

ABILENE1935 LECTURES

by Abilene Christian College

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14 Chapters

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Introduction

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The Church Today In Comparison with the Church in Apostolic Times in its organization

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CHURCH IN APOSTOLIC TIMES IN ITS ORGANIZATION

E. H. IJAMS

“And he gave to me, 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:” Ephesians 4:11-12.

“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 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 20:17; Acts 20:28.

“Paul to Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:” Php_1:1. “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” Hebrews 13:17.

Abilene Christian College is to be congratulated on having chosen such an important theme for its 1935 lectureship. I am sure it is good to make frequent comparisons between the church of the apostolic times and the church of today. The church of apostolic times is the admitted standard of church excellence. Beyond doubt the church of the first century had favor with God and power with men. The most significant chapter in the history of the world is the story of the rise and spread of Christianity under the Apostles of Jesus. The new religion which they proclaimed overcame difficulties and made progress at a rate never equalled. Beyond doubt it was effective, workable and adequate in practice as well as theory. If the church of today has varied from the model of apostolic times it will be well to correct such variations by an immediate return to the original pattern, the church of the first calvary.

SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS OF APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY In the first lecture of this important series, I have been asked to compare the church of today with the church of the Apostolic times as to organization. Before undertaking any direct comparison of this it is well to notice some of the striking characteristics of first century Christianity. A review of these notable characteristics will help us to appreciate both the form and the function of the organization of the church. In this connection, you know, of course that Christianity in its beginning was simple in form and spirit. It concerned itself with the fundamentals of life. Its doctrines touched principles and actualities. It grappled with such realities as sorrow, sin, death. It answers human questions about God, about duty, and the hope of eternal life. It taught the truths and principles needed to meet every issue of life. It filled human hearts with the passion for righteousness and the hope of

heaven. But the Christianity of the first century was not only simple and fundamental, it was also practical. It met the actual needs of men. It emphasized the fact that the hungry must be fed that the homeless must be cared for, that the sick must be nursed, and that the sorrowing must be comforted. It gave clear emphasis, also, to the fact that people need to be taught the ways of righteousness, that they must have the advantages of discipline, exhortation, and encouragement. It undertook to make religion workable in the home and in the community as well as in the place of worship. Christianity was, and is, everywhere the means of meeting the practical as well as the theoretical spiritual needs of mankind. And we must not forget that this simple and practical religion that we call Christianity was wonderfully adaptable. It was simple enough to meet all varieties of outward circumstance. Because it was so thoroughly adaptable, it worked equally well in Jerusalem, in Corinth, and in Rome. Being simple practical and adaptable Christianity was—and is—suited to all nations and all ages. It was not—and is not—based on local customs, nor does it depend for its effectiveness on fortunate situation of circumstance

It will do us good in these days, when self-appointed leaders frequently appear, to remember that God at first gave to the world inspired leaders. It was these specially prepared leaders who started the kingdom, taught others to select the best men among their number to be their leaders and teachers. Thus it came about that the leadership of the first century was a trained leadership. That was another characteristic of apostolic Christianity. The leaders of that far off day were leaders in deed as well as in name. And another characteristic of Christianity of the first century is this: it was a thing of principle, not a set of rules. Everywhere it gave clear cut emphasis to principles. Organization was important; but it was subservient to principle and purpose. Character and faithful service—soul saving were the big things in the religion demonstrated by the apostles of Christ. Organization in the early days was the means to the Divine end.

ORGANIZATION CONSISTENT WITH PURPOSE

Now having refreshed our minds in a brief way as to some of the outstanding characteristics of Apostolic Christianity, or of the church under apostolic guidance, we are ready to take note of its organization. And the first thing that should impress us is this: In apostolic times the organization of the church was thoroughly adapted to the nature of its character and work. As we have said already, Apostolic Christianity was simple and fundamental in principle. Its organization was also simple and fundamental. It was based upon principles, not on mere form or circumstance. We know of course that the church was not organized for honor but for service. Offices were created not for distinction but for the accomplishment of the Lord's work. The organization of the church in Apostolic times was not only simple but selective. It combined the best features of the monarchical and democratic forms of government. It combined the heavenly and the earthly factors of religious authority. For instance, we know that the church had, and has a supreme head, Jesus Christ. He is the head over all things to the church. (Ephesians 1:23) He is, indeed, King of kings, and Lord of lords to all his followers. But Christ does not rule by direct appearance and speech to his widely scattered people. As our text says, he hath made "some Apostles and prophets" etc. to be his witnesses and messengers unto others. When those taught by the Apostles united for the work and worship they had apostolic guidance in selecting officers or leaders, who in these worshipping groups or congregations were called, elders, or bishops, or shepherds or pastors. Ruling over the entire body of Christians everywhere is Christ, the Supreme Head of the church. Over the local congregations were the officers we have mentioned— elders, or bishops, or overseers, pastors.

Local congregations also had deacons, men who gave heed to the temporal and benevolent responsibilities of the work. Then in addition to the elders, deacons, apostles, and prophets, there was a great multitude of members who were instructed to respect and to obey those who had the rule over them. All members and all officers under Christ, the Head, worked together as one body.

Everywhere in New Testament times, the apostles and prophets taught the same truths and the same doctrines. Everywhere believers acknowledged the same authority, the authority of Christ. Everywhere congregations had the same officers chosen for reasonable fitness rather than personal glory. Everywhere followers of Christ were taught to respect and honor those who by reason of recognized merit, had the rule over them. This in brief is a simple description of the organization of the church in the New Testament times.

It should be noted that this simple organization combined the human and the Divine—the heavenly and the earthly. Though simple in form, it was wonderfully adapted to the Divine purpose for which it was designed. In its simplicity it was suited to all the varying ages and conditions of men. Its great simplicity and its adaptableness gives opportunity for principles to operate in all the work the Lord wants done. This combination of ultra simplicity and high efficiency in spiritual accomplishments is one evidence that the Church of the first century had its origin in divine wisdom and love.

HONOR THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH BY RESPECTING ITS ORGANIZATION

Now I suggest that if we are to keep the organization of the church of the present in line with that of the first century, that every Christian must be taught to respect the form and function of its simple but effective organization. Everyone who lives under the authority of Christ must respect the organization by which the principles of his Gospel are perpetuated. We must guard against the inconsistency of saying, “Lord, Lord” to Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, while disregarding the form of government which He instituted for the perpetuation of His church. Through Christ Jesus, the One unto whom all authority has been given, God has joined together the simple form of organization and the divine effectiveness of its function. He has wisely united the truth of Christianity with the simplicity of a minimum organization. We, must be careful, therefore, not to separate what God has joined together. If we do not keep together these principles which God has united, we betray the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and do violence to Divine wisdom. The moral obligation rests upon us to respect the form of the organization even as we respect the Divine origin of the church and the purpose for which it was created.

PRESENT AND PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY COMPARED.

Now, when we come down to the actual comparison of the church today with the church of apostolic times, find some departures from the principles that we have just mentioned. We notice, first of all, that a great deal of what is called “New Testament Christianity” does not appear to have the power that Christianity of the first century had. This fact suggests that there is something lacking. It suggests that somewhere we have missed the mark in our efforts' to adhere both to form and substance of the Christian religion. When we look for the cause of this weakness or inconsistency, we find some of it in organization. It appears in some instances today that, though we have the same offices as in former times, that we have not the spirit of service and leadership that these offices should represent. If your church doesn't have these offices and these offices

only, can it be considered the New Testament church? Sometimes men are elders in name only. Sometime though elders in name, they are not apt to teach, or they fail to command the highest respect and confidence of the people within and without the congregation. Sometimes we find men listed as elders and deacons who seem to be content with "holding office." They appear to be only mildly concerned about the work to which they are called. They think of the eldership as an office to be held instead of service to 'be rendered. It happens, therefore, sometimes that, we have the rule of the unworthy and incompetent instead of the rule of the humblest and best men in the congregation. Sometimes we find men in Scriptural offices who are self appointed. They are qualified in their own opinion but not by actual qualities of mind and heart. Thus, it comes about that instead of leadership of the best, according to the first century standard, we occasionally have the leadership of the usurper or of the childish weakling.

Another factor that has entered into the problem of church organization and unity within recent years, is the popular craze for "freedom." In nearly every part of the world new and revolutionary ideas of government have sprung up within the last quarter of a century. These radical ideas go by different names in different countries, but everywhere they operate to pull down constituted authority and make every man a law unto himself, set up the reign of the "mass mind" —majorities. This popular trend in theories of government has affected the thinking of people in the mass and even members of the church. As a result it is not difficult to recognize here and there a spirit of revolt against the apostolic form of congregational government—a kind of spiritual anarchy. It is admitted that these departures are natural and easy under the circumstances; but they are regrettable. They are indeed worse than regrettable because they are exceedingly dangerous. If we allow such tendencies to go on toward a logical end, it will bring an ever increasing number of perversions and reversals of the Divine pattern of church organization. Departures from the true pattern should be recognized and corrected. We should count it a privilege to exercise constant diligent to keep the organization of the church in the 20th century fully in line with the principles that governed the organization of the church in the first century.

IT SHOULDN'T CHANGE OR ADD TO IT'S ORGANIZATION

It should be a joy to do this because the church is the most sacred organization known to man. No existing institution in the world has a higher origin—the mind of God. No institution is designed to accomplish a holier mission—the saving of the world. No institution is so peculiarly a channel of God's blessings unto the sons of men. The church which bears Christ's name and acknowledges His authority is the body of Christ. It represents Him and His glory and His love for mankind. It is "the light of the world and the salt of the earth." Christ Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it. He wants it to be holy, and without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." For the glory of the church Christ gave some to be apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints to the work of the ministering. I am glad, therefore, to have the privilege of encouraging brethren to respect and maintain in the church of the 20th century that same kind of simple, effective organization which the church had in the first century. I am glad for the restoration of both the form and the spirit of the organization which the church had in the days of the apostles. I am glad of the privilege or saying to you today, "Let us keep together what God has joined—the great and holy mission of the church and the wise and simple organization designed for its control. Let us honor our Lord and the Head of the church by doing the work He has given us to do in and through the organization which is designed for its good."

The Church Today In Comparison with the Church in Apostolic Times in its organization

The Church Today In Comparison with the Church in Apostolic Times in its organization THE CHURCH TODAY IN COMPARISON WITH THE

CHURCH IN APOSTOLIC TIMES IN ITS DISCIPLINE

E. H. JAMS

“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 the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-12.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”—Romans 16:17.

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one do not to eat.”—1 Corinthians 5:11.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

“For this ye know; that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”—Ephesians 5:5; Ephesians 5:11.

“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.” —1 Timothy 5:20.

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”—2 Thessalonians 3:6.

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”—1 Thessalonians 5:14.

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision; “Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teachings things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”—Titus 1:10-11.

SIMPLICITY THE KEY NOTE OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY In the first lecture of this series the subject of study was the “Organization of the Church in Apostolic Times in Comparison with the Church Today.” The point of emphasis at the morning hour was the simplicity of the organization of

the Church of the Apostolic times. The simplicity was the strength of church organization in the first century. In those days Christ, the founder and builder of the Church, was everywhere recognized as its Supreme Head. It was also recognized that Christ the head of the Church gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers “for perfecting the saints unto the work of the ministering.” This simple organization was by actual test, wonderfully adapted to all the various circumstances of first century conditions. It met the real needs of the existing world better than any elaborate organization could have done. We believe that the simple adaptability of the New Testament organization is still adequate to meet all the spiritual needs of the modern world.

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION GO HAND IN HAND.

Tonight our subject is “Discipline in the Apostolic Church as Compared with the Church at the Present.” We have approached the subject of discipline with a brief statement concerning organization, because we believe that discipline should be considered in connection with organization. We believe that the subject of discipline should be studied in relation to certain definite characteristics of New Testament Christianity. One of these characteristics of major importance is that, in New Testament times, Christian leaders really led, and rulers of the Church actually ruled. Those placed in authority by divine choice were respected for the work’s sake, and their counsel was taken with respect for men and for God.

Another characteristic of New Testament Christianity that should be kept in mind is the fact that the Church of the early days made war on sin. The apostles and followers of Jesus made no compromise with evil things. They not only opposed sin, but they condemned sin in all. And another obvious characteristic of Christianity in the apostolic age is the fact that the mission which brought Jesus to the earth was understood. He came to save people from their sins, not to make excuses for sin. Christians taught, and were taught, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to cleanse themselves from all defilements of flesh and spirit. And this in the main they were glad to do. (2 Corinthians 7:1).

These characteristics of New Testament Christianity have been mentioned to pave the way for this affirmation, namely, —those whom Christ has set over his flock must discipline the group in the spirit of meekness and love. They must be willing to reprove and rebuke and exhort with all patience and kindness. Christians everywhere need constant admonition. Those who would live godly in Christ Jesus need teachers to encourage and instruct them so that they may deny worldly and ungodly lusts. For the work’s sake, somebody must be diligent and faithful in teaching and admonishing those who are trying to fight the good fight. For the good of the individual and the group, the weak must be encouraged and the erring must be instructed plainly and lovingly. The disorderly must be recognized, and those causing division must be marked. Somebody must have the discernment, faith, and courage to do this; and congregational officers are the proper ones to do it. Trespassers must be restored by those who are spiritual in the spirit of meekness. (Galatians 6:1).

Elders and deacons must be spiritual, as must also teachers, preachers, and Christians generally. Those who are impenitent and who cannot be brought to a correction of their faults must be separated from the body of Christ. Who is officially responsible for acting in such matters if not the officers of the congregation? Presumably, no argument is needed to establish the fact that the

principle of discipline must be observed among God's people. In like manner it is clear that elders are to take lead in its scriptural application, of the principle of discipline. But it must be remembered that though elders are to take the lead in disciplinary measures, all Christians are responsible to God for observing the disciplinary principle and for supporting those who scripturally apply it. THE VALUE OF DISCIPLINE The word discipline is a great word. It stands for that control and harmony without which no individual can attain the highest character. Discipline is of great importance to the individual. It is of incalculable importance to the group. It is discipline in the good sense that unifies the athletic team. It is discipline that gives focus, power and harmony to the work of a good school. It is discipline that keeps the family together, guiding each member in observing his faithful privileges and responsibilities. It is discipline, also, in the Church, in the congregation, that gives it uniformity, regularity, and power for good. It is obvious, therefore, that the principle of discipline must be observed among God's people.

Some time ago I heard an English naval officer tell an interesting story. He described a picture that hangs in Westminster Abbey in London. It shows, he said, a British war vessel in a sinking condition. One end of the vessel is awash. The deck was also tilted side-wise. But on the afterdeck, standing in perfect order, is the ship's band, flanked by a line of sailors. It is plain that everything possible is being done to save the men; but it is also obvious that the ship is going down and, in all probability—every man with it. But not a man breaks rank. There is no disorder, no panic among members of the crew. To the last, every man kept his place and did his duty. That picture which occupies a place of honor in the capitol building of the British Empire has as its title just one word—"Discipline." The naval man telling the story had a special knowledge of that picture. His father was captain of the sinking war vessel. He went down with his ship. Discipline.

Service cannot be maintained without discipline. Discipline must be employed to defend every good thing. Its principles must apply in the maintenance of every worthwhile institution. This being true, it is clear that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ must observe the principle of discipline. It requires discipline to maintain the sanctity of the character of the Church. It cannot be the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth" without observing the discipline of sound doctrine and right conduct.

Some Obvious Facts.

Misconduct on the part of Church members and poor discipline in dealing with those guilty of misconduct have done great harm to the reputation and the influence of the Church of Christ.. The failure of certain individuals to observe the true standards of Christian character and the failure of Church officers to discipline the guilty parties have brought reproach upon the name of Christ and have hindered the spread of the Gospel.

Experience and the revelation of God's word both show the necessity of drawing the line between the Church and the world. A distinction between order and disorder must be maintained. God's standards for His people are admittedly high, but they must be kept just as high as God makes them. Their power for good to the individual and to society, depends upon their being kept up to their divinely appointed plane. Those who would be steadfast and unmoveable in their loyalty to the will of our Heavenly Father must refrain from lowering the standards which God has set as the pattern of character for His saints. But it is equally obvious that discipline must be administered both in wisdom and in love. The leaders who are scripturally qualified and selected to oversee the

congregation must not be vindictive in dealing with the unruly. Elders are not called primarily to punish those guilty of misconduct. Their primary responsibility is to teach and to feed and to develop the spiritual characters in those over whom the Holy Spirit has made them bishops. When it is necessary and in keeping with their responsibility as shepherds of the flock to deal with the disorderly, they must make diligent effort to do it in love combined with the very best judgment that they can command. They must guard against every sort of prejudice and partiality. They must let their manner of procedure as well as their motives command the respect and confidence of all concerned. Elders must never forget that if they can win a brother from the error of his way, they have saved a soul from death. They ought to so value the soul that they are willing to put forth any reasonable effort of love and patience to win the sinner from his erring way. On the other hand elders must be courageous, even relentless, in their loyalty to truth and right. And their hands must be upheld by brethren generally. The efforts of proper persons to keep together what God has joined—sound doctrine and right conduct—is a duty which every Christian must encourage. In short, it is obligatory upon all God's people to help uphold the efforts of their elders when they in obedience to God's commands and their special responsibilities, seek to maintain the order and discipline of the Church. *The Rising Tide of Worldliness Must Be Resisted.*

It is my observation that worldliness is one of the great problems with which Christian leaders have to deal at the present time. The very atmosphere of our modern world is charged with the spirit of revolt against authority. Civil governments in all parts of the world are grappling with revolutionary influences within their own borders. In the moral realm there is a growing tendency to disregard the laws of decency, honor, and right. In religion there is a tendency for every man to become a law unto himself. Under these conditions and tendencies, the tide of worldliness seems to rise ever higher and higher. Many members of the Church are infected with it to the degree they do not suspect. For that reason, the necessity of maintaining respect for Scriptural authority weighs doubly heavy upon the elders of the Church at the present time. It is an extraordinary condition which all should recognize, and in which we all are obligated to do our full duty.

Since the Bible is our source of authority, the rule of practice for all things in work and worship, we shall end this study in the same way it was begun—with readings from God's word. We read these scriptural statements with the prayer that they may be so received as to give light and understanding to all who hear.

“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 the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-12.

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.” 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he receiveth of us.” 2 Thessalonians 3:6.

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision; “Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.” Titus 1:10-11.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and 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: for that is unprofitable for you.” Hebrews 13:17.

The Church Today in its Care of the Poor and Sick

The Church Today in its Care of the Poor and Sick THE CHURCH TODAY IN ITS CARE OF THE POOR AND SICK

JOHN ALLEN HUDSON

Professor Cox assigned me this subject to fit into the general discussion of the Church, which this entire series of lectures features. Other speakers whom I have not heard have delivered themselves upon the many other phases of the Church in its work, before I come to you with this address. In fact, the one consolation I have is that I am put in the position of delivering the last lecture of the series. I do not wish to take advantage of the occasion and, therefore, undertake to re-hash all that has been said, nor on the other hand, to preach a sermon on the whole subject of the Church just because I am last. This lecture happens to be the last because of a difficulty that Professor Cox and I had in the arrangement of dates for my speeches. I should like very much to have heard a number of the other speakers on this program for, no doubt, certain points in the things which they had to say dovetailed with this subject assigned me.

We understand in the outset of this that the Church is not, strictly speaking, a mere social agency. We hear much these days of the social gospel. On the subject of a social eschatology some writers have taken the position that the fruits of Christianity in this life are not merely for the perfection of individual character but for the actual fulfilling of the destiny of the religion of Christ. Someone else has called this "Eudemonism."

Christ did preach a social gospel and He undertook to relieve all sorts of distress, but to take the position on the subject of the social gospel that the primary ends of the religion of Christ are temporal, will be to reverse the fundamentals of the teachings of Christ. The thought of a present world social conclusion for the gospel of Christ has led many missionaries on the foreign fields to seek to spread the gospel through institutionalism. This is called "institutional missionary work." Such a plan is to set up a hospital or some other agency for physical relief or for mental training and thru such a means to undertake to reach the soul of the person with whom contact is formed. In my way of thinking this reverses the importance of things and puts too much stress on the social aspect of Christianity. I do not read in the New Testament where any of the Apostles or other inspired leaders of the Apostolic Age ever looked toward the relief of sickness or distress as a thing of primary concern. Naturally, Christianity could not overlook the earthbound phases of the religion of Christ. Problems of physical relief, of caring for the poor and administering to the sick not only arose with the very beginning of the Church but they are as old as the religion of the race. The Apostles could not overlook such social problems as naturally arose.

It can not be said from the study of the New Testament, however, that the Apostles set up an intricate and perfect system of mechanics for caring for the relief of the poor and sick. Such is not true. Those records of relief that we have in the New Testament indicate that individual cases were treated as the need arose. Whatever was done was done without any intricate machine being set

up. In the Jerusalem church, the first case that came to the attention of the Apostles Was incident to the community of goods which was established voluntarily by the early church. There is no indication in the Scriptures that the Apostles ordered or demanded of the individual members when they became converts to Christianity, that they should give all they possessed into the common treasury. While there is nothing to indicate there was a demand from the Apostles looking to this end, we do know from the Book of Acts that all the early members did give all they possessed into a community of goods. This is not a Christian communism, looking toward a definite system of production and distribution. There is no well-mapped plan or scheme for carrying out Christian communism. It seems the early Church became so enthused over the rapturous wonders of Christianity, that the mem* bers simply disregarded the material side of life and rushed at once voluntarily into a willing sharing of all that each individual possessed. We are told that as many as had houses or lands sold them and brought the proceeds and cast them at the Apostles' feet. This condition automatically thrust upon the Apostles the responsibility of dispensing from the common store the goods to meet the daily needs of the members of this early church. The first record we have of any sort of relief of the poor came as a result of this system of a community of goods.

We are told in Acts the 6th chapter that word was brought to the Apostles that the Grecian widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. It was noised about that some of them were in extreme want. The caring for the poor in their own community thus became a problem in the life of the church only a short time after it was established.

While no system of mechanics was set up to spread the social phases of the gospel of Christ, this first need did call for the first officers, with the exception of the Apostles, to be in the New Testament church. Seven men were ordained to be deacons and we can judge from the record of Acts the 6th chapter that the work of these men was the distribution of material goods to the needy of the Christian community. Relief agencies had been in the world, no doubt, from the beginning. Here the church is forced to adopt some means of dealing with the problems of its own cases in need. The Apostles said that it was not meet that they should "leave the Word of God to serve tables." The seven men who were ordained at the direction of the Apostles, and by them, upon the selection of the Church, had as their business then the spending of church finances. From a study of the record given us in Book of Acts, we reach the conclusion that the relief of the poor and the needy in the New Testament church was left in the hands of the deacons. It would not do, however, to take the position that the only way a case of actual need could be relieved would be thru the action of some deacon or group of deacons. We must not overlook the fact that there is an individual Christian duty in the social phases of Christianity as well as the duty of an official group in the New Testament church. If one meets an individual case of distress the person might starve to death before he could get an action of the deacons, looking toward the relief of the case. One cannot say he must first call together the deacons of the church and see whether they feel they can render aid in a certain case. If he is in a position to render enough aid himself, his individual Christian duty demands that he do so without calling upon the church for assistance. In the immortal parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches one must not pass by a case of need if it be sickness or any other sort of distress, but must render what aid he can according to the exigencies of the case.

