. Thus the apostles declared that they were elders (1 Pet. 5:1; 2 John 1); and when referring to the ministers (servants) of the Church and their selection, they are mentioned in our common version of the Bible under three names:

BISHOPS, ELDERS, PASTORS

These three terms are, however, misleading in view of the misapplication of them in churches of various denominations; hence, it is necessary that we explain that the word bishop simply signifies *overseer*; and that every appointed Elder was recognized as an overseer of a work great or small. Thus, for instance, on one occasion the Apostle was met by the elders of the Church at Ephesus, and in giving them his parting admonition said: "Take heed to yourselves and to the Church over which the holy Spirit hath made you *overseers*." Acts 20:28

However, under the Lord's providences some of these elders were granted a wider scope of influence or oversight in the Church and might, therefore, be properly termed *general overseers*. Such were all the apostles--the Apostle Paul having a wider scope of oversight, specially amongst the Churches established in Gentile lands--in Asia Minor and in Southern Europe. But this position of general overseer was not restricted to the apostles: the Lord in his providence raised up others to serve the Church in this manner-- "not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind"--with a desire to serve the Lord and the brethren. Primarily, Timothy engaged in this service under the direction of the Apostle Paul and partially as his representative, and was commended to various companies or *ecclesias* of the Lord's people. The Lord was, and is still, entirely competent to continue to send

such overseers as he chooses to advise and admonish his flock. And the Lord's people should be thoroughly competent to judge of the value of the advice offered by such overseers. It should be attested by a godly life, humble demeanor and spirit of self-sacrifice; by an absence of all scheming for honor and filthy lucre, as well as by teaching which would stand the scrutiny of thoughtful Bible study-- searching the Scriptures daily to see whether or not their presentations fully accord with both the letter and spirit of the Word. This, as we have seen, was done with the teachings of the apostles-- and as they invited the brethren to do--commending those specially who were thus cautious without being captious, hypercritical. **Acts 17:11**

However, so far as we may judge from Church history, the spirit of rivalry and love of honor rapidly took the place of the spirit of humble devotion and self-sacrifice, while credulity and flattery readily superseded Scripture-searching; and as a result the overseers gradually became dictatorial -- gradually claimed equality with the apostles, etc.-- until finally amongst them arose a rivalry, and some of them became known and distinguished by the title of chief or archbishops. In turn, a rivalry amongst these archbishops led to the exaltation of one of their number to the position of pope. And the same spirit has since obtained to a greater or less degree, not only in Papacy, but also amongst those who have been deceived and misled by her example far away from the simplicity of the primitive arrangement. In consequence, we find today that such an organization as obtained in the primitive Church--namely, without a sectarian name and without glory, honor and authority on the part of a few over the many, and without a division into clergy and laity--is regarded as *no organization at all*. We are happy, however, to take our position amongst these disesteemed ones, to copy closely the example of the primitive Church and to enjoy correspondingly similar liberties and blessings.

As elders of the Church are all overseers, caretakers, watchers of the interests of Zion, some locally and some in the broad and general sense, so also each, according to his talent and ability, might serve the flock, one as an evangelist, whose qualifications fitted him and whose conditions permitted him to go about preaching the truth to beginners --finding those possessed of an ear to hear the good tidings, etc.; another serving the flock as a pastor (shepherd), because of special qualifications of a social kind, enabling him to look after the interests of the Lord's people personally, individually--visiting them at their homes, encouraging them, strengthening them, holding together and defending them against the wolves in sheep's clothing who would bite and devour them. "Prophets" also had their special qualifications for service.

The word "prophet" is not generally used today in the broad sense in which it was used in olden times, but is rather understood to signify a seer, or foreteller. The word prophet, however, strictly signifies a *public speaker*--an orator. A seer of visions or a recipient of revelations might also be a prophet, in the sense of a declarer of the same; but the two thoughts are distinctly separate. In the case of Moses and Aaron, Moses was the greater, being the divine representative, and the Lord said to him--"See, I have made thee a god (mighty one or superior) unto Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet"--spokesman, mouthpiece. (**Exod. 7:1**) We have already seen that several of the apostles were seers in the sense that they were granted a knowledge of things to come; we now remark that they were nearly all prophets too, that is public orators--especially Peter and Paul. But there were many other public speakers, or prophets. Barnabas, for instance, was one; and it is written "Judas and Silas, being prophets [public speakers] also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words." **Acts 15:32**

There is no suggestion in the Scriptures that any person disqualified for the work to be done should be considered the Lord's appointee to that position for which he lacks special adaptation; but rather it is as a duty that in the body of Christ each member should serve the others according to his talents--according to his abilities--and that each should be modest enough, humble enough, "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly," according to the actual value of the talents the Lord has bestowed upon him. Neither should the Church recognize those of their number desiring to be greatest *on that account*. On the contrary, they should take cognizance of

humility as being one of the essential qualifications to eldership or to service in any department. If, therefore, two brethren seem to have equal talent, but one is ambitious and forward and the other humble and backward, the Spirit of the Lord, which is the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind, would teach the Lord's people to appreciate the humbler brother as the one whom the Lord would specially favor and wish them to put into the more prominent place in the service.

It seems less remarkable that "goats" and goat-like sheep in the Lord's flock should aspire to leadership, than that the true sheep who recognize the Master's voice, who know his Spirit and who are seeking to do his will, should with docility permit such goats or goat-like sheep to take the leadership amongst them. It is well that we follow peace with all men; but where we disregard the Word and Spirit of the Lord for the sake of peace it will be sure to result injuriously to a greater or less extent. It is well that all should have the docile, sheep-like nature; but it is necessary also that the sheep have *character*, else they cannot be overcomers; and if they have character they should remember the Chief Shepherd's words, "My sheep hear my voice [obey it]...and they follow me," "a *stranger* will they not follow...for they know not the voice of strangers." (**John 10:5,27**) It is the duty, therefore, of every sheep to take special notice of the message and the manner of every brother before they aid in putting him forward as an overseer, either local or general. They should first be convinced that he has the real qualifications of an elder in the Church--that he is sound on the basic doctrines of the Gospel--the atonement, redemption through the precious blood of Christ, and full consecration to him, his message, his brethren, his service. They should have charity and sympathy for the weakest of the lambs and for all the mentally and morally lame sheep; but they would be doing violence to the divine arrangement to choose such for their leaders or elders. They should have no sympathy with goats, or with wolves in sheep's clothing who strive for place and authority in the Church.

It should be recognized that the *Ecclesia* is far better off without any public servant than to have for a leader a golden-tongued "goat," who would surely not "direct their hearts into the love of God," but seductively into wrong channels. Of such our Lord forewarned the Church; such the Apostle described, saying, "Of yourselves shall men arise speaking perverse things [wrong, misleading doctrines], to draw away disciples after them [to artfully attract followers after themselves]." The Apostle says that many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the Truth will be evil spoken of. **Acts 20:30; 2 Pet. 2:2**

So we see it today. Many are preaching themselves rather than preaching the Gospel, the good tidings of the Kingdom; they are attracting disciples after themselves and their denominations, rather than attracting them to and uniting them only with the Lord, as members of his body. They are seeking to be the heads of churches, instead of having all the members of the body look directly to the Lord as the Head. From all such we should turn away--the true sheep should give them no encouragement in their wrong course. The Apostle Paul speaks of these as having a form of godliness but denying its power. (**2 Tim. 3:5**) They are great sticklers for days, forms, ceremonies, ecclesiastical authorities, etc., and are highly esteemed amongst men, but an abomination in the sight of the Lord, saith the Apostle. The true sheep must not only be careful to recognize the voice of the true Shepherd and to follow him, but they must remember also not to follow, not to support, not to encourage those who are self-seeking. Every one esteemed worthy of confidence in the Church as an Elder, should be sufficiently well known in advance to justify such confidence; hence, the Apostle says, "not a novice." A novice might do the Church injury and might himself be injured also, by being puffed up, and thus be led away from the Lord and the proper spirit and the narrow path toward the Kingdom.

The Apostle Paul* gives very explicit advice concerning who might properly be recognized by the Church as elders --describing in detail what should be their character, etc. In his letter to Timothy on this subject (**1 Tim. 3:1-7**) he reiterates the same in slightly different language. In addressing Titus, who evidently was another general overseer (**Tit. 1:5-11**), he describes their duties toward the Church. The Apostle Peter on the subject says, "The elders which are among you I exhort,

who am also an Elder,...Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof...not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. 5:1-3

*1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12; Jas. 5:14

They should be generous men, men of pure lives, having no more than one wife; and if they have children it should be noticed to what extent the parent has exercised a wholesome influence in his own family--for it should reasonably be judged that if he has been derelict in his duty toward his children, he probably would be unwise or derelict in his counsels and his general ministries amongst the Lord's children in the *Ecclesia*, the Church. He is not to be double-tongued or deceptive, not to be a brawler or a contentious person. He should be one of good reputation amongst those outside the Church: not that the world will ever love or rightly appreciate the saints, but that the world should, at least, be unable to point to anything derogatory to their character as respects honesty, uprightness, morality, truthfulness. There is no limitation made respecting the number of elders in a Church or *Ecclesia*.

In addition to the foregoing limitations, it is required that an Elder shall be "apt to teach"; that is to say, he must have ability as a teacher, explainer, expounder of the divine plan, and thus to be able to assist the Lord's flock in word and in doctrine. It is not essential to eldership that the talent or qualifications of a "prophet" or public speaker be possessed; there may be found several in the same Church possessing teaching abilities and pastoral and other qualifications of an Elder, and yet possibly none possessing the qualifications of a public speaker or declaimer of the divine plan. The Lord should be trusted to raise up such servants as are needful, and if none are supplied the *need* may be doubted. We might here remark that some of the most prosperous *Ecclesias*, gatherings or congregations are those in which there is no great talent for public speaking, and in which, consequently, Bible studies are the rule rather than the exception. The Scriptures clearly show that this was a custom in the early Church, too; and that when they came together an opportunity was offered for the exercise of the various talents possessed by the various members of the body--one to speak, others to pray, many, if not all, to sing. Experience seems to show that those companies of the Lord's people which follow this rule most closely, receive the largest amount of blessing and develop the strongest characters. That which is merely heard by the ear, however well-spoken and however good, is not impressed upon the heart so thoroughly as though the individual himself exercised his mind in connection with it, as is sure to be the case in a properly conducted Bible study in which all should have encouragement to take part.

Others of the elders, perhaps not so apt to teach, may be just in their element in prayer and testimony meetings, which should be a feature amongst the various gatherings of the Lord's people. He who finds himself possessed of a good talent of exhorting should exercise that talent rather than let it lie dormant while endeavoring to exercise a talent which he does not possess in any special degree. The Apostle says, "he that exhorteth let him wait upon exhortation," let him give his ability and service in that direction: "him that teacheth [who has a talent for exposition--for making the Truth plain] let him give his attention to the teaching."

As the word bishop or overseer has a wide range of meaning, so also has the word pastor. No one but an Elder is competent to be a pastor, or overseer, or shepherd. A pastor, or shepherd in a flock, is an overseer of the flock; the two words are practically synonymous. The Lord Jehovah is our Pastor or Shepherd in the largest sense of the word (*Psa. 23:1*), and his Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, is the great Shepherd and Bishop (overseer) of our souls--to all the flock, everywhere. The general overseers and "Pilgrims" are all shepherds or pastors--looking out for the interest of the general flock; and every local Elder is a pastor, shepherd, overseer in a local capacity. It will be seen, then, that the elders in the Church should primarily possess general qualifications fitting them for eldership, and secondarily that their special natural qualifications should determine in what part of

the service they can best serve the Lord's cause--some in connection with the evangelistic work and others in connection with the pastoral work amongst the sheep already evangelized, already consecrated, already in the fold; some locally and some in a wider field.

We read, "Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine." (1 Tim. 5:17,18) On the strength of these words the nominal church has built up a class of Ruling Elders; and has claimed for all elders a ruling or authoritative, if not a dictatorial, position amongst the brethren. Such a definition of "ruling" is contrary to all the presentations of the Scriptures on the subject. Timothy, occupying the position of a general overseer, or Elder, was instructed by the Apostle, saying, "Rebuke not an Elder, but exhort him as a brother," etc. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle toward all men." Nothing here, certainly, would sanction an autocratic ruling, or dictatorial bearing--meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love, must be prominent qualifications of those recognized as elders. They must in every sense of the word be ensamples to the flock. If, therefore, they should be dictatorial, the example to the flock would be that all should be dictatorial; but if they should be meek, long-suffering, patient, gentle and loving, then the illustration to all would be in accordance therewith. A more literal rendering of the passage under consideration shows it to mean that honor should be given to the elders in proportion as they manifest faithfulness to the responsibilities of the service they have accepted. We might, therefore, render the passage thus: Let the prominent elders be accounted worthy of double honor, especially those bending down through hard work in preaching and teaching.

DEACONS, MINISTERS, SERVANTS

As the word bishop signifies overseer merely, and in no sense of the word signifies a lord, or master, though it has gradually come to be so misunderstood by the people, so also is it with the word deacon, which literally signifies servant, or minister. The Apostle refers to himself and to Timothy as "ministers of God." (2 Cor. 6:4) The word here rendered ministers is from the Greek *diakonos*, which signifies servants. The Apostle again says, "Our sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament." (2 Cor. 3:5,6) Here also the Greek word *diakonos* is rendered ministers and signifies servants. In fact, the Apostle declares that himself and Timothy were deacons (servants) of God and deacons (servants) of the New Testament-- the New Covenant. We may see then that all true elders in the Church are thus deacons, or servants of God and of the Truth and of the Church--otherwise they should not be recognized as elders at all.

We do not wish to give the idea that no distinction obtained in the early Church as respects service. Quite the contrary. The point we are making is that even the apostles and prophets who were elders in the Church were all deacons, or servants, even as our Lord declared: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant [*diakonos*]." (Matt. 23:11) The character and faithfulness of the servant should mark the degree of honor and esteem that should be rendered to any in the *ecclesias* of the New Creation. As there were servants in the Church not qualified by talents, etc., for recognition as elders, because less apt to teach or less experienced, so, aside from any appointments by the Church, the apostles and prophets (teachers) on various occasions chose certain ones for their servants, or assistants, or deacons; as, for instance, when Paul and Barnabas were together they had John Mark for a time as their servant, or helper. Again, when Paul and Barnabas separated, Barnabas took John with him, while Paul and Silas took Luke with them for a servant, or helper. These helpers did not regard themselves as the equals of the apostles, nor as the equals in service to others of greater talents and experience than themselves; but rejoiced in the privilege of being assistants and servants under the direction of those whom they recognized as being qualified and accepted *servants of God* and of the Truth. They needed not to be chosen by the Church for such a service to the apostles; as the Church chose its servants or deacons, so the apostles chose their own. Nor was it a matter of constraint, but one of option. John and Luke, we may presume, considered that they could better serve the Lord in this manner than perhaps in any other way open to them, and

hence it was of their own free will and without the slightest restraint that they accepted, as they might with equal propriety have refused the service, if they believed that they could more faithfully use their talents in some other manner.

Nevertheless, this word *deacon* is applied in the New Testament to a class of brethren useful as servants of the body of Christ and honored accordingly, but not so well qualified as others for the position of elders. Their choice at all, however, to a special service in the Church implied good character, faithfulness to the Truth and zeal for the service of the Lord and his flock. Thus in the early Church, when the distribution of food, etc., for the poor of the flock was arranged, the apostles first undertook the matter themselves; but subsequently when the murmuring arose and the claim was made that some were neglected, the apostles turned the matter over to the believers, the Church, saying--Choose out from amongst you suitable men for this service, and we will give our time, knowledge and talents to the ministry of the Word. *Acts 6:2-5*

It will be remembered that seven servants, or deacons, were chosen, and that amongst these seven was Stephen, who later on became the first martyr--having the honor to be the first to walk in the Master's footsteps even unto death. The fact that Stephen was chosen by the Church to be a deacon in no sense of the word hindered him from preaching the Word in any and every manner in which he found an opportunity. Thus we see the perfect liberty which prevailed in the primitive Church. The whole company, recognizing the talents of any member of the body, might request him to render it a service; but its request and his acceptance was in no sense a bondage--in no sense hindered him from using his talents in any other way he might find opportunity. Stephen, the deacon, faithful in the serving of tables, transacting financial matters for the company, etc., was blessed of the Lord and granted opportunities for the exercise of his zeal and talents in a more public manner in the preaching of the Gospel--his career demonstrating that the Lord recognized him as an Elder in the Church before the brethren discerned his ability. Doubtless had he lived longer the brethren likewise would in time have discerned his qualifications as an Elder and expounder of the Truth and would so have recognized him.

However, the point we wish to impress is the complete liberty of each individual to use his talents as he may be able, *as an evangelist*, whether by direct appointment of the *Ecclesia* of the New Creation or not. (Stephen would not have been competent to teach in the Church, however, unless chosen by the Church to that service.) This absolute liberty of the individual conscience and talents, and the absence of any bondage or authority to restrict, is one of the marked features of the early Church which we do well to copy in spirit and in deed. As the Church has need of elders qualified and competent to teach, and evangelists to preach, so it has need of deacons to serve it in other capacities, as ushers, treasurers, or what not. These are servants of God and of the Church, and are honored correspondingly; the elders are servants, though their service is recognized as being of a higher order--labor in word and doctrine.

TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH

As we have just seen, "aptness to teach" is a qualification necessary for the position or service of elders in the Church. We might multiply citations from the Scriptures to show that St. Paul classed himself not only as an *apostle* and as an *elder* or *servant*, but also as a *teacher*, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but as the holy Spirit teacheth." (*1 Cor. 2:13*) He was not a teacher of languages nor of mathematics nor of astronomy nor of any of the sciences, except the one great science to which the Lord's Gospel, or good tidings, refers. This is the signification of the Apostle's words just quoted; and it is well that all of the Lord's people should keep this strictly in mind. Not only those who teach and preach, but those also who listen, are to see to it that it is not man's wisdom that is proclaimed, but the divine wisdom. Thus the Apostle exhorts Timothy, "Preach the Word." (*2 Tim. 4:2*) "These things command and teach." (*1 Tim. 4:11*) "These things teach and exhort." (*1 Tim. 6:2*) Going still further the Apostle indicates that all of the Church as well as the elders should see to it that teachers of false doctrines, and teachers of philosophy and "science falsely so-called,"

are not recognized as teachers of the Church. The Apostle's recommendation is, "If any man teach otherwise," etc., withdraw thyself--do not lend support to that which is another Gospel than the one ye have received, which was delivered unto you by them that preached the Gospel unto you with the holy Spirit sent down from heaven. **1 Tim. 6:3-5; Gal. 1:8**

There are some, however, who are competent to teach, capable of making plain to others the divine plan in a private way, who have no capacity for oratory, public speaking, "prophecy." Those who can privately speak a word for the Lord and for his cause are not to be discouraged; but, on the contrary, are to be encouraged to use their every opportunity to serve those who have an ear to hear, and to show forth the praises of our Lord and King. Then, again, we are to distinguish as between "teaching and preaching." (**Acts 15:35**) Preaching is discoursing in public; teaching can generally better be accomplished in a more private manner--in a Bible class or in private conversation--and the ablest preachers, public speakers or "prophets" have found occasionally that their public work prospers best when it is ably supplemented by the less public discourses, by the more private expounding of the deep things of God, to a smaller company.

