

# The care of all the churches

Thomas Munnell



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THE  
CARE OF ALL THE CHURCHES.

BEING  
A SCRIPTURAL STATEMENT OF THE CHARACTER,  
QUALIFICATIONS, ORDINATION, AND  
RELATIVE DUTIES  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY,  
EVANGELISTS, BISHOPS AND DEACONS,  
*WITH SPECIAL DIRECTIONS*  
AS TO THE PRACTICAL DETAILS OF A SUCCESSFUL MINISTERIAL  
LIFE, BOTH IN THE SPIRITUAL AND BUSINESS ASPECTS OF  
THE WORK.

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BY THOMAS MUNNELL.

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PREFACE.

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This work is a result of more than twenty years of practical experience in all the details of church work herein set forth, and this tithe of what might be written is published in the hope that it may aid other ministers of the Word to tunnel the difficulties in their way in shorter time, and more successfully, than the author was able to do.

While Broadbodus, Plumer, Bedell and others have been consulted, but little has been found in the special line of thought here pursued except as to ministerial character and pastoral visits, for which acknowledgements are due; and while we appreciate the over-estimates of two State Conventions, where lectures on these subjects had been delivered, requesting their publication in book form, the author feels under special obligation to Prof. D. R. Dungan, of Drake University, for valuable suggestions, for revision of the manuscript, and other evidences of his interest in the work.

As much of the route herein surveyed is over ground that has not come to light in print, forbearance is claimed for all defects of arrangement, of method, or of thought, in hope that this tentative effort may be followed by others more worthy, to which this may prove to have been an unpretentious contribution, as also a present help to all who are striving to "lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees." Should it prove useful to preachers, elders, deacons and teachers, and thereby contribute to the good order, growth and encouragement of the children of God, its acme will have been happily attained.



The evangelistic element in the New Testament is found to have occupied the Divine mind so much more than is usually supposed, and to be so broadly and so intimately associated with the pastoral element, as well as with every form of church work, that no essay could even approximate completeness without fully developing "the work of the evangelist."

If any one thought, more than any other, has supported the production of this work, it is the assurance gathered, during years of personal labor over eighteen States, of the needy condition of a large majority of churches outside of the cities and larger towns—the lack of a loving, pastoral care of the young; the indifferent, the backslidden, and especially of those who may have been excluded and never thought of again, as well as the lack of wise official management of the business interests of the church. The feeble, staggering, though often pious, congregations have therefore been so long the objects of solicitude that the author can cordially adopt the sentiment of that focal stanza relating to this part of the Church of God:

"For her my tears shall fall,  
For her my prayers ascend;  
To her my toils and cares be given,  
Till toils and cares shall end."

And now that the blessing of God may rest upon this little effort to do good, is all that could be desired by

THE AUTHOR.

*Mt. Sterling, Ky.*

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# THE CARE OF ALL THE CHURCHES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### APOSTOLIC SUPERVISION.

There are two generic forms of church government under which all religious bodies have organized themselves—the Episcopal and the Congregational. The one seeks to consolidate all individual churches into one organization and under one general management, in such a way that the individual surrenders certain rights to the body for the good of the whole. The other form allows every church to manage its own affairs, and to be entirely independent of all other churches or associations of churches as to discipline, co-operation and the general care of all. Admitting that a great truth was aimed at in each of these theories, it ought also to be admitted that each has somewhat missed the divine idea sought for in what is here to follow. That all ecclesiasticism seeking to “lord it over God’s heritage,” either in the individual congregation or in any consolidation of churches, is hostile to His Will, needs no proof, and will receive no attention in this work. It

ought also to be equally clear that all grades of congregationalism that so separate the churches as to cut off mutual sympathy, co-operation and a due sense of interdependence for mutual protection, are also unauthorized by the Word of God. But the present investigation will be pursued with less reference to what others have done than to what the Old and New Testaments teach, and consequently but few outside authorities will be cited, that the Bible alone, fairly quoted and honestly applied, may speak for itself without interruption. The policy of no particular religious people will be applauded or condemned, unless the "old paths" we are looking for may have that effect.

All religious, as well as scientific, investigations have been marked by the pendulous oscillations inseparable from such fragmentary thinkers as we all are, but the constant tendency is to settle on central truth, and no honest endeavor to re-examine the Book of Nature or the Book of Revelation will be apt to fail of doing good. That further effort is needed to find "a straight path for our feet" between the Scylla of hierarchical despotism and the Charybdis of disintegrating and dislocating independency, whereby the church may avoid the evils of both, and have more power for good than either, is undeniable. It will be readily admitted by intelligent people that the current of the present century flows not in the direction of

Ecclesiastical Despotism for the exposure of "the divine right of Kings;" the acceptance of constitutional monarchies and republics manifest a *renaissance* in the public mind that promises never again to be subjugated either to kingcraft or priestcraft. The dangers are chiefly in the other direction, but without regard to the wisdom of men our purpose is to show what arrangements the wisdom of God has made in order to have "a care of all the churches," as well as to preach the gospel to the world.

If the anxiety felt by Paul and the constant labor growing out of it, even among the few congregations of his day, were all he could endure under the divine arrangement, how much more would the multitude of churches of to-day have burdened him! And if ever "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ" (Rev. 11: 15) while his people are in the flesh, the divine arrangement, whatever it was, will have to be greatly extended if any general "care" is exercised toward all "the ignorant and them that are out of the way" by His ministry. This would require a territorial division of labor such as was begun by the apostles as soon as circumstances required it (Gal. 2: 9). Christianity needs no general *governing* system, but a general *working* system for mutual care, protection and co-operation.