Christianity is, beyond question, the finest religion the world has ever had in that it recognizes and demands of each individual member that he be his brother's keeper, or that, if granted the opportunity, he, too, shall be the good Samaritan. We must clearly recognize the difference between the individual Christian duty and the official duty of a group in the church, and Jesus makes room for both in the Scriptures. In many instances the Church has been imposed upon by thoughtless or by over-expectant people. Even in the days of Christ we learn of certain persons who He judged followed the Christ because of the "loaves and fishes." They had such a mean and low estimation of the values of life that they could see only such things as food and clothing. There are some like that in this age as there has been in every age and they see': to impose upon the Church. Its spiritual values to them are not supreme as they ought to be. Perhaps there is not a church of any size in any of the cities of the land but that has had experience with certain imposing individuals. Overmuch charity can injure a person and sometimes the churches have spoiled certain individuals by looking too carefully after their needs, of course, each case must be judged upon its merits.

Such social and religious agencies as the Salvation Army, the Community Fund and so on, have found out the only way to work charity on a uniform basis by what is called the "case method." Trained workers study individual cases and make recommendations as to what should be done. When the work of the Church in any community is considered, the deacons will finally have to adopt the case method method, secure the results without abusing the principles of Christianity. The church, for example, where I have been preaching in Tulsa for several years has had at different times the stern necessity of cutting off supplies from certain imposing individuals. As everybody knows, in this time of depression there have been unusual demands upon churches as well as upon all other agencies that have been established for the relieving of distress. The unusual times have called forth unusual demands but the thing about the New Testament church is that the Lord made it sufficiently comprehensive in principles, yet flexible enough in operation, that it can be adapted to any emergencies or conditions of any age.

There is always the human equation in divine affairs, for the Lord allows as much liberty as is required in working out the principles of the religion of Christ. A wideawake church will have a body of deacons who are prepared to meet in a skilled way the emergencies that may arise. This will enable them to relieve distress in cases of actual need, and will prevent the spoiling of other folk who might become professional Charity hunters. In harmony with the spirit of good-will at certain seasons of the year, when special efforts are made to manifest a helpful spirit, such times as Thanksgiving and Christmas, congregations of the Church of Christ throughout the land have been preparing baskets for the poor or indigent. But we must bear in mind that there are many others in the community and numerous organizations that are likewise interested in manifesting such spirit. The Church at Tenth and Rockford Streets in Tulsa has, therefore, found it proper for a number of years to co-operate, at least in the matter of reports with a Community Chest in the giving of baskets. We have found that unless such attention is paid to the relief agencies around about us, there will be duplications in some instances and perhaps neglect to others. One must bear in mind that in this Christian civilization so-called, there is a spirit of helpfulness on the part of society in general. This, of course should not deter any congregation from doing its best and looking after its own poor, and then it is often-times advisable to undertake to reach others. The Christ said "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Of course, we are not necessarily to give

with a view to reaching the soul thru the body but the spirit of Christ will impel us to aid others because it causes us to recognize all men as brothers, at least in the flesh. Of course, we must recognize that there is a very close relation between the spiritual and the natural and one must always keep the perspective of the spiritual. Even the abuse of one's body might be un-Christian and it has been said that cleanliness is godliness, which is not a bad "saw." This thought that makes one to look after his own needs, likewise will demand that he recognize an interest in his fellow, men. But, in any case, where one puts the physical above the spiritual, it is a case of getting the cart before the horse, or of having the tail to wag the dog.

One of the most beautiful cases of relief in the New Testament is that of a certain woman named Dorcas. In the 9th chapter of Acts of the Apostles, we have her story. She seems to have given much if not all of her time, to the making of garments for the needy and the poor, although we do not know that she administered very greatly to the sick. Dorcas became such a famed character that a certain relief society has been named for her. Of course, this is an unwarranted thing so far as the Scripture is concerned. Dorcas was not an intentional originator of any relief society. She simply lived a Christian, doing all she could to aid her fellowbeings. When she died those she had assisted were standing around her weeping and showing the cloaks and garments she had made for them. We are told in this instance the Apostle Peter raised her from the dead. The thing that prompted Dorcas was her unselfish devotion to the needs of her fellowbeings. This is a most creditable spirit in any one. The religion of Christ must take notice of every phase of life. There is no phase of thinking that Christianity does not affect, either directly or indirectly. The spirit of the religion of Christ will force individual members and congregations as well to take notice of the conditions of fellow members and even of persons in the world. A case of notice was brought to Timothy's mind by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy , 5 th chapter. Certain aged widows were to become wards of the church. However, the Apostle Paul gives the conditions. He says such a person must be seventy years old of three score years and ten, must have been the wife of one man, have reared children, and have washed the saints' feet, but he puts in another restriction before she can become a ward or in the care of the church. He says if she has nephews they must first learn to show piety at home, which seems to mean that if she has a nephew who can care for her and meet her physical needs, she is not to become a ward of the Church, but if she has no near relative then the Church is obligated to take her and to support her. The relief of such cases is, no doubt, largely like it is with orphan home work. There are some among us who say that orphan homes ought not to be established but that children should be adopted in the various Christian homes. When you ask a person how many such children he has adopted in almost every instance you will find he has taken none. Then his objection to the founding and maintaining of orphan home seems to be less valid in the face of the facts that he has done nothing.

There is no way set up in the New Testament Scriptures for the relief of such widows as may come to the Church's care but over in Nashville, Tennessee, the Chapel Avenue Church has established what it calls an "Old folks' home" that embraces not only widows but aged men. This home is operated very much as an orphanage, at least as regards the way it is financed. Being under the care of this special church collections are solicited and received from other congregations and individuals for its support. A unique thing in the way of caring for persons who may not be at the time in good financial condition is the plan that the Central Church in Nashville has for the caring for girls girls who may not have satisfactory positions. This church has what it calls a "Girls' home."

A girl who comes into the City of Nashville and finds herself earning but very little can upon application arrange to stay in this home for a mere pittance. Then other girls who earn more pay (just a little more) and other girls who are earning nice salaries, if they desire to stay under this influence are required to pay in keeping with their salaries up to a reasonable figure. This does not put such girls as may come under the influence of the home under the difficulty of meeting problems of the city while financially embarrassed. Hence, it offers her safety.

It is my understanding the Belmont Church in Nashville has a different thing yet with the regard to caring for widows and their children. Our orphan homes will take children but, neither of the parents. There is no plan among us except this that is operated by the Belmont Church that will enable a woman to keep her little brood of children together and to have her own influence upon them. This Church has a "widow's colony." I do not know the exact way it is operated except that it is practically rent-free and other means of sustenance are offered thru the Church and at its advice. The Church of Christ is working at the problem of caring for the poor and the sick. Then the Central Church in Nashville has for several years been operating a clinic. In this case it merely acts as a clearing house. Physicians of the city donate their services at certain hours in the week and the sick of the city of Nashville are given free clinical attention thru the influence of the Central Church. This, too is a step in the right direction. No doubt there are many other agencies and efforts looking toward relief of sickness and the feeding of the hungry, about which I do not know but since I am talking about this phase of the Church as it is today, I am glad to point out these things I do know about.

One would reason lamely who would argue it is alright to have orphan homes, the widows' colony I mentioned, the clinical service, and the girl's home in Nashville, who then would object to the founding of a hospital that should be maintained on exactly the same basis as other fields of work not specifically mentioned as the exact program of the New Testament Church. In other words, one would have the right to object to the maintaining of a college whose business it is to care for the minds and ideals of boys and girls, or to the founding of a hospital on exactly the same basis. The clinic is but a forerunner of an effort at hospitalization, perhaps in the Churches of Christ. I am looking for the day, even in my life, when the Churches of Christ will have some hospitals scattered over the land here and there. Of course, we must be careful to maintain the independence and autonomy of the local church. We must not create an organization or institution that infringes upon the local church but when such things as relief of distress, education of the mind, or the caring for the bodies of individuals are done in a way to respect the independence and autonomy of the local church are rather put upon the basis of individual enterprise, we shall find there is much we can do besides what we are already doing. In the beautiful judgment scene given us by the Christ, Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus tells us of the nature of His judgment:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.....And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world..."

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in, Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink?"

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison' and came unto thee? ' And the King shall answer and say unto them. Verily I say unto you inasmuch as ye have done it unto the lease of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; For I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

"Then shall they also answer him, saying Lord when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

The Church Today In Its Care of Widows and Orphans

The Church Today In Its Care of Widows and Orphans THE CHURCH TODAY IN ITS CARE OF WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

R. B. SWEET Have you ever considered very carefully what real religion is? That is, the kind of religion that is taught in the New Testament? Here is a definition given by one of the New Testament writers, which is not so much a definition of that religion as it is a description of that religion at work. You will find it in James' letter, James 1:27 :

“Pure religion and undefiled before God our Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

“To keep oneself unspotted from the world” is a part of that description that belongs to someone else in their study of the New Testament in the days of the Apostles in comparison with the church today. Let us concentrate our study just now upon that part which has to do with “visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.” That the apostles were confronted with this problem early in the work of the church and that they did not evade the issue but met it squarely and resourcefully is shown by the record of how they handled this problem when it arose at Jerusalem shortly after the day of Pentecost. In the first paragraph of the sixth chapter of Acts we find a record of this problem coming up and we are told how the apostles disposed of it, or rather how they made provision for its being taken care of permanently and efficiently. The disciples there had shown their love for the cause of Christ and their compassion for their unfortunate fellowChristians by selling all they had, and bringing the money which resulted from the sales to the apostles for their use in ministering to the disciples, so that none might lack the material comforts of life so far as they were able to provide them. Although this was not a command of the Lord, nor a decree enforced by the apostles, the disciples, with a few exceptions, notably that of Ananias and Sapphira, entered into it gladly and through their generosity in caring for the unemployed and poverty-stricken showed that they had learned well the lesson from the Master that only in caring for “one of these least” can we minister unto Him. And inasmuch as they were doing it for the least of them, they were practising the spirit of the most compassionate and generous Soul who ever walked along the roads and went into the humble homes of the citizens of this world. In this distribution of the common funds to the needy, friction arose because of the neglect of a certain group of the disciples. A number of widows were there who had come back to the home city from a residence in Greece. Having lost their husbands, possibly while in the foreign country seeking their fortune, they returned to the old home town, after being bereaved of their husbands, to find refuge among their kinsmen. These Grecian widows were in some manner neglected and their case was taken up by their friends. The dissatisfaction over it arose to the point that it is described as a “murmuring,” having arisen. When it came to the attention of the apostles they directed the people to look out from among them seven men of good report whom they might set over the work. The rather loosejointed or inefficient method, or lack of methods, that they had been following was to be administered by a definitely ordered plan and that systematic method was to be administered

by seven capable men. There had been a “daily ministrations” clearly implying that some attempt was being made to care for these unfortunate women. But, if it had been “everybody’s business,” or from whatever reason they had been overlooked in some measure, all that was now to be superseded by a definite organization who would see that the necessary funds flowed equitably into the hands of those who were eligible to receive it. This was a matter of “business” and the apostles described it as such, saying “look out among you seven men of good report, whom we may appoint over this business.” It was a matter of using money to purchase food and shelter at the best prices, or of turning this money over to beneficiaries through a system that would assure as nearly as possible a square deal for all concerned. The apostles were not to have their time taken up by such details of a business nature, for theirs was the greater responsibility of dividing the bread of life to the multitudes. Business men could the better handle such details and to such men was committed this business. It was out of this murmuring that arose over the problem of caring for widows that there came about the formation of the first group of men looking after the business affairs of the church, whom we refer to today as “deacons.”

Something of very great interest is seen here in that these deacons were not given detailed instructions about how they were to care for these widows. If all the Grecian widows were lodged together in some house, or if they were given homes with Christian families, one or two here and another one of two there, we are not told. At least, if the deacons were given their instructions in detail, those details are not preserved for us, for the details of what was done in Jerusalem in the first century would not fit into other centuries in distant countries with respect to the financial and business procedures. That we need not follow exactly their set-up seems implicit in the fact that the details of their administration are not given to us. It may have been expected that men who were responsible and capable of handling such funds were also competent to work out such details as to whether the widows should be assembled into one house or be placed in a number of houses.

Concerning widows, we do have very explicit instructions given in 1 Timothy 5:3-10. But, strangely, all these instructions apply to the type of widows who shall be taken care of and nothing at all is said about how the care shall be provided nor by whom administered, except that it is to be by the church. Simply that they are to be taken care of is all that we are told along that nature in that passage. But let us have a look at it.

“Honor widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety toward their own family, and to requite their parents: for this acceptable in the sight of God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and continueth in supplication and prayer night and day. But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth. These things also command, that they may be without reproach. But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. Let none be enrolled as a widow under three-score years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints’ feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work.”

Since this is the longest passage that we have concerning widows or orphans it will be interesting to look at each of the specifications laid down here. This reminds us somewhat of the list of

qualifications given for men who are to become elders.

1. First of all, "honor" widows that are widows indeed. By this we understand that Paul directs that these widows are to be supported or sustained. All is comprehended in this admonition "honor" that we have under consideration in connection with the fact that we are taught to take care of such unfortunates.

2. "Widows indeed" is the first restriction as to which widows shall have the support of the church. By the expression "widows indeed," it is clear from what follows that he means widows who have not kinspeople to whom they may look for their material sustenance. In verse 5 the additional description is given, "and desolate." One who has been made desolate by the loss of all kinsmen is a "widow indeed." Indeed she is!

3. Look now at some of the other characteristics of the widows who are to be honored. If they have children or grandchildren, those children, or grandchildren are to learn piety toward their own family and are to take care of their aged, widowed, mother or grandmother, and thus to requite their parents. This is the procedure that "is acceptable in the sight of God."

4. One that is a widow indeed, that is desolate, hath her hope set on God. It seems by this that the apostle is saying that the widow who has no relatives who are responsible for her upkeep, has to trust entirely upon God who has taken from her the usual means of support among men that the more favored have, and that, in the normal course of events a mother may expect to have: support by her husband, or if he precedes her in death, then from her children. For the one who has neither, she must trust entirely in God that through His goodness she will be provided for, and it is for just such a provision that the apostle Paul is giving directions as he writes to the young preacher Timothy, "These things command, Paul adds, "that they may be without reproach."

5. Then he gives us, through this writing to Timothy, one of the most striking principles relating to caring for one's family that we find anywhere in the Bible. But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith" Paul says emphatically and » worse than an unbeliever." One cannot be faithful to the principles of Christianity and deliberately neglect the care of his own household.

We are reminded in this connection of a man whom we used to know that had a great ambition to become a preacher. He loved so well to talk about, particularly to argue about, the scriptures that he would continue arguing with any victim he might hold so long, until the sun went down while his wife was left to do the milking and bringing in the wood. He would run off to the various sorts of meetings and indulge in almost endless harangues with little or no regard as to the welfare of his family. Even in his zeal for religion, one may do that which is worse than being an unbeliever and this he does if he neglects to care for his own household.

6. These widows indeed are not to be taken into the number if they are under three score years of age. "Into the number" suggests a distinct group within the church that is made up of this particular class of persons. Was the number all housed together within one "home," or were they kept track of by having a list made of such widows and the aid for them sent to the families who had agreed to take into them one or more of these widows? Again we are in the dark concerning the exact details of the system. The exact method they used might be entirely inapplicable, or impractical of working out in our present scheme of things. Not under sixty years old; 7) having been the wife of

one husband; 8) well reported of for good works; 9) having used hospitality toward strangers; 11) having washed the saints feet; 12) having relieved the afflicted and, 13) having diligently followed every good work are further interesting qualifications of these widows, and only such widows, as were to be taken into the number. From this rather large number of particulars given concerning these widows, and from other considerations, it seems that the apostle may have been considering an office which he refers to as “the number” rather than giving instructions that must be followed in each detail before the church administered help to an individual who asked for aid. The fact also that orphans are not mentioned in this connection, is a slight suggestion that the “widows indeed,” in this passage, were women who were being considered for an office something like that which we visualize when we speak of a “deaconess.” In the passage with which we started, James 1:27, widows and orphans are considered together and are in the same class with respect to their offering an opportunity by which we may test the genuineness of our religion. In this passage, 1 Timothy 5:3-10, only the widows are considered. This further leads us to think that perhaps Paul is giving directions concerning the selection of certain widows who are to have a rather important place in the work of the church.

Still further in this connection is the consideration that many things required of the widows here are things that she could have done except she had some means at her command at some past time for doing such charitable works as are named in this list of qualifications. They must be women who had been accustomed to a home for exercising hospitality and good works. As James might say, we're talking about a pure religion that visits (takes care of) the fatherless and the widows in their distress. It is a religion that speaks to their hearts. It relieves their wants, sympathizes with their distresses, instructs them in divine things and recommends them to God. And all this it does for the Lord's sake. This is the religion of Christ. The religion that does not prove itself by works of charity and mercy is not of God.” This very brief mention of the care of the fatherless and widows, as is true with other similar matters, brings home to us very forcefully that the Bible is not a book of detailed rules such as one finds governing the organization and maintenance of some big business institution, or the elaborate rules formulated for directing football playing-it is a book of principles! In only three passages in the New Testament do we find instructions on the subject: Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 5:3-10 and James 1:27. But the principle is all through the teachings of Christ! In the last named passage we are told that pure religion undefiled religion, will take the oversight of the fatherless and widows and not a thing is said as to how it is to be worked out! With the proper spirit of sympathy and helpfulness inculcated into the Christians, the Lord apparently expects us to use our judgment in devising the most efficient and effective methods for “visiting” them. We must keep in mind, of course, that whatever is done must be in keeping with other principles that are taught in the Bible. No other principle is to be violated as we follow this one. For example the New Testament teaches that each congregation is to be strictly autonomous and that no other organization is to be formed or supported for carrying on the work which the church itself should do. And the church itself is to take care of all charitable, philanthropic and missionary work that it has within its power to accomplish. That is, and it is not to form any other organization, society or institution to do the work that should be done by the church.

How then will the care of widows and fatherless tie in with the principle that no other organization is to be set up by the church or by the individual Christians? Let us have a look at some of the instances recorded in the New Testament wherein we find the church, or a number of

congregations carrying on such work, if such can be found. Here are some examples of that very thing.

As, we have seen the instance that seems most nearly to have involved a home or plan for caring for unfortunates, is that of the church at Jerusalem in caring for the Grecian widow*. Orphans are not mentioned there, but it is very that there were some, if not many, who were children of the widows involved. With so large a group, 5,000 men who were believers, Acts 4:4, it is improbable that so large a group tinued to meet, all the many more than 5,000, m one wee y assembly It is quite probable that they were divided into several small congregations. Now when it was "murmured that the Grecian widows were suffering want the apostles gathered the disciples, all of them, Acts 6:2 together and had them select seven men to oversee the work. Would it be pre suming too much to say that they were in a posthon very much like that occupied by the men who today supermte our orphan homes?, In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 we read:

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem, and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me."

What do we learn here? We have Paul explicitly directing the church at Corinth to take a collection for the saints at Jerusalem They were to do this as he had directed the churches in Galatia to do the same thing. For what Purpose this offering was sent to Jerusalem we are not told, but it could be used by the church at Jerusalem for any purpose for which a church might use money. Among other things they were to care for the fatherless and the widows. In Romans 15:25-26 Paul writes:

"I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem."

Now look at Php_4:10 :

"But I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length ye háve revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity."

Here a church, at Philippi, contributes to an individual, Paul, in a distant place to help him in his carrying on a good work. . In 1 Corinthians 16:17 we read: "And I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they supplied." Here is another instance of a church giving to an individual; Corinth to Paul, and also of individuals giving to an individual: Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus giving out of their own pockets to further Paul's work, in addition to what the church at Corinth had sent to him.

If these instances are not enough to convince us that anyone may give to anyone else for a worthy cause, either through a church to another church or a church to an individual, we have only to turn and read Galatians 6:10 :

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith." and Acts 20:35 :

“In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” From all this we learn that church and individuals may give to other churches or individuals to aid others in carrying on any work through the church that is authorized to be done by the church. If caring for the widows and orphans is not a work authorized by the New Testament then we cannot find one that is. Here is a criterion by which we may see whether they “visit” the fatherless and widows, and they have such religion. If they do not, they do not have, that sort of religion.

All these, things were done in the days of the apostles by the church which received its instructions direct from the apostles. They, did care. for the orphans and widow's---their exact method or system used in doing that work is nowhere described. The meagerness of the details, practically the utter absence of detail, that is recorded for us is powerfully suggestive that the intricacies of detail were left to be worked out by the needs of the occasion and in keeping with the customs in the age and country where the principle is applied.

We turn now to the consideration of what the church today is doing and may do in this same work of caring for the widows and orphans. If a church could help a church, and it could and did in those days; if a church could help an individual or an individual an individual, and they did, then it remains to Work out the most efficient way today in our country and age, without violating the principle that “whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” A church may help an individual with two children when they are eligible for such aid. A church may help the same individual with twenty children or with two hundred children. Other churches may help that church as it helps the individual or group of individuals in their caring for widows or fatherless.

Now the church that is doing the overseeing of such benevolent work should do it in a business like way, for their doing it in Jerusalem, as described in Acts 6, is called a business. That the churches should do all their work in a business-like manner and in keeping with the laws of the land wherein that church is located is clearly commanded in Romans 13:1; Romans 13:7, in this language:

“Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. * * Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”

All the business affairs of the church should be conducted in keeping with the laws of the land that concern the handling of such business. A church that is caring for a large group of orphans must have, or may have, some property holdings. If they have legal title to real estate, that real estate should be held in accordance with the laws. It is usness-like and our reputable attorneys tell us that all such property, even the physical property of the congregation, their church buildings, or other property, should be held in keeping with corporation laws. Every congregation should be incorporated and all its property held by that corporation. Every property that is used in the care of widows or fatherless should be held by some incorporated congregation as the property of that corporation, else how will we be subject to the powers” and rendering “honor to whom honor . The detailed instructions concerning holding property in Palestine in the first century would not apply to holding property in Great Britain or the United States in the twentieth century, or to any other modern nation. Hence we are given in the New Testament merely the principle and are allowed the latitude of doing it in keeping with the laws of the country and age in which the principle is

applied, to the end of time. In these scriptures we have all the authority anyone should desire, both in precept and example, for the honest, businesslike method of caring for the needy of whatever class.

What is the church doing today for the widows and orphans? So far as the speaker knows there are no widows homes, established for caring for widows only. They have not become a very serious problem, we suppose because widows have, as a rule, families, or relatives to care for them. In the exceptional cases, however, where widows indeed may be found, that is, widows who have no near relatives upon whom the responsibility falls, they should be taken care of by the church in the manner that is most effective and efficient* in other Christian families or in homes provided by the churches, or by some particular church for this specific purpose. The care of the fatherless becomes our greatest problem in the caring for the needy, rather, it is the greater of these two or the greater part of this compound problem of caring for 'widows and orphans. There are many considerations which make it appear that they can best be taken care of in homes established for that purpose. There, in large groups, they may be given careful oversight. The church that has oversight of the home may supervise it in such fashion that only godly men and women will be in charge of the fatherless; the orphans may be given systematic and thorough training in the common school subjects and may be taught pure Christianity.

We might do well here, however, to observe the principle contained in the expression "widows indeed," that is, only those should be given admittance into such orphan homes as have no relatives who are financially able properly to provide food, clothing and shelter and education for them. To allow children to enter such homes and become a burden to the churches when they have fathers living, or other relatives who could support them, is to place a burden upon the churches and to relieve their relatives of that burden which is not good for either. In the case of a father left a widower who could not give the proper training to his motherless children, he should at least expect to pay the expense of their being in the home, if he is financially able to do so. The homes that have been established and are being maintained by the generosity of the church for the caring for orphans, you all know. In our section, the great southwest, we have the Boles Orphan Home at Quinlan, Texas, the Tipton Orphan Home at Tipton, Oklahoma, and the Arkansas Christian Home at Fort Smith, Arkansas. There may be much work by individual congregations of this nature which is not advertised outside their immediate vicinity and thus is not generally known about. If so, all such work is good.