The gift of the evangelist, the power to stir men's hearts and minds to investigation of the Truth, is a special gift not possessed by all today any more than in the early Church. Moreover, changed conditions have more or less changed the character of this work, so that today we find that in consequence of general education amongst the people, the evangelistic work can largely be accomplished through the printed page. Many are engaged in the present time in this work--scattering tracts and colporteuring the SCRIPTURE STUDIES series. The fact that these evangelists are working on lines adapted to our day instead of upon the lines adapted to the past, is no more an argument against this work than is the fact that they travel by steam and electric power instead of on foot or on camels. The evangelization is through the presentation of the Truth--the divine plan of the ages--the Word of God--the "good tidings of great joy." According to our judgment, there is no other evangelistic work today achieving so great results as this. And there are many who have the talent, the qualifications, for engaging in this service, who are not prepared to engage in other departments of the work--many reapers who have not yet gone forth into the vineyard, and on whose behalf we are continually praying that the Lord of the harvest would send them forth--would grant them to see their privileges and opportunities of engaging in this evangelistic ministry.

When Philip, the evangelist, had done what he could for the people of Samaria, Peter and John were sent to them. (**Acts 8:14**) And so our colporteuring evangelists, after stirring up the pure minds of their hearers, introduce to them the *Studies in the Scriptures* as teachers from which they can further learn respecting the way of the Lord. As Peter and Paul and James and John, as the Lord's messengers and representatives, wrote epistles to the household of faith, and thus shepherded and counseled and encouraged his flock, so now truth literature visits the friends, personally and collectively, regularly--seeking to confirm their faith and to form and crystallize their characters along the lines established by the Lord and his apostles.

MANY SHOULD BE ABLE TO TEACH

The Apostle wrote to some, "For the time [ye have been in the Truth] ye ought to be teachers, but [in consequence of a lack of zeal for the Lord and a spirit of worldliness] ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." (**Heb. 5:12**) This implies that in a general sense, at least, the entire Church, the entire priesthood, the members of the New Creation, should become skillful in their Father's Word to the extent that they will be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and reverence." (**1 Pet. 3:15**) Thus we see again that teaching, Scripturally considered, is not limited to a clerical class; that every member of the New Creation is a member of the Royal Priesthood "anointed to preach," and thus fully authorized to declare the good tidings to those who have ears to hear--each according to his ability to present it faithfully and lucidly. But here comes in a peculiar statement by another Apostle:

"BE NOT MANY OF YOU TEACHERS, BRETHREN"

--James 3:1--

What does this mean? The Apostle answers, saying: "Knowing that ye shall receive severer sentence"--knowing that temptations and responsibilities both increase with every advance step of eminence in the body of Christ. The Apostle does not exhort that none shall become teachers, but would have each one who believes himself possessed of some talent for teaching remember that it is a responsible thing to undertake to any extent to be the mouthpiece of God--to make sure that not a word is uttered which would misrepresent the divine character and plan, and thus dishonor God as well as do injury to those who might hear.

Well were it for the Church if all would recognize and obey this counsel, this wisdom from above. There might be much less teaching done than is now being done; but the effect both upon teachers and learners would be not only a greater reverence for the Lord and the Truth, his Word, but a greater freedom from confusing errors. Along this line, our Master's words imply that some will have a share in the Kingdom whose teachings have not been in the fullest accord with the divine plan; but that the consequent result will be a lower position in the Kingdom than if more earnest heed had been given to have the teaching none other than the divine message. His words are, "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven." Matt. 5:19

"YE NEED NOT THAT ANY MAN TEACH YOU"

"The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you ye shall abide in him."

"Ye have an unction from the holy one and ye know all things." 1 John 2:27,20

In view of the many scriptures which encourage the Church to learn, to grow in grace and knowledge, to build one another up in the most holy faith, and to expect that the Lord would raise up apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, etc., this statement by the Apostle James seems very peculiar until rightly understood. It has been a stone of stumbling to quite a few, although we may be sure that the Lord has not permitted any whose hearts were in a proper attitude toward him to be injured by it. The prevalent tenor of the Scripture to the contrary--line upon line and precept upon precept--no less than the experiences of life, are quite sufficient to convince every person of humble mind that there is something radically wrong with the translation of this passage or with the ideas that are generally drawn from it. Those who are injured are usually very self-conscious people, whose self-conceit leads them to prefer that the Lord should treat them separately and apart from all the remainder of the New Creation. Such, however, is in absolute contradiction to the general teaching of the Scriptures that the body is one, and has many members united in the one; and that the nutriment supplied is carried to each member of the body for its nourishment and strengthening through or in conjunction with the other members. Thus the Lord intended to make his people interdependent upon each other, to the intent that there might be no schism in the body; and it is to this end that he has exhorted us through the Apostle not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, but to remember that he is specially pleased to meet with the Ecclesia, the body, in every place, even if so small a number as "two or three be gathered together" in his name.

Examining the text we find that the Apostle is controverting an error prevalent in his day--a gross error which, in the name of the Truth, in the name of Christianity, in the name of discipleship to the Lord, was virtually making void the entire revelation. He declared this erroneous system to be no part of the true Church or its doctrines, but, on the contrary, antichrist, or opposed to Christ while

claiming his name; thus sailing under false colors. He says of these that "they went out from us because they were not of us [either they never were true Christians or they had ceased to be such]; for if they had been of us they would have remained with us." He points out their error; namely that the prophecies of a Messiah were figurative, and never to be fulfilled through mankind, and declared this a complete denial of the Gospel statement that the Son of God became flesh, was anointed at his baptism by the holy Spirit as the Messiah and that he redeemed us.

The Apostle's thought is, that any who have become Christians at all, any who have understood the divine plan to any extent, must first have before them the fact that they and all were sinners and in need of a Redeemer; and, secondly, the fact that Jesus, the Anointed One, had redeemed them by the sacrifice of his own life. The Apostle further declares that they have no need that any man *teach them this basic truth*. They could not be Christians at all and yet be in ignorance of this fundamental of the Christian religion-- that Christ died for *their* sins according to the Scriptures, and rose again for their justification--and that our justification and consequent sanctification and hope of glory are all dependent upon the fact and value of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. He points out that although it might have been possible to trust in and believe on the Father without believing on the Son before the Son was manifested, yet *now*, whosoever denieth the Son of God denies thereby the Father; and no one can confess the Son of God without confessing at the same time the Father and the Father's plan, of which he is the center and executor.

So, then, we today can see exactly what the Apostle meant; namely, that whoever had been begotten of the holy Spirit must first have been a believer in the Lord Jesus; that he was the Only Begotten of the Father; that he was manifested in the flesh; that he was holy, harmless and separate from sinners; that he gave himself as our ransom; and that the sacrifice was accepted of the Father and witnessed by his resurrection to be the glorious King and Deliverer. Without this faith no one could receive the holy Spirit, the anointing: consequently, whoever has the anointing needs not that any man shall waste time in discussing further the fundamental question as to whether Jesus was or was not the Son of God; whether or not he was the Redeemer; whether or not he was the anointed Messiah who shall fulfil in God's due time the precious promises of the Scriptures. The same anointing which we have received, if it abides in us, will assure us of the truth of these things--"Even as it hath taught you ye must abide in him." Whoever abides not in him, in the Vine, is--like the branch cut off--sure to wither; whoever abides in him is sure to abide in his Spirit also, and cannot deny him.

"Ye have an unction from the holy one and ye all know it." (*Diaglott*) The holy Spirit was typified throughout the Jewish dispensation by holy oil which, poured upon the head of the High Priest, ran down over all the body; so whoever is of the body of Christ is under the anointing, under the influence of the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, it is unctuous, smooth, lubricative. Its tendency is to follow peace with all men, so far as is possible, and so far as fidelity to righteousness will permit. It is opposed to friction--to anger, malice, hatred, strife. Those under its influence are glad to be taught of the Lord, and so far from quarreling with his plan and revelation, they readily fall into full harmony with them, and have correspondingly the lubrication promised--the unction, the smoothness, the peace, the joy, the holiness of mind.

Those who have received the Spirit of the Lord in this sense of the word, bringing peace and joy and harmony into their hearts, knowing that they have these as a result of the Lord's dealings with them, and that they received these since they believed on the Lord Jesus and accepted him as the Anointed One. This unction, therefore, is an evidence not only to themselves but, in a considerable measure, an evidence to others that they are members of the body of Christ; while those who lack this peace and joy, and whose hearts are filled with malice and strife and hatred and bickerings and quarrelings and disputes, certainly lack the evidence of the anointing, of the lubrication, of the smoothness which accompanies the Spirit of the Lord. True, we are not all alike, and the smoothness may not in the outward affairs of life manifest itself so quickly in some as in others; but very early in the Christian experience this smoothness should be looked for in the heart,

as an evidence that we have been with Jesus and learned of him and received his Spirit, and shortly after it should begin to be evident to others in the daily life.

We see, then, that nothing in the Scriptures opposes the general tenor of the Lord's Word respecting the necessity of teachers and of learning the mind of the Lord through them. Not that we hold that God is dependent upon the teachers, and that he *could not* instruct, edify, and build up the members of the New Creation by some other means or agency; but because his Word declares that this *is* his means and agency, his method for instructing and upbuilding the Church, the body of Christ--that there may be no schism in the body and that each member may learn to sympathize with and cooperate with and assist every other member.

We have already considered the fact that these teachers are not to be regarded as infallible but that their words are to be weighed and measured by the divine standards--the words of the Lord and the apostles and the holy prophets of past dispensations, who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the holy Spirit for our admonition upon whom the ends of the age have come. We now call attention to the Apostle's declaration, "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." Gal. 6:6

"HIM THAT IS TAUGHT" AND "HIM THAT TEACHETH"

This scripture, in accord with all the others, shows us that God designed to instruct his people by means of each other; and that even the humblest of his flock shall think for himself and thus develop an individual faith as well as an individual character. Alas, that this important matter is so generally overlooked amongst those who name the name of Christ! This scripture recognizes teacher and pupils; but the pupils are to feel free to communicate, to make known to the teachers any and every matter coming to their notice and seeming to bear upon the subject discussed--not as desiring to be teacher but as an intelligent student to an elder brother student. They are not to be machines, nor to be afraid to communicate; but by asking questions, calling attention to what seems to them to be misapplications of Scripture or what not, they are to do their part in keeping the body of Christ and his teachings pure--they are thus to be critics; and instead of being discouraged from doing this, and instead of being told that they must not criticize the teacher or call in question his expositions, they are, on the contrary, urged to communicate, to criticize.

We must not, however, suppose that the Lord wished to encourage any hypercritical spirit, or combative, fault-finding disposition. Such a spirit is entirely contrary to the holy Spirit, and not only so, but would be very dangerous; because whoever in a spirit of debate sets forth a hypothetical, or supposititious case which he does not believe to be the Truth, merely with a view to confusing his opponent, having a "debate," etc., is sure to be injured as well as tolerably sure to injure others by such a course. Honesty to the Truth is a prime essential to progress in it: to oppose what one believes to be the Truth, and to even temporarily uphold what one believes to be an error, "for fun," or for any other reason, will surely be offensive to the Lord and bring some just retribution. Alas, how many have undertaken to "see just what could be said" against a position which they believed to be the Truth, and have been entangled and entirely captivated and blinded while pursuing this course! Next to the Lord, the Truth is the most precious thing in all the world; it is not to be trifled with, not to be played with; and whoever is negligent along this line will himself sustain injury. See 2 Thess. 2:10,11.

It is proper to remark that the word "*communicate*" is a broad one, and includes not only communication respecting thoughts, sentiments, etc., but may be understood also to mean that he who is taught and who receives spiritual benefits should be glad to communicate in some manner to the support of those who teach--giving to the Lord, the brethren, the Truth, of the fruit of his labors and talents. And such is the very essence of the holy disposition of the New Creation. Early in Christian experience each learns the meaning of their Master's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and, hence, all who have this spirit are glad indeed to give of earthly things in the service of the Truth, and that in proportion as they receive spiritual blessings into good and honest hearts.

The question of how to give, and of the wisdom to be exercised, will be considered later on, under another head.

WOMAN'S PROVINCE IN THE CHURCH

In some respects this subject could be better considered after examining the general relationship of man and woman in the divine order; but in an important sense this is the appropriate place for its presentation--the other concurrent views, set forth later on, we believe will be found corroborative of what we now present.

Nothing is clearer than that sex is ignored by the Lord in the selecting of his *Ecclesia* of the New Creation. Both males and females are baptized into membership in the "one body" of which Jesus is the Head. Both are, therefore, alike eligible to a share in the First Resurrection and its glory, honor and immortality, on the general condition, "if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." Both have been honorably mentioned by our Lord and the apostles in warmest terms. Hence, any limitations placed upon the female as to the character and extent of Gospel service, must be understood to appertain merely to the present time, while still in the flesh; and must be accounted for in some other manner than by supposing a divine preference for males. We shall endeavor to show that the discriminations between the sexes are along symbolical and typical lines-- because the man symbolizes Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, while the woman symbolizes the Church, the Bride, under the divinely appointed Head.

Our Lord's love for his mother, and for Martha and Mary and other "honorable women who ministered unto him of their substance," is very evident from the record, even aside from the direct statement that he "loved" them (*Jno. 11:5*); yet when choosing his twelve apostles, and later the "seventy," he included none of them. We cannot suppose this to have been an oversight, either--even as it was not by oversight that the female members of the tribe of Levi were, as respected the public services, ignored for the more than sixteen centuries previous. Nor can we explain the matter by supposing that the females of our Lord's friends were not sufficiently educated to be used by him; for of those chosen the record is that it was readily perceived that "they were ignorant and unlearned men." We must, therefore, conclude that it was of divine intention that from amongst the "brethren," only the males were chosen to be the special public servants and ambassadors of the Gospel. And here, be it noted, that this divine arrangement is the reverse of the method of the great Adversary who, although ready to use either sex as his tools, has always found woman his most efficient representative.

The first woman was Satan's first ambassador--a successful one, too, in misleading the first man and plunging the entire race into sin and death. The witches of the past, and spirit mediums, "Christian Scientists" of our times, are all evidences along this same line--of Satan's propaganda through women nearly as marked as the divine propaganda through men. Moreover, the divine program runs counter to the natural tendency of all men to specially esteem women in religious matters--to accredit to the sex a higher degree of purity, spirituality, fellowship with God. This tendency is notable in the records of the past as well as in the present, as evidenced by the Egyptian goddess Isis, the Assyrian goddess Ashtaroth, the Greek goddess Diana, and Juno and Venus and Bellona, and the Mariolatry which for centuries and today dominates fully two-thirds of those claiming the name of Christ--notwithstanding the most explicit appointment of man as the mouthpiece and representative of the Lord in his Church.

Aside from its symbolic meaning, the Lord's Word does not inform us if there be other reasons for sex distinction, and our surmises respecting the matter may or may not be correct: in our opinion, however, some of the qualities of heart and mind which combine in the noblest types of woman, render her unsuitable for public religious services. For instance, by nature woman is, fortunately, endowed with the desire to please and to win *approval* and praise. This quality is an inestimable blessing in the home, leading to the preparation of the numerous table delicacies and attractive home adornments which differentiate a home from the apartments of old maids or old

bachelors. The true wife is happy when endeavoring to make her family happy, and rejoices in their manifestations of appreciation of her efforts --cooking, etc., and she should never be denied the encomiums which surely are her due and which her nature craves and which are absolutely essential to her health and progress.

But, if woman be lifted out of her sphere--so large and so important that the poet has well said, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world"--if she gets before the public as a lecturer or teacher or writer, she gets into a position of great danger; because several of the peculiarities of her sex (one of which we have mentioned) which go to make her a true woman and attractive to true men will conspire under the *unnatural* conditions to spoil her womanhood--to make her "mannish." Nature has set the metes and bounds of the sexes, not only in physical contour and hair-suit but equally in qualities of heart and head-- adapting each to the other so thoroughly that any interference with, or disregard of, her laws is sure to work injury in the end, however beneficial the changes may temporarily appear to be.

The quality of *approbativeness* which nature has so freely bestowed upon and which rightly exercised is so helpful to her, to her home and to her family, is almost certain to become a snare to her if exercised toward the public--in seeking the approval of the Church or the world. Ambition to shine--to appear wiser and abler than others--is a danger which besets all before the public eye, and, undoubtedly, has stumbled many men who have become puffed up, and thus have fallen into a snare of the Adversary: but the very womanliness of woman renders her peculiarly liable, not only to herself stumble in her attempt to shine, but liable also to stumble others; because such an one getting off the track would be sure to be supplied by the Adversary with spurious oil--by whose false light many might be led out of the way of the Lord. Thus the Apostle's warning--"Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that a man [who is a teacher] shall receive the severer testing" (*James 3:1*)-- would be still more forceful if applied to the sisters. Indeed, the danger with them would be so great that none were appointed to be teachers; and the Apostle writes--"I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over a man, but to be in silence." *1 Tim. 2:11,12*

This emphatic and explicit statement cannot, however, be understood to mean that the sisters of the New Creation may never impart a blessing by telling the old, old story. The same Apostle refers most respectfully to noble women of his day as *helpers* in the ministry. For instance, he mentions Priscilla as well as her husband as "helpers," or "fellow-workers." (*Rom. 16:3*) This signifies more than merely entertainers who had received the Apostle into their home: it meant that they worked with him in his work--not merely in tent-making, but specially in his chief work as a minister of the Gospel. In a later verse (6) he mentions Mary's services differently, saying--"Mary bestowed much labor *on us*." She evidently was not a fellow-worker. Her services rendered the Apostle, and which he wished to acknowledge, were personal services--perhaps washing or mending. Priscilla's service, on the contrary, is mentioned in the same language as the services of Urbane (vs. 9). Indeed, since Aquila's name is mentioned after that of his wife, the inference is reasonable that the wife was the more efficient of the two as a "fellow-worker." Tryphena and Tryphosa (vs. 12) are two other sisters whose "*labor in the Lord*" is honorably mentioned.

Any interpretation of the Apostle's words which would ignore all opportunity for the sisters to "labor in the Lord" would manifestly be erroneous. It is in the gatherings of the Church (whether two or three or more) for worship and praise and mutual edification that the sisters are to take a subordinate place and not attempt to be the leaders and teachers--thus to do would be *usurping* authority over the man, upon whom, both by nature and by precept, the Lord has placed the responsibility of the leading ministries --undoubtedly for wise reasons, whether we could agree respecting them or not.

The Apostle's restrictions evidently related to meetings such as he describes in *1 Corinthians 14*. These meetings included the sisters, who certainly shared all of its blessings-- joining in the songs and hymns and spiritual songs and in the prayers, by whomsoever offered. The Apostle wished to inculcate the necessity for order in the meetings, that they all might be the more profited. He urges

that not more than one speaker orate or prophesy at a time, and that all others give attention; and that not more than two or three orators or prophets speak at one meeting, so as not to give too great diversity of sentiment at one session. Likewise any speaking unknown tongues were to keep silence unless some one present could interpret their utterances.

Women were not to speak at all in such meetings, although outside the meetings or at home they might "ask their own husbands," or, more properly, their own *men*; they could suggest their views or make queries through those brethren (men) with whom they were most intimately acquainted --their husbands, if possible, or brethren with whom they talked on their way homeward from meetings, etc. The word *home* in this text has the significance of *family* or acquaintanceship. The thought then is, Let them ask their questions of or through the males of their acquaintance. The Apostle proceeds to say, "It is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, *as also saith the Law.*" **1 Cor. 14:34-36**

Evidently some in the Church at Corinth favored the "women's rights" idea, claiming that in the Church the rights of the sexes were indiscriminate. But the Apostle not only negatives this thought but, additionally, reprimands their audacity in thinking to inaugurate a procedure not recognized by others of the Lord's people. His words are, "What, came the word [message] of God out from you [originating with you]? or came it [from elsewhere] *unto you*, only? If any man think himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the *commandments of the Lord*," and not merely my personal opinions, or crotchets. We, then, no more than the Corinthians, are to exercise our own preferences or judgments on this subject, but are to bow to the Apostle's statements as the Lord's command. And if any one disputes the Apostle's guidance on this subject, let him be consistent and reject him as an apostle in toto.