Nearly six hundred children are being cared for in these three Homes. One of them reports about six applicants each week, on an average, are refused because they have insufficient space and facilities to take care of them. Discounting this heavily to eliminate many applicants which possibly should not be filled, there are still several hundred each year who knock for admittance but must be turned away. What becomes of them, who can say? Would it be too presumptuous to say that they, many of them, are knocked about the world and lost?

1. It is not philosophy. Some body has said that "philosophy is the search of a blind man in a dark cellar for a black cat that isn't there."

o the church because she has not taken Seriously enough this measure that James gives us for determining whether our religion is pure and! undefilled?

One of the homes reports that, while it would be splendid if every orphaned child could be taken into a good Christian home and reared, "the situation simply is this: there are not enough suitable Christian homes who will open their doors to these destitute children. Unfortunately we are faced with stubborn facts, instead of hypothetical abstractions. I take it that all those who are supporting orphan homes---I mean those who are directing them---could earnestly desire that the home be no more than a sort of a clearing house through which unfortunate children could be placed in suitable homes. But if suitable homes simply will not take these children to rear, what then? Shall the children be left to starve "just because we can find no detailed description of the method used by the apostles in caring for the orphans, after they have clearly told us that Christians must care for them?"

These three homes, and others that are properly administered, should receive the support of the church since they are relieving many congregations of the burden of caring locally for children who were orphaned within the community of such congregations. Other congregations, from whose vicinity no children may have been sent to the home, are nevertheless subject to the plain teaching that to be practising pure religion they must help in caring for the fatherless and widows.

Such work of the church was characterized by the apostles as a business. Every congregation should be business-like in its taking care of this exceedingly important work. If a congregation is not facing this matter squarely and frankly and doing what it can about it, it is extremely doubtful whether it should be classed as a church "loyal" to the New Testament teachings. Every congregation should send regularly, monthly or quarterly, and liberally, to one or more of these homes, or help them in their work of caring for these unfortunates and in that be following the example of the Master who went about doing good. When we talk of pure religion, let us remember that James' description of it does not even mention many of the things that are causing such concern and widespread discussion among the churches, but he said it is to visit the fatherless and the widows. What sort of religion do you have? Oh, you are loyal, you proclaim loudly! Are you? in every respect? James says that pure religion is to visit the fatherless and the widows. Is yours a pure religion, measured by this standard?

I WONDER

I wonder if I have the right'

To let myself forget to care

How children shiver in the night

Where all is cold and dark and bare. My little ones are free from dread,

And sheltered safely from the storm;

Their eyes are bright, their cheeks are red,

Their laughter glad, their clothing warm. But other little ones must weep,

And face new dreads with each day,

Where hunger's fangs bite very deep

And want sits like a ghost in gray.
I have no need to share the blame
If palor dims the orphan's cheek;
I have not made the cripple lame,
Nor taken from the poor and weak.
If children who are hungry sigh,
If others who are cold complain,
No guilt lies on my conscience—
I Have never wronged them for my gain.
But, knowing how they weep at night,
Where all is dark and cold and bare,
I wonder if I have the right
To let myself forget to care.
Unknown.

The Church Today In Its Giving or Financial Support

The Church Today In Its Giving or Financial Support THE CHURCH TODAY IN ITS GIVING OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

R. B. SWEET

One of the most beautiful passages on Immortality found in all literature is that written by the apostle Paul, found in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians. Immortality is a subject that intrigues the imagination with never failing interest and an earnest belief in it soothes the spirit of man as nothing else can. The whole subject is on so high a plane and all seems so transcendently spiritual that it does not partake in any measure of the grossly physical world about us. We usually do not mix our dreams of immortality with the practical on go of the material world in which we are imprisoned.

But, startling as it may seem at first glance, Paul descends from his burst of oratory on immortality to such a material thing as money. He passes from description of the mortal having put on immortality; from his triumphant shout of victory over death; to very commonplace directions concerning the handling of one's material income. That there is anything inconsistent in this seems not to occur to Paul at all. He changes his subject as easily and naturally as if there were nothing at all incongruous about descending from the realm of the incorruptible to the region where dollars and cents are a powerful force. In fact, he seems more nearly to be climbing toward his climax than to be falling into an anti-climax after his eloquent reasoning concerning the resurrection. We believe that he has done this very thing. He did not descend from talking of immortality to talking about money. Rather, he reaches the vital consideration concerning an eternal happiness in basing it upon the way one handles his stewardship in this world. If you would have a lasting happiness, is his train of thought, you must be careful to use your money rather than letting it use you, for he doubtless remembered the words of our Master that "it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." From his eloquent discussion of the life beyond this one, he turns with the utmost simplicity to earnest directions about giving. After his shout of triumph, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" he says "wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Then he writes:

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me.."

Thus we find Paul talking plainly about the giving that should be observed in the church in the days of the apostles. He wrote to these same Corinthians again on this subject. In his second letter,

chapter nine, the first seven verses, we read:

"For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: for I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them. But I have sent the brethren, that our glorying on your behalf may not be made void in this respect; that, even as I said, ye may be prepared; lest by any means, if there come with me any of Macedonia and find you unprepared, we (that we say not *ye') should be put to shame in this confidence. I thought it necessary therefore to entreat the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your aforepromised bounty, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion."

"But this I say, 'he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.' Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." The simplicity and directness of all the teachings of the New Testament concerning the fundamental principles of obedience and the "necessary" things for the carrying on of the work of the church, is forcefully illustrated here. The financing of the church is not to be through such elaborate methods that it will take a financier to understand them. The instructions are given simply and plainly so that the most naive can make no mistake. It is perhaps because we want so badly to do the spectacular thing, the elaborate thing today that the religious world today is led into all sorts of schemes for raising money for church work and utterly to abandon this beautiful simplicity which is far more effective than the intricate methods worked out by inventive minds, not well schooled in the New Testament spirit or method.

It will be interesting to see what the church needed money for.

What possible use could the church have had of so much money that it needed instructions concerning it along with the instructions having to do with Christian living.

A.) The church in the days of the apostles needed and used its money in ministering to the poor. We discussed that feature of its work last night in our talk about the early church "In Its Care of the Widows and Orphans." But its helping of the unfortunates was not confined just to that class of dependent persons. In his letter to the Romans, Romans 15:25-28, Paul writes:

"I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make certain contributions for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. Yea it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things." The churches in those days made up contributions to send to sister churches. The churches throughout a region would give their contributions into a common fund which was collected by a messenger, or group of messengers who traveled among those churches, and who then take that fund to a distant church to help that distant church carry on its good work. In the passage quoted we find Paul telling about those who might come to Corinth with him from Macedonia. He had sent certain of the brethren on before them that they might have everything in readiness when he and the Macedonians should reach there. In the first passage quoted he told them to appoint certain ones who would carry their contribution to Jerusalem.

Here was a group of men traveling among the churches in Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia, stirring up the Christians to giving their money, collecting money from them and that group of men taking the money to Jerusalem to help carry on its work of looking after the poor. Jerusalem could carry on an extensive program of looking after the fatherless and widows, and other poor, and could send, or have Paul send, men among distant churches to raise money to help them in their good work. Who could object to churches today using the same method?

B.) Another vital work for which the church used its money was that of preaching the Gospel. This was not second in importance although we mention it here second. In first Corinthians, ninth chapter, verses eleven to fourteen we find:

“If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.” In its incipient stages there were many who would suspicion that this was just another fanatical religious racket propagated by Paul for his own enrichment. He chose not to use what was his right, a support by the church, but to make his own way. But he did give us emphatically the principle “That they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel” and, in 1 Timothy 5:18 b, “The laborer is worthy of his hire.”

Today one who knows the actual condition of the support of the average gospel preacher would hardly accuse them of being in it for the money they can make out of it! The few exceptions do not make void the rule nor the principle.

Here then we have descriptions of the things for which the church in the days of the apostles used money. It was in their ambitious program of caring for the unemployed and helpless and in their equally ambitious program of carrying the gospel to all the nations that they needed money. The same means and methods of collecting money for the first purpose could be used for the second. Rather, certain methods were used in collecting the money for the Jerusalem church that it might finance its work. Anything that it was right for the church to do, it was light that they use this fund to accomplish. That includes preaching and charity Work.

Whatever was necessary to preach the gospel effectively might be bought or paid for out of this fund which the church had. Intricate details of their work are not given us for such details might not fit down into the social and economic conditions of a nation half around the world, nineteen centuries away in time. That they used houses to worship in, either given to the church by wealthy Christians, or purchased or rented by the church, can hardly be questioned. That Paul had help in renting the school of Tyrannus at Ephesus is probable. (Acts 19:9) That Paul did accept money occasionally to supplement what he earned at his tent-making is seen from his acknowledgment to the Philippian church, in Php_4:14-16.

“Howbeit ye did well that ye had fellowship with my affliction. And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need.” From these passages, and others, we see that the church in

that period gave money to care for the poor and to have the gospel preached. A congregation sent direct to an individual in a distant place to help him in his missionary work: groups of congregations made up collections together and sent that money by an individual or by a group of men to a distant church to help it in its charitable and missionary work: that money was raised by an individual or by a group of men traveling among the churches telling them of the need; arousing them to generous giving and accepting their money to help churches and individuals in distant places to carry on their work. Let us look a little closer at methods they used.

(1) Of their methods in raising money we find in 2 Corinthians 8:10-11 :

“And herein I give my judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. But now complete the doing also that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability.” And again, in 2 Corinthians 9:2; 2 Corinthians 9:5 :

“For I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them, * * I thought it necessary therefore to entreat the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your aforepromised bounty, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion.”

Many good brethren shy away from the matter of pledges like a good old plow horse used to shy away from an automobile in the early days of its use. But those same brethren will pledge themselves for a year or even for eighteen months to pay so much each month to get possession of one of those very machines. The people at Corinth had certainly pledged themselves to have part in Paul's work and had made the promise a year before he wrote them. Yes, they made promises that they would give and Paul sent a group of men to them to remind them of it and to collect their pledges!

II) Perhaps it would cause further shying, if not a real run-away, to mention their using committees, but let us see how Paul wrote to them, immediately following the passage just quoted. This is in 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 :

“But thanks be to God, Who putteth the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he accepted indeed our exhortation; but being himself very earnest, he went forth unto you of his own accord. And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches; and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and to show our readiness: avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us: for we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of all men. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have many times proved earnest in many things, but now much more earnest, by reason of the great confidence which he hath in you. Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward, or our brethren, they are the messengers of the churches, they are the glory of Christ. Show ye therefore unto them in the face of the churches the proof of your love, and of our glorying in your behalf.”

“Titus * * with him our brother * * who was appointed by the churches to travel with us * * with them our brother * * they are the messengers of the churches, they are the glory of Christ.” There it is! A group of at least three courageous champions of the cross traveling among the churches to raise money from them to aid in the charitable and missionary work of a distant congregation. Why do we today so resent having some one come to us asking us to give to the support of an orphans home or for missionary work? Is it possible that we do not know how the church in the days of the apostles did its work? Or is it possible that we do not want to know that we should do this vitally important work, and in the way it was done by the early church?

III) In that time, then, they made pledges as far as a year ahead, they had messengers traveling among the churches to raise money and, third, their work was done on a basis of equality, by encouraging every congregation to have part in the work which the church, as a whole should accomplish.

Concerning their methods involving the matter of equality we find this in 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 :

“For I say not this that others may be eased and ye distressed: but by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality: as it is Written, ‘he that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.’”

If Corinth was not to be burdened and others left out of the work, and that is what Paul sought, then we might well look to our congregations today to see that not just a few are doing vitally important work carrying the gospel to all nations and caring for the poor, but that every congregation should help as much as it can in this work that there may be equality! Each congregation should have a financial program and include in their plans certain amounts to be sent regularly to help others if they are not doing such work locally.

Thus we see that the methods of financing the church in the days of the apostles included pledging, or promising be- forhand, and the use of traveling representatives and equality. These methods are used in collecting and distributing money sent to distant churches. The local collections and expenditures of each congregation were handled apparently by the deacons of the congregation. (Acts 6:1-6.) With all these passages before us we are now ready to notice some of the principles that govern the handling of this grace. Have you noticed that the matter of giving is called a “grace?”

Each one might make his own list of principles and different lists would give different orders to their listing. This is not meant to be rigidly inclusive nor is the order that of their importance. We group then in this way merely to get them before us in a comprehensive, workable fashion.

1) In the days of the apostles giving was an individual matter. “Let each one of you lay by him in store,” Paul says in 1 Corinthians 16:2. Each Christian had the obligation to consider for himself the privilege of helping carry on the work of each church. Each one could do this and each one was to do it for himself.

2) Not only must each Christian do his own giving, he must do it regularly. “Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store.” We have no trouble determining how often the Lord’s supper should be observed. “Upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered

together to break bread—” we read in Acts 20:7 and conclude from that that the Lord’s supper is to be observed as often as it becomes the first day of the week.. The same regularity was observed in giving for exactly the same expression is used in connection with it: “Upon the first day of the week: * * lay by in store.” It seems to have been done regularly as the first day of the week recurred, for no particular first day was designated.

3) While each Christian was taught to give and to give regularly it was also taught them that it should be done liberally. Read Romans 12:8; Romans 12:13 : “He that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. * * Communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality.” The Christians at Jerusalem had learned well this lesson from their Master and ours’. When the emergency arose there as a result of widespread unemployment and poverty the Christians, many of them at least, sold their possessions and brought the price of what they sold and turned it over to the apostles that distribution might be made to all Who were in need. Their liberality amounted almost to prodigality and would have been that had it not been wisely administered for a good purpose.

It was a violation of this spirit of liberality, with other elements considered, of course, that brought the spectacular death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) who sought to be credited with the same liberality in giving that characterized the sincere disciples. Their hypocrisy in the matter of liberality was tragically and swiftly punished as an example to all who will heed, that the Lord expects the utmost honesty from us in our accounting of the goods he has given in our care. When we say we are doing the best we can, but are not actually doing our best, we are crowding mighty close upon the hypocrisy of this notorious couple. “He that giveth, let him do it with liberality.”

4) A fourth principle that we find taught the early church concerning this grace of giving is that of cheerfulness. 2 Corinthians 9:7 reads: “Let him do according as he purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

Distinctly and forcefully they were taught that the giving they did must be done cheerfully.

5). The fifth principle that we notice is that it must be done as they were prospered. 1 Corinthians 16:2 contains, in addition to two of the principles already named, this: “as he may prosper.” Again, 2 Corinthians 8:12 :

“For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not.”

Clearly, if a man had not prospered there was no obligation upon him to give. Equally clear is it that he has been prospered there is an obligation for him to lay by in store on the first day of the week “as he may prosper.” As part of this fifth principle, or perhaps as a distinct one, one was to give as he had made up his mind to give. In 2 Corinthians 9:7, already read, we notice this principle:

“Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” No one, nor any board of officials, could tell a man what he should give. It was an individual matter and one should give as he had determined in his own heart. But his determination to give should be formed in keeping with the principles of regularity, liberality and cheerfulness. There is no hint that there was any sort of assessment imposed upon anyone in the

church in the days of the apostles.

Thus we have before us the whole program of financing the church in the days of the apostles. The church needed money to carry out the great commission of the Lord to carry the gospel to every nation. It needed money to serve the Lord through ministering to "these least" which must be done if they were faithfully to follow his example. This money for preaching and charity work was raised from all over the Christian world by voluntary giving and in some instances by having men travel among the churches to inform them of the need and to accept their contributions. It was taught that they should lay by in store regularly: their gifts should be liberal and should be given cheerfully as they had prospered and as they had purposed in their hearts. When we turn to consider what the church is doing today, we are struck with the variety of schemes that are used in the religious world, even in that part of it which professes to be Christian. In deserting the simple method of giving that the New Testament outlines, and which was practised in the days of the apostles, various religious groups have not bettered themselves but have fallen upon lean days for their treasuries. In their determination to get money, and in their disregard for simple New Testament teaching, all sorts of fantastic schemes have been invented, some of which bring no honor upon the church; some of which border closely upon dishonesty and profiteering. This is satirised in one of O'Henry's stories, "A Tempered Wind," where he has the heroine saying, "I was about to accept a place in one of the women's auxiliary bazaars where they built a parsonage by selling a spoonful of chicken salad and a cream puff for seventy five cents and calling it a business men's lunch." But we are not so much interested in pointing out the weaknesses of our religious neighbors as we are in seeing how well we measure up to the apostolic teaching and example. And this will be not so much an attempt to tell you what churches are doing as a rule, as to try to impress us with the importance of following the methods and principles which we have read about from the apostles. So far as we know the churches generally are holding pretty close to the principle of giving by the members through the church treasury to finance the work of the church. We have heard of a few instances of congregations soliciting all the people in their neighborhoods to help them build or enlarge their church building. This cannot be too strongly condemned for we are as much obligated to follow the New Testament plan for financing the church as we are to follow its directions in all the other parts of its program. The Christians who are members of a particular congregation are under the responsibility of maintaining its work. They may solicit and receive help from other congregations of the churches of Christ, as we have pointed out, but they should not solicit help from non-Christians to do the work of the church. An occasional gift from someone who is not a Christian may be accepted if it comes from that person as a voluntary offering, but, the point is, we should not solicit them. Neither should we solicit our fellow-Christians except in keeping with the principles outlined in the scriptures we have read.

While we have followed the voluntary offering plan very consistently, it may be that we have not done so well with respect to some of its characteristics. Let us look at them again as they should be used today in the church finances. 1a) Do you remember that it is an individual matter? "Let each one of you lay by him in store." Each one, includes the boys and girls who have become Christians. The children should be taught the place of giving in the work of the church and should have instilled in them the principle of sacrifice, of the giving a share of what they have to the Lord. As the boys sell papers, or mow lawns and thus make a little change, or as they and the girls have allowances given them, they should be impressed that they have been prospered in that measure

and that each one of them has the duty as a Christian to give a portion of that to the Lord's work. When a boy or girl, a young man or woman, begins to earn his own money, or when they have allowances given them, their father cannot do their giving for them any more that he can take their communion for them. It is an "each-one-of-you" matter.

If the children were taught, and saw the example, of more liberal giving, by the time they grow to be adults it would not so excruciatingly painful a task to extract from them the portion of their income that should be given cheerfully to the Lord. We cannot overemphasize that it is an individual matter.

Wives who have separate incomes are in the same manner responsible for their stewardship of what they have been prospered with. It would be a splendid thing" if every married couple would recognize that the wife has had a very definite part in earning the family's income and if the part that she laid by in store for the first day contribution would be divided between husband and wife that she might actually give into the treasury, with her own hands, that part of the income that belongs to her as rightfully as it does to the husband who usually does all the giving for the two of them. Of the course the manner of handling their joint income will govern this. For example, if they have a joint checking account, one as well as the other may make out the check for their contribution to the church and it will be in effect both of them giving. This is one of the details that is not bound and is an example of what we have been saying about intricate details not being given but the principles being taught. We wonder, however, if it would not do much to increase the interest and the morale of the Christian women if each one could give her share into the treasury from her own hands?

2a) Regularity in giving is much needed now. We seem to feel that if we miss the Lord's service we have been excused from all necessity of giving on that particular Lord's day. The expense of the church goes no however, whether few are there or whether the whole membership is present. The small churches may have little local expense and that not matter much, locally, but the missionaries in distant places still must live and the orphan homes still must have food for the hundreds of children who are in their keeping. If each small congregation, as well as the larger ones, had a definite program, as they should have in helping other congregations that have shouldered tremendous burdens that they themselves would not undertake, each such congregation would be glad to send regularly, regularly to their assistance. To do this will require regular giving on the part of "each one of you." When we have laid by in store a certain portion for the Lord that portion should get into the treasury. If we cannot take it on a certain first day it should be sent by some one, or held over and taken the next Lord's day by the one who has laid it by in store. If one decides to give a dollar on a certain Sunday, but fails to be at the meeting of the church, then goes the next Lord's day and fails to give the dollar for the day missed, although he may give a dollar for that day when he is present, he has used for himself what he has laid by in store for the Lord. How far is that from stealing from the Lord's fund? You would not take it out of the contribution plate, but you hold it out! The cost of carrying on the program of the congregation, assuming each one has a program, and God pity the one that has not, goes on continually. Each Christian should give regularly.

3a). To give liberally may be somewhat harder to do. It will be comparatively easy to give regularly if the regular amount is very small. But let us not forget that liberal giving is as necessary as

regular giving. "He that giveth, let him do it with liberality" we read in Romans 12:8.

4a). Closely in connection with liberality we have the other principle that may seem irreconcilable with it. That is, the giving should be done cheerfully. Cheerfully? How in the world can one give liberally and do it cheerfully? Well, no one but a Christian who remembers how freely he has received, could be cheerful about giving freely. But when the Christians remembers all that the church means to him, if he is really sincere he can give cheerfully an amount that will be liberal in keeping with prosperity.

We remember a story that illustrates the need of both these principles being observed in our giving. As we got it, the incident is supposed really to have occurred. Anyway, it might have occurred and whether it actually did it brings out clearly the conflict and the possible harmony that may result between cheerfulness and liberality.

It was in a small place where the people came after the communion and laid their offerings on the table. The old brother who was officiating at the table that day could hardly keep from seeing the offering made by the prosperous member of the congregation. The well-to-do man had laid a twenty five cent piece on the table. The old brother waited until he had reached his seat. Then he took up the quarter and carried it down the aisle to the man.

"Here is your quarter," he said. "You have given on the first day of the week as we are taught, but you did not give liberally. We all know that this is not a liberal gift from a man of your means. Please take it back for we want no unscriptural giving."

After a moment the man overcame the surprise, got possession of himself and stalked back up to the table and threw a five dollar bill at the old brother.

"There you are," he almost shouted, "I guess that is liberal enough." And he went back to his seat in a rage. The old brother waited until he had settled himself again, then calmly took the five dollar bill back to him.

"Here is your five dollar bill, brother" he told him. "You have indeed given liberally but you did not do it cheerfully. We read that the 'Lord loveth a cheerful giver.' Your liberal gift is not acceptable to him if it is not given cheerfully. We do not want grudging gifts."

After that the man thought for a moment, he followed the old brother back to the table and with a good humored smile said:

"I see the point. You have rebuked my stinginess most severely and I see how little I was. Really, I'm glad to give the five dollars. Take it for it is cheerfully given."

Certainly we must not neglect one of these principles as we emphasize some other one. We would almost surely violate the matter of cheerful giving if we solicit people who are not members of the church to help us. Aside from their having no responsibility, they could not give cheerfully the liberal amounts that the church has a right to expect of her members.

5a). The question of giving as one has been prospered is one that may give some trouble. If a widow with children on a ten dollar a week salary gives a dollar on the first day of the week and a man on a fifty dollar a week salary gives a dollar, have they each given as they have been

prospered? There is certainly no equality in that. Then how shall we determine what should be given in keeping with the principle of "as he may prosper?" The Jews had to give a tenth of their gross income. They are an example for us and it does seem that Christians with all their liberty and their glorious hope and precious promises should do at least as well as the Jews did. Every sincere Christian should give a tithe, a tenth, of his gross income, is what the example of the Jews keeps showing us. We believe that is so and that every Christian who has anything above a mere subsistence living should give at least a tenth of his income. But a tenth of a widow's ten dollar a week salary and a tenth of a man's fifty dollar a week salary, who has only himself and wife to support, is not giving equitably. The widow's sacrifice in that proportion is much greater than is the man's. For a long time we have been trying to read into the New Testament the teaching that every Christian should tithe. We have gone to great pains and resorted to arguments that strained almost to the breaking point some principles in our attempt to make it prove a tenth should be given now just as it was commanded for the Jews. It just is not there. There are some wealthy Christians who, if they gave a tenth, would be giving entirely too little!