It is proper in this connection to call attention to the Apostle's words when speaking of the gifts from our Lord to the Church--dating from Pentecost. He says, "And he gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (**Eph. 4:11,12**) In the Greek the *article* indicates the gender--masculine, feminine, or neuter. This text then is an excellent one from which to decide how particularly the Lord through the holy Spirit drew the line of sex amongst the active servants given to his Church. What are the facts as respects the above text; which gender is indicated in the Greek? We reply that the article *tous* (plural, Accus., *masculine*) occurs before apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors, and no article at all before teachers, which apparently stands here either for "helpers" (**1 Cor. 12:28**), or else is a comprehensive term referring to the male apostles, male orators, male evangelists and male pastors as *all* teachers.

Let us here remark, however, that for a sister to call the attention of the assembly to the words of the Lord or of the apostles on any subject under discussion without giving her own views could not be considered teaching, nor as in any sense usurping authority over the man: she would, on the contrary, merely be calling up the words of recognized and authorized teachers. Similarly for a sister to refer to, or to read to others, this book or other of our publications explanatory of the Scriptures would not be teaching on her part, but by the author quoted. Thus we see that the Lord's arrangements safeguard his flock and at the same time make ample provision for their needs.

All may obey the divine command, but, assuredly, none will comprehend it except as he realizes that in Biblical usage a woman symbolizes the Church, and a man symbolizes the Lord, the Head or Master of the Church. (See **Eph. 5:23**; **1 Cor. 11:3**) As the Church is not to attempt to teach the Lord, so woman, who symbolizes the Church, must not assume the role of teacher over man, who symbolically represents the Lord. With this thought before our minds no sister need feel slighted and no brother may feel puffed up by this Scripture regulation; rather, all will have in mind that the Lord is the only teacher and that the brethren dare not utter wisdom of their own; but merely present to others that which their Head sets forth as the Truth. Let us apply this scripture (**1 Tim. 2:11,12**) to the Lord and the Church, thus--Let a church learn in silence with all subjection. I suffer not a church to teach, nor to usurp authority over Christ but to be in silence."

"LET HER BE COVERED"

We have already pointed out* that the High Priest who typified Christ, the High Priest of our Profession, alone went with uncovered head when in priestly attire; and that all of the under-priests, who typified the Church, "the Royal Priesthood," wore head coverings called "bonnets." The teaching of this type is in full accord with what we have just seen, for in the gatherings of the *Ecclesia* of the New Creation, the Lord, the antitypical High Priest, is represented by the brethren, while the Church or Royal Priesthood is represented by the sisters, who the Apostle declares should likewise wear a head covering as indicating the same lesson--the subserviency of the Church to the Lord. The Apostle details this in **1 Cor. 11:3-7,10-15.**

*Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices, p. 36.

Some have inferred that as the Apostle mentions a woman's long hair being given her by nature as a covering, that he meant nothing more than this; but verse 6 clearly shows to the contrary--that he meant that women should not only let their hair grow long as nature provided for, but, additionally, should wear a covering, which in verse 10 he declares is a sign, or symbolic recognition of being subject to, or under the authority of man; symbolically teaching that the entire Church is under law to Christ. The record of verse 4 seems at first to be in conflict with the requirement that women keep silence in the ecclesias. Our thought is that while at the general Church service women are not to take a public part, yet in social meetings for prayer and testimony, and not for doctrinal teaching, there could be no objection to the sisters participating with their heads covered.

Respecting this matter of perpetuating the typical covering of their heads by the sisters, the Apostle urges it, but he does not state it to be a divine command. On the contrary, he adds, "If any man seemeth to be contentious [on the subject] we have no such custom [positive law in the Church]." It should not be considered a vital subject; though all who are seeking to do the Lord's will should be particular in this as well as in other regards from the time they discern its appropriateness as a symbol. The words, "because of the angels," seem to refer to the chosen *elders* of the Church, who specially represent the Lord, the Head, in the *ecclesias*. **Rev. 2:1**

* * *

Summarizing, we suggest that the most liberal interpretation possible should be given to the inspired Apostle's words respecting the scope of the liberty of the sisters in the affairs of the Church. Our judgment of this we set forth thus:

(1) The sisters have the same liberty as the brethren in the matter of the election of the Church's servants--the Elders and Deacons.

(2) The sisters cannot serve as elders or teachers in the Church, because, the Apostle says, "I suffer not a woman to teach." (**1 Tim. 2:12**) This, however, need not be understood to hinder the sisters from participating in meetings not of the teaching or preaching kind; such as prayer and testimony meetings, Berean studies, etc., because the Apostle says that if she pray or prophesy (speak) it should be with her head covered, representing her acknowledgment of the fact that the Lord, the Great Teacher, is specially represented by the brethren. (**1 Cor. 11:5,7,10**) Such participation need not be considered teaching; because neither are the brethren who participate teachers; as the Apostle says "Are all teachers?" No, the teachers or Elders are specially chosen, though always from among the males. **Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 2:24; 1 Cor. 12:28,29**

ORDER AND DISCIPLINE IN THE NEW CREATION

IN CONSIDERING this subject it is well that we keep clearly before our minds the oneness of the Church, and that while the entire Church throughout the world is one, yet in another sense of the word each separate gathering, or company, of believers is a representation of the whole. Each separate *Ecclesia*, therefore, is to consider the Lord as *its* Head, and to consider the twelve apostles as the twelve stars, bright ones, teachers, whom the Lord specially held in his hand and controlled--using them as his mouthpieces for the instruction of his Church in every place, in every gathering, throughout the entire age.

Each congregation or *Ecclesia*--even if composed of only two or three--is to seek to recognize the will of the Head in respect to all of its affairs. It is to feel a oneness with all the dear *ecclesias* of "like precious faith" in the dear Redeemer's sacrifice and in the promises of God--everywhere. It is to be glad to hear of their welfare, and to recognize the fact that the Lord, as the overseer of his work, may today, as in every period, use some special instruments for the service of the *Church as a whole*, as well as use certain members of each little local company. Looking thus to the Lord and recognizing the character of the servants he would use--humble, zealous, well reported of, clear in the Truth, giving evidence of having the anointing and the unction of the Spirit--they would be prepared to *expect* such general ministries to the needs of the whole Church, and to *seek* a share in the general blessing and dispensation of the "meat in due season" promised us by the Master. They will specially remember, too, how he promised special blessings in the end of this age, and that he would provide things new as well as old to the household of faith through appropriate channels of his own choosing. *Matt. 24:45-47*

The means, the channels of these blessings, the Lord himself will oversee and direct. All the members of the body united to the Head are to have confidence and to look for the fulfilment of his promises; but, nevertheless, are to "try the spirits"--to test the doctrines from whomsoever they emanate. The proving does not imply a lack of confidence in those recognized as divinely directed channels of the Truth; but it does imply a faithfulness to the Lord and to the Truth as superior to all human teachers and their utterances; it implies also that they are not listening for the voice of man, but for the voice of the Chief Shepherd; that they feast upon his words and love them--love to masticate them and to digest them. Such members of the body grow stronger and more rapidly in the Lord and in the power of his might than do others, because more attentive to the Lord's leading and instruction.

This general unity of the body, this general sympathy, this general teaching through a general channel which the Lord has provided for the gathering together of his jewels to himself at his second presence (*Mal. 3:17; Matt. 24:31*), does not interfere, however, with a proper recognition of order in each of the little companies, or *ecclesias*. However small the company, there should be order in it. By this word "order" we do not, however, mean stiffness or formalism. The order which works best and most satisfactorily is that which works noiselessly, and of which the machinery is quite out of sight. If the meeting be so small as three or five or ten, it should, nevertheless, look to the Lord to ascertain his guidance as to which of the number should be recognized as elders, seniors, or most advanced ones in the Truth, possessing the various qualifications of an Elder as we have already seen these outlined in the inspired Word--clearness in the Truth, aptness for teaching it, blamelessness of life as respects moral character, and ability to preserve order without unnecessary friction, as might be exemplified in his family, etc.

If the little company thus have the Word and Spirit of the Lord before them and actuating them, the result of their united judgments, as expressed in an election of servants, should be accepted as the mind of the Lord on the subject--the persons chosen as elders would, in all probability, be the best and most suitable in the number. However, care needs to be observed that such selections are not made without due consideration and prayer; hence, it is advisable that due announcement be made in advance, and that it be recognized that only those who claim to be members of the New

Creation (male and female) shall attempt to express the mind of the Lord on the subject--in the vote. These should be such as have passed the point of *repentance* for sin and *restitution* to the extent of their ability and *acceptance* of the Lord Jesus' sacrifice as the basis of their harmony with God, and who then have made a full *consecration* of themselves to the Lord, and thus have come under the anointing and all the privileges of the "house of sons." These alone are competent to appreciate and to express the mind, the will, of the Head of the body. These alone constitute the Church, the body of Christ, though others, who have not yet taken the step of consecration, but who are trusting in the precious blood, may be counted as members of "the household of faith" whose progress is to be hoped for, and whose welfare is to be considered.

ORDAINING ELDERS IN EVERY ECCLESIA

*"And when they had ordained them elders in every church [Ecclesia], and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord." **Acts 14:23***

The form of this statement, with other frequent references to elders in connection with all churches, justifies the inference that this was the *invariable* custom in the early Church. The term "elders," as seen in the text, includes evangelists, pastors, teachers, and prophets (or public exponents); hence, it is important that we learn what is meant by this word "*ordained*." At the present time this word is generally used in reference to a ceremony of installation; but this is not the significance of the Greek word *kirotoneo* used in this text. It means, "*to elect by stretching out the hand*," still the usual form of voting. This definition is given in Prof. Young's Analytical Bible Concordance. As that may be considered a Presbyterian authority, we will give also the definition set forth in "Strong's Exhaustive Concordance," which may be considered a Methodist authority. The latter defines the root of the word--"A hand-reacher, or voter (by raising the hand)."

A totally different Greek word is used when our Lord declared of the apostles, "I have chosen you and *ordained* you." (**John 15:16**) This is the same word, *tithemi*, used by the Apostle when, speaking of his ordination, he says: "I am *ordained* a preacher and an apostle." (**1 Tim. 2:7**) But this ordination, the Apostle distinctly declares, was "not of men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." (**Gal. 1:1**) All of the members of the Anointed Body, united with the Head and partakers of his Spirit, are thereby similarly ordained, not indeed to apostleship like Paul, but to be ministers (servants) of the Truth, each to the extent of his talents and opportunities (**Isa. 61:1**)--the twelve only were *ordained* to be apostles, or special representatives--ministers plenipotentiary.

Recurring to the ordination or recognition of elders by the vote of the congregation (*Ecclesia*) of the New Creation, by "stretching forth the hand," as seen above, we note that this was the customary mode; for the Apostle uses the same Greek word in telling how Titus became his helper. He says, "*who was also chosen* of the churches to travel with us." The words italicized are from the Greek word *kirotoneo* which, as above shown, signifies "to elect by stretching out the hand." And, further, the word "also" here implies that the Apostle himself was chosen by a similar vote. Not chosen or elected to be an apostle, but to be a missionary--a representative of the churches on this occasion, and, doubtless, at their expense.

Evidently, however, some of the Apostle's subsequent tours were without the vote or support of the Antioch Church. (**2 Tim. 1:15**) Primitive Church regulations left all free to exercise their talents and stewardship according to their own consciences. The *ecclesias* (congregations) could accept or decline the services of apostles, even, as their special representatives; and the apostles could accept or reject such engagements--each exercising his own liberty of conscience.

But, is there no ordination of elders, etc., mentioned in the New Testament other than this--an election? Is there nothing signifying *to give authority* or permission to preach, as the English word *ordain* is now generally used in all denominations in connection with licensing and ordaining elders, preachers, etc.? We will examine into these questions.

The word *ordain*, in respect to elders, is used in one other place, only, and it is the translation of a different Greek word, viz., *kathestemi*, which signifies--"To place, or set down"--*Young*. "To place down"--*Strong*. This word occurs in **Titus 1:5**: "Set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain* elders in every city, as I had appointed thee"--i.e., as I arranged. *Revised Version*, "as I gave thee charge." On the face of it this text seems to imply that Titus was empowered to appoint these elders, regardless of the wishes of the congregations (churches, *ecclesias*); and it is on this view that the Episcopal theory of church order rests. Catholics, Episcopalians and Methodist-Episcopals all claim for their bishops an apostolic authority to set, to place or appoint, elders for the congregations--without the stretching forth of the hand, or vote of the Church.

This text is the bulwark of this idea; but it appears to be rather a weak support when we notice the last clause--"As I gave thee charge"--and reflect that the Apostle would surely not give Titus "charge" or instruction to do differently from what he (the Apostle) did in this matter. The account of the Apostle's own procedure, rightly translated, is very explicit: "And when they had elected them elders by a show of hands in every *Ecclesia*, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord." **Acts 14:23**

No doubt the Apostle's advice and the advice of Titus, whom he specially commended to the brethren as a faithful minister of the Truth, would not only be desired, but sought by the brethren, and very generally followed; nevertheless, the Apostle and all who followed in his steps sought to place the responsibility where God placed it--on the *Ecclesia*, whose concern it should be to "Try the spirits [teachings and teachers] whether they be of God." (**1 John 4:1**) "If any speak not according to this Word it is because there is no light in them"; and "from such turn away," the Apostle advises; they are not to vote for such, nor in any manner to accept them as teachers, elders, etc.

In any event the concurrence of the *Ecclesia* would be necessary --whether expressed by vote, as stated, or not; for suppose that Titus had appointed elders not congenial to the brethren, how long would peace have prevailed?--how much pastoral or other service would such an Elder, obnoxious to the sentiments of the Church, accomplish? Practically none.

Priest-craft, and not the teachings of our Lord and his twelve apostles, is responsible for the division of the saints into two classes, called "clergy" and "laity." It is the spirit of priest-craft and antichrist that still seeks to lord it over God's heritage in every way possible--proportionately to the density of the ignorance prevailing in any congregation. The Lord and the Apostle recognize not the elders, but the Church (*Ecclesia*) as the body of Christ; and whatever dignity or honor attaches to faithful elders, as servants of the Lord and the Church, is not merely their recognition of themselves nor their recognition by other elders. The congregation choosing must know them, must recognize their Christian graces and abilities in the light of God's Word, else they can grant them no such standing or honor. No Elder, therefore, has any authority by self-appointment. Indeed, the disposition to ignore the Church, the body of Christ, and to make himself and his judgment superior to the whole, is first-class evidence that such a brother is not in the proper attitude to be recognized as an Elder--humility, and a recognition of the oneness of the *Ecclesia* as the Lord's body, being prime essentials for such a service.

Nor should any brother assume public duties in the Church as leader, representative, etc., without an election-- even though assured that there is no question respecting his acceptability. The Scriptural method of ordaining elders in all the churches is by congregational election--by stretching forth the hand in a vote. To insist on such an election before serving is to follow Scriptural order; it fortifies the Elder, and, additionally, reminds the *Ecclesia* of its duties and responsibilities as appointees of the elders in the Lord's name and spirit--as expressing God's choice, God's will. Additionally, this Scriptural arrangement interests the members of the *Ecclesia* in all the words and deeds of the elders, as their servants and representatives. It opposes the too prevalent idea that the elders own and rule the congregation and puts an end to their thinking of them and speaking of them as "my people"--rather than as "the Lord's people whom I serve."

Why are not these matters, so clearly Scriptural, more generally understood and set forth? Because human nature is pleased to have honor and preferment, and falls readily into wrong conditions favorable to these; because they have been popular for seventeen centuries; because the people yield to these conditions and prefer them to the liberties wherewith Christ makes free. Then, too, many have felt so confident that the customs of Babylon must be right that they have never studied the Word of the Lord on this subject.

THE PERIOD OF ELDERSHIP

Nothing is said by inspiration respecting the period for which an Elder should be chosen: we are, therefore, at liberty to exercise reason and judgment on the question. Many persons may be esteemed elders, or developed brethren in the Church, and may be useful and highly appreciated, and yet not be of the chosen elders set forth by the *Ecclesia* as its representatives--evangelists, teachers, pastors. The "elder women"* are thus several times referred to honorably by the apostles, without the least suggestion that any of them were ever chosen as representative elders or teachers in the congregation (*Ecclesia*). Some chosen as suitable to the *Ecclesia's* service might cease to possess the stipulated qualifications; or others might, under divine providence, advance to greater efficiency for the service of the Church. A year, or its divisions--a half or a quarter year--would seem appropriate periods for such services--the latter if the persons were less tried, the former if well tried and favorably known. In the absence of law, or even of advice or suggestion, it would be for each congregation to determine as best they can the Lord's will in each case.

*Woman's place in the Church is treated in Chap. v.

THE NUMBER OF ELDERS

The number of elders is not limited in the Scriptures; but, reasonably, much would depend on the size of the *Ecclesia*, as well as upon the number available--competent, etc. (None should be *assumed* to be a believer and to be fully consecrated; both by word and act he should have given unmistakable evidences of both his faith and consecration long before being chosen an Elder.) We favor having as many as are possessed of the outlined qualifications, and the dividing of the services amongst them. If the proper zeal actuates them, some kind of missionary or evangelistic work will soon claim some of them, or portions of the time of many. Each *Ecclesia* should thus be a theological seminary from which efficient teachers would continually be going forth to wider fields of service. The Elder who would manifest jealousy of others and a desire to hinder them from ministering should be considered unworthy of continuance; yet, no one either incompetent or a novice should be chosen--to satisfy his vanity. The Church, as members of the body of Christ, must vote as they believe the Head would have them vote.

A caution should perhaps be given against electing an Elder where none is found competent for the service, under the qualifications set forth by the apostles--far better have no elders than incompetent ones. In the interim, until a brother shall be found competent for the service, let the meetings be of an informal kind, with the Bible as the textbook and with Brother Russell representatively present as teacher in the *Scripture Studies*--your chosen Elder, if you so prefer.

WHO MAY ELECT ELDERS AND HOW?

Only the *Ecclesia* (the body--male and female), the New Creatures, are electors or voters. The general "household of faith," *believers who have not consecrated*, have nothing to do with such an election; because it is the Lord's choice, through his "body," possessing his Spirit, that is sought. All of the consecrated body should vote, and any of them may make nominations at a general

meeting called for the purpose --preferably a week in advance of the voting, so as to afford time for consideration.

Some have urged that the voting should be by ballot, so that all might be the more free to express their real choice. We answer that whatever advantage there is in this is offset by a disadvantage: namely, in the loss of the discipline and character-building accomplished by the apostolic mode of "stretching forth the hand." Each should learn to be candid and straightforward, yet, at the same time, loving and gentle. The vote, be it remembered, is the Lord's choice-- expressed by members of his body to the extent of their ability to discern it. No one is at liberty to shirk this duty, nor to favor one above another except as he believes he has, and expresses, the mind of the Lord.

MAJORITIES NOT SUFFICIENT

In worldly matters the voice of a bare majority decides; but evidently it should not be so in the Lord's *Ecclesia*, or body. Rather, so far as practicable, the jury-rule should prevail and a unanimous verdict or decision be sought. The brother receiving a bare majority in the vote could scarcely feel comfortable to accept that as "the Lord's choice," any more than could the congregation. Another candidate able to draw the support of all, or nearly all, should be sought for, by vote after vote, week after week, until found or the matter abandoned; or let all agree on the two or three or more who could serve in turn and thus meet the ideas of all. But if fervent love for the Lord and the Truth prevail, with prayer for guidance and the disposition to prefer one another in honor, where talents are on an equality, it will generally be found easy to unite in judgment respecting the divine will on the subject. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory." "Preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." *Phil. 2:3; Eph. 4:3*

The same order should prevail in respect to the choice of helpers called deacons and deaconesses, whose good repute should also be noted as a qualification. (See *1 Tim. 3:8-13.*) These may be for any service required--and they should have as many of the qualifications of eldership as possible, including aptness in teaching, and graces of the Spirit.