Here again the great wisdom of the Bible is shown. That it is not a book of minute details but of great principles is illustrated here most forcefully. Do not misunderstand our use of that expression "minute details." We think that first principles, faith, repentance, confession and baptism, the wearing the name Christian only, as a religious designation, the observing of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week and other plainly taught principles are splendidly great principles. They are not in the class of details by any manner of means. What we do mean may be shown further in connection with this thought of tithing. The early writers on Economics, Richardo, Mills and others following the lead of Adam Smith, believed that proportional taxation was the ideal manner of taxing. One of Adam Smith's canons of taxation, which was standard for decades', lays down this principle. That is, every citizen should be taxed an amount proportional to that which all other citizens are taxed to support the government whose protection they enjoy. If 3% were the rate of taxation, then everyone should be taxed at the rate of 3 % on the type of property that carried that rate. If a man's holdings were worth only a hundred pounds he would be taxed at the rate of 3%. Another whose estate was worth a hundred thousand pounds would be taxed at the same rate, 3%. That was thought to be the very maximum of equality. And that is the principle we have been following trying to make the New Testament teach tithing for all Christians. But thank God, his wisdom has saved the Bible from any such reproach. Today there is not a writer on Economics, particularly in the field of taxation, who would advocate proportional taxation upon all citizens. The inequality of it is now recognized and we have pretty well accepted and established a progressive tax system. A family that has an in-come that is a bare subsistence income should have none of it taken away from them in taxes, while a man who has a comfortable income will be taxed pretty heavily: a wealthy man will be taxed more heavily, and on up. In South Carolina an act in 1921 raised the total of Federal and State income taxes to 72% of the income over \$200,000.

Now suppose that tithing was taught in the New Testament. It would certainly be considered a back number by the economists and its writers would be classified in the school of such as Adam Smith in this respect. But it does not teach that. It teaches the principle of equality and whatever principle may be worked out in any age, in any country, the Bible will be found to fit right down into that scheme so far as it is Christian in principle. No, the Book is not out of date even in the principles of Economics. It is as new as any book in the world. It is as new as the day after

tomorrow!

How could it have made such a tremendous advance over the now discredited principle of proportional giving that was bound on the Jews? How, in an age that was still ignorant of such social science as Economics, could its writers have given principles that are still up-to-date; that were nineteen centuries in advance of the principles of that time, yet were fitted for that age? Its marvelous elasticity which fits it into any country, any age, is shown here and surely shows its divine origin.

What we have been saying takes care of the matter of one's purposing, in large part. "As one has been prospered" is but a part of "as each one purposeth in his heart." As we have said there must be no assessing if we are to follow the teachings of the church in the days of the apostles. We have never violated this principle so far as we know. One's prosperity will guide him in what he purposes to give. If he has a subsistence level of income, only a very little given will be a sacrifice. As one has more than that his giving should advance progressively until one with a really good income should not be hampered by the tenth bounty but should go beyond it further and further as the Lord allows him to prosper more and more. But let no one think this excuses those with small incomes from giving. It does not. For, surely, we have not forgotten that our giving must be liberal, and it must be cheerful. We know of those on fifteen and twenty dollars a week income who tithe and they are blessed in doing it. Except in cases of extreme poverty where only a mere existence can be eked out of the meager income, each one should lay in store on the first day of the week. A tenth will not be too much for those who are above that subsistence level. A tenth will be too little for those who are well above it! "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Notice that each one is to give "as he may prosper." Sometimes good brethren give something and say "if you need more, let me know." One's giving is not to be regulated by what is in the treasury but as he has prospered. Whether the treasury is in the red or has a surplus is not to be considered by the individual as he determines his "purpose."

If all would follow this principle treasuries would have enough that most congregations could widen their influence. "Give as you have been prospered" is the criterion that should measure the purpose, not what is in the treasury!

Some have found difficulty in using "pledge cards" in their attempt to regulate the expenditure of the church through learning approximately what its income will be. We do not like the idea of a pledge. It is irksome and we cannot well get away from it. Some have avoided this very nicely by using a "purpose card." To call it a "purpose card" is to use New Testament terminology and obviates the harsh word "pledge" while it serves the same good purpose. The sincere Christian who "purposes" to give a certain amount weekly, and tells the church treasurer so, will be as faithful to that "purpose" as anyone will in keeping a "pledge." And more will be willing to tell the treasurer what they purpose to give, knowing in doing that that they are not signing a promissory note, as the pledge seems erroneously considered. Let us all purpose and there will be no harm done in letting our treasurer know what we do purpose to give regularly, liberally and cheerfully. With this study of what the church did in financing its work during the days of the apostles; some suggestions of how the church today is doing its financing and how it may do as the church was then taught to do, we are prepared to read understandingly one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible. Here it is in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 :

“But this I say, he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work: as it is written, "He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor;

His righteousness abideth forever.”

“And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: ye being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God. For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God; seeing that through the proving of you by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all; while they themselves also, with supplication in your behalf, long after you by reason of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!” On an old tombstone in some cemetery was found an epitaph which we will do well to consider:

“What I spent I used What I saved I lost What I gave I have.” The golden text for all giving is found in Luke 6:38 in the words of the Master himself. Hear it:

“Give and it shall be given unto you;

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together,

Running over shall they give into your bosom.

For with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again.”

If we will give ourselves into the service of the Lord whole-heartedly as the Macedonians did who are mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8:5 “First of all they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God” then we will have no trouble in following gladly the leading of the early church in doing our work and supplying the financial means for increasing the work. We will then have a “purse-and all’ religion.

The Church Today In Its Preaching and Teaching

The Church Today In Its Preaching and Teaching THE CHURCH TODAY IN ITS PREACHING AND TEACHING

Oscar Smith Text: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from rivers unto the ends of the earth." (Psalms 72:8)

"And as many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:3)

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14). The promise of redemption embraced "all the families of the earth," but the prophecies concerning the proclamation of the gospel could not be fulfilled until Jesus broke down the middle wall of partition and abolished the law of Moses by nailing it to the cross. After the resurrection of Jesus and just before his ascension, he met the apostles in a mountain in Galilee and commanded them to "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20). This commission is the accumulated wisdom and power of forty centuries. It is Christ's farewell message to mankind. When it was given, the Lord would not trust the disciples with it, until they were "clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49). An interesting conversation occurred between Christ and the apostles just before the ascension, which should be noticed here. "They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, it is not for you to know times and seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8). This well defined plan of operation required that they begin preaching in Jerusalem, where the Jews were in a position to vindicate his claims, or prove that he was not the Messiah. The inhabitants of the rural districts of Judea were also prepared to accept the gospel at once. Then the Samaritans, who had witnessed these miracles of Jesus were to have opportunity to hear the gospel, and thence to the uttermost part of the earth.

Let us consider the preaching of the apostles. The first gospel sermon that was ever preached in the name of the Lord, was that of Peter on the day of Pentecost. Pentecost was one of the three annual festivals of the Mosaic law, at which all of the male Jews were required to be present. Hence, there was a large crowd assembled in Jerusalem at that time. The firelike and forked tongues appeared, and Peter began his work of "binding and loosing" with the assurance that his work would be recognized in heaven. It was a great occasion. The Jews were cut to the heart and inquired what to do. Peter said: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts

2:38). Result: "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41).

Peter and John went up into the temple at the hour of prayer. The lame man at "the beautiful gate" was healed. The people were astonished and ran together in Solomon's porch. Peter explained the power by which the miracle was performed, and emphasized the doctrine of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Result: "But many of them that heard the word believed: and the number of men came to be about five thousand." (Acts 4:4)

Stephen, a man "full of faith and the Holy Spirit," preached to the Jews in Jerusalem. They resisted his arguments by stopping their ears. They cast him out of the city and stoned him to death. (See Acts 7:1-60.)

Philip carried the gospel to the city of Samaria. "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women." (Acts 8:12.) The same evangelist, guided by an angel of the Lord, preached Jesus to the Ethiopian officer. "And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." (Acts 8:26-39.)

Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church. He was on his Way to Damascus with authority from the high priest to bind Christians and cast them into prison. The Lord appeared to him saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He inquired what to do. The Lord directed him to Damascus where Annanias was sent by the Lord to tell him what to do. (Acts 22:16.)

Peter was sent to the house of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. The gospel was preached, Cornelius believed, repented and was baptized. (Acts 15:7; Acts 11:18; Acts 10:48.)

Lydia was a worshipper of God. She heard Paul preach the gospel. The Lord enlightened her understanding, "and gave heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul," and "was baptized." (Acts 16:14-15.)

Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi for preaching the gospel and casting out devils. At midnight they prayed and sang praises unto God. The prisoners heard them. An earthquake shook the prison's foundation, opened its doors and loosed the bands of the prisoners. The jailor awoke and was about to kill himself. Paul assured him that the prisoners had not escaped. He inquired what to do. Paul "spake the word of the Lord unto him, and all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and was baptized, he and all his, immediately." (Acts 16:25-34.) At Athens Paul encountered philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics, who desired to hear him "concerning Jesus and the resurrection." Paul preached to them, with the result that "certain men clave unto him and believed." (Acts 17:33.) At Corinth Paul preached the gospel. "And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." (Acts 18:8.)

Today, we are under divine instruction to preach the same gospel that the apostles preached. In other words, the teaching and preaching of the church of the first century, must be the teaching of the church now. The Lord's plan has always succeeded. Were the apostles successful? In less

than forty years Paul wrote the church at Rome, "Did they not hear? Yea, verily their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Romans 10:18.) Again: "If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister." (Colossians 1:23.) The Lord, during his personal ministry selected twelve men whom he qualified to go before the world and testify of him. These men are known in the New Testament as apostles. While they are not with us in person, their teaching remains binding open the human family, and will be binding as long as the Christian dispensation stands. Consider the following:

1. The apostles were eye-witnesses of the Lord.
2. They were immediately chosen and trained by the Lord.
3. They were infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit.
4. They performed miracles to prove their mission.
5. Had power to impart spiritual gifts upon others by the laying on of hands.
6. Exercised authority while they lived over churches planted by their instrumentality.
7. Received their commission directly from the Lord, hence, could not transfer their office to others. They had no successors.
8. They were the Lord's chosen ambassadors. (2 Corinthians 5:20)
9. They have the keys of the kingdom. (Matthew 16:18; Matthew 18:18.)
10. They are upon thrones today, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:29.) The only official personages in the church today are evangelists, elders or bishops and deacons. Elders or bishops are appointed in the local congregation to look after the spiritual interests of the church, and deacons manage the financial affairs of a well-organized congregation. The word "evangelist" occurs three times in the New Testament as follows: "And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Caesarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him." (Acts 21:8.) In writing the Ephesian church Paul says that the Lord "gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists." (Ephesians 4:11.) Timothy was instructed by Paul to "do the work of an evangelist." (2 Timothy 4:5.) The evangelists of today receive their commission just as Timothy did. Paul said to Timothy: "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2.) Again "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that need-eth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth," (2 Timothy 2:15) His duties are:

1. He must be an example to others. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12.)
2. He must be meek and holy in life. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." (1 Timothy 6:11.) Again: "But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes. And the Lord's servant must

not strive, but be gentle towards all apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves." (2 Timothy 2:23-25.) 3. He must "hold the pattern of sound words." (2 Timothy 1:13.) 4. "Speak the things which befit the sound doctrine." (Titus 2:1.)

5. Preach the word. "I charge thee in the sight of God. and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts." (2 Timothy 4:1-3.)

Evangelists must take the apostles for their models. In the fourth chapter of Acts we have an account of Peter's defense before the council. Of course Peter and John were asked by what power they had healed the lame man. "And Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit," said, "Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner." (Acts 4:10-12.) Here Peter puts his accusers in the attitude of laying the foundation for a building, and rejecting the stone which was cut out for the corner. He further declares that Christ was raised from the dead, and that salvation is in his name. The next verse reads, "Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13.) The text does not say "and when they beheld the deep piety of Peter, although piety has its place. It says, "and when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John." After this, the apostles prayed, and one of the main points in the prayer is stated as follows: "And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness." After the prayer the place was shaken, and it is recorded of them "that they spake the word of God with boldness."

It was God's will that the church should be kept pure. The apostolic preachers drew the line deep and wide between the church and the world. Sin was not tolerated in the church at Jerusalem, and the man today who follows the plain preaching of the apostles, will not hesitate to cry out against every form of corruption in the church. Like the prophets of old, it is the duty of a preacher to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to build. The mission of the church is to help the needy, edify itself and preach the gospel to the world. The paramount work of the church is that of preaching the gospel to the lost. The church is said to be "the pillar and ground of the truth." That means that the church supports the truth, upholds it and transmits it from generation to generation. The question may be asked, "What is the truth?"

1. It is not philosophy. Some body has said that "philosophy is the search of a blind man in a dark cellar for a black cat that isn't there."

2. It is not theology. Theology is the word of God diluted by human opinion. Theology sent the church into the wilderness and brought on the dark ages. Theology as the curse of the religious world today.

Since the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, what is meant by the term "truth?"

1. The truth is the word of God. "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17.)

2. The truth is the gospel. "In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation." (Ephesians 1:13.)

3. The truth or the gospel must be rightly divided. "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15.) The evangelist, armed with the "sword of the Spirit," must wage an aggressive warfare. Some seem to think the Christian's armor is for defense only; but Paul told Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith," and to "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." To get some idea as to the faithful preacher's attitude toward the false teacher, follow Paul and Stephen in their career as preachers. Stephen engaged some men in a religious debate in the Cilician synagogue in Jerusalem, and it is reported that his enemies "were not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." (Acts 6:10.) On one occasion Stephen defended himself before the Sanhedrin. That speech closes with these blistering words:

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts 7:51.) As a result of that speech, Stephen was stoned to death. On the island of Cyprus, it seems that Paul and Barnabas encountered an influential man who desired to hear them preach. "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. But Saul who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:8-10.)

After many years of hard labor on the firing line, Paul was able to look back over a life of faithful service in the Lord's kingdom and call it "a good fight." Having fought the "good fight of faith," he could look forward to the crown of life "which the Father has in store for all who love him." In New Testament times, each local church was a unit of action. Mission work was often done, by a congregation selecting evangelists and sending them out, as in the case of Barnabas and Saul and the Antioch church. "The Holy Spirit said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 13:2-3.) The first missionary journey of Paul was from Antioch through Asia Minor back to Antioch. Upon his return to Antioch he called the church together and reported the work done in foreign lands. The church at that time was the divine society organized for the purpose of preaching the gospel to the lost. The Lord's plan will succeed.

The Church Today In Its Building Itself Up In Love

The Church Today In Its Building Itself Up In Love THE CHURCH TODAY IN ITS BUILDING ITSELF UP IN LOVE

EARNEST BEAM A debt of gratitude is owing institutions such as this for the attitude of mind and habits of life you cause young people to adopt. I want to express my sincere thanks to our Father in heaven for the men and women of faith, of courage, and of vision who have made and are making such educational foundations possible. Not long since, in California, I heard a discussion concerning some land that was for sale. "It is not worth that much if the Japanese have been farming it," one man said to the other. And the other man asked, "What have the Japanese to do with it?" To which the first replied, "They can take all the good out and leave the land almost worthless for agricultural purposes until years of building up processes have been employed." Our civilization is running down. We have been taking entirely too much out of men and not putting enough back. We are going to change this procedure very soon now or we are going to leave this stage of action. The universe is against it. But schools such as these are great helps to the home—to fathers and mothers who care how their children are developed—for yours is just the opposite of the Japanese with the land. Instead of taking out, you develop those processes of thought and habits of life that enable the student to take the great God of the universe into himself. This truly becomes a well of water springing up into eternal life. Again I thank the Lord for all the good all of the men of faith thus engaged have done for Him and for the world.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Spiritual gifts is the subject Paul has under consideration in that church at Corinth when he comes to pen the thirteenth chapter which was read for us by Brother Silas. Let us get the setting of this chapter that treats so pointedly of love. The twelfth chapter enumerates the gifts of the Spirit possessed by the church of apostolic days. A study of each gift would be profitable for that church was a body. It was not merely a torso. It had feet with which to walk, and hands with which to serve, and eyes to see as well as ears to hear, and above all, it had a heart that cared. The Holy Spirit was the Assembling Agent. That harvesting machine was complete. But these gifts added nothing to the moral and spiritual character of those Christians. These powers that they possessed lodged in the character of God—not in them—and they were not the better for possessing them. This point is of extreme importance and understanding it you will see why Paul contrasts these gifts with love. When times were better than they are now we had shipbuilding there in the Los Angeles harbor near Long Beach. Some of the shipbuilding companies are located in Los Angeles. Now suppose it is pay day and one of you goes to Los Angeles and is given the ten thousand dollar pay roll to carry down to the men at work. Are you any richer by this pay roll that is for others? No you are not. You might excite the envy of a friend of yours if you should get out in Long Beach before going on down to the harbor and begin to show him that ten thousand dollars and how very prosperous you are. Some men in merely handling money for others, of the which not one dime is their's, suddenly are lifted very high in their own conceits. And imagine yourself

exciting the envy of your friend who scarcely can find enough for food and raiment but you have ten thousand dollars! And, yet, you are not a pennyworth richer. No bread can you buy with that ten thousand dollars, no clothing can you buy and no rent can you pay. That entire sum is in your hands for the good of others and you are not the richer for it. Spiritual gifts were like that .

Paul speaks expressly in Ephesians the fourth chapter that these gifts were for the “work of the ministry.” And yet a few days ago a sister of mine together with her friend were dining at the home of friends. And about as soon as they were seated at the dinner table they became engaged in a discussion of spiritual gifts. One young lady had prayed for a week or so and professed to have one of the gifts. She thought herself perfect—complete—and that she had arrived at that state of character where she could fulfill all the pleasure of God in herself. The young lady was sincere and meant well too as many another like her also is. But she was wrong—terribly wrong.

Each side in that little discussion went for re-enforcements so a few nights found all the company together again with a “Brother Rogers” to help them and with me to help “us.” I said to this young lady who thought she was perfect (complete): “You prayed for a week or so and were by direct fiat of the Lord made entire. No hard benches did you sleep on nor taunts did you take nor suffering did you have worth the mention. And yet you arrived at perfection. The apostle Paul labored in strifes and sorrow and hardships and sufferings almost beyond our comprehension and afterward opened with a hand that still trembled from the terrible buffetings he was undergoing: ‘Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’ How hard it was for him to come by the unimpeachable character and how easy you came by it. To arrive at perfection after a week or so of mere prayer is unworthy the Saviour with a cross, the men of faith of the ages, and the God who gave His son for the world.”

“But the gift is the guarantee. God will not give the gift except you are wholly pleasing in his sight,” she reasoned. “You are tragically in error,” I replied. (I spoke in kindness and she listened well.) I continued by showing her that the very church (at Corinth) possessed of so many gifts were “babes in Christ,” “carnal.” Among them “envying, strife, and divisions” and that their “walk” was “according to man.” Rejoicing was there that was not good, and neither was the rejoicing of the young lady good. I believe I persuaded her of this. And the discussion continued until proof sufficient was given that the possession of these gifts added nothing—not a thing—to the moral and spiritual character of the possessor. True, they were largely given to converted persons—to good men—but the possessing of them neither made them good nor were they necessarily well developed spiritually. They were with these gifts exactly where the man with the payroll was—in possession of something to build up others but which enriched them not. The gifts gave the wisdom and showed the behavior of heaven and gave the proof that the message was divine (the truth and the proof of the truth) but the possessor’s character was not made better.

It is further pointed out that one might speak in tongues of men and of angels and personally be nothing but a noisy, troublesome person. Too, he might understand all mysteries and all knowledge—have the gifts with which to do this — and personally be nothing; that one could give his body to be burned and all his goods to feed the poor and it profit him nothing. These gifts lodged in the character of God—in the character of those who possessed them. But the “end of the

commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5.) And Paul kept this end in view and therefore contrasted these gifts with charity.

Another Mistake

Riding east with a very good friend of mine—a law student and a Christian—he too raised the question of whether the whole world would not be converted if a great display of these gifts were in evidence. And I asked, "Suppose they were converted, then what? Would they on that account be the kind of characters God wants? Will mere belief do it?" After some study I believe he was persuaded that these gifts are not needed to the development of character. And here let me interpose for emphasis. I come to Abilene with just two words: I am pleading for unification—integration—within us—for character and for unification with the whole world outside of us. This calls for character This calls for love. This state represents the completed circuit. The germ of life in a seed will not cease its work until it has deposited energy like itself—until it has deposited the seed that will repeat the same process. And the love set forth in Christ never stops until it has made us like Christ. The end of the commandment —the end of all ordinances, church name, sacrifices, toil, suffering—all—the end is' charity. Any system abortive of this is not of God. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Except the church of Christ produces character—and love is that character—superior to the denominations it so sorely criticizes, it has no right to exist. To what profit is it that we may grow a tree with more luxurious growth than our neighbors? What does it matter that the tree abides more soundly within the principles of proper living? If his fruits equals ours our whole procedure is worthless and only has in it some excellency that is short lived. God goes for character—for love. The something that mothers have by instinct is what we must come to have through salvation in the realm of the Spirit. That something is love. That is God. That is the cosmic energy—the essence—of the moral and spiritual universe. The scheme of the ages is to produce character, love, life and not systems, dogmas and doctrines. These, to be sure, cannot be disregarded but are essential. But if they do not bring us to perfection—to completeness—to the love—character that God has—then are we salt that has lost its savour and we are good for nothing. We are then the most putrid thing in the world. And this love—this character—is not a direct bestowal of God for then had he as well taken the rocks and the trees for his children. We must rise up in faith and hope and God will give us the joys and the sorrows, the successes and the failures that will perfect that character. The two words are: Unification within—integration—no lost motion, and unification with God, the angels and the whole world of men. The one method of this end is not the mere bestowal of gifts but the hard, ugly, vexing way of the cross. But I anticipate my speech concerning unity for tomorrow afternoon and will return to the subject in hand.