VARIETY OF MINISTRIES

As already seen, elders may have special qualifications in one or another particular--some excelling in exhorting, some in teaching, some in prophesying or oratory, some as evangelists, in interesting unbelievers, and some as pastors taking a general oversight of the flock in its various interests, local or general. The Apostle Paul's address to the Elders of the *Ecclesia* at Ephesus gives us the general scope of the ministry to which each individual must adapt and fit his talents as a steward. His words are well worthy of careful and prayerful consideration by all accepting the service of an Elder in any department of the work. He said: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the holy Spirit hath made you *overseers* [the word elsewhere misrendered bishops] to feed the Church [*Ecclesia*] of God." (*Acts 20:28*) Ah, yes! the elders need first of all to watch *themselves*, lest the little honor of their position make them proud and lordly, and lest they assume to themselves authority and honors belonging to the Head--the Chief Shepherd. To feed the flock is the Lord's province; as it is written, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." (*Isa. 40:11*) When, therefore, one is chosen an Elder it is that he may represent the Chief Shepherd--that he may be the instrument or channel through whom the great Shepherd of the flock may send to his own "meat in due season," "things new and old."

"Woe be unto the pastors [shepherds] that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors [shepherds] that feed my people: Ye have scattered my flock and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord....I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more nor be dismayed." *Jer. 23:1,2,4*

LAYING ON OF HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY

(1) "Neglect not the gift [endowment] that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy [prediction], with the *laying on of the hands of the presbytery* [assembled elders]." **1 Tim. 4:14**

(2) "Whom [the seven deacons chosen by the Church] they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they *laid their hands upon them*." **Acts 6:6**

(3) "In the Church [*Ecclesia*] that was at Antioch,...the holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and *laid their hands on them*, they sent them away." **Acts 13:1-3**

(4) "*Lay hands* hastily on no man, and be not partaker of other men's sins." **1 Tim. 5:22**

(5) "And when Paul had *laid his hands upon them*, the holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied [preached]." **Acts 19:6**

(6) Then *laid they* [the apostles] *their hands* on them, and they received the holy Spirit." **Acts 8:17-19**

(7) "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee, by the *laying on of my hands*." **2 Tim. 1:6**

We thus aggregate the inspired testimony respecting laying on of hands in the *Ecclesia* of the New Creation. In the last three (5,6,7) the reference to the imparting of the "gifts" common in the early Church is evident. Apostolic hands were thus laid on all consecrated believers and some one or more gifts followed--"tongues," etc. "A measure of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."* The first four texts (1,2,3,4) may be grouped together as of one general teaching; namely, as a mark of approval or indorsement-- but not as a sign of permission or authorization.

*See Volume V, Chap. viii.

(1) Timothy, Paul's adopted "son" in the ministry, had already been baptized and had already received a gift of the holy Spirit at the hands of the Apostle Paul (see 7) when he went with Paul to Jerusalem. (**Acts 21:15-19**) Doubtless, there and then "James and all the elders," apostolic-elders, recognizing Timothy's devotion and close affiliation with Paul, unitedly blessed him, laying their hands upon him by way of indorsement; and the account implies that they did this, not according to a usual custom nor to all of Paul's companions, but "by prophecy"--indicating that they were led to do it by some prediction by, or instruction from, the Lord.

(2) These deacons were not commissioned, or authorized to preach, by the apostles' laying hands on them, for they were not elected to be preachers, but to serve tables; and, anyway, they already, by virtue of their anointing of the holy Spirit, had full authority to preach to the extent of their talents and opportunity. And without any mention of license, or permission, or other ordination from anybody, we find Stephen, one of these deacons, preaching so zealously that he was the first after the Master to seal his testimony with his blood. This laying on of hands evidently signified merely the apostolic approval and blessing.

(3) The laying on of hands on Paul and Barnabas could not have been a permission to preach; for they were already recognized as elders and had been teaching in the Antioch Church for over a year. Besides, they had both been preaching elsewhere, previously. (Compare **Acts 9:20-29; 11:26**.) This laying on of hands could only mean the *indorsement of the missionary work* about to be undertaken by Paul and Barnabas--that the Antioch *Ecclesia* joined in the mission with them and probably defrayed their expenses.

(4) Here the Apostle intimates that a laying on of Timothy's hands upon a fellow-laborer in the vineyard would signify his approval, or indorsement: so that if the man turned out poorly in any respect, Timothy would share in his demerit. He must, so far as possible, make sure that he did not give his influence to introduce one who would do injury to the Lord's sheep, either morally or doctrinally.

No risk should be run; caution should be exercised either in giving a letter of recommendation or a public indorsement in the form of a public God-speed. The same advice is still appropriate to all of the Lord's people in proportion to the degree of their influence. Nothing in this, however, implied that any were dependent upon Timothy's indorsement before they would have the right to preach: that right according to ability being granted by the Lord to all who receive the holy Spirit of anointing.

A PAID MINISTRY?

The custom of a paid ministry, now so general and considered by many unavoidable and indispensable, was not the usage of the early Church. Our Lord and his chosen twelve were, so far as we are able to judge from the inspired records, poor--except, perhaps, James and John and Matthew. Accustomed to voluntary giving to the Levites, the Jews evidently extended this usage to everything religious that appealed to them as being of God. The disciples had a general treasurer, Judas (*John 12:6; 13:29*), and evidently never lacked; though it is equally evident that they never *solicited alms*. Not a hint of the kind is even suggested in the record of our Lord's words. He trusted to the Father's provision, and certain honorable women ministered unto him (and his) of their abundance. See *Matt. 27:55,56; Luke 8:2,3*.

Had our Lord's sermons and parables been interlarded with appeals for money, it would have sapped their life. Nothing appeals to us more than does the evident unselfishness of the Master and all his specially chosen ones, Judas being the only exception, and his avarice cost him his fall. (*John 12:5,6*) The love of money and show and the begging system of Babylon today is much against its powerful influence; and the absence of this spirit amongst the Lord's faithful now, as at the first advent, tells much in their favor with those who study them as living epistles, not fully appreciating their teachings. In a most remarkable manner the Lord has provided thus far for his "harvest" work without one solitary appeal being made for money; and we trust it will never be otherwise, believing that this is the Lord's mind.

Let those ambitious for this world's luxuries and wealth seek them in the fields of trade or in the lucrative professions; but let none become ministers of the Gospel of Christ from any other motive than love for God and for his Truth and for his brethren: a love that will rejoice in sacrificing ease and wealth and honor of men--not grudgingly, but heartily. But alas! nominal Christianity has grown great and worldly, and her servants are honored with the titles Reverend, Very Reverend, Most Reverend and Doctor of Divinity; and with these honors and titles go salaries--not according to the minister's needs, but on the commercial basis of his ability to attract large congregations and wealthy people. The natural result has followed--"The priests thereof teach for hire and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord and say, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us." "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all D-----s, they cannot bark; dreaming or talking in their sleep; lazy, loving slumber [ease]. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way [welfare], every one for his gain from his own quarter [denomination]." "They shall gather to themselves teachers having ears itching [for praise of men]; and they shall turn their ears from the Truth and shall be turned unto fables." *Isa. 56:10,11; Micah 3:11; Phil. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:3,4*

Some may reason that both extremes ought to be avoided--large salaries and no salaries--and may call to mind the Lord's words, "The laborer is worthy of his hire;" and the Apostle's words, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?" Yet we must remember that even these strongest statements of Scripture refer not to princely salaries, but to bare necessities. This the Apostle illustrates by the quotation, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." The ox was to be free to provide for his necessities, but no more. The Apostle has given us the keynote of his own successful ministry, saying: "I will not be burdensome to you:

for I seek not yours, but you....And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." 2 Cor. 12:14,15

Following in the footsteps of Jesus will not lead us in the direction of salaries: neither will the footsteps of his chief apostle, Paul. The latter, after showing that to ask earthly remuneration for spiritual services would in no sense violate justice, tells us of his own course in the matter in these words:

"I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. Yea, yourselves know that these [my] hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:33-35

"We have not used this right [over you to require temporal things in exchange for spiritual]: but we bear all things that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ." (1 Cor. 9:12) "When I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia [voluntarily] supplied." 2 Cor. 11:9

Our liberties are just the same as were those of the apostles in these respects; and fidelity to the cause should lead us to follow their steps in this as in all matters. The Lord, the apostles, and their associates, who traveled and gave their entire time to the ministry of the truth, did accept voluntary contributions from the brethren to meet their expenses; and, as already intimated, the laying on of the hands of the Antioch Church upon Paul and Barnabas, when they were about to start on their first missionary tour, seems to have implied that the Church became responsible for their expenses, and correspondingly participated in their work.

There is no intimation, direct or indirect, that the elders serving the Church at home received either salary or expense money; and we believe that it will generally be found advantageous to each local Church to use the voluntary services of its own members--few or many, great or insignificant. This Scriptural method is spiritually healthful: it tends to draw out all the various members in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, and leads all to look more to the Lord as the real Shepherd, than does the hiring method. As the number of qualified teachers increases, let the example of the Antioch Church be imitated--let some be sent forth as missionaries, colporteurs, pilgrims, etc.

Nevertheless, if any congregation considers that its field of usefulness is a large one and that a brother could advantageously give his entire time to ministering to it and to mission work, and if they *voluntarily* tender him money sufficient for his expenses, we know of no scripture that would forbid its acceptance. But both the serving Elder and the supporting *Ecclesia* should see to it that the amount provided is not more than *reasonable living expenses* for the servant and those properly dependent on him. And both should see also that *all* the members of the *Ecclesia* be exercised, and particularly such as possess qualifications for eldership; otherwise the spirit of Babylon, churchianity, will be sure to develop.

DISCIPLINE IN THE ECCLESIA

--Matt. 18:15-18--

The administration of discipline is not the function of the elders only, but of the entire Church. If one appears to be in error or in sin, his supposed wrong should be pointed out to the erring one only by the one he has injured, or by the member first discovering the wrong. If the reprov'd one fails to clear himself, and *continues* in the error or sin, then two or three brethren without previous prejudice should be asked to hear the matter and advise the disputants. (Elders they may or may not be, but their eldership would add no force or authority in the case except as their judgment might be the riper and their influence the more potent.) If this committee decide unanimously with either party, the other should acquiesce and the matter be wholly at an end--correction, or restitution, so far as possible, being promptly made. If either of the original disputants still persists in the wrong course, the one who made the original charge or one of those called in committee or, preferably, all of these together, *may* then (but not sooner) exercise their privilege of bringing the matter before

the *Ecclesia*, the body, the Church. Thus it is evident that the Elders were in no sense to be judges of the members--hearing and judgment were left to the local body, or Church.

The two preliminary steps (above mentioned) having been taken, the facts being certified to the elders, it would be their duty to call a general meeting of the *Ecclesia*, or consecrated body, as a *court*--to hear the case in all of its particulars, and in the name and reverence of its Head to render a decision. And the matter should be so clear, and the condemned should have such generous treatment, that the decision would be a unanimous one, or nearly so. Thus the peace and oneness of the body (the *Ecclesia*) would be preserved. Repentance even up to the moment of the Church's condemnation is possible. Nay, to secure repentance and reform is the very object of every step of these proceedings--to reclaim the transgressor; his *punishment* not at all the object. Punishment is not ours but God's: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." (*Rom. 12:19*) Should the wrongdoer repent at any step in this proceeding, it should be a cause of thanksgiving and rejoicing to all who possess the Lord's Spirit, and no others are members of his body. *Rom. 8:9*

Indeed, even if the transgressor refuse to hear (obey) the decision of the entire Church, no punishment is to be inflicted or even attempted. What then? Merely the Church is to withdraw from him its fellowship and any and all signs or manifestations of brotherhood. Thenceforth the offender is to be treated "*as a heathen man and a publican.*" *Matt. 18:17*

At no time in these proceedings are the faults or failings of the offender to be made public property--scandalizing him and the Church, and the Lord, the Head of the Church. Nor is he to be harshly spoken of even after the separation; just as we are not to berate, or rail against, heathen men and publicans, but are to "speak evil of no man" and to "do good unto all men." (*Titus 3:2; Gal. 6:10*) Love is the quality which insists on the strictest obedience to these last two requirements to "all men": how much more will love insist that a "brother," a fellow-member in the *Ecclesia*, the body of Christ, shall not only not be injured by false or garbled statements, but that additionally, his weaknesses or blunders or sins be carefully covered, not from the unsympathetic world only, but also from "the household of faith" and from even the Church--until the final step of "telling it to the Church" should be found absolutely necessary. At every step the spirit of love will hope that the wrongdoer is laboring under some misapprehensions, and will be praying for wisdom and grace to turn a sinner from the error of his way and thus (possibly) to save a soul from death. *James 5:20*

Oh, that the holy Spirit, the spirit of love, might dwell in every member of the *Ecclesia* so richly that it would give pain to hear a defamatory tale about any one, and especially about a fellow-member! This would at once eliminate one-half the friction, or more. Nor would the following of the above procedure, outlined by our Lord, lead to *frequent* church trials: rather, while removing the ground for animosities, it would inculcate a respect for the judgment of the Church as being the judgment of the Lord, and the voice of the Church would be heard and obeyed accordingly. Furthermore, with order and love thus prevailing we may be sure that each would seek as far as possible to "mind his own business" and not attempt to reprove his brother or correct him, or bring the matter before a committee or the Church, unless the matter were one of some importance as concerned himself or the Church or the Truth.

Unquestionably, the majority of the Church troubles (and society and family troubles as well) spring not from a desire to wrong, nor even from a wrong unintentionally committed, but from misunderstandings and, at least, partial misinterpretations of intentions or motives. The tongue is the general mischief-maker; and it is part of the spirit of a sound mind, therefore, to set a guard upon the lips as well as upon the heart, from which proceed the ungenerous sentiments which, the lips expressing, set fire to evil passions and often injure many. The New Creation--the Church-- has strict instructions from their Lord and Head on this important subject. His spirit of love is to fill them as they *goalone*, privately, to the injuring person without previous conference or talking with anyone. They go not to make him (or her) *ashamed of his conduct*, nor to berate him or otherwise punish, but to secure a cessation of the wrong and, if possible, some recompense for injury already received. Telling others of the wrong, first or afterward, is unkind, unloving --contrary to the Word and Spirit

of our Head. Not even to ask *advice* should the matter be told: we have the Lord's *advice* and should follow it. If the case be a peculiar one, the wisest of the elders should be asked for advice along the lines of a hypothetical case, so as not to disclose the real trouble and wrongdoer.

Unless the trouble is serious, the matter ought to stop with the personal appeal to the erring one, whether he hears or forebears to hear--to yield. But if the second step be deemed necessary, no explanation of the trouble should be made to those asked to confer until they gather in the presence of the accuser and the accused. Thus slanderous "talk" will be avoided and the committee of brethren will come to the case unbiased and be the better able to counsel both parties wisely; for the trouble may be on both sides, or, possibly, wholly on the side of the accuser. At all events, the accused will be favorably impressed by such fair treatment and will be much more likely to yield to such counselors if his course seems to them also to be wrong. But whether the one deemed by the committee to be in error shall yield or not, the whole matter is still strictly private, and not a mention of it should be made to anyone until, if thought sufficiently important, it is brought before the Church, and passed upon finally. Then for the first time it is common property to the saints only, and in proportion as they *aresaints* they will desire to say no more than necessary to anyone respecting the weaknesses or sins of anybody.*

*Additionally see Chap. ix--"If thy brother trespass against thee."

In carrying out the findings of the Church court, the matter rests with each individual; hence, each must discern the justice of the decision for himself. The penalty of withdrawal of fellowship is designed to be a correction in righteousness, and is of the Lord's prescribing. It is to serve as a protection to the Church, to separate those who walk disorderly, not after the spirit of love. It is not to be esteemed a perpetual separation, but merely until the reprov'd one shall recognize and acknowledge his wrong and to the extent of his ability make amends.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ELDERS

*"Against an Elder receive not an accusation,
except at the mouth of two or three witnesses." 1 Tim. 5:19, R.V.*

The Apostle in this statement recognizes two principles. (1) That an Elder has already been recognized by the congregation as possessing a good and noble character, and as being specially earnest for the Truth, and devoted to God. (2) That such persons, by reason of their prominence in the Church, would be marked by the Adversary as special objects for his attacks--objects of envy, malice, hatred and strife on the part of some, even as our Lord forewarned-- "Marvel not if the world hate you"; "ye know that it hated me before it hated you"; "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household!" (Matt. 10:25; 1 Jno. 3:13; Jno. 15:18) The more faithful and capable the brother, the more nearly a copy of his Master, the more proper his choice as an Elder; and the more faithful the Elder, the more sure he will be to have as enemies--not Satan and his messengers only, but as many also as Satan can delude and mislead.

These reasons should guarantee an Elder against condemnation on the word of any one person, if otherwise his life appeared consistent. As for hearsay or rumor, they were not to be considered at all; because no true yokefellow, cognizant of the Lord's rule (Matt. 18:15), would circulate rumors or have confidence in the word of those who would thus disregard the Master's directions. To be heard at all, the accusers must profess to have been *witnesses*. And even if two or more witnesses made charges there would be no other way of hearing the case than that already defined. Any one person charging wrong against the Elder, should, after personal conference failing, have taken with him two or three others who would thus become *witnesses* to the contumacy. Then the matter, still unamended, might be brought by Timothy or anyone before the Church, etc.

Indeed, this accusation before two or three witnesses, being the requirement as respects all of the members, leaves room for the supposition that the Apostle was merely claiming that an Elder should have every right and privilege guaranteed to any of the brethren. It may be that some were inclined to hold that since an Elder must be "well reported," not only in the Church, but out of it, an Elder should be arraigned upon the slightest charges, because of his influential position. But the Apostle's words settle it that an Elder's opportunities must equal those of others.

This matter of *witnesses* needs to be deeply engraved on the mind of every New Creature. What others claim to know and what they slanderously tell is not even to be heeded--not to be received. If two or three, following the Lord's directions, bring charges against anyone--not backbitingly and slanderously but as instructed--before the Church, they are not even then to be believed; but then will be the proper time for the Church to *hear* the matter--hear both sides, in each other's presence; and then give a godly decision and admonition, so phrased as to help the wrongdoer back to righteousness and not to push him off into outer darkness.

MISTAKEN CALLS TO PREACH

A considerable number of people declare that they received of the Lord a *call* to preach the Gospel; perhaps they add in the next breath that they never knew why, or that they are aware that they have no special qualifications for the service, or that circumstances have always seemed to hinder them from responding to the call. Questioning them respecting the nature of the "call," develops the fact that it was merely an imagination or conjecture. One felt *impressed* at some time in his experience (perhaps before becoming a Christian at all) that he ought to devote himself to God and his service, and his highest ideal of God's service was drawn from his nominal church experiences, represented in the preacher whose services his family attended. Another felt his organ of approbateness impressed, and said to himself --How I would like to be able to wear the cloth and receive the respect and titles and salary of a preacher--even a second or third-rate one. If possessed of large self-esteem, too, he probably felt still further impressed that as the chosen apostles were "untalented and ignorant men," so, possibly, God had him specially in mind because of his lack of talent and education. God has favored many such, and his cause as well, in not opening the way to their ambitions, misconstrued to be his call to preach.

As already pointed out, every member of the New Creation is *called to preach*; not by his ambitions or imaginations, but by the Word, which calls upon all who receive the grace of God not in vain to "*show forth the praises* of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." (**1 Pet. 2:9**) This call includes, therefore, all begotten of the spirit of the Truth--male and female, bond and free, rich and poor, educated and uneducated--black, brown, red, yellow and white. What further commission is needed than this--"He hath put a new song into my mouth," even "the loving kindness of Jehovah"? **Psa. 40:3; 107:43**

True, the Lord did *specially choose* and specially call the twelve apostles for a special work; true also he has proposed that in so far as his people will hearken to his words he will "*set* the various members in the body" as pleases him--some to one service and some to another, "to every man according to his several ability." (**Matt. 25:15**) But he clearly shows us that many will seek to "*set*" themselves as teachers; that it is the duty of the Church to look continually to him as their true Head and Leader, and not to favor the self-seeking ambitious brethren; that neglect of this duty will mean neglect of his words; deficiency, therefore, of love and obedience; and will surely be to the spiritual disadvantage of such an *Ecclesia*, as well as to the disadvantage of the self-set teacher.

The Lord's rule on this subject is clearly set forth to be-- "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted; and he that exalteth himself shall be abased." (**Luke 14:11**) The Church is to follow this rule, this mind of the Spirit, in all matters in which she shall seek to know and obey her Lord. The Lord's method is to advance only him whose zeal and faithfulness and perseverance in well-doing have shown themselves in little things. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." (**Luke 16:10**) "Thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things."

(Matt. 25:21,23) There is always plenty of room at the bottom of the ladder of honor. Whosoever wills, need not for long be without opportunities for serving the Lord, the Truth and the brethren in humble ways which the proud-spirited will disdain and neglect, looking for service more honorable in the sight of men. The faithful will rejoice in any service, and to them the Lord will open wider and yet wider doors of opportunity. Thus his will, exemplifying the wisdom from above, is to be carefully followed by every member of the New Creation--especially in his vote, in his stretching forth of his hand as a member of the body of Christ to express the will of the Head.

A self-seeking brother should be passed by, however capable; and a less capable, but humble, brother should be chosen for Elder. So gentle a reproof should be beneficial to all--even though not one word be uttered respecting the reasons governing. And in the case of a capable Elder giving evidence of a dictatorial spirit, or inclining to regard himself as above the Church and of a separate class, or implying a divine right to teach not coming through the *Ecclesia* (Church), it would be a kindness as well as a duty to such an one to drop him to some less prominent part of the service or from all special services for a time, until he shall take this gentle reproof and recover himself from the snare of the Adversary.

All are to remember that, like other faculties, *ambition* is necessary in the Church as well as in the world; but that in the New Creation it must not be a selfish ambition to be something great and prominent, but a loving ambition to serve the Lord and his people, even the very humblest. We all know how ambition led to Satan's fall--from the favor and service of God to the position of an enemy of his Creator and an opponent of all his righteous regulations. Similarly, all who adopt his course, saying, "I will ascend above the stars of God [I will *set* myself above others of the sons of God], I will be as the Most High--[a ruler amongst them, a usurper of divine authority without divine appointment, and contrary to the divine regulation]," are sure to suffer divine disapprobation, and proportionate alienation from the Lord. And the influence of such, like Satan's, is sure to be injurious. As Satan would be an unsafe teacher, so are all who have his disposition sure to lead into darkness for light; because they are not in the proper attitude to receive the light and be used as messengers of it to others.

Whenever, therefore, any brother feels sure that he is called to preach in some public capacity when no door of service has been opened to him in the appointed manner--if he is inclined to force himself upon the Church, without its almost unanimous request--or if having been chosen to the position of a leader or Elder he seeks to hold the position and consider it his by right, without regular votes of the Church from time to time requesting his service continued, we may set it down either that the brother has not noted the proprieties of the case, or that he has the wrong, self-seeking spirit unsuitable to any service in the *Ecclesia*. In either event it will be the proper course to make a *change* at the first proper occasion for holding an election: and, as already suggested, the first Sunday of a year or in a quarter would be an appropriate time easily remembered.

"WARN THEM THAT ARE UNRULY"

*"We exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men." **1 Thess. 5:14,15***

This exhortation is not to elders, but to the entire Church, including the elders. It takes cognizance of the fact that although the entire Church, as God's New Creation, has a perfect standing before him as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, nevertheless each and all of them have their imperfections according to the flesh. It shows, further, what we all recognize; viz., that there are differences in the degrees and in the kinds of our fleshly imperfections; so that, as in children of an earthly family different dispositions require different treatment by the parents, much more in the family of God there are such wide differences of disposition as to require special consideration one for the other. To take notice of each other's imperfections, from the standpoint of criticism, would be

to do ourselves much injury, cultivating in our hearts a faultfinding disposition, keenly awake to the weaknesses and imperfections of others, and proportionately, perhaps, inclined to be blind to our own defects. Such criticism is entirely foreign to the spirit and intention of the Apostle's exhortation.

Those are addressed who have been begotten of the spirit of the truth, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of humility, the spirit of love. Such as are thus growing in the graces of the Spirit, will fear and criticize chiefly their own defects; while their love for others will lead them to make as many mental excuses and allowances for them as possible. But while this spirit of love is properly condoning the offenses and weaknesses of the brethren, it is to be on the alert, nevertheless, to do them good--not by bickering, strife, contention, chiding, faultfinding and slandering one another, but in a manner such as the Golden Rule, would approve. With gentleness, meekness, long-suffering and patience, it will seek to make allowance for each other's weaknesses, and at the same time to help each other out of them, each remembering his own weaknesses of some kind.

The *unruly* are not to be comforted and supported and encouraged in their wrong way; but in kindness, in love, they are to be admonished that God is a God of order; and that in proportion as we would grow in his likeness and favor we must observe rules of order. They should be admonished that nothing is further from the divine arrangement than anarchy; and that as even worldly people recognize the principle that the worst form of government imaginable is preferable to anarchy, so much the more should God's people, who have received the spirit of a sound mind, the holy Spirit, recognize this same principle in the Church; and the Apostle exhorts us to submit ourselves one to the other, for the sake of the general interests of the Lord's cause. If we were all perfect, and our judgment of the Lord's will perfect, we would all think exactly the same--there would be no particular necessity for submitting one to another; but since our judgments differ, it is necessary that each consider the other and the other's standpoint of observation and judgment, and that each seek to yield something in the interest of general peace--yea, to yield everything so as to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace in the body of Christ, except where principle would be infringed by such a course.

The unruly or disorderly are not entirely to blame for their condition, perhaps. Many people are born disorderly and inclined to be so in their dress and in all their affairs in life. Disorderliness, therefore, is a part of their weakness, which should be thought of sympathetically, kindly, but, nevertheless, should not be permitted to do injury to the Church of God, to hinder its usefulness, to prevent its cooperation in the study and service of the Truth. It is not the will of God that his people should have that meekness which would amount to weakness in dealing with disorderly persons. Kindly, lovingly, but firmly, they should be shown that, as order is heaven's first law, so it must be highly esteemed amongst those who are heavenly-minded; and that it would be sinful for the congregation to permit one or two or more of its members to do violence to the divine regulations, as expressed in the Word of God and as generally understood by the congregation with which he is associated.

ADMONISHING NOT A GENERAL ORDER

It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that the Apostle, in using this general language to the Church, meant that every individual of the Church was to do such admonishing. To admonish wisely, helpfully, is a very delicate matter indeed, and remarkably few have a talent for it. The election of elders on the part of congregations is understood to signify the election of those of the number possessed of the largest measure of spiritual development, combined with natural qualifications to constitute them the representatives of the congregation, not only in respect to the leading of meetings, etc., but also in respect to keeping order in the meetings and admonishing unruly ones wisely, kindly, firmly. That this is the Apostle's thought is clearly shown in the two preceding verses, in which he says:

"We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake. And be at peace amongst yourselves." 1 Thess. 5:12,13

If divine wisdom has been properly sought and properly exercised in the choosing of elders of a congregation, it follows that those thus chosen were very highly esteemed; and since novices are not to be chosen, it follows that these were appreciated and selected for their works' sake, because it was discerned by the brethren that they had a considerable measure of the holy spirit of love and wisdom and meekness, besides certain natural gifts and qualifications for this service. To "be at peace amongst yourselves," as the Apostle exhorts, would mean that, having chosen these elders to be the representatives of the congregation, the body in general would *look to them to perform the service to which they were chosen*, and would not attempt to take it each upon himself to be a reprover, or admonisher, etc. Indeed, as we have already seen, the Lord's people are not to judge one another personally; and only the congregation as a whole may exclude one of the number from the fellowship and privileges of the meeting. And this, we have seen, can come only after the various steps of a more private kind have been taken--after all efforts to bring about reform have proved unavailing, and the interests of the Church in general are seriously threatened by the wrong course of the offender. But in the text before us the Apostle exhorts that the congregation shall "know"--that is, recognize, look to--those whom they have chosen as their representatives, and expect them to keep guard over the interests of the Church, and to do the admonishing of the unruly, up to the point where matters would be serious enough to bring them before the Church as a court.

PUBLIC REBUKES RARE

This admonishing, under some circumstances, might need to be done publicly before the congregation, as the Apostle suggests to Timothy: "Them that sin [publicly] rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (1 Tim. 5:20) Such a public rebuke necessarily implies a *public sin of a grievous nature*. For any comparatively slight deviation from rules of order the elders, under the law of love, and the Golden Rule, should surely "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works," and so considering they would know that a word in private would probably be much more helpful to the individual than a public rebuke, which might cut or wound or injure a sensitive nature where such wounding was entirely unnecessary, and where love would have prompted a different course. But even though an Elder should rebuke a grievous sin publicly, it should be done, nevertheless, lovingly, and with a desire that the reprovved one might be corrected and helped back, and not with a desire to make him odious and to cast him forth. Nor, indeed, does it come within the Elder's province to rebuke any to the extent of debarring them from the privileges of the congregation. Rebuke to this extent, as we have just seen, can proceed only from the Church as a whole, and that after a full hearing of the case, in which the accused one has full opportunity for either defending himself or amending his ways and being forgiven. The Church, the *Ecclesia*, the consecrated of the Lord, are, as a whole, his representatives, and the Elder is merely the Church's representative --the Church's best conception of the Lord's choice. The Church, therefore, and not the elders, constitute the court of last resort in all such matters; hence, an elder's course is always subject to review or correction by the Church, according to the united judgment of the Lord's will.

While considering this phase of the subject, we might pause a moment to inquire the extent to which the Church, directly or indirectly, or through its elders, is to exercise this duty of admonishing the disorderly, and of eventually excluding them from the assembly. It is not within the power of the Church to exclude permanently. The brother who, having offended either a brother member or the whole Church body, returns again and says, "I repent of my wrong course, and promise my best endeavors to do right in the future," or the equivalent of this, is to be forgiven-- fully, freely--as heartily as we hope the Lord will forgive the trespasses of all. No one but the Lord has the power or authority to cut off any individual everlastingly--the power to sever a branch from the Vine. We are informed that there is a sin unto death, for which it is useless to pray (1 John 5:16); and we are to

expect that such a wilful sin as would thus bring the penalty of the Second Death would be so open, so flagrant, as to be readily discerned by those who are in fellowship with the Lord. We are not to judge of any by what is in their hearts, for we cannot read their hearts; but if they commit wilful sin unto death it will surely become manifest outwardly--by their lips, if they are doctrinal transgressions, denying the precious blood of atonement; or by their immoralities, if they have turned to walk after the flesh, "like the sow that is washed, to her wallowing in the mire." It is respecting such as these, referred to in Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-31, that the Apostle warns us to have no dealings whatever--not to eat with them, not to receive them into our houses, and not to bid them Godspeed (2 *John 9-11*); because those who would affiliate with them or bid them Godspeed would be accounted as taking their places as enemies of God, and as partaking of the evil deeds or evil doctrines, as the case might be.

But in respect to others, who "walk disorderly," the regulation is very different. Such an excluded brother or sister should not be treated as an enemy, nor thought of as such; but as an erring brother, as the Apostle says further on in this same epistle, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle [if he be disorderly, unwilling to submit himself to sound reasoning and loving, generous rules of order] note that man, and have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (2 Thess. 3:14,15) Such a case as this would imply some open, public opposition on the part of the brother to the rules of order laid down by the Apostle, as the Lord's mouthpiece; and such a public opposition to right principles should be rebuked by the congregation, should they decide that the brother is so out of order that he needs admonishing; and if he does not consent to the form of sound words, sent us by our Lord through the Apostle, he should be considered as so out of accord as to make it no longer proper that he should have the fellowship of the brethren until he would consent to these reasonable requirements. He should not be passed by on the street unnoticed by the brethren, but be treated courteously. The exclusion should be merely from the privileges of the assembly and from any special brotherly associations, etc., peculiar to the faithful. This is implied also in our Lord's words, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Our Lord did not mean that we should do injury to a heathen man or a publican, nor treat either in any manner unkindly; but merely that we should not fellowship such as *brethren*, nor seek their confidences, nor as New Creatures give them ours. The household of faith is to be cemented and bound together with mutual love and sympathy, and expressions of these in various ways. It is from the lack of these privileges and blessings that the excluded brother is caused to suffer, until he feels that he must reform his ways and return to the family gathering. There is a suggestion in this respect to warmth, to cordiality, to true brotherliness, that should prevail amongst those who are members of the Lord's body.

"COMFORT THE FEEBLE-MINDED"

Continuing our examination of the Apostle's words in our text, we note that the Church is to comfort the feeble-minded. We thus have notice that the reception of the holy Spirit does not transform our mortal bodies so as to entirely overcome their weaknesses. There are some with feeble minds, as there are others with feeble bodies, and each needs sympathy along the line of his own weakness. The feeble minds were not to be miraculously cured; nor should we expect that because the minds of some are feeble and unable to grasp all the lengths, and breadths, and heights, and depths of the divine plan that, therefore, they are not of the body. On the contrary, as the Lord is not seeking for his Church merely those who are of fine physical development, strong and robust, so likewise he is not seeking merely those who are strong and robust in mind, and able to reason and analyze thoroughly, completely, every feature of the divine plan. There will be in the body some who will be thus qualified, but others are feeble-minded, and do not come up even to the average standard of knowledge. What comfort should we give to these? We answer that the elders, in their presentations of the Truth, and all of the Church in their relationship one with the other, should comfort these, not necessarily in pointing out their febleness and condoning the same, but rather

along general lines--not expecting the same degree of proficiency and intellectual discernment in the members of the family of God. None should claim that those who have such disabilities are, therefore, not of the body.

The lesson is much the same if we accept the revised reading, "Comfort the fainthearted." Some naturally lack courage and combativeness, and with ever so good will and ever so loyal hearts cannot, to the same degree as others of the body, "be strong in the Lord," nor "fight the good fight of faith" in the open. The Lord, however, must see their will, their intention, to be courageous and loyal, and so should the brethren--if they are to attain the rank of overcomers.

All should recognize that the Lord's judgment of his people is according to their hearts, and that if these feeble-minded or fainthearted ones have had a sufficiency of mind and will to grasp the fundamentals of the divine plan of redemption through Christ Jesus, and their own justification in God's sight through faith in the Redeemer, and if on this basis they are striving to live a life of consecration to the Lord, they are to be treated in every way so as to permit them to feel that they are fully and thoroughly members of the body of Christ; and that the fact that they cannot expound or cannot perhaps with clearness discern every feature of the divine plan intellectually, and defend the same as courageously as others, is not to be esteemed as impugning their acceptance with the Lord. They should be encouraged to press along the line of self-sacrifice in the divine service, doing such things as their hands find to do, to the glory of the Lord and to the blessing of his people--comforted with the thought that in due time all who abide in Christ and cultivate the fruits of his Spirit and walk in his steps of sacrifice will have new bodies with perfect capacity, in which all the members shall be able to know as they are known--and that meantime the Lord assures us that his strength is shown the more fully in our weakness.

"SUPPORT THE WEAK"

This implies that there are some in the Church weaker than others; not merely physically weaker, but weaker spiritually --in the sense of having human organisms depraved in such a manner that they as New Creatures, find greater difficulty in growth and spiritual development. Such are not to be rejected from the body, but, on the contrary, we are to understand that if the Lord counted them worthy of a knowledge of his grace, it means that he is able to bring them off conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. They are to be supported with such promises as the Scriptures afford--to the effect that when we are weak in ourselves we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, by casting all our care upon him, and by faith laying hold upon his grace; that in the hour of weakness and temptation they will find fulfilled the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." The entire congregation can assist in this comforting and supporting, though, of course, the elders have a special charge and responsibility toward these, because they are the chosen representatives of the Church, and, hence, of the Lord. The Apostle, speaking of the various members of the body, after telling of pastors and teachers, speaks of "helps." (1 Cor. 12:28) Evidently the Lord's good pleasure would be that each member of the Church should seek to occupy such a place of helpfulness, not only helping the elders chosen as the representatives of the Church, but also helping one another, doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith.

"PATIENT TOWARD ALL"

In obeying this exhortation to exercise patience toward each other under all circumstances, the New Creatures will find that they are not only exercising the proper attitude toward each other, but that they are cultivating in themselves one of the grandest graces of the holy Spirit--patience. Patience is a grace of the Spirit which will find abundant opportunity for exercise in all of life's affairs, toward those outside the Church as well as toward those within it, and it is well that we remember that the whole world has a *claim* upon our patience. We discern this only as we get clear

views of the groaning creation's condition, revealed to us through the Scriptures. Therein we see the story of the fall, and how all have been injured by it. Therein we see God's patience toward sinners and his wonderful love in their redemption, and in the provisions he has made, not only for the blessing and uplifting of his Church out of the miry clay and out of the horrible pit of sin and death, but glorious provisions also for the whole world of mankind. In it, too, we see that the great difficulty with the world is that they are under the delusions of our Adversary, "the god of this world," who now blinds and deceives them. **2 Cor. 4:4**

Surely this knowledge should give us patience! And if we have patience with the world, much more should we have patience with those who are no longer of the world, but who have by God's grace come under the conditions of his forgiveness in Christ Jesus, have been adopted into his family, and are now seeking to walk in his steps. What loving and long-suffering patience we *should* have toward these fellow-disciples, members of the Lord's body! Surely we *could* have nothing else than patience toward these; and surely our Lord and Master would specially disapprove and in some manner rebuke impatience toward any of them. Furthermore, we have great need of patience even in dealing with ourselves under present distress and weaknesses and battles with the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Learning to appreciate these facts will help to make us more patient toward all.

"SEE THAT NONE RENDER EVIL FOR EVIL"

This is more than an individual *advice*: it is an injunction, addressed to the Church as a whole, and is applicable to each congregation of the Lord's people. It implies that if some of the household of faith are disposed to take vengeance, to retaliate, to render evil for evil, either upon brother members or upon those outside, that the Church will not be acting the part of a busybody in taking notice of such a course. It is the duty of the Church to *see* to this. "*See that no man render evil for evil,*" means, give attention to it that this proper spirit is observed in your midst amongst the brethren. If, therefore, the elders should learn of such occasions as would be covered by this injunction, it would be their duty kindly to admonish the brothers or the sisters respecting the Word of the Lord; and, if they will not hear, it would be the duty of the former to bring the matter before the congregation, etc., etc. And here is the Church's commission to take cognizance of such an improper course on the part of any. Not only are we thus to see one another, and to look out for each other with kindly interest, to note that backward steps are not taken, but we are to see to it that, on the contrary, all follow after that which is good. We should rejoice in and commend every evidence of progress in a right way, giving it our support as individuals and as congregations of the Lord's people. By thus doing, as the Apostle suggests, we may rejoice evermore, and with good cause; for so helping one another the body of Christ will make increase of itself in love, growing more and more in the likeness of the Head, and becoming more and more fit for joint-heirship with him in the Kingdom.

"Let Us Consider One Another to Provoke
Unto Love and to Good Works"
--Heb. 10:24--

What a loving and beautiful thought is here expressed! While others consider their fellows to fault-find or discourage, or selfishly to take advantage of their weaknesses, the New Creation is to do the reverse--to study carefully each other's dispositions with a view to avoiding the saying or doing of things which would unnecessarily wound, stir up anger, etc., but with a view to provoking them to love and good conduct.