It is a serious mistake to think that God is all the while anxious to use his supernatural power. If he did use it constantly we would then be walking by sight—regularly seeing his power—rather than by faith, to walk by faith is to trust him when we cannot see. Evidence is every-, where abundant both in nature and in revelation that God does not choose normally to use his supernatural power. It is so evident that we strongly suspect those who constantly clamor for signs as still being a "wicked and adulterous generation." God's manner of giving by the processes of nature is a living testimony against this constant longing for the sup-ernatural. Every natural birth with the incident suffering and the long, patient care of the infant is a testimony against it. The acquisition of knowledge and wisdom so necessary even for this short earth-life is likewise an abiding testimony

against it. In the realm of salvation and revelation the testimony is as abounding. Why trouble Noah to build the ark? Why not speak it into existence? Why forty days and forty nights with Moses on the mount and then the offerings of the children of Israel in order to build that tabernacle that was to house the heavenly likenesses? God was very particular and all things must be made according to the pattern. The God who “spake and it was done; who commanded and it stood fast” could have spoken it all into existence. He did not do it. Why choose twelve unlettered apostles to carry the message to the world? Why not let Jesus and the angels take a day off up there in heaven and thunder the message of salvation to every corner in the earth? They would have made no mistake in the message and, too, the whole world have started off together with the wonderful news. Why not raise up a set of prophets every one hundred years to thunder forth the message anew? We can depend upon men to get matters badly twisted within one hundred years. And so might we multiply the considerations. Every one points to the grand conclusion that God is anxious to use this supernatural power. And we can be sure he is not anxious to use it for it is neither consistent with his character nor good for us that he should. All the philosophies of man ever written are not worth a featherweight that do not begin with facts— things as they are—things that have been done. See what God hath done is the way to begin to learn. Both the quaking of Mount Sinai, the thunder, the lightnings, the Voice that spake, and prior thereto the wonders in Egypt- all these show that God begins with things done. So of the miracles, wonders and signs which God did give with Jesus - •• yea, more, the person and character of Jesus himself—all is God showing his power and goodness that we might reason with facts and not with theories. But all of these displays just mentioned are supernatural and exceptional. Nature and the doings of God as recorded by faithful witnesses are just as enlightening to us if we will but consider. The theory that God is anxious to use his supernatural power is wrong and has wrecked the usefulness of many a man. The superintending providence of God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God hearing our prayers—all these are apart from the supernatural. They are all mysterious but not miraculous. They are as much a part of the way God works with his children today as the force of life is a part of his way in nature. And the fact that we understand neither working does not make either of them miraculous. Mysterious is one thing. All life is that. Miraculous is quite another agency. That is the exceptional and God does not choose to use it regularly.

We are taught today that we need to pray God and have some miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit. With some every step of the way must be marked by some miracle. If it does not happen then exaggeration is employed to pump up the ordinary and to make it a miracle. It is a most striking fact that in the Bible those, for the most part, who know nothing of the coming of the miraculous were sometimes endowed with it and those who wanted it had it not. Simon the sorcerer offered money for one of these miraculous powers but he did not get it. I do not know that there is a great difference between him and those today who offer both money and sanity in some cases to get something. He was in the “gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” If that same Holy Spirit was speaking through us now with Peter then I doubt not the same diagnosis would be made in many cases. Those who asked Jesus for a sign were assigned by Jesus to a similar disposition of character—a wicked and adulterous generation. Brothers and all, we are often so sinful that we are incapable of judging aright our motives and thoughts. How reverently we should then come to His word. Truly to us these words are spirit and they are life.

I pointed out to my companion in travel on the way here that no people ever saw more wonders—more miracles— than did those Israelites who came out of Egypt. It is appalling to think of what they witnessed. But the carcasses of nearly all of them fell in the wilderness because, they neither had faith in God nor did they know him! Think of it! Let these dead carcasses instruct us and all those who constantly clamor for gifts—for the miraculous. Life is not built upon that scheme and happy is that man who comes to see the “more excellent way.” Our greatest strength can become our greatest weakness. These very gifts are a case in point. Given of God to support the infant church they made them great. But when that church began to focus attention upon them and conducted themselves in such a way that they would have need of them always they were found to be very weak, (carnal, walking as men, babes, rejoicing in the wrong things). My mother cared for me when I could not care for myself. My father counselled me when I would have been ruined without his counsel. They fed me. They clothed me. The instructors taught me the elements of education and the mediums whereby I may use the knowledge and the wisdom so essential to physical manhood here. But now would I not have been in a ridiculous state if it had been necessary for me to bring them all with me here for these addresses? And if I never could bargain for myself in the affairs of men and go in and out among them without carrying a nurse along to put me to sleep and an instructor to read to me and a father to caution me not to give all my money to the first stranger who asked for it— would I not be ridiculously weak? These very agencies ordained for my childhood would be my weakness should I need them always. Their voice—their care—their instruction—their counsel—all—is to lodge in me and become a part of me and make me a mature person until I unconsciously use all of their ways. Then am I grown to manhood and can put away childish things. It is precisely so with these gifts. How could God ever develop spirits of faith, of hope and of love if all the while he was to do all for them as he could and did do with these gifts? The continuance of the gifts would have kept them perpetual babes. But once beholding the perfect—the mature—the full stature of Christ—we can come by his ways, his thoughts, his ideals until we are completely regenerated and made anew. And when we arrive at that stage we have love as God is* love—perfect as He is perfect. We will find ourselves able to live in this world by His grace and like the oak of the forest, the beast of the field and the man of the world we shall be fully equipped unto every good work if we abide within his teaching. By faith we contact God, by hope we continue in the way, and love is the goodness of God himself. These elements lodge in our own character and make us to be what God wants us to be. But those gifts lodged in the character of God. How right Paul was! Surely this is the more excellent way.

How It Worked In Building The Church

Jesus exhibited love in providing the foundation for the church. Those twelve disciples would have burst into as many particles as persons without his love. There was plenty of material for them to have warred each other to death. But Jesus found them, changed them, and made them ready for the kingdom “in spite of” themselves. Love always works “in spite of.” In mothers, in God, in Jesus it goes on when all else stops. Jesus went on with the twelve when they considered themselves so soon perfected and would have led the way knowing not they savoured not the things of God but only of men. He stayed with them when they fell to discussing who should be the greatest. He was with them when they would have fire come down from heaven to devour the adversaries. He stayed with them when they all forsook him at Gethsemane. He stayed with them on the cross and thought of the forgiveness of their sins. He was with them afterward in their perplexities. He

empowered them at Pentecost. Love found a way to perfect everyone of those apostles with good hearts. Only ho who had a demon was lost. This marvelous accomplishment stands both as a challenge and a living rebuke to the whole world. There are thousands of people with just as good hearts as we this day have that we have never reached. If we loved as Jesus loved we would win them. But I anticipate the latter part of this address.

Love did it. Love worked in Jesus. Let any man consider carefully what Jesus experienced at the hands of those disciples and still perfected them “in spite of.” This powerful example became the very dynamic of the early church. The type was forever set.

Take the life of Paul as a further example of how love worked in building of the early church. Yes, Paul loved. Just because John spake of love and was that disciple whom Jesus loved, it does not argue that Paul was not loved and loving. He was. No minister from the ascension of Jesus until now of whom we have record compares with Paul in the excellency of love. Others wrote of it but where is the record of their accomplishment? And love acts. Love does things. Love finds a way. Paul did that. In the case of John Mark it was Paul who would not take him the second time. He had turned back the first time. Paul would not take him again. Why? Paul had a sense of completing this work God gave him to do. The urge that is in every- plant to complete its life cycle; the urge that is within our physical constitutions to take us on to maturity; the power that was with Jesus until he could say “it is finished”—that power was with Paul. Mark was a contradiction of that power. He turned back. And that power was love. Paul had it. He was one of very, very few men who truthfully could say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

I have seen the frost come upon the corn in the milk stage. It became chaffy, unfit for seed, and devalued for food. O, the thousands of Christians like that! But the frosts did not cut Paul down until he finished the course. He exhibited the full, hard kernel that the frosts of winter cannot harm. He did that because he had love. And consider what that meant in the life of that early church. The very hardness that Paul endured gave him wisdom and understanding. He is the one writer more than any other that set the church loose from Judaism. Judaism w'ould have destroyed it. Paul saw that and gave the needed instruction. He did that because he had love. He suffered the consequences because he had love.

Paul demanded purity of life free from hypocrisy. It takes a good man to make that message effective. Paul had the necessary goodness because he had love.

He was never deterred from the goal because of circumstances. He used them all to the glory of God. It takes love to do that.

It takes a good man to stand when hundreds depart. It takes a good man to leave a desposit of faith that God can use when he is dead and gone. It takes a good man to be robbed of every proper consideration among men in order to bless and save those men and their children. It takes love to do that. Paul did it.

It took love to plant the flag of the King of kings in every land. Paul did it.

Paul is one man that gave himself to the Lord.. And the Lord gave him love; What powers this little man left in that early church' for good! He was its very life blood. Members came to emulate him as

they always will do their leader. Even those who despised him when he lived were made powerful by him at his death. We praise dead saints while we persecute the living ones. No lives other than those of Jesus and Paul are needed •to show how love worked in the early church. The apostles imitated the life of the Lord they had known. And like Joshua of old, they reared up a generation of men and women who knew the Lord. They signed the death pack with Jesus. They actually died to things of this world They were controlled by the Lord. It was love at work. The Church Today In Comparison

How often do we see this exhibition of love today? It is a rare excellency among us. But those few we have seen with it shone and shine like the stars of the firmament. Those who have had it have made us desire to sell all we have that we may possess this treasure too. The generality in the church today do not have that love of which the Bible speaks. Have you noticed that most of the things over which we have quarrelled in the churches during the last fifteen or twenty years have been matters that did not call for purity or affections, nor the disciplining of the will but only the using of our tongues and pens? A man could argue on the "college question," the "no-class question," the questions surrounding baptism, and near or about every other question and be counted loyal. At heart he may be no different to the man of the world. The fact that he argues well on these of itself proves little. It is too much like paganism where a man could bring his gift to the altar but take no account of his personal life. It was the unexamined life. We have a great many unexamined lives. The weapons of the carnal are used right and left of us. And the kingdom of God is not now and never will be built by them. Love is lacking. The early church had love enough to disfellowship the covetous. I never knew of a case like that in modern times. We are all too much possessed of our possessions to start a disfellowshipping movement on covetousness. Yet there is the demand in the Scripture? not to eat with the covetous. It takes love to make that commandment effective. What charges would come in the church if we disfellowshipped the covetous from pure motives? It would mean we had love. And that would work to the building of the kingdom. There is a plain passage of Scripture in this matter. We do not use it. The railer was put out of the church in the long ago. If there is any hateful thing that brother may not say to brother today—any insinuation he may not use—I confess I do not know what it is. Love made for reverence of personalities in those days—the love of the spirit that came from God. Even Michael would not rail against the Devil. The Devil would have been railed against good and proper if my brethren had been there. Fools still rush in where angels fear to tread. Along with our democracies these evil days we have counted even persons as common and to be spoken of and against almost as we will. I even heard a prominent brother say he liked another one because he could use such "withering sarcasm." Contempt for the person of another, if I mistake not, was counted by Jesus, as between brother and brother, equal to murder. Love would cast away this vile sin and make the church of to-day once again inhabited by the Holy Spirit. The early church put out the jokers and the foolish talkers. We do not. That is because we do not have the love that early church had. Our manners are all but gone. I heard of a prominent brother who was very ill. Some fear for his life was felt. But the report came back that he was doing fine and "able to tell one joke after another." That makes us think of Paul—it is so different. How can a man tell one joke after another in plain violation of a plain passage of Scripture and tomorrow hear the cries of the oppressed and deal gently with them? How is that gangrene, that callous to be removed from his spirit so that he may be as responsive to the call of God as the rose is to the sunshine? It cannot be done. Sins find us out. They tell their story. There are problems in the church today that the jokers

and men without a cross can never solve. They have come to this hour unprepared. The sins witness against them. They cannot see right because they have not lived right.

Covetousness, railers, extortioners, jokers, foolish-talkers— what do we do with such now? Nothing. The early church had love enough to cast them out rather than to do them the injustice of permitting them to think they are Christians. The “spiritual” restored the erring in the days of love. They did it with all longsuffering and lowliness too. We see more of the opposite of this than we do of the other.

I speak plainly and I mean it so. The world has a right to expect better things than this of us. Our children have the right to expect it. The Lord has the right to demand we do not insult the Holy Spirit thus and drive Him from our hearts. And these “little” items are but indices—they are like buds on the tree. They tell the story of the life that is within. These plain violations declare a terrible condition of our hearts. It is away from love. It makes mockery of the religion of Christ. It crucifies him afresh. The troubles of the early church were largely from without. They had love within and easily withstood all things. Yea, they used “all things” to the glory of God. We never have done that as a people. The Japanese have a tree which by nature belongs in the forest and would grow large. They cut the tap root, leave the surface roots, and make pot plants of the trees. The gospel is a world plant. It feeds by way of love. We have taken away this tap root today and feed upon the surface. What a fearful reckoning awaits us! If we had love we too would make the church pure and not violate the plainest passages of Scripture; if we had love we too would use “all things”—“the world, life, death, things present, things to come”—and evangelize the world if we had love we too would finish the course. We would be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect—complete.

We can argue for the right name, for the correct baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and tell everyone how loyal we are but unless we come to have love we will show to the world more and more that we are nothing but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. And we cannot have love until our wills, our affections and our intellects are all coordinated for God— all—and until we make the world—the whole world—our field. In short, there cannot be love without the cross. It is the method.

It is the Father’s good pleasure to give the church of tomorrow to those who love. To those souls among us who labor on patiently and lovingly in hard places—to those who know the weight of the cross—the church of tomorrow and the ages to come will be given. Make no mistake about it. I beg all of you young people to find the little places, the hard places, here in the United States and abroad. Go there and live and work. Take the cross of Christ. Take it and keep it when no man applauds. Love will develop in you mightily. What glorious personalities you will become!

Two things only will I say in concluding. Jesus Christ never did send the gospel abroad for the purpose of declaring good things and doing good things without first demanding we be good. If we make the tree good we will bear good fruit. If we long and pray and work that we may be perfected by love so sure as God is in heaven and Jesus is His Son will we come to have good fruit. And to this end, and finally, I would cite you to Jacob who came to meet his brother Esau. These were twins. They were different characters. You have two natures in you also. Jacob knew he could not meet that brother alone. He needed help. And when he got hold of that angel that came to him he would not let him go until he received help. When you once consider your weak, human nature you will find it insufficient for the way of the cross. I beg you then to consider Jacob. Tell the Lord you

cannot win out against the nature that will pull you down to hatred and fruitlessness without His help. When you mean that sincerely and pray him sincerely you will find He will send upon you the joys and the sorrows, like angels of blessings, to bring you to that state of love you must have. And unto Him will be the glory through Jesus Christ our dear Lord.

The Church Today In Its Worship

The Church Today In Its Worship THE CHURCH TODAY IN ITS WORSHIP

JOHN ALLEN HUDSON

Since my subject has been assigned me to be a link in a series being delivered in this lectureship I am very glad to address myself to the subject, "The Order of Worship." It is not mine to expostulate upon the importance of worship, nor to define worship. Others no doubt in this series have done that. But I am to develop in this lecture what we can learn of the form and items of worship as furnished us in the New Testament.

It is a notable thing that Churches of Christ have no creed but the Bible. No man-made book can describe for us in a ritualistic way what shall constitute worship, nor in what it shall consist as to form. The Book of books is the guide. What it says alone will suffice. It is true in all the Protestant world that final appeal is supposed to be made to the Bible, but in such cases as where appeal may be made the interpretation of the point is through denominational bias. Hence, this lecture prefaces the thought that Churches of Christ alone, as religious folk do actually take the Book of books as the all-sufficient guide in matters of faith and of practice. This position then upon the word of God prepares for the discussion of the order of worship as furnished us in the word of the Lord. In seeking to establish the order of worship, if a certain definite plan is given, it is necessary to arrive at another point, and that is what will constitute authority in the word of the Lord. In taking the old rule that the Bible establishes every point either by direct statement or by an approved example no originality is claimed, of course. Others long since dead have arrived at the conclusion that the way to prove a thing from the Bible is either by taking a direct statement made upon the subject in hand or else by taking the practice of inspired men as written out for us in the history of the New Testament as law. It must be admitted upon mature thought that what inspired men and women did and left behind as history approved of God does make a rule, and a very safe rule, for us to follow.

There are recorded actions in the New Testament that do not stand as approved examples, for later God saw fit to countermand them lest any one should get the idea that they are to be followed as law. Hence the Bible is infallibly safe as a rule of action. God permits no flaws to stand in the way. An example, or the history of the practice of the apostles upon a certain point that does not constitute a rule for us to follow, is in the early community of good furnished us as the voluntary acts of the members of the early church out of their generosity alone and not because God required such to be done. If this did not stand out in apostolic history as a sporadic or separate piece of history in the life of the church this example of the Jerusalem church would be forever fastened upon the Church of Christ as the law to be followed with reference to our material possessions. We are told that as many as had lands or houses sold them and came and brought the money and cast it at the apostles' feet. The first great wave of enthusiasm that swept over the early church made them count as of no importance whatever they possessed as material things. They lost the sense of value of houses and lands. The eternal world became so important that they minimized

this world. And this first great wave of enthusiasm swept them to give all that they had. But God recognized the property rights of even Christians in this world in what is implied in the case of Anninas and Sapphira. In their case the apostle Peter said: "While it remained was it not thine own? And after it was sold was it not in thine own power?" Hence, God did not require the members of the Jerusalem Church to give all they had of this world's good when they became disciples. When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church about the requirements of the Gospel on the subject of material possessions, he said that each member should give upon the first day of the week as he had been prospered through the previous time. (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). And again he said that giving of one's means should be according to purpose (2 Corinthians 9:7). There are other phases of the subject of giving as outlined to us in the New Testament, but this is enough to show that the example of the Jerusalem Church in giving all they possessed did not rest upon all coming disciples and congregations as an approved precedent or example. Hence not every example in the New Testament is an approved example. But where God has written out in history of the New Testament actions that he evidently outlined by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and did not repeal them, the example furnished us is a law for us to follow. This is an important point of interpretation of Scripture. The direct—statement—way of teaching needs no lengthy treatment. 'Jesus said for the apostles to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel to every creature. It simply means what he said to them. And he said moreover that those taught should believe, repent and be baptized. The person who hears the Gospel, believes it and repents of his sins and is baptized does what Jesus said he should do and the statement is direct and comprehensible. (Head Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

There are some students of the Bible who insist upon a third thought in interpreting the Scriptures, and that is what they call a "necessary inference." Thomas Campbell took notice of this in the "Declaration and Address." If a thing is necessarily inferred from the over-shadowing command, then it is a part of the commandment though not directly mentioned. Let us take the case of the Great Commission. Jesus said for the apostles to go into all the world. He did not say how for them to go. At times they walked, at others they sailed on ships, at others- they rode in carriages. Whatever way was best, or that seemed the most convenient was implied in the use of good common-sense by the Master in carrying out the commandment. Hence, it is necessarily inferred. Such a thing is also true of many minor things in the acts of worship. The convenience of a comfortable house, seats, song books, and many other things are implied matters in the New Testament. God did not permit himself to write out to men as though they were the veriest tyroes in his service such petty details as could be worked out in human judgment to the best advantage of all concerned and to the best ends of a spiritual worship. Then the Bible should have been such a weighty volume that an hundred and twenty books, and not sixty-six would have been required to tell men and women what to do.

We shall find in the study of the New Testament that God has written for us the example of churches at work that we are to follow, that he has made direct statements which we are to carry out, and that he has implied many things that we may have and use in order to worship.

It is necessary to think of worship as regards its definition a little in this lecture, for what constitutes worship must be thought about in order that we may take up the subject of the order of the items involved. Some make a clear distinction between worship and service, but it seems to me that such distinctions may be more or less arbitrary. One can worship God in many ways other than in

the partaking of the Lord's Supper. He can worship God while he farms his acres, doing such work as may fall to his hands as one who renders service unto God while he prepares to feed the hungry mouths of his family. And Paul said that even a slave in the days of slavery should serve God through the service to his master. God could be always in mind as the one to whom all homage and praise and service are due. In such a case we have a worshipful spirit going about the affairs of this world. There is some sense of worship in such a reverential heart. But of course the clear-cut thought of worship is bowing before and doing homage directly to a divine being, or to a superior being. When we come to the numbering of the items of worship in the New Testament, we shall find that they are very few in number. While here and there are elaborate systems of worship that are so complex that it takes a lifetime of study to master even the routine, and while we must consider that such an endless routine is always in danger of smothering the true spirit, we must bear in mind that God knows very well indeed the capabilities of his creatures. He has made a religion that he has designed for all the world and for every age, and for all conditions of men. Therefore, he had to design something exceedingly simple to meet the requirements of the human family. We may expect to find but few things as items of worship.

We are told in Acts 2:42, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." And so far as the order of worship is concerned, this is all that the historian Luke has told us. It would have made exceedingly interesting history for some one to have written about the personalities and their actions in the worship in that Jerusalem church. And if some reporter had told us of how they assembled, whether they sat, or kneeled, how they were dressed, and what they did in order when they came together for worship it would have been a record greatly enjoyed by countless thousands, but God mercifully covered such a history in the debris of the centuries so that persons easy to misunderstand could not bind some things of local color and custom upon all succeeding generations and in all the countries of the earth.

Since Luke's history is so brief, only the initiated could understand what he meant by such things as the apostles' doctrine, breaking of bread and prayers. It requires other records and parts of Scripture for one to know just what such a statement could mean. What was this breaking of bread? Was it a common repast of an average sort of bread? Or was it a special bread, and consecrated to a special purpose? The latter was the case. When one goes back into the life of Christ while he lived and labored among the apostles in preparation for the coming kingdom, he will find that on the night of the betrayal of the Lord by Judas that he (the Lord) took bread at the passover supper, gave thanks and broke it and instituted a meal that was designed to keep him in mind throughout the generations as the one who gave his life that man might live. This is called the Lord's Supper. But it did not consist of the breaking of a memorial loaf alone. There was used in the same connection a container of wine that he said was to represent his blood. These two items are sometimes in Scripture contained in the single item of bread, for they both represent the last supper. Therefore, what is meant by Luke in Acts is that the breaking of bread represented the observance of the Lord's Supper. And some writers understand at, the first this was observed every day instead of the first day of the week only, as later became the approved example.

We may expect to find that where God has written out, even if through the thought of the correction of some abuse, the record, or example, with whatever corrections may be pointed as needful, it is set up as a law for us to follow. Indeed we learn more about the proper observance of the Lord's Supper from the example of the Corinthian Church than from any other source. And

may it be added that we could not understand the full import of the expression, "breaking bread" unless we had an example that would show us fully what is meant.

One could not take the statement of Acts 2:2 without either passages of Scripture and come fully to understand what the worship in the New Testament is. Scripture must be used to throw light upon Scripture. Scripture must be used to interpret Scripture. Nor could one learn what the doctrine of the apostles is except from the study of the New Testament history in Acts and the Epistles. It's even necessary to go back to the Gospels to get an understanding of what Jesus gave to the apostles. There are in the personal ministry many things in germ that come to full light in the Acts and Epistles. Jesus gave the apostles authority in the Church. He said that he would place them upon twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of the kingdom of Israel. This simply means that through them he would exercise his rule upon Spiritual Israel. They should be kings under his vast and more powerful rule. They should be satellite kings. This they were in the administering of his doctrine, for his and their rule upon the people would be the rule of the heart, through divine law. The apostles never had a separate doctrine or law. Their doctrine was the doctrine of Christ. The apostles' doctrine was what Christ gave to the world through them by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He said that the Spirit would guide them into all truth. And in that day of the direct guidance of the new and growing church, when the whole record was verbal only, and not any of it as yet committed to a permanent record, what the apostles said was final, for the whole church recognized that the apostles were under divine guidance and what they said was not open to dispute. The people even knew that these men had gained from the Lord first-hand information for the period of the personal ministry of the Lord, and now they were under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. They were the visible, physical leaders' of the army of the faithful. They set up the whole practice of the Church. Hence, Luke's statement that the early Church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Just what did this mean? As before stated, it was known by the historian that the initiated, that is the members of the Church, would know. He alluded to some understood form of worship. The mere statement was sufficient to their minds to recall vividly some actual meetings of the Church in which they had participated and the varied program of the Church in worship. They could envisage afresh the worship of the Church. But God has given us light here and there through the rest of the New Testament so that even if we did not witness any of those scenes we can understand the main items of worship and practice them with absolute assurance. But how wise he has manifested himself in that he has prohibited from going into the record any such set routine as to make the plan for divine worship a set thing, and not flexible to suit the needs and conditions of other folk and other ages! If he has set it up as a record from the actions of a divinely guided society, then such a routine would constitute an unalterable rule. And there could never be an abridgment, never a protraction. Disciples meeting together in great haste, and under dire persecution, would have been committed to a plan of worship so cumbersome and heavy that they should have been endlessly involved before their persecutors. But God did not commit them to any such routine. The simplicity of divine worship is an amazing thing. Paul exhorted that the brethren be not moved away from the simplicity that was in Christ. For as a system tends to become elaborate it is very apt to lose the spirit. and the power that originally attended it. It becomes a ritual, and loses the very heart of worship. Is it any wonder that God did not want the New Testament Church to become involved in an elaborate system of worship when Christ and the apostles had seen the ritualism of the Jews? There the Apostle Paul could warn that the

brethren be not moved away from the simplicity that was in Christ. The artless expression is often the most expressive. Stilted speech seldom gets over. People are exceedingly simple by nature. Their needs are just as simple. Man requires, John Stewart Mill said, only companionship, food and a place to sleep. He may greatly elaborate upon the pomp and circumstance of these but after all his needs do not vary. He may live in a palace, eat special viands, and drink the most fragrant and delectable of wines, and wear the most gorgeous of clothes, but after he has come to do such, he has not changed in number or nature his basic needs, but only altered the circumstance of them. And the humblest, having a sufficient amount of these plain things in his heart, can be as happy as the rich. Now this same simplicity of nature makes it most desirable that man in religion, as in life, be unspoiled. God wishes him to be simple, and sincere. And to correspond with his basic nature God has given a simple system of worship. As before stated in this lecture, no one can read in the Scriptures of a detailed, fully outlined system of worship. But God has had recorded in the Scriptures all the acts of worship that he desires his people to have. We read of them here and there. Anyway, the word of God is given that way—here a little and there a little. But when all is combined we have all that is necessary. We have mentioned in Scripture the singing of psalms. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16. Prayer. 1 Timothy 2:1-5. Giving of our means, or the contributions which we are required to make for the work of the Church. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. The Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:20-30. Teaching or preaching. Matthew 28:19-20. These are the only things that any one can read from the Scripture as being parts of, or together, comprising the things of worship of the New Testament Church. There are simply no more items than these. And it matters not to the speaker whether one classifies some of these as worship and some as service. They are the things that were done by the Church in the days of the apostles when the whole Church was under the guidance of the inspired apostles. Anything more than these would simply be things of men's authority and not things of God's authority. God authorized no more. And not only did God not authorize more, but when it comes to the way in which they are to be done, and the order of them the Bible is as silent as the tomb, as unreplying as the "tongueless silence of the voiceless dust." One can search the record in vain. Nothing more is to be gained than that what is done must be done decently in order. God allows every assembly of saints to meet when they feel they can the best, where they will, and to proceed as they see fit, with the carrying out of these simple elements of worship. He has therefore given a flexible worship that can not be trammelled by local conditions and color. When a congregation of disciples comes together how shall it proceed with the worship? How many songs should be sung? Some one says, "Let us sing the scriptural number, three." Yes, Brother, that is the custom. But where does the Bible say so? No where. Ah, and that is the trouble. We are trying to make our own custom divine law to regulate others. We do not know the difference between what is written in the Book and what we merely do as custom in certain sections of the land. Time was, many will remember, when those who communed drank from a common glass. And there are many who know of the great protest which went up when a more sanitary system of communion was introduced. Many, because they had been used to drinking from a common dipper, and from a common communion glass, felt that the religion of Christ was profaned. What was the matter? It was simply the growing pains of leaving behind the customs of a by-gone day. And time was when many who contributed simply walked up to the table and slipped a small coin under the table cloth so that the right hand would not know what the left hand did! And in many instances what a furore went up when a systematic plan of waiting upon the audience was instituted to meet the needs of

a growing congregation! But the passing of the plate had to come, or the passing of the basket, kill any whom it would. Customs change, but the die-hards are ever with us, And they are often so blind that they confuse the custom which they have with the law of divine worship. But God has removed from the record any taint of custom, even of the ancient world, and no such die-hard can point to the Book and say that there it is, and the transgressors are going to perdition for breaking up the order of divine worship. God has prevented them from doing that by leaving such customs and plans of procedure out of the record. Oh, the items are there. But the order in which they are to be done cannot be found. So the order is left to the discretion of the worshippers.

Tradition is a powerful thing. It has a part in all life. And the religion of Christ is no exception. What folk have been doing traditionally they want to continue. And they in many instances resent change, even if it is reform back to a simpler plan. The encrustations of social and religious custom are thrown out by a growing society like a mollusk thrown out the shell with constant expansion that is to encase it. But disciples of the Lord must bear in mind that there is always a distinction to be made between the mere tradition which largely moves them and the divine worship which they are to preserve. They should remember that the Lord's plan of worship is flexible, to suit the nature of the case, while the elements are always the same. And certainly while we must know that there is such a distinction to be made, we must appreciate each in its due proportion. We can not dispense with order, or decency and orderliness. We can not dispense with order, or decency and and worshipful way. On the subject of custom, congregations of the Church of Christ to day almost wholly engage in the singing of songs congregational, which in many cases is not congregational singing, but merely a badly disorganized choir. We do not believe in choirs. And I do not dissent from the main point of view. Choirs are dangerous, and are wholly without apostolic precedent. Therefore, they are unscriptural. But at the same time the New Testament has not said just exactly how the singing shall be done. It does say that we are to speak to one another, to teach in song. And we read in 1 Corinthians the 14th chapter where Paul mentions the fact that the Church at Corinth had solo singing. One sang a song. One prophesied. Now bear in mind that Paul did not condemn the practice, but merely ordered that not more than one person, at the most two, should seek to command the floor. It would not be unscriptural from this mention for a single person to sing a song for the teaching of the congregation through song. But in many cases if a brother should do such a thing there would be a great stir, and many would cry, "Heresy!" We are fearfully wedded to our customs. It would not be a bad thing for all of us to take stock of the teaching of the New Testament on the general subject of worship, and while we are doing so to lay aside, if indeed that were possible, our prejudices. Very many are wedded to their traditions and think them divine law. But this speech is to deal with the worship of the Church as it is conducted today. And that gives a privilege to tell of some customs that I have observed. Some years ago I was engaged for a meeting for one of the Detroit churches. While there I was impressed by the vast difference in custom, or procedure between the churches of that section and those of the south. They have in that part of the world more of the English way of conducting worship. And that is the old synagogue system that has come down all through the years. The elders largely lead in the worship. One such person presides, certain songs are sung, after this presiding officer (elder) lines them and announces them. Afterward there is a reading of the Scripture, one portion from the Old Testament and the other from the New by two young men who have been selected for their work weeks in ad-vance. After such Scripture reading, there is then the prayer service, afterwards the Lord's Supper and then the collection. And at the close there are the speeches of edification, or

the sermon, in case there is a minister of the word present. The Hamilton Boulevard Church house is built with the view to the order and prominence of certain features of the services. The table for the Lord's Supper is placed in the exact center of the rostrum. The speaker's stand is placed over at the right side. The Lord's Supper is featured. And the general plan of worship is that just mentioned, namely, the English, or better, the old Scotch method. In the South and Southwest the custom is to sing about three songs, then the minister of the word reads a portion of Scripture, prayer is conducted, or said, another song is sung, and then the announcements are generally made before the sermon. After the sermon, there is the communion and last of all the collection with fitting closing thoughts. There has been much discussion of this plan of procedure all down the years because it has involved what has been called by some the so-called "Pastor's system." But Churches of Christ in the Southwest and South do not regard this way of conducting services a violation in the least the plan of worship which seems to them to be left open to their own discretion and wisdom. There is no restriction on the order. Paul left the order of procedure in the hands of the Corinthian Church by merely saying that everything should be done decently and in order. There must be system. But how that shall be arranged is left to the individual congregation.

It must be admitted with these scriptures that custom in different sections of the world will naturally alter the way of doing things. The predominant custom is that of the American Churches of Christ which feature the worship as detailed in the last instances. Possibly the services are not more dignified, but certainly the growth is phenomenal as compared with the old Scotch or Jewish synagogue method. Since Jesus has not prescribed the how, but merely has indicated the things to be done, then the way that produces the best results certainly should receive the most favorable consideration. And the results of the plan followed in the most of the United States, that is to say, the direction of the services by a skilled man who makes it his life business, certainly justify a serious consideration. But still other brethren in other parts of the world may meet when they please, where they please, and follow the order they may select, and there is no one that has a right to tell them to do otherwise.

Since the Bible is the guide in all matters of faith and of practice, Churches of Christ refuse to do more or less than can be found in the word of the Lord. The singing is never accompanied with a mechanical instrument of music, such as the organ. Churches of Christ object because there is no mention or such in the Scriptures. God has issued an injunction against the introduction of any thing into the services more than what he has said. He said: "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 1:9-11. This statement is aimed at doctrinal purity. No man is allowed to add anything to the word of the Lord, or the doctrine of worship as found in the Scriptures. Unless therefore, the proponent of instrumental music in the worship can produce a "Thus saith the Lord" this Scripture forbids him the privilege of adding anything to the worship. The burden is placed upon the one who uses such an instrument to furnish proof from the word of the Lord for his practice. Frequently one hears it urged that the objector to such practices find where the Bible says not to do it. Well; this scripture is ample proof. It not only forbids such a practice, but demands that the doctrine of Christ be kept pure, free of additions and subtractions. It adds that the teacher of something different has departed from God. One cannot force God to go with him

into the adoption of tenets of men. One cannot have God unless he stays with God, or unless he adheres to the doctrine which the Scripture established as from God. Therefore, the burden of proof does not rest with the man who does not go beyond, but with the man who does something else. Each man must bring proof from the Bible that what he does is Scriptural. Therefore, let the one who uses instrumental music find the scripture for it. And since the Old Testament Scriptures are not now the standard of worship and do not set forth the worship of the apostles, but of Moses and the prophets, then it cannot be taken as proof. It (the Old Testament) gives the history of worship among the Jews. The New Testament sets up worship for Christians. Therefore, in the New Testament the user of instrumental music in the worship will have to find the proof of the practice or else abandon it. Otherwise he has not God—in such practice, and maybe not in anything. John simply says that he has not God.

Paul said to the Corinthians that one must not permit himself to be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. A simple worship, containing the items mentioned in the New Testament, is dignified enough. And since the Lord is the one who ordained the worship, with its flexibility and simplicity, it is enough for the spiritual unfolding of the members of the body of Christ. The range of the minds of men is in the main not very wide or large. To accommodate a worship to all sorts of people required the wisdom of Jehovah. He has given that wise worship that embraces but a few items that can be practiced the world around. And he has forbidden any to add to it or take from it. Truly, God has not embarrassed any by giving a vast system which they could not follow. No set of men on the face of the earth can evolve a worship that can be universal in application. And when men have invented systems of worship they have created denominationalism in that. God has given a universal plan, and that is what Churches of Christ practice. No wonder they are destined to fill the earth, and no wonder at their truly phenomenal growth! A wise Providence has ordered it. It is written for consummation as surely as that the Kingdom of God is to grow.

The Church Today In Its Ideas and Ideals of Unity

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ERNEST BEAM

There cannot be a unity that is fraught with blessing until we all come to have that love of which I spoke yesterday, or which is promotive of that love. Jesus made those twelve, excepting only him who had a demon, into one because he was love at work and he finally brought them to the perfections of love. In this school of Christ with this little company is the whole story declared.

Ideal Of Unity In Apostolic Times

It is easy to tell what the idea of unity was in the early church. "For 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." (1 Corinthians 12:12). That means this: That just as the hand and the foot and the eye are all joined together and make but one entity that is exactly what the Lord wants in his church. He desires just one church visibly and invisibly—organically and inorganically. "And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body." (1 Corinthians 12:19-20). There is nothing about this idea difficult to understand however so difficult may be the realization of it.

Hear Paul further, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:4-6) We do not find it difficult to believe there is one God, only one Christ and only one Holy Spirit. But it were as proper to speak of a multiplicity of gods, of two Christs or of two Holy Spirits as to speak of two bodies—a multiplicity of churches. Many gods of the people of heathenism which called forth the Jewish nation to cry, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God," were not more subversive of the ways of the Lord than is the multiplicity of churches today subversive of it. Oneness with God of old was the truth of his presence and oneness in these verities today is still necessary to His presence.

Negatively Stated

Paul also makes plain the truth of one church by this: "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:12-13). And note also First Corinthians, third chapter, of the same matter. Certain it is the same Paul who forbade them to be Pauline-Christians and Appollosian-Christians and Cephasite-Christians would likewise forbid that there be Baptist-Christians, Methodist-Christians, and Presbyterian-Christians. The idea in that early church was for a unity which is abundantly illustrated by the human body—many members but one body. In Matthew 28:18; Matthew 28:20 Jesus says, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth." There can be no such thing as a church of Christ without Christ being the

head thereof. He is given “to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body.” (Ephesians 1:22-23). But Paul expressly declares—and he had authority to declare it—that of any religious group heading up in Christ that the same must be one body. And to end all argument he points out certain divisions of that time exactly like those divisions we see in Christendom today, except they had inspired leaders but these are uninspired, and Paul condemns those divisions. This is enough to end the matter clearly and properly for all who are governed by the word of God. The idea of unity in that early church is just the idea you see in your own physical body. There are many members, but one body.

Ideas Today

There are two ideas today respecting unity that are equally hurtful. I heard the first one presented by Dean Rieber of the University of California at Los Angeles. This man is highly intellectual, an instructor in logic and philosophy, and has mastered his subjects. But one day he was teaching us how to reason. Among other things he cited the fact that astronomers once believed the motion of the planets formed a perfect circle. It was later discovered that planets do not move in a perfect circle but what is known in geometry as an ellipse is the figure they make in their movement. The movement in the circumference of a circle is always equi-distant from the center at any given point. Therefore any segment of the circle may be taken and put down upon any other segment of that same circle and the two are as one. They harmonize exactly. But with the ellipse the movement is not always the same distance from the center. It is egg-shaped. You can therefore take a segment out of an ellipse and put it down upon another segment of the same figure and they do not always harmonize. Yet placed together in the proper arrangement the various segments of an ellipse will, of course, represent one perfect and complete path of movement.

“Now,” said Professor Rieber, “I want to tell you what radical differences came in my reasoning when I discovered these truths. I used to believe there should be one church. I was against all religious parties. I believed it out of harmony with the motion everywhere extant in the universe. If planets moved in perfect circles and any segment of the same circle completely harmonized with every other segment I believed that the belief of individuals who follow Christ should be also exactly alike. I was against so many church organizations. But when I thought of the ellipse and saw that in truth perfect motion does not consist of always remaining exactly the same distance from the center, I thought, ‘I have learned something.’ In perfect motion the segments of the figure formed do not all harmonize. They are different. And yet they blend into a perfect figure. Then I said, ‘Churches should be like that.’ I therefore am happy when I see a new catholic edifice. I am glad likewise when I see a salvation army chapel going up. I am just as glad to see other churches prosper. Notwithstanding each emphasizes some truth that the other does not they yet are a unity and represent the full expression of Christ to the world.” So did the Dean deliver himself.

Now, what do you say to that? Doubtless he has something to give us and we have something to give him. The Dean has discovered a truth but has misplaced that truth I do believe. Let us see.....

You can take the segments of the ellipse and put them together and you get one perfect figure. In harmony with the Dean’s illustration suppose he tries to put the more than two hundred sects in Christendom together. Will he get a perfect form of motion? Shall we put the Christian Scientists who takes away the personal Savior and a personal Devil in the same movement with the Christian who believes both are as certainly beings as you and I are beings? Do these views

complement each other? Do they not rather contradict each other and set each at naught in proportion to the success of each? The Catholic submits to his papa (pope) and all protestantism goes for teaching everyone away from such submission. Again, do these complement each other or contradict? Are they after all but parts of the same harmonious whole? If so what would disharmony be? The modernist goes for subjective reality and virtually makes his own experience the test of his religion. But Christians go for objective and authoritative reality. Are they the complements of each other or the contradictories? To ask these questions is to answer them. A few years ago it was argued quite strongly that Congress and not the Supreme Court should have the supreme voice in determining the constitutionality of laws. Congress, about that time, was talking about a great many things, agreeing upon nothing, and disgusting many observers. A cartoonist in a large daily out west gave his idea of the proposal. He showed the old ship of state in the form of an automobile. There were ninety six senators in that automobile running the old ship of state. And every senator had a steering wheel! The wheels on that old car were going every direction without going any where. There is the Dean's picture of perfect harmony as he himself would learn if he tried to put the various religious parties of this day together as one machine. No apostle ever contemplated such an arrangement when they spoke of "one body" for no physical body ever yet existed with the contradictions and disharmonies he would have to have to represent these sects. The Dean Had A Good Illustration

But Dean Rieber had a good illustration all the same. It serves well to get at the popular idea concerning unity. I had rather say it serves to show forth the idea that was current. Hundreds of people have come to see the fallacy of trying to pass off divisions by saying, we are all one at heart. We are all going to the same place." The automobile with the ninety six steering wheels will serve to show every man of reflection that the unity contemplated among Christians was organic and visible and it must be so today. That was the idea in apostolic times and thereunto must we labor today Sin and division is frightfully hurtful. It is terrible. It is infidel made and infidel making. I pray God with all the sincerity of my heart that I may develop myself to where I will not be, on any account, partly responsible for continuing division. We should be one. The whole world order awaits it. The world needs to be a brotherhood. It will never be so in human governments until it is first so in the religious realm. These religious divisions contribute to the loss of millions and billions of dollars and in the loss of millions of lives both now and eternally. This is an awful matter and needs to be studied in the fear of God. Our fellowship is either with God or with Satan. If we are responsible for division among God's people in any degree we are partners with the demons of terror and destruction everywhere manifest in the world today. Let us get that straight for it is the truth. And that leads me to the truth the Dean almost got hold of. It is a truth we need in our own ranks today and we need it badly. It is true that in the church we do have a harmony of differences as well as likenesses. It is true! That ellipse does suggest for us a most important truth, viz: we are different while we are one.

Take now the human body. Look at the foot. Now look at the eye. If each could talk do you suppose they would speak the same sentiment? Is their outlook the same? Do you not imagine that they would soon set about in all things as one? You have heard of the Negro, the Jew and the man who was neither Negro nor Jew but a rank infidel. They fought side by side through one of the severest engagements of the world war. They were a unit. They won and they lived. They returned to camp for relief and rest after the engagement. There they entered into violent disputations and

ended up by striking each other and wounding each other until they all die it They were all a unit while they had their minds possessed of a common cause in a common battle. Yet while they had that unity they at the very same time had all those different views and differences otherwise. It was when the mind came away from the common task and turned back upon themselves that they warred it out to death. And when the hand and the foot and the eye are not possessed of the spirit which constantly they are to serve they too refuse longer to abide with each other but fall away into dust to be used in life where common purposes are once again pursued. While engaged side by side for the good of the person housed in that body they are a harmony of differences controlled wholly by the one purpose of serving the person in that body. They are as much different¹ as they are alike.. Yet they make one harmony, for self is forgotten and the spirit served. In the church we have those same differences—in every church or congregation Christ ever had or ever will have. Take the work of elders, that of deacons, that of the evangelists and the work of the women and of the song leaders, together with that of the teachers. Are all these the same office? No. They were not the same in the early church and if we ever do produce that early church we will learn something by the differences that existed among those spiritual gifts that were given to build up the church. The body has a multiplicity of functions to fulfill. These call for different qualifications. All of the dissimilarities the good Dean found in his ellipse he will find in a full grown church. And like his ellipse he will in a church of one faith be able to put the segments all together and thereby to see harmony of the whole.

Romans the twelfth chapter is fruitful of help at this point. There some were to prophecy, some to serve, some to teach, some to exhort, some to rule. Some like to study prophecy, some are good at showing the difference between law and gospel, some especially fitted to speak of social life and others fitted for other phases of activity. Whoever thinks he can speak with equal authority in all of these fields is a dullard in the study of both experience and revelation. Whoever thinks that views and opinions and persuasions will always be just alike—just like his—has not the Spirit in himself. There is indeed to be in us all just one Spirit and together we are to have just one Lord. We are together to love him with our whole heart and obey his commandments and serve him. And when we do this we are brothers in Christ notwithstanding our differences in taste, talents, and the special fields of study for which we are fitted. It is as reasonable to expect that a brother who comes to study prophecy long will have some ray of light—some excellency of personality—by which others may be attracted to the one Lord—some excellency, mark you, that the elementary teacher of the word will not have—as reasonable, I say, to expect this as it is to expect that a farmer and a lawyer would be equipped to give forth words of wisdom in different fields. And if I rise up against my brother who is different to me because he has exercised himself in a careful study of one part of God's word while I have made careful study of another part—and who is there who can be authority in all of it?—I am against Christ, ruled by the spirit of Satan, and am in danger of committing trespass against God that will confine me to the regions of hell. We cannot love God whom we have not seen if we love not our brother whom we have seen. Whether you like it or not, whoever accepts Christ as Lord and gives every evidence he is as anxious to obey him as anyone can be, that man is your brother in Christ (if you are in) and happy are you if you have the Holy Spirit and its first fruit, which is love, and exercise it toward that brother.

Elders In That Early Church

Out of these very considerations in that early church were elders. These men were mature as their very name implies. They must have demonstrated their ability to rear children in the way of the Lord. Here they would learn the differences in their own sons and daughters—radical differences—without finding it easy to deny they were nevertheless all of the same family. These elders were to be perfect—matured—in the ways of Christ. They would come to have that indwelling Spirit and the fruits thereof. They were suited to harmonize and keep in one body all members of the church. But, brothers, what have we done today? We permit our religious journals to give us men—often times young men—who never would be qualified to preside along with other men as elders over one church. But notwithstanding they lack this they nevertheless are turned loose by themselves to manage a whole brotherhood. Such a prerogative was for the Apostles in the early church who were especially equipped of heaven for this work. No such person in that early church was permitted to do as many among us do today. Elders were to preside over the assemblies. Give us good, godly elders, and let all matters come up through them, let them pray, and you will have a different brotherhood on your hands. The guilty will by no means be cleared either—neither the one or the other.

If we will consider well what the New Testament says of unity we will find the human body perfectly illustrates the ideas not only in the harmony of the whole, and of the oneness of purpose in each member, but also that these members are different, while they are one. We need to be joined in perfect judgment relative to this last—this harmony of differences. It will not be difficult for everyone to see this. Then our ideas, so far as I can judge, as to the unity of the church, will be like that of the church in the days of the Apostles. But what shall be the ideals of this unity? The Saviour's Prayer

The prayer of our Saviour in John the seventeenth chapter is often only partly quoted and improperly set forth. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The words that indicate the ideals of this unity are "as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." In that sermon on the mount Jesus stressed the thought of growing up into God completely when he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." About thirty three times in the New Testament, one writer informs us, perfection is held as the goal of life. The ideal of unity was to present to the world a Christ through his spiritual body—the church—like that Christ that was here in a physical body. This ideal of unity is so essential to its realization. The mere idea of it will never bring it. That early church was told of the ideal and they strove to come to that ideal.