And why not? Is not the whole attitude of the world, the flesh and the devil provocative of envy, selfishness, jealousy, and full of evil enticement to sin, of thought, word and deed? Why, then, should not the New Creatures of the Christ body not only abstain from such provocations toward themselves and others, but engage in provoking or inciting in the reverse direction--toward love and

good works? Surely this, like every admonition and exhortation of God's Word, is reasonable as well as profitable.

"THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES"

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day drawing on." Heb. 10:25

The Lord's injunction, through the Apostle, respecting the assembling of his people, is in full accord with his own words, "Where two or three of you are met in my name, there am I in the midst." (Matt. 18:20) The object of these gatherings is clearly indicated; they are for mutual advancement in spiritual things--opportunities for provoking or inciting each other unto more and more love for the Lord and for each other, and to increased good works of every kind that would glorify our Father, that would bless the brotherhood, and that would do good unto all men as we have opportunity. If he who says, I love God, yet hateth his brother, knows not what he says, and deceives himself (1 John 4:20), similarly mistaken, we believe, are those who say, I long to be with the Lord and to enjoy his blessing and fellowship, if they meantime neglect opportunities to meet with the brethren, and do not enjoy their company and fellowship.

It is in the nature of things that each human being must seek some companionship; and experience attests the truthfulness of the proverb, that "Birds of a feather flock together." If, therefore, the fellowship of the spiritually minded is not appreciated, longed for and sought after, if we do not improve opportunities to enjoy it, we may be sure these are unhealthy indications as respects our spiritual condition. The natural man loves and enjoys natural fellowship and companionship, and plans and arranges with his associates in respect to business matters and pleasures, even though their common worldly hopes and plans are very limited indeed as compared with the exceeding great and precious hopes of the New Creation. As our minds become transformed by the renewing of the holy Spirit, our appetite for fellowship is not destroyed, but merely turned into new channels, where we find a wonderful field for fellowship, investigation, discussion and enjoyment--the history of sin and the groaning creation, past and present-- God's record of the redemption and the coming deliverance of the groaning creation--our high calling to joint-heirship with the Lord--the evidences that our deliverance is drawing nigh, etc. What an abundant field for thought, for study, for fellowship and communion!

No wonder we say that the one who is unappreciative of the privilege of meeting with others for the discussion of these subjects is spiritually sick, in some respects, whether he is able to diagnose his own ailment or not. It may be that he is diseased with a kind of spiritual pride and self-sufficiency, which leads him to say to himself, I need not go to the common school of Christ, to be taught with his other followers; I will take private lessons from the Lord at home, and he will teach me separately, and deeper and more spiritual lessons. Quite a few seem to be afflicted with this spiritual egotism--to imagine themselves better than others of the Lord's brethren, and that he would depart from his usual custom and from the lines marked out in his Word, to serve them in a peculiar manner, just because they think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, and because they request it. Such brethren should remember that they have not one solitary promise of the Lord of a blessing so long as they are in this attitude of heart and conduct. On the contrary, "the Lord resisteth the proud and showeth his favors to the humble." The Lord blesses those who hear and obey his instructions, saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." To those who are in a right attitude of heart it is quite sufficient that the Lord has enjoined that we come together in his name; and that he has promised special blessings to so few as even two or three obeying him, and that the Church is representatively his body, and is to be prospered by "that which every joint supplieth," and to edify itself and to "build one another up," as members in all the graces and fruits of the Spirit. Sometimes the difficulty is not purely a spiritual egotism, but partially a neglect of the Word of God and a leaning to human understanding, supposing that the promise, "they shall be all taught of God,"

implies an individual teaching, separate the one from the other. The customs of the apostles and their teachings, and the experience of the Lord's people, are all contrary to such a thought.

However, on the other hand, we are not to crave merely numbers and show and popularity, but are to remember that the Lord's promised blessing is to "two or three *of you*"; and, again, through the Apostle, the exhortation is to "the assembling of *ourselves* together." It is not a sectarian spirit that the Lord and the Apostle inculcate here, when they intimate that the assemblies are not to be worldly assemblies, in which the Lord's people are to mingle, but Christian assemblies --assemblies of those who know of God's grace and who have accepted of the same by a full consecration of themselves to him and his service. The worldly are not to be urged to come to these meetings. They are not of *you*, even as "Ye are not of the world"; and if they were attracted, either by music or other features, the spirit of the injunction would be lost, for where worldliness would abound, and a desire to please and to attract the worldly, very speedily the proper object of the meeting would be lost sight of. That proper object is explained to be "the building up of *yourselves* in the most holy faith," "edifying *one another*," "inciting *one another* to love and to good works." Jude 20; **1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24**

Let the *evilly disposed* flock together, if they will; let the *morally disposed* flock together with their kind; and let the Spirit-begotten ones *assemble themselves* and proceed along the lines laid down in the Lord's Word for their edification. But if they neglect this, let the blame for unfavorable consequences not be attached to the Head of the Church nor to the faithful apostles, who clearly emphasized the proper course and exemplified it in their own conduct.

This does not mean that outsiders are to be forbidden entrance to the meetings of the Church, if they are interested enough to desire to come in and "behold your order," and be blessed by your holy conversation, exhortations to good works, and love, and exposition of the divine Word of promise, etc. The Apostle intimates this very clearly in **1 Cor. 14:24**. The point we are making is that "assembling ourselves" is not an assemblage of unbelievers, where endeavors are made constantly to break the hearts of sinners. The sinner should be free to attend, but should be let alone to see the order and love prevailing amongst the Lord's consecrated ones, that thus even though he comprehend only in part, he may be reprov'd of his sins by discerning the spirit of holiness and purity in the Church, and may be convinced respecting his errors of doctrine by beholding the order and symmetry of the truth which prevails amongst the Lord's people. Compare **1 Cor. 14:23-26**.

This brings us to a consideration of the general Character of the Meetings of the Lord's people. We remark, first of all, that on this subject, as on others, the Lord's people are left without cast-iron laws and regulations--left free to adapt themselves to the changing conditions of time and country, left free in the exercise of the spirit of a sound mind, left free to seek the wisdom that cometh from above, and to manifest the degree of their attainment of the Lord's character-likeness under the discipline of the Law of Love. That Law of Love will be sure to urge modesty as respects all innovations or changes from the customs of the early Church; it will be sure to hesitate to make radical changes except as it shall discern their necessity, and even then will seek to keep close within the spirit of every admonition and instruction and practice of the early Church.

In the early Church we have the example of the apostles as special teachers. We have the example of the elders, doing pastoral work, evangelistic work, and prophesying or public speaking; and from one illustration, given with particularity in **1 Cor. 14**, we may judge that each member of the Church was encouraged by the apostles to stir up whatever talent and gift he might possess, to glorify the Lord and to serve the brethren--thus to exercise himself and to grow strong in the Lord and in the Truth, helping others and being helped in turn by others. This account of an ordinary Church meeting in the Apostle's day could not be followed fully and in detail today, because of the peculiar "gifts of the Spirit" temporarily bestowed upon the early Church for the convincing of outsiders, as well as for personal encouragement at a time when, without these gifts, it would have been impossible for any of the number to be edified or profited to any extent. Nevertheless, we can draw from this early custom, approved by the Apostle, certain valuable and helpful lessons, which

can be appropriated by the little companies of the Lord's people everywhere, according to circumstances.

The chief lesson is that of mutual helpfulness, "building one another up in the most holy faith." It was not the custom for one or even several of the elders to preach regularly, nor to do or attempt to do all the edifying or building up. It was the custom for each member to do his part, the parts of the elders being more important according to their abilities and gifts; and we can see that this would be a very helpful arrangement and bring a blessing not only to those who heard, but also to all participating. And who does not know that even the poorest speaker or the most illiterate person may, if his heart be full of love for the Lord and devotion to him, communicate thoughts which will be precious to all who may hear. The class of meetings here described by the Apostle evidently was a sample of the majority of meetings held by the Church. The account shows that it was a mixed meeting, at which, adapting the account to present times, one might exhort, another might expound, another might offer prayer, another propose a hymn, another read a poem which seemed to fit his sentiments and experiences, in harmony with the topic of the meeting; another might quote some scriptures bearing on the topic under discussion, and thus the Lord might use each and all of these members of the Church in mutual edification, mutual upbuilding.

It is not our thought that there never was preaching in the early Church. On the contrary, we find that wherever the apostles went they were considered specially able expounders of the Word of God, who would be present probably but a short time, and during the period of their presence, it is likely, they did nearly all of the public speaking, though we doubt not that other social meetings, open to all, were held as well. This same practice respecting apostolic preaching was no doubt followed by others who were not apostles; as, for instance, Barnabas, Timothy, Apollos, Titus, etc., and the same liberties were enjoyed also by some who misused them and exercised quite an influence for evil--Hymenaeus and Philetus and others.

Where the Lord has laid down no positive law it would be inappropriate for us or for others to fix a law. We offer, however, some suggestions, viz., that there are certain spiritual needs of the Church which require ministering to:

(1) *Instruction* is necessary--in the more purely prophetic matters and also in the moral doctrines, and in respect to the development of the Christian graces.

(2) Because of more or less differing methods in the use of language, and because of more or less obtuseness of mind and varying degrees of spiritual perception, as between those who are babes in Christ and those who are more mature in knowledge and in grace, it is advisable that opportunities be afforded at which each will be encouraged to express his understanding of the things which he has learned, either through reading or hearing, to the intent that if his understanding of these things be defective it may be corrected by the statements of others on the subject.

(3) There should be frequent regular meetings at which reasonably full opportunities would be given to anyone to present what he might believe to be a different view of truth from that perhaps generally held and approved by the *Eccllesia*.

(4) There should be not only devotional services connected with all meetings of the Lord's people, but experience shows the profitableness of *each one*, in the hearing of his brethren, *confessing with his mouth*, either in testimony or in prayer, his devotion to the Lord.

DOCTRINE STILL NECESSARY

Respecting the first proposition: We are living in a time when doctrines in general are being sneered at, and when quite a good many claim that doctrine and faith are of no value in comparison to works and morals. We cannot agree with this, because we find it entirely out of accord with the divine Word, in which faith is placed first and works second. It is our faith that is accepted of the Lord, and according to our faith he will reward us, though he will properly expect that a good faith will bring forth as many good works as the weaknesses of the earthen vessel will permit. This is the rule of faith everywhere laid down in the Scriptures. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:4) No man can properly be an overcomer, therefore, unless he exercise faith in God and in his promises; and in order to exercise faith in the promises of God he must understand them; and this opportunity and ability to grow strong in faith will be in proportion to his understanding of the divine plan of the ages, and the exceeding great and precious promises connected therewith. Hence, doctrine--instruction--is important, not merely for the knowledge which God's people are to have and to enjoy above and beyond the knowledge of the world in things pertaining to God, but especially because of the influence which this knowledge will exercise upon all hopes and aims and conduct. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself" (1 John 3:3) is a Scriptural expression which fully coincides with the foregoing statements. He who would endeavor to purify himself, to cleanse his conduct, must, to be successful, begin as the Scriptures begin, with the heart, and must progress, using, for a cleansing, the inspired promises. And this means a knowledge of the doctrines of Christ.

It is appropriate, however, that we clearly distinguish and differentiate between the doctrines of Christ and the doctrines of men. The doctrines of Christ are those which he himself and his inspired apostles have set before us in the New Testament. The doctrines of men are represented in the creeds of men, many of which are grossly and seriously at variance with the doctrines of the Lord, and all of them in disagreement with each other. Moreover, it is not sufficient that we be indoctrinated once; for, as the Apostle intimates, we receive the treasures of God's grace into poor earthen vessels which are very leaky; and hence, if we cease to receive we will cease to have; for which cause it is necessary that we have "line upon line, precept upon precept," and that we continually renew and review our study of the divine plan of the ages, using whatever helps and assistances divine providence supplies, seeking so far as possible to obey the Apostle's injunction to be--"not forgetful hearers, but doers of the work," and thus "doers of the Word." James 1:22-25

Our second proposition is one that may not at once be so fully appreciated as the first. It is apt to be the thought of many, if not of all, that those who can express the truth most clearly, most fluently, most accurately, should be the only ones to express it, and that the others should keep silence and hear and learn. This thought is right in many respects. It is not our suggestion that any should be put to teach or be looked up to as teachers, or their words received as instruction, who are incapable of giving instruction, and who do not clearly apprehend the divine plan. But there is a great difference between setting such to teach--as in the case of elders--and having a meeting at which all members of the New Creation would have an opportunity of *briefly expressing themselves or asking questions*, with the understanding that their questions or doubts or expressions are not upheld by the Church as being the sentiments of the company. At such meetings, wrong ideas may possibly be set forth in the form of questions--not with an intention of teaching these opinions, nor with the purpose of enforcing them, but with a view to having them criticized. But beware of violating conscience by any attempt to defend error. Such procedure should be sanctioned only in the presence of someone advanced in the Truth and able to give a Scriptural reason for his faith, and to show the way of the Lord more perfectly. Is it asked, What advantage could come from such a course? We reply that we have frequently seen the advantages demonstrated. It is often difficult--sometimes impossible--to state matters in the simplest and most direct manner; and it is equally impossible for all minds, however honest, to grasp a subject with an equal degree of clearness from the same illustration. Hence the value of questions, and of a variety of presentations of the same truth, as illustrated in our Lord's parables, which present subjects from various standpoints, affording a more complete and harmonious view of the whole. So, too, we have noticed that the blundering and somewhat bungling statement of a truth may, at times, effect an entrance into some minds where a more sound and more logical statement had failed--the incompetence of the speaker matching in some respects the lower plane of reason and judgment in the hearer. We are to rejoice if the Gospel is preached and finds a lodgment in hungry hearts, whatever the channel, as the Apostle explains--"some even preach Christ of contention and vainglory." We can only rejoice if some are brought to a proper knowledge of the Lord, even though we must greatly regret the improper motives of the presentation; or, as in the other

case, the imperfection of the presentation. It is the Lord and the Truth and the brethren that we love and desire to serve; and, hence, we must rejoice in anything which brings the desired results, and should make our arrangements so as not to interfere with this, which we recognize to be a fact. This does not signify that the illogical and incompetent should be *set* to teach in the Church, nor that we should imagine that the illogical presentations would be the most successful in general. Quite the contrary. Nevertheless, we are not *wholly to ignore* that which we see is sometimes a channel of blessing to some minds and which has the backing of primitive Church usage.

In support of our third proposition: No matter how confident we are that we have the truth, it would certainly be unwise for us so to shut and lock the door of interrogation and contrary expressions as thoroughly to exclude all that might be considered error by the leader of the meeting or by the entire congregation. One limitation alone should prevail to a thorough exclusion; viz., that the gatherings of the New Creatures are not for the consideration of secular subjects, worldly sciences and philosophies, but solely for the study of the divine revelation; and in the study of the divine revelation the congregation should first, last and always recognize the difference between the foundation principles of the doctrines of Christ (which no member may change or alter, nor consent to have questioned) and the discussion of advanced doctrines, which must be fully in accord with the foundation principles. The latter should at all times have full, free opportunities to be heard, and there should be meetings at which they can be heard. This, however, does not mean that they should be heard over and over, and that some individual should be permitted to confuse and distract every meeting and every topic with some particular hobby. Let his hobby have a fair hearing and a fair discussion at an appropriate time, in the presence of some well versed in the Truth, and if ruled out by the congregation as unscriptural, and the promoter of the thought be not convinced of its unscripturalness, let him at least refrain from intruding the subject upon the notice of the Church for a long time--perhaps a year--when he might without impropriety request another hearing, which might or might not be granted, as the congregation should think the matter worthy or unworthy of hearing and investigation.

What we urge is, that unless there be some such vent, two dangers may be encountered: One, the danger of falling into the condition we see prevailing now in the nominal churches of Christendom, in which it is impossible to find access to their ears through their regular Church meetings, every avenue of approach being carefully guarded. The other danger is, that the individual having a theory which appeals to his judgment as truth--no matter how false and irrational it might be--would never feel satisfied unless it should have a reasonable hearing, but would be continually obtruding the topic; whereas, after having been heard reasonably, even if not convinced of the error of his argument, he would be disarmed as respects the impropriety of intruding the matter upon those who have already heard and rejected his thought.

Our fourth proposition: Growth in knowledge is very liable to detract from devotion--strange as it may appear that it should be so. We find our capacities so small, and our time for religious things so limited, that if attention be energetically directed in one channel it is apt to lead to dwarfing in other directions. The Christian is not to be all head and no heart, nor all heart and no head. The "spirit of a sound mind" directs us to cultivate all the fruits and graces which go to round out and complete a perfect character. The tendency of our day in all matters is in the opposite direction --to specialize. One workman does this part, another workman that part; so that now very few workmen understand a trade in full as in former times. The New Creature must resist this tendency, and must "make straight paths for his feet" accordingly; lest while cultivating one element of grace he falls into danger through the lack of the proper exercise of another God-given faculty or privilege.

The qualities of devotion are found in all mankind in a greater or less degree of development. These mental qualities are called veneration and spirituality, and they summon to their aid the organs of conscience, hope, tune, etc. If these be neglected, the result will be that interest in and love for the Truth will degenerate; so that instead of our hearts being led to the Lord with greater appreciation of his love, and with greater desire to please, honor and serve him, we will find the lower organs joining

more in the controversy, taking the places of these higher ones, and the investigations will come to be more in the light of mental philosophies, into which will enter combativeness and destructiveness, ambition, strife and vainglory. The New Creation needs, therefore, not only to unite devotional services, prayer and praise, as a part of every meeting, but, we believe, needs in addition a special meeting of a devotional kind once a week, joined with which should be opportunities for testimony respecting Christian experiences--not according to the usual custom of going back from one to twenty years or more to tell about a first conversion, etc., but an up-to-date testimony, referring specifically to the condition of the heart at the moment, and during the week intervening since the last meeting of a similar kind. Such up-to-date testimonies prove helpful to those who hear; sometimes encouraging them by the rehearsal of favorable experiences, and sometimes comforting them by the narration of trials, difficulties, perplexities, etc., because they thus discern that they are not alone in having trying experiences, and sometimes failures.

Thus all may learn more fully the meaning of the words of the Apostle, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (*1 Pet. 4:12*) They find that all who are the Lord's people have trials and difficulties, and each learns thus to sympathize with the other; and as the bond of sympathy grows the spirit of helpfulness grows, and the spirit of love--the holy Spirit. Such midweek meetings could advantageously have a topic suggested at the previous Sunday gathering; and this topic being before the minds of the class should inspire each to mark the passing experiences of life, and to make note of them, especially along the line of the particular topic for the week. Undoubtedly every Christian has an abundance of opportunities for noting the lessons and experiences of life along various lines every week; but the majority, not thinking, not noticing, permit these valuable lessons to flow past them unrecognized, and learn chiefly from the larger and more bitter experiences of life what they might better have learned by taking heed to the Lord's daily dealings with them through his providences.

To illustrate: Suppose that the topic for the week had been, "The peace of God," from the text, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [guard in] your hearts." (*Phil. 4:7*) Each of the brotherhood should take notice during the week to what extent this scripture found fulfilment in his own case; and what things seemed to interrupt and prevent this ruling peace--bringing in disquiet, discontent. These experiences and the lessons drawn from them, told by those in the group more expert, and by those less expert (male and female) would not only bring to each other's attention their own experiences during the forepart of the week, but in the after part would add to their own experiences the lessons and experiences of others, thus broadening their sympathies and leading them more and more to discern the beauties of peace in contrast with strife--the blessing of the peace of God in the heart; and how it is possible to have this peace even when surrounded by turmoil and confusion or distressing conditions over which we have no control. The devotional feature of these meetings will add to their profit. He who realizes most keenly his own defects, and who is most earnestly striving to grow in the graces of the Spirit, will be the most earnest in his devotions to the Lord and in his desires to please him and to partake more and more of his holy Spirit.*

*There are meetings of the character here described held in various localities, convenient to the little groups who constitute them.

In these meetings, as in all others, it is apparent that the greatest good can be accomplished by preserving order-- not to the extent of destroying the life and liberty of the meeting, but to the proper extent of best preserving its liberty, without anarchy or disorder, under wise, loving, gentle restraint. For instance: The character of the meeting should be understood in advance; and it would be the duty of the leader to hold it, with reasonable, loving laxity, to its specified and agreed-upon purpose. It should be understood that these are not general question-meetings, nor meetings for discussion, nor for preaching; that other meetings are provided, and that those who wish are welcome

to attend them; but that these meetings have a limited scope. To keep the meeting thus properly in line, and to avoid private discussions or replies of one individual to another, the leader--being the one chosen to represent the whole--should be the only one to reply or to criticize others--and then only when *necessary*. It is his bounden duty to see that some testimonies are not so lengthy as to be tedious and hinder others from having opportunity, and that the meeting is not prolonged beyond its reasonable, agreed-upon, length. All these things devolving upon the leader, imply that he should be an Elder in the Church. A novice of insufficient experience would be apt, even with the best of intentions, to be either too lax or too rigid in applying principles to such an occasion; he might either spoil the meetings with too great leniency, or offend some worthy brother or sister by an unwisely expressed correction and application of proper rules. Moreover, the leader of such a meeting should be an Elder, or one competent to hold the position of an Elder in the Church, so that he might have a sufficiency of knowledge of the Word, and experience in grace and teaching ability to be able to give a word of encouragement or counsel or helpful advice *in responseto* the various testimonies as presented. For "A word in due season, how good it is!"-- how much more helpful, often, than a whole discourse under other conditions. **Prov. 15:23**

Although in the foregoing we have indicated various interests that should be provided for in the meetings, we have described particularly only the last--which, by the way, we consider one of the most important of all: the one meeting most helpful in spiritual growth. Let us now glance at what might be good arrangements respecting other meetings. These would differ according to the circumstances, conditions, and numbers constituting the gathering--the *Ecclesia*, the body. If the number were fifty or so, and if some of the number were particularly talented in public speaking and clear exposition of the Truth, we advise that one preaching service in the week might generally be advantageous--especially as the meeting to which friends, neighbors or others might be invited. But if in the Lord's providence none of the company are specially qualified for the presentation of a connected, logical, reasonable discourse on some Scriptural topic, we believe it would be better that this form of meeting be not attempted, or that the time be divided between several possessed of some ability to treat a Scriptural subject thus connectedly in public, the topic being the same and the brethren taking turns in leading off. Or such elders might alternate, one this Sunday, another next, and so on, or two this Sunday, two next, and so on. It would appear that the best interests of the whole Church are conserved by the bringing forward and granting opportunities to *all* the brethren *in proportion* to their ability--always estimating that humility and clearness in the Truth are absolutely the primary essentials--not flourish and oratory.

But the most important meeting in our judgment, the most helpful, next to the devotional meeting first described, is one in which the whole company of believers take part under sometimes one chairman, or leader, and sometimes another. For these meetings either a topic or a text of Scripture may be taken up for discussion, and the leader, looking over the subject in advance, should be intrusted with authority to divide it amongst leading brethren, if possible appointing them their parts a week in advance, that they may come to the meeting prepared to offer suggestions, each along the line of his own particular department of the topic. These principal participants in the examination of the subject (perhaps two, or perhaps a half dozen, or more, as the number of competent persons, the size of the congregation, and the weight of the topic might demand) will find the Berean Bibles with the references to *Studies* and *Reprints* and the Topical Indexes, very helpful. Let them either present the matter in their own language, or find special extracts from *Studies*, *Reprints*, etc., right to the point, which they might read in connection with some appropriate remarks.

When the meeting has been opened by praise and prayer, the topics may be called for in their proper turn by the Chairman; and after each appointed speaker has presented his findings on his phase of the subject it should be open to the entire class for questions and expressions, either in harmony with, or in opposition to, what has already been presented by the leading speaker on the topic. If the class appear disinclined to discuss, and need drawing out, the Chairman should do this by skillful questions. The Chairman only should address the speakers or attempt to *answer* or

harmonize their declarations; though, of course, he may call upon any speaker for a further explanation of his position or reasons. The speakers should all address their remarks to the Chairman and never to each other, and thus danger of personality and wrangling may be avoided. The Chairman should take no other part than as above in connection with the discussion, but should be able at the close to draw together the various findings, briefly summarizing the whole subject from his own standpoint, before closing the session with praise and thanksgiving.

Each point may be gone through with, and the entire subject be well ventilated and investigated, so that it will be clearly discerned by all. Or, in some of the more complex subjects, the Chairman might better sum up and give his views at the close of the examination of each topic. We know of no better kind of meeting than this for a thorough study of the divine Word. We consider it much more advantageous usually than regular preaching for the majority of gatherings of the Lord's people.

A meeting of this kind includes all the features covered by the suggestions numbered 1, 2 and 3, foregoing. As respects the first, those who are assigned the leading parts have full opportunity for the exercise of whatever abilities they possess. In regard to the second point, all have an opportunity of taking part, asking questions, offering suggestions, etc., following each of the leading speakers on the several points. And as to the third point, it also is accommodated by such a meeting as this, because the topics for each week should preferably be decided on by the whole class, and not by the leader, and at least a week ahead of their discussion.

Any one in attendance at such a class should have the privilege of presenting his question or topic, and the spirit of love and sympathy and helpfulness and consideration pervading all should be such that all proper topics would be accorded a respectful hearing. And in the case of a special request for a topic supposed to be contrary to the general views of the congregation, yet fully within the lines of the foundation principles of the Gospel, the person desirous of having the subject discussed should be granted a reasonable time for the presentation, and should be the chief speaker for the occasion, his time possibly being limited, say, to thirty minutes or more or less, according to the importance of the topic and the interest of the class in it. Following his presentation the question should be open for discussion by the others of the class, the propounder of the question having a few minutes granted him subsequently for a brief answer to any objections brought forward by others, the Chairman having the final word in closing the meeting.

Another kind of meeting which has proven very advantageous in the study of the Word is known as a "Berean Circle for Bible study." These are not merely reading circles, but a systematic study of the divine plan in all its phases, taken up item by item. The several volumes of SCRIPTURE STUDIES, treating the subjects, as they do, in a connected and consecutive order, constitute (with the Bible) textbooks for these Bible studies; but in order to the profit of these classes it is necessary that the leader and the class should clearly differentiate between reading and studying. So far as the reading is concerned, all of the dear friends can as well, or perhaps better, do their reading by themselves at home. The object of these studies is to take up a certain portion of each topic as presented in one or more paragraphs, and to discuss it thoroughly between themselves, calling up collateral passages of Scripture, etc., and thoroughly ventilating the matter, and, if possible, getting each member of the class to give an expression of his thought respecting the particular matter under consideration, proceeding then to the next topic. Some of these Berean Circles have taken a year or two for the study of a single volume of SCRIPTURE STUDIES--and that to great interest and profit.*

*There are meetings of this kind held in various localities, and on evenings most convenient for the friends attending each. They are led by various brethren-elders.

"Let Every Man Be Fully Persuaded in His Own Mind"

--Rom. 14:5--

All logical minds delight in reaching a *decision*, if possible, respecting every item of truth; and this the Apostle declares should be striven for by each member of the Church for himself--"in his own mind." It is a common mistake, however, to attempt to apply this personally good rule to a Church or to a class in Bible-study--to attempt to force all to *decide* on exactly the same conclusion respecting the meaning of the Lord's Word. It is proper that we should wish that all might "see eye to eye"; but it is not reasonable to expect it when we know that all are fallen from perfection, not only of body, but also of mind, and that these deflections are in various directions, as shown by the various shapes of head to be found in any gathering of people. Our various kinds and degrees of education are important factors also in assisting or hindering oneness of view.

But does not the Apostle intimate that we should all mind the same things?--and that we will be all taught of God so that we will all have the spirit of a sound mind?-- and that we should expect to grow in grace and knowledge, building one another up in the most holy faith?

Yes, all this is true; but it is not intimated that it will all be attained in one meeting. The Lord's people not only have differently developed heads, and differences in experience or education, but they are additionally of different ages as New Creatures--babes, youths, matured. It must not surprise us, therefore, if some are slower than others to comprehend and, hence, slower to be fully persuaded in their own minds respecting some of "the deep things of God." They must grasp the *fundamentals*--that all were sinners; that Christ Jesus, our Leader, *redeemed* us by his sacrifice finished at Calvary; that we are now in the School of Christ to be taught and fitted for the Kingdom and its service; and that none enter this School except upon full consecration of their all to the Lord. These things all must see and fully and always assent to, else we could not recognize them as even baby brothers in the New Creation; but we have all need of patience with each other, and forbearance with each other's peculiarities--and behind these must be *love*, increasing every grace of the Spirit as we attain more and more nearly to its fulness.

This being so, all questions, all answers, all remarks--in meetings where several participate--should be *for* the entire company present (and not personal to any one or any number), and should, therefore, be *addressed to the Chairman*, who represents all--except when the Chairman may for convenience request the speaker to face and address the audience direct. Hence, too, after having expressed his own view, each is quietly to hear the views of others and not feel called to debate or restate his already stated position. Having used his opportunity, each is to trust to the Lord to guide and teach and show the truth, and should not insist that all must be *made to see* every item as he sees it, nor even as the majority view it. "On essentials, unity; on non-essentials, charity," is the proper rule to be followed.

We agree, however, that every item of truth is important, and that the smallest item of error is injurious, and that the Lord's people should pray and strive for unity in knowledge; but we must not hope to attain this by force. Unity of spirit on the first basic principles of truth is the important thing; and where this is maintained we may be confident that our Lord will *guide* all possessing it into all truth due and necessary to him. It is in this connection that the leaders of the Lord's flock need special wisdom and love and force of character and clearness in the Truth, so that at the conclusion of each meeting he who has led may be able to summarize the Scriptural findings and leave all minds under their blessed influence--expressing himself clearly, positively, lovingly--but never dogmatically, except upon the foundation principles.

FUNERAL SERVICES

On funeral occasions, when more or less of solemnity prevails amongst the friends in attendance, the cold and silent corpse, the wounded hearts and tearful eyes, the crape, etc., all help to impress the general lesson that death is not the friend of mankind, but its enemy. Such occasions,

therefore, are very favorable to the presentation of the Truth, and should be improved. Many now interested in Present Truth received their first clear impressions of it from a funeral discourse. Besides, many will attend and listen on such an occasion who would be too prejudiced, too fearful of opposing the wishes of their friends, to attend any of the regular ministries of the Truth. Accordingly, we advise that such opportunities be used as effectively as circumstances will permit. Where the deceased is a believer, and his family are in opposition, he should make a dying request that someone representing the Truth address the mourners on the occasion of his funeral. If the deceased be a child, and the parents are both in the Truth, there would be no question respecting the matter; but if only one of them were in sympathy and the other opposed, the responsibilities of the matter would rest with the father, though the wife would have a perfect right to present her view of the matter to her husband, and he should give her suggestions reasonable consideration--not, however, to the avoidance of his own responsibility to God as the head of the family.

In many of the little companies there are brethren quite qualified to make an interesting and profitable discourse suitable to such an occasion, without any suggestions from us or from any one; but in the majority of the little groups of consecrated ones special talent for such a discourse is lacking, and it is for this reason that we offer some suggestions respecting a profitable method of conducting such services. The brother conducting the service would preferably be one not close of kin to the deceased; and yet if no other than one of close kin were available, there could be no impropriety in a son or a husband or a father conducting the service. Unless quite conversant with public speaking, and familiar with the subject, his better plan might be to adapt to his particular use and the occasion the suggestions below given--writing them in manuscript form, from which he would read to the assembled friends. The writing should be in a very plain hand or by typewriter, and should be read over several times aloud before attempting to deliver it in public, so that the delivery might be as smooth and distinct and easily understood as possible. We would suggest further that if no brother be found competent for the occasion there would be no impropriety in such a reading by a sister--wearing some kind of a head covering.

We offer the following suggestions for the conduct of the service and for an address at the funeral of a brother in the Lord:

(1) Commence service by the singing of some appropriate hymn to a moderately slow tune--"Rock of Ages," "Nearer, my God, to Thee," "Lead, Kindly Light," "Many Sleep, but not Forever," or other.

(2) If any of the family be members of denominational churches, and desire their minister to be assigned some part in the service, this would be the most appropriate place to have him either read a few verses of Scripture on the resurrection, or offer a prayer, or both. If there be no such request, omit this (2), and pass from (1) to (3).

(3) Suggestive Outline of Funeral Discourse

Dear Friends: We are met together to offer a tribute of respect to the memory of our friend and Brother, whose earthly remains we are about to commit to the tomb--dust to dust, ashes to ashes. Notwithstanding the fact that there is nothing more common in the world than dying, and its attendant processes of sickness and pain and sorrow, we, nevertheless, find it impossible, as intelligent beings, to get accustomed to such painful breakings of ties of friendship, of home, of love, of brotherhood. Salve the sore as we will it is still painful, even though, as the Apostle declares, we, as Christians, "sorrow not as others who have no hope." And what could be more appropriate here today than an examination of this good hope, set before us in the Gospel as the balm of Gilead, which is able to heal earth's sorrows as nothing else can do.

However, before considering the hopes set before us in the Gospel--the hope of a resurrection of the dead, the hope of a future life in a much more happy condition than the present one--we are not improperly met with the question, Why should we need such a hope? Why should we not rather be spared from death than be given a hope of resurrection from the dead? Why does God permit us to

live but a few short days or years, and they full of trouble? and why are we then cut off, as the grass that withereth? and why are the heartstrings broken, and the home and family arrangements disordered by this great enemy of our race, death, which, during the past six thousand years has slain, it is estimated, over fifty thousand millions of our human race, our brethren according to the flesh--children of Adam? To thoughtful minds there is no more interesting question than this conceivable.

Infidelity tells us that being merely the highest grade of animals we are born and live and die as does the brute beast, and that there is no future life provided for us. But while shuddering at such a thought, and unable to prove to the contrary by any experience of our own, we, as children of God have heard our Father's Word "speaking peace through Jesus Christ our Lord." The message of peace, which our dear Redeemer gives us as his followers, is not a denial of the facts of the case, not a declaration that there is no pain, no sorrow, and no death, but the reverse of this. He declares, "I am the resurrection and the life." He tells us again that "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth." Ah! this contradiction of the voice of infidelity is sweet to us! It brings hope, and hope brings peace in proportion as we learn to know and to trust the Father and also the Son, whose words we have heard, and who is carrying out the Father's gracious plans.

But if the Lord thus purposes a resurrection, and if the message of the resurrection brings peace and rest and hope, is it not still proper for us to inquire, Why should God first turn man to destruction and then later on, by a resurrection, say to mankind, in the language of the Psalmist (*Psa. 90:3*) "Return ye children of men"? Why not have kept them alive? Why not hinder sorrow, pain and death? We answer that the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, give us the explanation of present conditions: nothing else throws the slightest light upon the subject. Their testimony is that God originally created our race perfect, upright, in his own image and likeness, and that through disobedience our first parents fell from that noble estate--came under the penalty of sin, which is *death*--and that this penalty for sin which was pronounced against father Adam involves his entire race in a natural way. The momentum of sin increased with human generations, and sickness, pain and death were proportionately hastened.

We have all been mistaught that the wages of father Adam's sin, the curse, the penalty, was to be eternal torment; that we and all mankind inherited that indescribable penalty as the result of original sin; and that only such as become followers of Jesus, consecrated saints, would escape that eternal torment. But we find, dear friends, that God's Word supports no such unreasonable, unjust and unloving plan, and that the Scriptures quite clearly state, to the contrary, that the wages of sin is *death*, that eternal life is the *gift* of God, and that none can have this *gift* except those who become vitally united to God's dear Son. Hence, we see that since the wicked will not be granted eternal life they could not suffer eternal misery. The Scriptural declaration is very plain and very reasonable: "All the wicked will God *destroy*." *Psa. 145:20*

Note how clearly this was stated to father Adam when he was put on trial, the very time and place above all others where we should look for a statement from our Heavenly Father respecting what would be the penalty of his righteous wrath. The statement is that the Lord made bountiful provision for our first parents in the various life-giving fruit-trees of Paradise, and merely tested them along the lines of obedience by prohibiting them from eating or even tasting or touching the fruit of one particular tree. It was this disobedience that brought exclusion from Paradise-- exclusion from the trees (grove) of life, and, hence, gradually brought the dying conditions which still prevail, and that increasingly; for all are aware that the average of human life today is very much shorter than that of father Adam, who "*lived nine hundred and thirty years*."

The Lord's words as presented in Genesis are, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This "day," the Apostle Peter explains to us, was a day of the Lord, respecting which he says, "Be not ignorant, brethren, concerning this one thing, that *a day with the Lord is as a thousand years*"; and it was within this "day" that Adam died, and none of his posterity have ever lived out an entire thousand-year day. After Adam had transgressed, the Lord's words of condemnation show very clearly that he had no thought of tormenting his creatures, and that the curse extended no farther

than to the destruction of the present life and the incidental tribulations connected with the dying condition. The Lord's expression of the curse to Adam was, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou art returned unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." **Gen. 2:17; 3:19; 2 Pet. 3:8**

It is certainly a great cause for rejoicing to realize that the terrible doctrine of eternal torment, with its infliction, not only upon our first parents, but upon all of their race, all of their children, is a false doctrine which came to us not from the Bible, but from the "Dark Ages." It is not in the Lord's declaration in any sense of the word. Hear the Apostle Paul's explanation of the matter, in full accord with the account in Genesis. He says (**Rom. 5:12**): "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by [as a result of] sin, and thus death passed upon all men, because all are sinners." What could be more reasonable or sensible or more satisfactory than this divine explanation of death?--that it is the result of sin; that our father Adam, when on trial, lost all of his rights and privileges by disobedience and came under this curse of sickness and pain, sorrow and trouble and dying; and that we, without having any trial (it being useless to try us who have inherited sinful propensities and weaknesses) are sharers of this same divine sentence against sin; viz., *death*--and are as a race gradually going down in weakness, sickness, pain and trouble, into the tomb?

The explanation is satisfactory to our judgments, and it accounts for the fact that the infant of but an hour or a day or a week or a month shares in the pain and dying process as well as those who live a few years longer and participate personally in the transgression of the laws of righteousness. "I was born in sin, shapen in iniquity; in sin did my mother conceive me," is the Scriptural declaration on this point. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

But now, where is the hope? What help can there be for such a sad condition of things? What can be done for those who are now suffering, sorrowing and dying, the world over--and what can be done for the fifty thousand millions who have already gone down into the prison-house of death? We answer that they can certainly do nothing for themselves. Six thousand years of human endeavor to lift itself out of sickness, pain and death has proven, unquestionably, the utter baselessness of any hope of that kind. Those who exercise hope must do so by looking unto the Lord, the God of our salvation. He has proposed a salvation, and the Bible is the revelation of the glorious plan of the ages which God is accomplishing step by step. The first step was that of redemption, the payment of the penalty that was against us--the death penalty. It was paid by our Lord Jesus, who "died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." None of the condemned race could so much as redeem himself, and hence, surely--as the prophet pointed out--"None could give to God a ransom for his brother." But man's extremity became God's opportunity, and he sent Jesus, who gave for us his *unimpaired life*, his life that was "holy, harmless, separate from sinners," separate from the dying race. This life God accepts as the corresponding price and offset to the condemned life of father Adam; and thus it avails for all of us who are of Adam's children, because we were not condemned on *our own* account, but "by one man's disobedience"; hence, God can be just and can release us through the obedience and ransom of one--Jesus Christ, our Lord. Of him it is written that he "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." **1 Tim. 2:6**

Let us notice, dear friends, while passing, that our Lord Jesus did not redeem merely the Church; but, as the Scriptures clearly declare, "He is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins [the Church's sins], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (**1 John 2:2**) Here, thank God! we have the basis for the good hope which, as the Apostle suggests, enables us to sorrow not as others who have no hope, or who have but a flimsy hope, not based upon the positive declarations of God's Word.