Take as an instance what Christ did for Peter. Peter had no more proper ideal when he first followed Christ than has any carnally minded Christian today. He would prevent Jesus going to Jerusalem to suffer. His ideas were wholly different because his ideals for his Master were so different. So in the matter of authority when the disciples fell to discussing who should be greatest. In the washing of feet. All of these incidents show an ideal that was terribly imperfect. It is noteworthy Christ did not send these disciples into all the world at this time. Finally, Christ said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and when thou are converted strengthen thy brethren." Peter was not fully converted then. He did believe Jesus to be the Christ but he lacked much of knowing what that Christ was like. So long as he did not know what Christ was like he was unable to get his brethren to see Christ in proper light. Christ was not fully in him nor was he in

Christ at that time. Such an apostle, no matter what his ideas of unity were, would never be able to bring his brethren to unity so long as he had this terrifically faulty ideal. Nor can we do it today. Brethren, it takes something more than ideas in order to have the unity of the New Testament Church. It takes ideals that reach clear up to the head even Christ.

Acts fifth chapter tells of two, Ananias and Sapphira, who were faulty in their ideals. They lied to the Holy Spirit. Fire from the Lord devoured them. Yet some of us today think we have everything in the church of Christ to bring us to one people in the Lord! Do you suppose we would disfellowship such covetous persons as these? We have the commandment to do it in First Corinthians the fifth chapter and eleventh verse. We must not eat with a covetous person. I have never known of a person to be excluded for covetousness from the church of Christ. It is one thing to have ideas of unity; it is quite another to have the ideals. That church in the days of the apostles had the ideals that the Holy Spirit gave them. And that Holy Spirit took the things of Jesus and showed it to that church. (John 16:14). Jesus insisted he was going to be in them and they in him. That is the kind of unity he prayed for. He did not pray for the oneness of people who have lost the heavenly ideal. He commands in those letters to the seven churches in Asia that instead of oneness there should be separation.

Railers too by that same passage of Scripture in First Corinthians fifth chapter were to be excluded from fellowship. Railing against brethren is so common today I take it many will be surprised to know it is a sin. The New Testament church had an ideal that made railing stand out as sin.

Over against these sins we find repeated statements throughout the apostolic writings speaking of love, humility, forbearance, patience, "above all things have fervently charity among yourselves." That is Christ in them and they in Christ. That was the ideal whereby unity was to be in the church.

Phariseeism

One is never the same again who enlists in the services of the Christ. He will grow to where he is worthy the association of angels or he will come to be like fallen Babylon, "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean bird." He will not stand still. The foulest cruelties in the world have been committed, in the name of religion. That happens when the true ideal is lost. And if that ideal is lost there is nothing to prevent us having strong delusion and coming to show forth the wrath of God in ourselves. The evil of the mind, someone has said, is error. That of the emotion is suffering. And that of the will is sin. The Pharisees were specialists on the evils of the mind—evils in doctrine. And because they were specialists in that field they thought they knew what sin is. In the realm of the emotions, however, they were so deficient the blessed Lord gave them the severest indictment on record in any language. And the awful truth is, my brethren, when you neglect the ideals of the New Testament, when you do not make its tender feeling and its pure emotion your concern on a par, at least, with matters of doctrine, you are powerless to prevent a reproduction of Phariseeism. Sins find us out.

There never was yet a virtue that could not be turned to error. Every virtue has its companion virtue whereby we are kept from going either to the right or to the left. The Lord never did intend that we could be specialists in doctrine but neglect our hearts. Our vision becomes clouded. We will strain out the gnats but the camel gets by us. That early church had its idealism from heaven. It had doctrine to be sure. It also had a practice—a purity—a zeal, a godly sorrow, a carefulness, a

clearing of themselves, an indignation, a fear, a vehement desire—the elements of true repentance—it had these. Those brethren became new creatures. An atmosphere of love, respect for each other, general helpfulness, and condescension prevailed everywhere. It was Christ in them and they in Christ. This is the idealism the church today has lost. Our petty difficulties testify in tongues anyone can hear. Let us see why we have lost that idealism. *The Cross Ceases To Be The Method*

To maintain the ideals of the New Testament without which the ideas of unity never can be enforced it is necessary to take up the cross and follow Jesus. There is no other way to get this ideal and to keep it. Right today the ideals of the New Testament would cause us to plant churches in every town and community in the United States, and send missionaries to every country in the world, and to take ourselves completely away from the sins of this present evil world. That program can be put through in one generation. It can not be done without the cross. If it is done by the cross you will see a church that has both the ideas and the ideals of New Testament unity. The Lord will pour it out a blessing whereby all people will know the Israel of today as surely as they could tell that one of yesteryears.

There is a difference, brethren, between the cross and burdens and thorns. Everyone in the world today has burdens of some kind. There are thorns possessed by all people too. No one can escape burdens and thorns be he Christian or infidel. But there is one form of suffering we can take up or lay down as we will. That form is the cross. And that is the form that is all but absent. Yet it is the one method that leads home.

Preachers today come to have salaries better than hundreds of persons in the world. They go to a church, preach a couple of years, leave it about as it now is, all the brethren think well of them, they get relatively good pay, and when things begin to drag a little they go to another church and repeat the process. True, if they preach the truth fearlessly there will be some cross in this. But in many cases it is no more than the cross an executive has in his small office. Is this the cross of Christ? Is this the way that leads home? Are these crosses that which marks true discipleship? Catholic priests often have crosses far heavier than these. For the most part I believe these positions are unworthy the name of any cross. None of us would like to disgrace any good work or worker but the abundance of luxuries and equipage is far beyond what many persons in the world have is a sign there is no cross in this. And without that cross the New Testament ideals cannot be. The early church kept its ideals just so long as it kept its cross. I imagine the demons in hell laugh at ple[^]s for the unity of God's church, or among professed Christians, while they behold the easy times of this age.

It would gladden the souls who had passed on if the young people of this age would learn to take the hard and thorny way. When we think of those millions put to death for their Christ; when we consider Paul in those sorrows and cruel wrongs; yea, when we see our dear Lord crucified, do you not feel that our lives today are no sufficient compliment of such beginning? No, the cross is the one and only method. "All things are yours," says Paul in First Corinthians third chapter. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." But we do not want all these experiences. We want the easier way. We are not hurt enough. We do not suffer enough. There is plenty of it to be done. Then would our hearts be tender and once again the ideals of unity in the

body of Christ would also be ours.

It is frightful the amount of money we waste annually in evangelistic work. Men are well paid to go to old established congregations and baptize a few converts in addition to the children of the members. And we call this the Lord's missionary work! I know how easy some of this work is for I have done it myself. I also know the difference between being carried along on the shoulders of the brethren, paid exceedingly high wages, in meetings of this type, and of going into hard places to work and suffer in order to build real Christian characters. Yea, I know the difference that comes in one's thinking when he bears burdens and when he bears them not. The cross comes when we get into the hard places. There is no cross worthy the name in this evangelizing all the while with established congregations with' big pay. Whoever would be greatest among us must be the servant of all—not the speaker for all.

Thorns and Snares

“And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you go up out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: Why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.” (Judges 2:1-3). The Lord's instruction to Israel was that they should possess all of the land of Canaan. No vineyards nor olive yards, nor hills were to be left to other people. All the fruits of the soil they were to bring forth. They were to dispossess all of the enemies of the Lord. And so too did Jesus our Lord intend that our whole body, soul and spirit should be dedicated to his service. Our loves and hates and desires— none of them was to be left for the devil to bring forth fruit. But only the cross could make us to be wholly the Lord's. Only when we have denied self can we take up the cross. We have not denied many selfish, foolish and hurtful things. Our idealism has not been high enough. Other peoples of the earth have taken much of the ground of the Lord in fervency of spirit in giving, in personal sanctification, in joy through the Holy Spirit, and such, and those peoples are thorns and snares to us. Our conceptions of what the church of the Lord would be like in its fullness is faulty. We have not the tenderness and love to behold it. We hate too many people. And hate blinds us until we walk in darkness. There is a remedy for this*—only one remedy. That remedy is to cease from the way of men and follow the Lord. Study his word anew and purpose to deny self and to take up the cross. Then will we come to have a beauty and a passion which bespeaks both the ideas and the ideals of unity of the New Testament. We can speak with others whose hearts are as good as ours and they will be able to speak to us. We will hear each other. Christ will come to be in us and we in him. The unity for which he prayed will be realized. Then will we know the sweetness of dwelling in his love. Then will we know the victory of his humility. Then will we know the glory of his cross. In us everything will be unified—brought to focal point—by the power of the Holy Spirit for the glorifying of Christ. Outside of us all will be unified too. We will look to the ends of the earth as our field and to the height of the heavens for our fellowship.

The Church Today In Its Leadership

The Church Today In Its Leadership THE CHURCH TODAY IN ITS LEADERSHIP

BATSELL BAXTER

God has always called for a trained leadership. He has in ages past trained his men for what he desired them to do. There are many striking examples. An outstanding leader is Abraham. God led him out from Chaldea to the west, where he could learn to be the Father of a nation that should bring back to the world the name and the worship and service of God.

One of the greatest leaders of Old Testament history is Moses. God set about the task of delivering Israel from the bondage of Egypt. He brought them out “by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm.” How did he do it? It goes back to the birth of a baby. That baby was adopted into the king’s family. That boy was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians. Why? God is training him for leadership. But he quits training before God is done. He blunders, trying to do the work of God in the way of the Egyptians. Out in the desert of Midian he goes to school forty years to God. He received his diploma at the burning bush. This time, as a prepared leader, he does it right. The successor of Moses was Joshua. Everywhere Moses went, Joshua went—up into Mount Sinai; into battle for his God; into the tabernacle; against the enemies of Israel, Og of Bashan, Sihon of Heshbon. Why? God is training him to be a leader. The day came for Moses to die. This great leader of Israel went up into the. Mount of Nebo to lie down in death. Though he was 120 years old, his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated. Israel mourned for Moses. They had lost their leader, but they were not without a leader. Moses had taken care for that. He had trained Joshua forty years for this very day when he should leave Israel and turn the leadership over to this young man. There was hardly a ripple when Joshua took command of Israel. He was already experienced, he was certain of his duty, and he had his eye upon the goal. How emphatically he called to Israel, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve * * * as for me and my house we will serve Jehovah.” Joshua 24:15. The splendid success of Joshua’s leadership was partly due to the fact that he had been well-trained. During his life Israel remained true to Jehovah. When Jesus came as the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world he selected some men to help him. Our Lord chose twelve men. They went almost everywhere he went. They saw his miracles they heard his teaching, they heard him pray daily, they saw his life. For three and a half years there was a more intimate companionship than exists between teacher and student in any school today; He wa: with them day and night, twelve months of the year. They saw his death, they were witnesses of his resurrection. They were given the Holy Spirit direct from Heaven to guide them. And somebody has called them ignorant Galilean fishermen! Far more reason to call a college graduate an ignorant country high school boy. Why all this training? They are to be leaders—leaders in the great work of saving souls. And today some men say that all you need is to eat a big breakfast and borrow a dozen sermon outlines!

After our Lord, the giant figure of the New Testament, towering high above the others is Saul of Tarsus. He was educated at the feet of Gamaliel. Far above the average student of his day. He

studied at Jerusalem in its most famous school. He was trained in the learning and philosophy of the Greeks and Romans. Why? God plans to send the Gospel to the Gentile world. He is training Saul for leadership. He can talk with the humble women by the river-side at Philippi, he is at home in the synagogue at Thessalonica. He is equal to the occasion the next Saturday when the whole city—Jews and Gentiles—is gathered together. He takes care of the situation when he is mistaken for a god at Lystra and confronted with a sacrifice. He arises from the scattered stones that have but taken his life, and goes back into the city to preach again the Gospel of his Lord. He stands in the mart of commerce at Corinth or in the seat of learning at Athens; he preaches in his own hired house in Rome, chained to a soldier. He writes most of the New Testament. Why? He was trained for leadership.

One of the sweetest associations of Paul's life was that with the young man, Timothy, the noble boy whom Paul found at Lystra. "Him would Paul have to go with him." Acts 16:3. That intimate companionship, over a long period with an inspired man! Why? Training him for leadership. Why choose Timothy? He had some training on which to build. "The unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother, Lois, in thy mother, Eunice; and I am persuaded in thee also." 2 Timothy 1:5. This and other young men Paul trained. Why so much training? These men are to teach men things that are so vital that eternal destiny depends upon them. These men were admonished to study continually. "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God." 2 Timothy 2:15. There is nothing finer and more filled with pathos than the charge of the old soldier to his young lieutenant: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering 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; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept thy faith." 2 Timothy 4:2-7. "The things which thou hast heard from me * * * commit thou unto faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2.

Jesus established a church. He called it "my church." "Upon this rock (the fact that he is the Christ) I will build my church." Matthew 16:19. In this church the scripture plan provides for leadership. The leaders¹ are called elders or bishops. See 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9. Below we have listed the qualifications for these men: without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, given to hospitality, apt to teach, no brawler, no striker, gentle, not contentious, no lover of money, having his children in subjection, not a novice, good testimony from them without, desire the office. The fellow who has none of the other is sure to have that last one. These come from long training and experience. No wonder these leaders are called elders, or older men. He would be a remarkable character who could gain these, qualities in youth. The leaders in the New Testament church were trained men. The deacon's qualifications were nearly the same. Of course, no man may attain all of these in a perfect state here, but he can approximate them.

It is hard for us to see the need of training for leadership. Young men especially desire to get out and preach without preparation. Of course, it is not right to discourage anybody from trying to save souls', but Paul told Timothy to "study" or "give diligence." "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.

Some time ago a young man came to enroll for a course, "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons." Four and a half months. "I don't need that. What I want is your sermon book so I can copy the outlines. I want some sermons." He did not take the course.

Twenty years ago at Thorp Springs Christian College I was trying to teach a young man grammar and composition. He was making a great many blunders in English and his written compositions were very poor. I have never seen a young preacher who I thought more sorely needed training in English. Of course, the work was hard for him. He knew so little about it! Finally, one day he asked me in disgust, "What's that got to do with baptism for the remission of sins?" It has this to do with it—if we make too many mistakes in our speech it will hinder us in our attempts to get people to hear us when we preach baptism for the remission of sins. In worldly affairs, in business, and in government it is easy for us to see the need of training for leadership. Every business of any consequence trusts its responsibilities to trained men. The success of government depends largely upon trained men. In the World War I, the German hosts were advancing steadily upon Paris, sweeping one French fortress after another. As these men retreated and left their homes to the enemy, they cried, "Where are the Americans?" Where were the Americans? They were over there in France, a million of them. What were they doing? Marching up and down, marching, marching, wheeling to right, to left, learning how to light, how to obey orders, how to react under the trying situations of the battle field. Finally, one day the German offensive rolled up against a solid wall that did not yield; but rolled them back and crushed them in one of the greatest counter-offensives known to the history of armies. Why was this? The Americans had been training—training for the task. So it is in every business. Leaders are trained for their work. It is only in the church of God that men assume and hold positions of leadership without training.

I talked to a young man a few days ago about what he intended to be. He has been here some time. He is not gifted with oratory. But he can speak. His talks are clear and plain. His prayers are well worded and from the heart. His life is clean and Christian and his habits are studious. He does not intend to be an evangelist. He plans to go back home, after two more years and serve many years. "I want to grow to be an elder." God bless him and keep him and all like him. He desires a good work. He appreciates the need and he knows how it must be met.

Paraphrasing the words of a poet we say

Leadership is not reached at a single bound.

We build the ladder by which we rise

To lead men from earth to the skies.

And we serve to its summit round by round

The Larger Vision and Need of the Hour

The Larger Vision and Need of the Hour THE LARGER VISION AND NEED OF THE HOUR

J. N. ARMSTRONG The reader of the New Testament becomes acquainted with a number of phrases by which the people, bought and saved by the blood of Christ in New Testament times were designed. These phrases in the strictest sense are not names, but descriptive phrases used by the Holy Spirit to assist the reader in knowing what kind of people the Lord's people are designed to be and what their relations to God and to Christ are.

Some of these phrases are "the church," "the churches of Christ," "the temple of God," "the family of God," "the body of Christ," and so forth. As to which one of these phrases the Holy Spirit employs in a given chapter depends upon the subject treated or the lesson being taught. In writing to his disciples at Ephesus the Holy Spirit declares that Christ is the head "from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:16). Again "the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not of the eye, I am not of the body; is it not therefore not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary; and those parts of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor—but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof." 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

Therefore, when the Holy Spirit employs the phrase, "the body of Christ," he does it to emphasize the oneness, the good-working order, the harmony, the team work, that should characterize the church in all of its activities. He stresses the necessity of every member, and the necessity of that member's doing his part in intelligent cooperation with every other member—that all of them and their services are needed, each in his place. In the normal human body there are no schisms, no contrariness, no factions, parties, or cliques, knockers, or blockers, but perfect harmony and cooperation. Should the hand undertake a task and find it too great to accomplish alone, without the loss of a moment the other hand joins in the effort; should the task prove too great for the hands, the feet plant themselves advantageously and at once make it their job also. And so on, till, if required, every member of the body gets into the struggle. Finally, should the task not be accomplished, it would not be a failure of the member that first undertook the work, but a failure of the whole body. In the human body, the members fail together or succeed together. There are no

"grand-stand" players, but each plays with and for the team—It is an example of perfect team work. The Lesson Applied

When the Holy Spirit wrote the first Corinthian letter, the Church at Corinth was in a serious plight. The members were warring over preachers; holding in their fellowship a man guilty of the worst type of fornication; having Jew suits one with another; tangled up with idolatry; and torn asunder over spiritual gifts. Surely they needed to see a new vision; needed to see the miserable state to which their contentions had brought them. To give them this important lesson He points out to them the beautiful working order of their own bodies and lets them see how perfectly every member in these bodies works together with very other member—let's them see the flawless cooperation, perfect harmony, and the unstinted performance of team service on the part of every organ in the body, and as they behold, He declares, "Now ye are the body of Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Visualize (if you please, the leadership of a congregation with its responsibilities, struggling under its load! These leaders are striving to have the best work possible in the Sunday morning Bible Classes; seeking to build up the attendance and to strengthen the teaching and to increase the good results. They are boosting and generating enthusiasm and interest to get all the young people and the children to attend, while most of the fathers and mothers "stroll" into the meeting house just in time for the "preaching," with never a thought of joining those leaders and boosting for that teaching service and of making that job theirs. They want the class work to go on, but they want some one else to bear the burden of it and be responsible for it.

Then think of that missionary contribution! A few faithful souls that feel keenly their obligation to take care of the chief job for which the Church exists contributed it'. What is the matter with the other members of "that body?" They are not interested; they believe (?) in preaching the gospel at home; they don't believe in sending money across the sea when there are lost people all around us here at home. That's it. "If I work with you; if I join you in an effort, you must do what I want to do and you must do it in my way." May the Lord lead us up to heights all but unknown to us and let us see a New Testament Church in all of its glory. As we behold what unstinted loyalty the New Testament teaching demands, may we in humility repent and become the body of Christ, "fitly framed and knit together" for the jobs the Lord has given to his people; may we like the members of the human body, join one another in our local work in every program in which a faithful leadership may ask us to cooperate with it.

"There Is One Body"

All Christians in a given place, it is true, constitute the body of Christ at that place; there are no "wandering stars," but everyone belongs to some constellation, and therefore owes duties, hearty cooperation with a leadership appointed- of God. But there is another and greater vision for us to behold; namely, that we are fitly framed and knit together with every other Christian in all the world and that therefore there is a bigger and broader service than the local work, because we belong first of all to that larger body over which Jesus is head and into which we were all baptized. Will my reader observe that all the passages that I have used thus far refer to the larger body and are designed to reveal the greater vision. Under the greater and higher Leadership this greater body, this mighty army, that includes all the local bodies, is going forth to accomplish that for which its mighty Leader came into the world to accomplish; namely, to save sinners. In our thinking of the

independence of the local congregation, we must not forget that Christ is over all and that these smaller groups are only in training to fit and prepare themselves for service through the larger body of which it is said, the members are fitly framed and knit together” and that by each member of this body’s doing his part the body, the greater body, builds itself up in love. To put it another way, when a government is in war, training camps are an essential to the job. To display military tactics? To put on displays for the governor when he visits the camp? Verily not. But it is all being done for a job out yonder—to conquer the enemy. Every soldier is trained looking forward to the time when all of this training is to be practically employed in a great job ahead. He looks forward to the time when his camp will be plunged into the real job for which the camp exists. Verily he has a broader vision of his job than camp activities. In army camps there is a wise plan or program being executed all the time to enlist new soldiers; skilful men are everlastingly on the job for recruits; and every man enlisted is put into daily and extensive training. But why? There is a big job ahead and every patriotic soldier enters the camp and engages in the daily training inspired by the vision given him by his leaders. He believes in his cause and is willing to make the supreme sacrifice for it. His vision may be “to make the world safe for democracy,” “to end all war,” or “to save America from German domination”—but for some great cause out yonder—all the activities of his camp are performed.

What is the job before the local churches of our Lord, the training camps of a Great Army? Is it to “keep” saved those that come into the camp? Surely this is in the plan, but is surely to be accomplished by unselfish service in saving others.

There is no conflict between the two bodies, or a difference of aims or of objectives. But the local objectives and local jobs must not be disconnected from the real job and made an end, rather than a means; they must not be allowed to obscure the sky of our vision or hinder us from the larger and more important undertaking, the execution of the Lord’s worldwide program.

I believe there is an over stressing, an exaggerating of the local body that is leading the churches to lose sight of the broader vision and therefore retarding the cause of our Master on the earth. It occurs to me that we are fast making the local church an end of effort, rather than a preparation for a great job, the real service for which the local churches, the training campus, exist. The Two Functions

As members of the body of Christ into which we were all baptized, there are two ways in which we may serve. In New Testament times, by far, the greater part of the work done by the new church was accomplished by Christians working as individuals, men and women filled with enthusiasm for the New cause and with love for lost souls, of their “own accord” went forth to proclaim the new message.

They consulted not with flesh and blood, but went out with a burning zeal to preach the gospel “not where Christ was already named.” Just as Christians have always done, we may go forth to feed the poor, to care for orphans, and to preach the gospel at our own cost without consulting with flesh and blood. We may choose our own field and work, as independent disciples under Christ. (See Acts 8:4; Acts 11:19-21; Acts 8:5; Acts 8:25; Acts 10:1-48). Not only may disciples of the Lord go of their own accord, as individuals under Christ, but these independents may stir other disciples to help them in any work undertaken. (See Acts 11:25-26; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:13; Acts 15:36; Acts 15:41; Acts 16:1-3. For instance, Barnabas was sent by the church at Jerusalem to

take care of the young congregation at Antioch, and it appears that he found the work too heavy, or, at last, in some way he found that he needed help, so, of his own accord, so far as the record shows, he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him into Antioch. "And * * * even for a whole year they were gathered together with the Church, and taught many people. Two "located ministers" labored with this young Church for a whole year. Truly there was no ecclesiastical strings on the disciples in New Testament times. They went everywhere preaching the gospel, as their hearts stirred them and as they could find doors for utterance, without consulting flesh and blood. The history of the New Testament church thus shows a hearty cooperation on a broader scale than that within the local church. Disciples recognized their obligation to one another in that broader sense, since they were "fitly framed and knit together" in the body of Christ over which Jesus is Head. What was one disciple's job was every other disciple's job, also. With one heart and one soul they pursued a divine program, all heaving the same aims and objectives, each holding himself ready to join in helping the other engaged in any job committed to the disciples by the Lord. The Other Function

Besides this individual functioning of members of the body into which Christians have been baptized it is clearly manifested in New Testament history that congregations combined their strength and resources in accomplishing a work that no congregation could do alone. As God's churches, each congregation keeping its own identity, they cooperated with one another in the performing of big tasks.

Just as Barnabas found more work at Antioch than he could do, and called in Saul to help him, so congregations, as such, united their efforts to render service that individual congregations could not do alone. The Lord lays upon his churches the same obligation to work together, as congregations, in executing the great program given to the disciples, as is laid to individual members of the church to cooperate or to join together, in accomplishing the work given to the church.

It is not the spirit of the New Testament teaching to leave one congregation to struggle alone with a load that is a common load—a load laid upon the great body of Christ over which Jesus is Head and into which by one spirit we were all baptized. "For I say not this that others may be eased and ye distressed; by an equality your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality." (2 Corinthians 8:13-14). This doctrine of bearing burdens together, of distributing burdens among the churches so as not to ease one church and distress another was delivered to the Corinthian church in an effort to move it to join other churches in ministering to poor saints. The job of taking care of the poor in Judea was a greater burden than one church could bear; yes, it was a greater burden than even the churches of Macedonia could handle and the Holy Spirit was urging the Corinthian church to join the Macedonian churches in the undertaking. The condition was so distressing that Titus became so deeply stirred that of his "own accord" he went forth to this church to urge it to get into the struggle. A "Brother" whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches went with Titus. This brother was also "appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord." Again, "We have sent with them our brother whom we have many times proved earnest in many things, but how much more earnest, by reason of the great confidence which he hath in you. Whether any inquire about Titus he is my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward, or our brethren they are the messengers of the

churches, they are the glory of Christ. Show ye therefore unto him in the face of the churches the proof of your love, and of our glorying on your behalf."

What earnest care! What joining together of effort! What splendid interest manifested on the part of the churches in that they appointed a "brother" "to travel with us!" Think of it—a group of brethren—"messengers of the churches"— going among the churches to stir them to join with other churches to meet the emergency. A great example.

Some of the group were "appointed" by the "churches," one went of his "own accord," but their going and their effort is plainly approved.

First of all, there is the obligation—a host of brethren who are in need; This becomes known and individual Christians of their "own accord" became interested. Churches become so concerned that they "appointed" a brother to travel among other churches not yet concerned or interested; "messengers of the church" go forth to assemble contributions to care for the saints in distress.

Surely we need no more evidence to assure us that it is good, wise, and of divine approval to stir churches to join other churches in accomplishing jobs committed to the church. Surely it is good, too, and scriptural for one of his "own accord," should he be so moved, to go forth to stir the churches to cooperate in meeting an emergency. It would be no grounds for criticism were he to "appoint himself" to go among the churches. Titus did this very thing and is graciously commended for this course. He did not wait for a "church" to appoint him, but went of his "own accord." But would one contend that this is an example for churches to cooperate with one another in supplying the needs of the poor saints, but is not an example for their cooperating with one another in the doing of other service committed to the great body of Christ? In other words, is it an example for combining our strength to feed and clothe the poor, but not an example for the same and solid cooperation, for preaching the gospel to the world? As in the case when a nation is facing national peril by the approach of a formidable foe every citizen, man and woman, is utilized, drawn into the service, at home or on the field, to save the cause; so every local church on earth should be filled up to the teeth with knowledge of the great job, the outstanding work assigned to the army of the saints by the commander-in-chief, the job of rescuing captives from the Devil's army by offering deliverance through Christ Jesus our Lord. Every Christian "at home" should be on their toes for news from the field and should be preparing to join the army on the field, or, as eager to supply the needs of those on the field driving back the enemy, establishing new forts, and possessing new territory, as patriotic fathers, mothers, sisters, and sweethearts—the army left at home, were eager in the world war to supply food and clothing—socks, sweaters and every other need—to the boys gone to war. The cause for which we fight is infinitely greater than the cause for which those boys fought, and in our interest, enthusiasm, and sacrifices we should put to shame the patriotism displayed in that war. In the world war we at home did without, denied ourselves of comforts and even necessities to supply the wants on the field; we ate brown bread, corn bread, rye-bread, to save the white bread for those on the field; we did without sugar that the boys on the field might have it. We stinted ourselves, doing without in every way helpful to maintain the army on the field. To the patriotic at home the needs of those on the field came first. Mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts donned overalls and went to the stores, factories, shops, and farms that men might be freed to join the army on the field.

Although our cause is infinitely important, the greatest in the world, our workers, the army on the field, go without necessities, live without screens on their houses, when it is deadly almost to do it, and make other severe sacrifices, and that without murmur, while we live at home comparatively in luxury. But worst of all, those few workers we have out yonder are desperately hampered for supplies, means with which to battle against the enemy. They can't rent a hall or support native workers, supply other severe demands of that work, because we do not hold up their hands as we should. The whole thing is summed up in these words— we are not in the fight with them.

Every farm, store, factory, shop, and office controlled by Christians "at home" should be run in the interest of the war, should be dedicated to the great cause for which Jesus died. Instead we are running them for ourselves; even the "camps" (local churches) of the army are exhausting themselves on camp activities. Nine tenths of the means, ability, and efforts of the local churches are devoted to the keeping of these churches alive. May the Lord open our eyes and enlarge our hearts that we may get into the real struggle as the faithful body of Christ "fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:16).

The Church Today In Its War Against Sin

The Church Today In Its War Against Sin THE CHURCH TODAY IN ITS WAR AGAINST SIN

W. S. LONG In obedience to the highest impulse—the desire to do good—I come before you this morning to speak of the Church of Christ and her war against sin and Satan. When we remember that the Church cost the blood of Christ and was established to save sinners it should stir every fiber of our souls. When the word is used as Jesus used it there comes before us that mighty army of saints and martyrs who have suffered through the past 1900 years—fighting for those principles dedicated by the blood of Christ and His apostles. It has always been composed of the noblest, purest, and bravest men and women who have ever adorned our common humanity. The earthly life of Christ was one continuous battle against the forces of darkness, and His victorious struggle gave to his Church the power to overcome sin, Satan, and death, and there are no such words as failure or defeat to those who follow Him.

Let us think of every Christian as a soldier, clad in the armor of righteousness, and bravely contending for the right against error in every form.

It has been said, We are against too many things, but not for enough things, but the true soldier of Christ must not only stand up for all that is true, holy and right but he must stand out clearly against all forms of sin without fear or favor. Men who have accomplished the most for the world, and who have measured up to the preaching of the Apostles and their contemporaries, were severe on false doctrine and were recognized as “fighters.” Every one should fight sin. Stephen delivered but one sermon that was recorded, and yet he was immortalized because he fell with his face toward the foes of death, and with the sword of the Spirit drawn against false doctrine. He was not one of those “tender footed” men, afraid some one would be offended if he exposed their errors. If you want to know the attitude of the Apostolic Church and the preachers of that time regarding Sin and Satan, I present to you today men like Paul, Peter, James, and Jude, and call upon them to be our witnesses. Hear their words as the Holy Spirit sat upon their lips in glorious power and majesty. Paul would walk into our midst and say, “The night is far spent, and the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light.” (Romans 13:12). “Thou, therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus * * * no soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier.” In his last message to the Church at Ephesus he says, Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.” To the Church in wicked Corinth he writes, “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” women from the fires of Sin which is near to consume their souls. Peter says to the great army everywhere “Arm yourselves with the same mind.” (1 Peter 4:1).

Now, the solemn question, which we are considering is; Does the Church of today measure up to the Apostolic Church in its warfare against sin and Satan. Are we equipped for the struggle? * Are

we ready to endure the hardships as did they? Are fired with the same degree of zeal possessed by those great souls? Have we forsaken all that we might follow Christ? Has worldliness, selfishness, prejudice, narrowness, and petty jealousy been swallowed up by our love for the Church, and our desire to save lost souls from the hand of Satan?

I. Preparedness.

The warfare against Sin is the greatest work in all the earth, and if we would succeed in such a conflict we must, first of all, be well prepared. To be equipped we must follow the divine instructions, which say "Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:13-17) The next step in this preparation is to ask God's guidance and help. So Paul says, "Praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all saints." What an inspiring picture is here presented of God's people all over the world in their war against sin. Each clad in the Armor of the Lord, each lifting his voice to God in prayer constantly for guidance, and each praying for all other Christians that they, too, may be more than conquerors through Him who loved them and washed them in His blood.

II. Satan's Tactics.

In the second place we must know the tactics of Satan, and his many methods of leading people into sin. Is not this what Jesus means when He says, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Did not Paul drive this truth home to every heart when he said, "Watching, there- unto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.'" By knowing the tactics of Satan do not think for a moment that I mean for any one to go to the places of Sin and follow the ways of Satan to learn his devices. No, you don't get it that way. The banker knows the counterfeit money, the worthless imitations, because he knows the genuine. He does not go out and take part in handling the false money and passing it on the public to know the difference. So if you know God and His truth, you can at once detect the errors of the evil one, and false teaching the very minute it comes to light. Oh, how Satan has attempted to whiten and beautify sin that it may appear to have the sweetness of the rose and the luster of the lily. Look at the billboards stretched along our highways from Maine to California, picturing the poison cigaret in the fingers of the innocent girl. The cigarette in the fingers of the girls today is the serpent that will destroy this nation tomorrow. Every device possible has been seized upon by money lovers to make sin appear to be harmless and helpful. To illustrate: The country boy sees a glowing picture of his possibilities if he will enlist in the Navy or Army. It offers a trip around the world and a liberal education. But every sowing must have its harvest, and in a few years he faces the fact that he is engaged in the work of wholesale murder under the name of patriotism.

"Be not deceived—whatsoever you sow that shall you reap." This Christian warfare, my fellow countrymen, is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against Spiritual wickedness in high places. Satan seeks every avenue possible to deceive the hearts of men. He uses his servants to secure a seat as instructor

in our colleges and universities. He comes under the pretense of a preacher of the gospel and from the pulpit he destroys the faith of many in the word of God. Such instructors are but Satan's servants and are using the Bible, but handling it deceitfully, as did the Devil when he tried to destroy our Savior in His hour of temptation. Paul warns us that Satan will transform himself into an angel of light and his servant as a minister of righteousness. I pause here to say, I thank God that we have colleges such as Abilene Christian College, in which all the teachers are true to God, and that Satan can never have a part as an instructor. Sin and Satan have entered into thousands of what is thought to be the best books and magazines, and in this way the souls of our youth are being destroyed—and character undermined. The warfare in which Satan is the "Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is at work in the children of disobedience."

III. Begin at Home.

In this great battle against Sin, we must begin first at the House of God. Jesus twice came to His Father's house and cleansed it of its thieves and corruption. The first Church in the world was kept clean as long as it existed. Men could not slip into the Holy place and into its sacred worship with a corrupt life and be held in esteem because they were men of prestige in the world. They were openly rebuked at once, and if they failed to show fruits of repentance the Church immediately withdrew fellowship. The Holy Spirit so commands us today. "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all." (1 Thessalonians 5:15). Again, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." (2 Thessalonians 3:6). The story of Akin and the golden wedge is no doubt given to teach us that we are defeated—and a church is crippled and defeated—when it permits men and women to be held in good fellowship when it is known that such are unfaithful and impure.

IV. Endure Hardness.

But with all our knowledge and all our scholarship we can never expect to make successful warfare against Satan unless we know ourselves true soldiers. The true Christian will not be content with a soft seat and be of ease. A Christian is not a fair weather person who attends worship just to be entertained. He is faithful for God, and must "endure hardness," face the bitterest weather, the deepest sorrows, and the most discouraging conditions—and this will do with his whole heart if he loves God. The success of the Revolutionary War was due to the courage of men like Washington, Adams, Henry, Putnam, and Pitt, who faced the charges of the wilderness and who hungered, suffered, bled and died that we might sing of the "Land of the True, and the Home of the Brave." By indescribable hardships they planted the tree of liberty in American soil and watered it with their tears and blood.

If for such a cause they gladly suffered so much, then how much more should we suffer for the most glorious and sacred Cause in all the earth. The Church of Christ has a glory higher than the heavens, transcending all time, more sacred than the bleeding cross upon which our Savior died, and more enduring than all the Kingdoms of ages past. Such a great cause, and such a warfare calls for men of the highest type and the deepest convictions. Is it any wonder that Paul exclaimed: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." Our greatest need at this hour is men who are ready to suffer and to fight.

“God give us men: A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and willing hands:
Men whom the lust of office cannot kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and will,
Men who have honor: Men who will not lie:
Men who can stand before the Demagogue
And scorn his treacherous flattery without winking;
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and private thinking.”

V. A Love Which Inspires

The Church in the days of the Apostles had a love and a zeal that came from the very heart of Jesus they loved the cause better than all other things of earth. Upon their banner was inscribed the hope and happiness of all nations. They believed the word of Christ. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.” They knew the gospel was the only power to save men, and that if it was rejected the world would be left in midnight gloom. The principles for which they contended included every promise, type, and prophecy of the Old Testament, from the smoking sacrifice of righteous Abel to the Lamb of God whose precious blood was shed upon the cruel cross. They were ready to suffer and to die for this gospel because it embraced all the hopes held sacred in the heart of Abraham and all the holy prophets for four thousand years. Without this hope no welcome voice resound along the dark channel house of death: No rose of immortality would blossom upon the grave of our loved one. It was the Gospel of Our Lord and Savior that inspired their love and inflamed their souls because it sent its shafts of light divine across the centuries and wrote life joy, peace and hope upon the dust and ashes of the tomb of every child of God. Their love was so deep so high and so holy that they fought with the courage of true men, and with the Calmness of angels till they had given every ounce of strenght, and (some of them) every drop of a martyr’s blood. No higher compii- ment was ever paid to men and women than the one recorded in the 11th Chapter of Hebrews: “And what shall I more say, For the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah: of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of mockings and scouragings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented * * wandering is deserts and mountains and caves, and holes of the earth.” (Hebrews 11:32-39).

I pause and ask, to what degree do we measure up to those brave and illustrious characters? Is our courage comparable to theirs? Are we found in the slums? trying our best to save the lost and forsaken? Do you believe the Church of today compares favorably with the Church in Apostolic times? I fear we are “weighed and found wanting.” The knowledge that in our Christian warfare there is no such word as failure or defeat should stir the heart of every Christian to the greatest zeal and the brightest hopes. Mighty kings have risen rapidly to worldly splendor, and received the praise of millions, but soon their flag and their cause trailed in the dust of forgetfulness, but across the banner of Christ is written, “Eternal Victory,” and all the powers of earth and hell can never defeat God’s faithful. We are assured too, that every act of service in Christ’s name will be rewarded even to the cup of cold water. Napoleon, while an exile at St. Helena, had time to meditate upon earthly kingdoms, and he gave utterance to the following words. “The more I study the world the more I realize the inability of force to create anything durable. Charlemagne, Alexander the Great, Caesar and myself, have built empires, but I ask upon what did these creations of our genius depend. They depended upon force. Jesus Christ built His Kingdom upon Love, and today millions would die for Him.” Massive monuments have been erected to men of earthly fame, who led armies to victory or defeat, and who drenched the land in blood, but the humblest soldier of the Cross, by faithful service, and a firm stand for truth can come to the closing bounds of life and say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and I have kept the faith.” It will be there the answer will come re-echoing from the throne of Christ, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ Then may he say in the words of the poet:

“On palaces, Sculptures, and crowns,

Your pride with disdain I survey,

Your pomp is but shadows and sounds,

That pass in a moment away.

The crown that my Savior bestows,

Yon permanent sun will outshine,

My joy everlasting flows

My God and my Redeemer is mine.”

VI. Our Greatest Need I am persuaded that our greatest need is faith.

Israel lost 40 years wandering in the wilderness because of unbelief. John tells us that “Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.” In Apostolic days it was Faith that cast out all fear and sent the Gospel into all parts of the earth in less than a century. God give us faith, and victory is certain.

Spreading the Gospel or Sounding Out the Word

Spreading the Gospel or Sounding Out the Word SPREADING THE GOSPEL OR SOUNDING OUT THE WORD

W. S. LONG

“For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to Godward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything.” (1 Thessalonians 1:8). My Beloved Brethren: From my youth this has been a very interesting subject and I have often spoken of the marvelous success of the Church in the days of the apostles. Time is well spent on the question: “Why was the early Church so successful?” It has challenged the interest of the most brilliant minds and the most gifted thinker of the past.

Let us picture the scene of Jesus’ farewell words on the Mount of Olive, and then see these eleven men turn their faces toward Jerusalem, where the heartless rulers had six weeks before crucified their Lord. See them encounter a cruel world, made up on the one hand of Romans who were then preparing to destroy Jerusalem and put to death thousands of Christians, and on the other hand the bitterness of the Jews who in blindness to their own good, would do their best to stamp out of existence the very name of Jesus.

What hopes had they (humanly speaking) of success? What prestige to open the door to proclaim the Glorious Gospel? They had no degrees, no money, no colleges, no church buildings, no orphanages, no publications, no men in power to advocate their cause before the Rulers. Yet, they begin in the City of Jerusalem with only a handful of men and women—not a Church anywhere else in all the wide, wide world. Favor was granted for only a few years and then they soon became so unpopular that their own people began a severe persecution and were joined by pagan rulers, and it grew so cruel that it meant death to be known as a Christian. Such a name was odious, and the followers of Jesus were counted as scum of the earth—“the offscouring of Creation.” Viewing this Church from a human standpoint it would be of short duration, and pass away with the death of its first leaders; yet, in the face of this persecution God lead them from victory to victory until we hear the Glorious message spoken by Paul to the Church at Colossae: “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which was preached to every creature which is under heaven: wherof, I, Paul, am made a minister.” (Colossians 1:23). He further says, that the gospel which had come to them as it had in all the world. From these statements we learn that in this short time, less than 100 years, the gospel had gone into all parts of the known world.

1. The First Three Decades: It is an old, old story, yet an interesting one to follow the spread of the gospel from the one little band in Jerusalem till it reached all the known world. When the dark clouds of persecution fell upon them, and blow after blow took many of their best members, it looked as though they were soon to be blotted from the earth. The apostles were whipped, threatened, cast into prison; Stephen was martyred as a warning to any one who would mention

the name of Christ. Soon the persecution broke forth like a storm everywhere, and “at that time there was great persecution against the Church,” and it was scattered to the four winds, yet God overruled this seeming calamity to his glory. We read “Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.” With their hearts warmed by the fresh blood of their leaders, and their zeal fired by the love of Christ, no power on earth or in Hell could silence them in telling the message of salvation. Twenty-one brief chapters of Acts that followed this persecution is pulsating with the wonderful missionary spirit of the early Christians.

Philip plants a Church in Samaria, and then proclaims Jesus to the treasurer of that far-away land of Ethiopia and thereby the gospel is made known in Africa. He then passes to Antioch and all the cities in order till he comes to Caesarea. Peter and John visit Samaria and evangelize many of the cities of that State. Soon Paul is converted in the City of Damascus and began at once to preach Jesus everywhere he set foot. If Luke had been permitted to tell us of all the work of each one who was scattered everywhere it would have made one of the most interesting books ever written. Missionaries went to every point of the compass from that first Church and the plan outlined by Jesus when He said, “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth,” is effective beyond the dreams of the most optimistic souls. By the time the Gospel had reached Antioch of Syria, the number of Christians had reached into the hundred of thousands and there is no way to measure the extent and strength of the Church. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the kingdom and it was destined to cover the earth. As we follow Paul and his faithful company of workers through Galatia, Asia Minor, into Europe on to Greece and Achaia and the islands of the sea, our minds stagger to comprehend the rapid growth of the Church against the odds of poverty, persecution and martyrdom.

II. Why This Rapid Growth: It would be well to study the question, “Why had the Church such rapid growth in those days?” If the work that brought about this wonderful success can be put in operation today then as certain as effect follows cause, we may again spread the Gospel as did they. If not, why not? Some might conclude that it was because miraculous power accompanied the preaching of the Word. We must admit that this brought many to hear the Word, yet God did not intend the miracles to be the power to reach the lost or he would have continued their use. The Gospel is the power of God to save and not miracles. I believe there were causes which may be applied today that will bring the same success as it did then. I shall mention a few of these causes.

(1) Their great faith in God and his promises. They had a faith that was unmoved by all the persecutions, threats and hardships that could be heaped upon them. They went into cities where you and I would not dare to go today, and where it looked as though they were casting pearls before swine, preached in parks, dungeons, jails and dwelling, even where death was hanging over them.

(2) Their Convictions: They were wholly converted to the Lord, and ready to forsake all for His name. Their love for Christ inspired them to tell everyone they met the wonderful story of Christ who died for them. We take our vacations and go everywhere seeking pleasure; they went everywhere preaching the Word. Salvation meant so much to them that they wanted to save every one else. Moreover!! they did not believe they could be saved unless they gave their lives in saving others.

(3) A Third Cause Of This Success Was The Liberality Of The Early Church. It has been recognized as the most liberal Church in the world. They sold possessions that this Gospel might be preached. If prosperity came they gave; if deep poverty overtook them they still gave, and begged the Church to accept their offering. Why don't we give today as did they?

(4) The Purity Of The Church. The Church stood out before the world as a body of people honest and upright in their transactions, and pure in all their deeds and words. It was a high calling to be a member of the Church and the world respected such a people. The higher we lift the standard of membership, the greater influence we will have and the more right thinking people will seek our fellowship.

(5) Prayer And Hard Work: When the Church becomes prayerless it becomes powerless also. This model Church was born during a great prayer meeting. Whatever they did in word and deed they first took it to God in prayer. There is a lifting power about prayer. By it they were lifted from discouragement and sorrow; and given renewed strength and hope to go forward. But with all the promises of God of comfort and help they knew nothing could be accomplished without hard work. So they worked at the job day and night "in season and out of season." No farmer, business man, teacher, lawyer, doctor, mechanic, student or preacher will ever succeed in this calling without hard work. No Church can ever expect to make success without hard work. Every member of the Church should be a worker and if they are truly converted they cannot be happy without work. A working Church never finds time to stop to fuss. "There is no place in the Church for grumbling or complaining. Smile and boost; "Lift man Lift" would be a good motto for any Church I wonder if the church today is trying as hard to save souls as did the one in Paul's day?

(6) The earnestness and boldness which they preached the Gospel. Their every soul was poured into every sermon and the people who heard them were made to feel their lost and condemned state and to tremble under the mighty power of the preachers. "I see Paul as he stands up day and night for three years in Ephesus with tears flowing freely down his cheeks and with marks of persecution on his body, boldly, earnestly and sympathetically telling of the wonderful love of Christ.

(7) Now, there was one other thing that had to do with their success. Many new congregations become missionary Churches, for we read that the congregations at Philippi and Thessalonica "sounded out the -Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in other places." They began to do that soon after they were established.

Let us suppose that every congregation in America that has as many as fifty members would seek out a new location at once and place a good preacher there and support him until a new congregation was established in that field, and then teach the new congregation to plant another. The growth of the Church in a few years would excel anything since the days of the Apostles. With the help of God and the application of these principles used by the first Church, we would establish 10,000 new congregations in the next ten years. Truly, "the field is white unto the harvest," and the Church of Christ should catch the spirit of the early Church and follow their example to "Sound out the Word." If this is done (and let us pray that it will be done) there would not be an idle preacher to be found and the call would be made for many more, and every saved man would try to save some one else.

Now, let us by tongue and pen, appeal to every congregation in America to reduce the causes of success to practice, and set the New Testament plan to work in each local congregation. Then we will begin to measure up to some degree with the Church of those days. With our splendid modes of travel, our wealth and our talents we should surpass them in growth. Oh, are we making the sacrifice we should? Are we doing our best?

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