But, says one, It is long since Jesus died. Why is it that sin and death are still permitted to reign and to swallow up the human family? We answer that God delayed the sending of the *sacrifice* for four thousand years, and still delays to send the blessing secured by it which must ultimately result-- which blessing will be sure in God's "due time." The object in the delay, as explained by the Scriptures, is twofold:

First, to permit of the birth of a sufficient number of the human family properly to fill or populate the whole earth, when it shall be brought to the perfection of Eden, and as a whole be the Paradise of God restored on a larger and grander scale. These during the present time gain a certain amount of experience with sin and death, and learn a part of a very important lesson; viz., the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its undesirability. As soon as the Lord's time shall come, which we believe is not far distant, he will fulfil his promise and establish his Kingdom in the world, which will bind Satan, restrain all the powers and influences now working toward sin and death, and cause the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth. Thus Christ will bless the human family and lift it up, step by step, toward the grand perfection in which it was created--in the image of God as represented in father Adam. This period of blessing is called the Millennial Kingdom, and it was for it that the Lord taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." It will require all of this thousand-year day of blessing and restitution to establish righteousness on a firm basis in the earth, and to test the world of mankind--to ascertain who of mankind, by obedience to Christ, may be accounted worthy of eternal life; and who under full knowledge, because of preference for sin, will be sentenced to the Second Death--"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." These blessings of the Millennial age apply, not only to the sixteen hundred millions now living on the earth, but also to the fifty thousand millions who have gone into the tomb, the great prison-house of death, from which our Lord Jesus will call them forth to those Kingdom opportunities; as he declares, "I have the keys of death and of the tomb." **Rev. 1:18**

Secondly, dear friends, the Lord has delayed bringing in the general blessing and opportunities for the world, since our Lord redeemed us, in order that during this Gospel age he might gather out from amongst mankind, whom he has redeemed, a "little flock," an "elect" class, disciples, footstep followers, saints, holy ones. He is seeking thus "a peculiar people," "a Royal Priesthood," to be associated with himself in that Millennial Kingdom--not to have part with the world in restitution to earthly conditions, however perfect and grand and glorious, and to an Edenic home, however desirable, but to a still higher favor, to be like their Lord--spirit beings, partakers of the divine nature, far above angels, principalities and powers, and sharers of his glory. What a wonderful hope is this, and how inspiring to the hearts of everyone who has heard the invitation and who has become a disciple, a follower of Jesus, and is seeking to walk in his steps, as he has set us an example! What a blessing it will be to attain to such glory, honor and immortality as is offered to the Church in the First Resurrection! and what a grand privilege it will be to be associated with our Lord in dispensing the divine favors to the entire groaning creation, and bidding whosoever will, to Come to the water of life, and partake thereof freely! Yes; then, in the Kingdom, the Spirit and the Bride will say "Come" (for there will be a Bride then, the marriage of the Lamb taking place in the end of this Gospel age), "and whosoever will, may take of the water of life freely." (**Rev. 22:17**) Are not these two good reasons why God delayed giving the blessing as soon as the redemption sacrifice at Calvary was finished? Surely we may rejoice in the delay, and in our consequent opportunity to be called and to make our calling and election sure.

Such, dear friends, is a brief statement of the glorious hopes which animated our dear brother whose memory we honor today. These hopes were as an anchor to his soul, which enabled him to stand firmly on the Lord's side and to cast in his lot with those who confess the Master, and who seek to take up their cross daily in following him. He had noble qualities, which doubtless many of you recognized; but we are not basing our hopes and joys on his account on the supposition that he was perfect; but on our knowledge that Christ Jesus was his perfect Redeemer, and that he trusted in him; and that whosoever trusts in him will never be put to shame, but will eventually be brought off conqueror. No doubt our dear brother had estimable qualities which we all might copy, but we do not need to take any earthly pattern. God himself has given us in his Son a glorious example, which we all, like our dear brother, are to endeavor to copy. We do well not to look at each other, but at the perfect copy, Jesus. We do well to overlook natural blemishes, which all mankind have through the

fall, and to remember that all these are covered, for such as are the Lord's followers, by the robe of his righteousness, so that they are "accepted in the Beloved."

Finally, dear friends, let us learn a lesson of the brevity of present life; and that while God has great blessings in store for the world, we who have already heard of his grace and salvation in Jesus have special privileges, special opportunities, and correspondingly special responsibilities in connection with our knowledge. As the Apostle declares, "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." If we expect to be with the Lord and to share his glory and to be associates in his work in the future, we know that it will mean that our characters must be transformed, that our hearts must be renewed, that we must become not only pure in heart--that is, in intention, in will, in purpose, toward God, but, so far as possible, in word and in deed also--as nearly as the new mind may be able, under various circumstances, to control these bodies, imperfect through the fall. We are to remember not only to abide in Jesus and under the robe of his merit, but also to cultivate in our hearts more and more the graces of his Spirit; and good resolutions are a great aid in this direction. Let us, therefore, resolve afresh under these solemn circumstances and with these solemn, yet joyful thoughts before our minds, that as for us we will henceforth endeavor to walk more closely in the Master's footsteps and to let the light of his truth and grace more and more shine out through our lives. Let us endeavor that the world shall be better and happier for each day that we live in it, and that so far as possible we will glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his. Amen.

(4) The discourse may be followed with prayer, which should be either by the speaker himself or by some competent brother in the Truth. An outside minister should never be called upon to pray *after* the discourse. He would be tolerably certain to pray to men and not to God, and to try to destroy in the minds of the audience whatever good effect had been produced by the discourse. In the prayer the Lord should be specially thanked for his grace in Christ Jesus, and his blessing should be asked upon all present, and particularly upon the bereaved ones in the family connection.

(5) The service may be appropriately closed with a verse or two of a suitable hymn, such as previously suggested.

(6) We advocate merely a few words of prayer at the grave-side after the lowering of the coffin.

VARIATIONS IN THE DISCOURSE, TO SUIT VARYING CIRCUMSTANCES

The above discourse would, of course, be equally appropriate to a sister, by substituting the word "Sister" for "Brother"; but in the case of a worldly person or one not professing full consecration to the Lord, there would be need to make several amendments, such as will readily suggest themselves to any person competent to deliver such a discourse.

In the case of a child, whether of believing or unbelieving parentage, the discourse might be varied to suit; the deceased being referred to as "our young friend, cut down in the bud of manhood or womanhood by the scythe of the grim reaper, death"; or, if a babe, the text might be taken, "Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears, for thy works shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall *come again from the land of the enemy.*" (*Jer. 31:15-17*) In such a case it would be appropriate to emphasize the fact, that none will dispute, that children of immature years could not commit sin unto death, and that thus the Scriptural declaration is verified, that it was by one man's disobedience, and not by universal disobedience, that sin entered into the world, with death as its result or penalty.

TITHES, COLLECTIONS, etc.

So far as we are aware, none of the little companies of the Lord's people "of this way" (*Acts 22:4*) take up public collections. We have from the first advocated the avoidance of public

collections, not because we believe that there would be anything sinful in the procedure, and not because there is anything in the Scriptures to condemn it, but because the money question has been made so prominent throughout Christendom by all denominations that, in our opinion, its total avoidance would be to the Lord's glory. People who all their lives have been dunned for money are rapidly coming to believe that a great deal of the preaching and teaching, etc., is done for revenue--if not for revenue only or chiefly, at least for revenue in a considerable measure.

Not only do the Scriptures intimate that the majority of the Lord's faithful will be of the poor of this world, but our experience attests the same--that there are not many rich, not many great, not many noble, but "chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith." Some of these, we are sure, coming into meetings where Present Truth is advocated, feel a sense of relief in the absence of the worldly, money-grabbing spirit; and in some instances, at least, this feature has commended the Truth to them. Those whose eyes become opened to the light of Present Truth become possessed of a zeal and an energy in the service of the Truth, and so great a desire to let their light shine to the glory of the Father and of the Son, that many lukewarm Christians are inclined to say, What is the motive? What is the object? How will it pay you, or what will it advantage you, that you should seek to interest me--that you should loan me books or spend your time in endeavoring to draw my attention to these Bible themes, as you see them? Coming to the meetings and finding that even the usual collections and money-duns are absent, these inquirers are the more thoroughly convinced that it has been *Love*, for the Lord and for his Truth and for his flock, that has inspired the efforts made to bring the Truth within their reach. Even though somewhat inclined to be prejudiced against the Truth, these evidences of sincerity and of a Godlike spirit of benevolence and generosity commend themselves as being the emanations of the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love.

But while advocating this principle, and commending it most heartily to all of the Lord's people everywhere, it is our duty, on the other hand, to call attention to the fact that however ignoble and selfish and miserly any might be at the time of his acceptance of the Lord and consecration to him, he could not remain identified with "the Church whose names are written in heaven," and with the Lord, the Head of that Church, without to a considerable degree gaining a victory over his selfish disposition. We well know that selfishness and stinginess are foreign to the Spirit of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus and must, therefore, be foreign to all who will be ultimately recognized as children of their Father--all of whom must have the family likeness, the chief characteristic of which is love--benevolence. If, by heredity or unfortunate environment and education, the spirit of meanness has become largely developed in the mortal flesh of any who have been accepted as probationary members of the New Creation, he will find a warfare shortly along this very line. As the Apostle intimates, the mind of the flesh will war against the mind of the spirit, the New Creature, and the mind of the New Creature must gain the victory if it would ultimately attain the coveted position amongst the overcomers. Selfishness and meanness are to be overcome; godliness and liberality and generosity, both of heart and deed, are to be diligently cultivated. Such may, even to their dying day, be obliged to struggle with the flesh, but there must be no question about the attitude of the mind, the new will; and those who know them best will surely perceive in their conduct evidences of the victory of the new mind over the fleshly and selfish mind.

Our thought, therefore, in connection with the avoidance of collections and all financial questions in the assemblies of the Church is not to discourage giving. So far as our observation goes, those who give to the Lord most abundantly, most heartily, most cheerfully, are the most blessed of him in spiritual matters. It will be observed that we are not limiting this expression, "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," to monetary gifts; but are including in it all the gifts and sacrifices which the Lord's people are privileged to present on the altar of sacrifice, and which God informs us he is pleased to accept through the merit of our dear Redeemer. Indeed, wherever and whenever the question has been presented to us--Should I best pursue such a course of business, and thus be enabled to give largely of the product of my hands and brain for the spread of the truth? or should I better be content with less ability and service in this direction, by taking another course which would enable me to

give more of my time and personality to the interests of the Truth and its promulgation amongst friends and neighbors, etc.?--our answer universally has been that we should consider that our time and influence given to the service of the Truth are still more appreciated in the Lord's sight than gifts of money.

Hence, if one found himself possessed of a talent for presenting the Truth, and also a talent for legitimate money-making, our advice would be that he should preferably exercise the money-getting talent to a limited degree only, so as to give as much time and attention and energy as possible to the exercise of his still higher talent of ministering the Truth. And this would apply in considerable degree also to the ministries of the Truth through the printed page, colporteur, etc.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive," is an axiom which all of the Lord's people who have reached any good degree of development in divine likeness can well appreciate. God is the great Giver--he is continually giving. The whole creation in its every department is the result of this benevolence on God's part. He gave his Only Begotten Son, with the life, the pleasures, the blessings of intimate association with him. He has given to the angelic sons of God innumerable blessings. He bestowed upon our race, in the person of father Adam, the blessing of life, and the teeming blessings of this world, which, even in their present fallen and degraded condition, are wonderful. He not only provided us with our senses, by which we might notice pleasant odors, pleasant flavors, beautiful colors and combinations of them, etc., etc., but he has provided in nature wonderfully, bountifully, for the gratification of these tastes: in fruit and flower, gem and starry sky, he has been lavish in bestowing his bounties upon natural man.

And when we contemplate the blessings God has in reservation for the "little flock" of the New Creation, as revealed to us in his Word, we acknowledge that they are exceedingly abundant, more than we could have asked or thought. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Benevolence, therefore, or giving, assisting, blessing others, is a part of the Godlikeness. What wonder, then, that we should appreciate giving as being superior to receiving?

In proportion as we learn to appreciate the spiritual things, and in proportion as we have fellowship with the Lord, and become partakers of his Spirit, and in proportion as that spirit of love and bounty and generosity is shed abroad in our hearts--in the same proportion we find ourselves delighting to do good unto all men--especially to the household of faith. Love in us, as in our Heavenly Father, seeketh not merely her own interest and welfare, but is continually on the alert to notice how blessings may be conferred also upon others; how the lives of others may be brightened and cheered; how they may be comforted in their sorrows and assisted in their necessities. Indeed, it is in proportion as this new mind is shed abroad in us, in proportion as we become transformed by the renewing of our minds, and changed from glory to glory, that we come to appreciate the great work that God has mapped out for us in the future--the Godlike work of blessing all the families of the earth, of being his agents in the distribution of the heavenly bounties which he has provided for all who will come into accord with him. The New Creatures, therefore, find that in proportion as they grow in grace they come rather, while still appreciating the personal glories promised, to think more particularly of the privileges which will be theirs through joint-heirship with their Lord, of ministering restitution and all of its multitudinous blessings to the poor groaning creation--lifting as many of them as will up to the human perfection from which all fell in Adam.

This spirit of love, this desire to give, this desire to assist others, as it grows in our hearts in the present time, leads us not only to generosity of thought respecting others, but also to generosity of conduct--to willingness to sacrifice our time and influence for the sake of others; so that they may be blessed with the light of Present Truth, as we have been blessed by it. And this same spirit leads us, if we have not the talent for teaching or expounding, to seek to use our talent of time and opportunity for distribution of tracts, etc., accompanied by a word in season, however brief. And it leads us further, if we have also the money talent, to use it in the Lord's service, for the promulgation

of the Gospel. Indeed, we believe that the Lord appreciates today, as much as ever he did, the spirit which was in the poor widow who cast two mites into the Lord's treasury, and whose self-denial, as exhibited in this small offering, our Lord declared placed her, in his estimation, and, therefore, in the estimation of the Father, as a giver on the very highest plane--after his own heart: "She of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." (Luke 21:4) In her way, therefore, she was doing for the general cause much along the same line that our Lord himself was doing. He was giving, not merely a living, but laying down life itself, daily, hourly, in the service of others; and finally at Calvary, in the fullest and completest sense, he finished the work.

We have been inclined to wonder why our Lord did not in some degree caution the poor widow that she had done more than her duty; that if she had only two mites she should have kept them both, or at least one of them, for her own necessities. Had it been anyone else than the Lord or one of the apostles who noted this transaction and commended it, without expressing a word of caution in connection with it, we would have felt perfectly free to have added that word of caution. But, on the whole, we presume that very few require caution along the line of self-preservation. Very few require to be cautioned against giving all of their living. There may be some; but we are sure it would be true with those few, as with the poor widow, that the Lord would make up to them in some manner for what we would be inclined to consider their over-generosity. We are quite confident that it is better they should err on that side of the question than that they should err on the opposite side. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth [if the increase come not in natural things it surely will come in spiritual matters], and there is that withholdeth more than is meet [those that are overcareful, overcautious, penurious, overly conservative], but it tendeth to poverty [sometimes to financial poverty, but always, surely, to spiritual poverty]." Prov. 11:24

Since the Lord has placed no law upon his people in respect to their benevolences, but has left the matter open to those who have consecrated *their all* to him, it is evident that he intends that their consecration shall be measured by their subsequent conduct--their sacrifices, their self-denials. The question, then, properly comes before each of us individually, To what extent should I give of my time, of my influence, of my money, to the Lord? We answer that if the inquiry comes from one who has made a *full* consecration of himself, and has become a New Creature, there can be but one answer; viz., that he has nothing *to give*--he has already *given* all that he has to the Lord. If he kept anything back then he did not make a full consecration, and he may be sure that he has not been fully accepted of the Lord.

But, admitting that we have given all to the Lord, how shall we determine the divine will respecting our carrying out of this gift? We answer that each one is to consider himself as appointed by the Lord the *steward* of his own time, influence, money, etc., and each is to seek to use these talents to the best of his ability, to the Master's glory. And since he is granted the privilege of the throne of grace, this would mean that if he is in doubt respecting the use of these talents, he may ask of God who giveth his wisdom liberally to him that asketh, and upbraideth not. Guided by this wisdom from above, in proportion as his love and zeal for the Lord grow day by day through a knowledge of the Truth and the attainment of its spirit, he will find himself giving more and more of time, more and more of his influence, and more and more of such means as are at his command, for the service of the Truth--and planning, additionally, how he may curtail the various personal and family obligations so as to be able to increase his offerings and sacrifices.

As is well known, God instituted with the Jews a tithing system, under which the one-tenth of all the increase of wealth, whether of grain or vegetables or herds or flocks or money, was set apart for sacred uses as the Lord's, to be used only for sacred purposes. But this was an arrangement only for "the house of *servants*." The Lord has left "the house of *sons*" without any such law or regulation. Does this imply that he expects less from the sons than from the servants? Nay, verily; the son who would be less interested in the father's business than the servant would be unworthy his place as a son, and would certainly lose it; another would be found possessed of more of the true spirit of sonship. In the case of the house of sons, not merely *one-tenth* but *everything* is consecrated,

sacrificed, and *all* is to be used as opportunity indicates to us as possible services to the Lord and to his cause. Thus we are to proceed continually, laying down our lives, our all, in the service of the Truth.*

*The obligations of the consecrated to their families, and how this has to do with the devotion of their *all* to the Lord, is considered in Chap. xiii.

The Apostle draws this lesson to our attention in his letter to the *Philippians (4:17)*: assuring them that their voluntary gifts were both useful and appreciated, he adds--"Not because I desired a gift; but I desired fruit that might abound to your account." He knew that so surely as they had been begotten of the holy Spirit it would begin to bring forth a fruitage of good works and benevolences; and that the more these benevolences were in evidence, the more he had demonstration of their spiritual growth, which was the thing he really desired. And so it is today. The Lord informs us that all the gold and silver are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. He really needs none of our efforts, none of our money; but because it will be to our advantage, and assist in our development, he permits his work to be in such a condition that it will have need of all the efforts of those who are truly his, and of all the means which they will be prompted to use in their efforts to glorify him.

How gracious is this arrangement! What blessings these privileges have already brought to the Lord's dear people! We doubt not that they will continue with us to the end of our racecourse--to the intent that we may all have the blessed privilege of rendering our talents, whatever they may be in the Lord's service. So then we urge that, after the example of the poor widow and her two mites, there are none so poor that they cannot show the Lord their desire of heart. Our Lord's estimate seems to be, as expressed in one place, that he that is faithful in a few things will be faithful in larger and greater opportunities; and to such it is that he will be inclined to give, not only the larger opportunities of the future, but the larger opportunities also of the present time.

Our advice is that the money question be left, so far as possible (and that we believe is *altogether*), out of consideration in the general meetings of the Church. We advise that the Spirit of the Lord be cultivated, and that as it richly dwells within, each will be anxious to do his share toward meeting, not only the current expenses of the Church--rent, perhaps, or other expenses--but he will be anxious also to do what he can in respect to the extending of the light which is blessing his own soul, to others who yet sit in darkness. We advise along this same line that money be not solicited from outsiders, though we know of no reason why money tendered by outsiders should ever be refused. It would, at least, be an indication of their sympathy, and no doubt would bring them eventually, either in the present or in the coming life, some recognition and reward from him who declared that even a cup of cold water given to one of his disciples in his name would by no means fail of its reward. *Matt. 10:42; Mark 9:41*

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