*Suitable boundaries.* Even civil governments, which were instituted of God for the good of mankind, are necessarily bounded by territorial limitations, for it would be impossible for all the nations of the world to be organized into one nation, under one emperor, president or king. It would be impracticable to bring any one of the four continents under one government. The geographical positions of North and South America indicate that at least two governments should exist on the Western Hemisphere. Asia and Africa would not conveniently form one government. The same is true as to church co-operation in carrying forward its missionary and other benevolent enterprises abroad, as well as the care of all the public congregations at home. The distance from place to place, and consequent inconveniences, forbid a working association broad enough to embrace the churches all around the world; but districts, states, the United States, and other civil divisions, suggest the necessary limits. No institution except that of Popery ever attempted to embrace all ecclesiastical interests on earth under one head, and it is represented in the Bible as a monster "having seven head and ten horns." The extent of territory to be included in any human government or in any Christian co-operation, not having been determined in the Scriptures, has been left to the decisions of society itself, based on

human experience and good sense; and yet all peoples should be embraced in and have the benefit of some form of civil government, and all churches should be embraced in and have the benefit of some working association, for strict congregationalism makes "a care of all the churches" impossible.

Most Protestants in this country have utilized our civil divisions as the limits best suited to church co-operation. Hence, we have general, State and district conventions, conferences, associations and synods. But none of these arrangements have been specifically pointed out in the Bible, for when the Lord decided to have birds' nests and honey-combs constructed, in order to avoid the trouble and expense of sending teachers along with these little workers every spring, he decided to plant the instinct and revelation in their little constitutions at once and be done with it, and thus let them know the will of God concerning them. So, when God expended so much on the creation of men with understanding enough to make such arrangements as will best enable them to carry on his work, he has a right to expect some returns from the investment, and not have them searching the Bible continually for information which he has already "written in their hearts." Instead of enlarging that Book with trifling business details until "the world could not

contain the things that should be written," our physical and mental organizations command us to attend to all these minutiae which he did not think it necessary to burden the Scriptures with. The natural capabilities of animals and men are as truly a revelation from God as is any thing in the Bible addressed to our higher reason. Revelation is not all by inspiration, for God's deeds before men, as well as his enabling them to "do by nature the things contained in the law," are, in a general sense, revelations to men, and in this way he has revealed to men how to combine all church forces so as to do his work.

*The teaching of extreme Congregationalism* holds that the individual church, however few or ignorant, is the highest ecclesiastical authority on earth, and that no organization of churches could be formed that would give it a right to act outside of the single congregation. It is assumed that the word *church* is used but in two senses—that of the whole body of Christ, and that of the single congregation; and as the whole body cannot act as one congregation, the other is the only legitimate organization. The lack of careful study that is manifest throughout this reasoning is enough to condemn it, for besides coldly isolating every church to itself, it defies all missionary, publication and other societies, that do more in any one year to evangelize the heathen world than all such

thinkers will do in a millennium. *But these two are not the only uses of the word church in the New Testament*, for all the churches in all Palestine are grouped under this name in the singular number—"Then had *the church* rest throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria." (Acts 9: 31—Revised Version). Here is the learning of forty-two of the best scholars in the world—twenty-seven English and fifteen American—who without a dissenting voice decide that the old version is erroneous in reading this word in the plural; and if the Holy Spirit could thus speak of "the church" of Palestine, why is it wrong for us to speak of "the church" of Ohio, "the church" of Kentucky, or "the church" of Kansas, since in such territorial limits the congregations can all unite as one church to accomplish by united action what singly they could not do?

That the apostles did not intend to have each congregation left to struggle alone without the sympathy and oversight of any other is clearly proved by the following facts.

**SUPERVISORY EPISTLES.** *First.*—The Apostle John, after leaving the Isle of Patmos, wrote to the *seven churches of Asia*, administering various warnings, threats, directions and encouragements. Two of the seven were found blameless and were praised for their good deeds, while five were either praised or blamed, as the case required, showing

that a wholesome *supervision* was exercised over them by one capable and authorized to do so (Rev. 2: 3). How far this work was intended as an example for modern ministers may be seen under the heading, *Apostolic Succession*, but that those seven churches were not left to edify themselves without assistance or supervision is manifest to all. Here were seven churches all cared for *by one minister*. It is not claimed that this supervision was effected through a co-operation of churches in modern form, but that the divine economy intended *supervision* in some form cannot be denied—a fact that does not favor the unstudied notion of church independency so entire that no one outside of the local officers has any supervisory care over the needy.

*Second.*—Paul also wrote to many churches—“Unto the church of the Thessalonians;” “To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus;” “To the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons,” and “To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.” He also wrote epistles to whole districts of churches—“To the churches of *Galatia*,” then “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints which are in *all Achaia*,” while his first Epistle to the Corinthians was of still wider range, “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth . . . with

*all that in every place* call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord both theirs and ours." Besides these single churches, the districts of churches and "all in every place," Paul wrote four epistles to three preachers—two to Timothy, one to Titus and one to Philemon. Then as still further indicative of a general supervision of church interests, he informs us that he had "given order unto the churches of Galatia" to manage their financial affairs the same as he had directed the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 16: 1). These and other facts, such as Paul's "care of all the churches," his letter to the Hebrews, of the genuineness of which there should be no doubt, his prayers and anxieties for as many as "had not seen his face in the flesh" show the erroneousness of a theory that leaves "the hands that hang down and the feeble knees" to struggle on in their weakness without any arrangement for systematic help or sympathy.

*Third.*—John and Paul were not alone in this work of general epistolary "care," for Peter also wrote an epistle to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia," five large districts in Asia Minor. This same spirit inspired Peter also to write a second General Epistle not merely to said five districts, but to "all that have obtained like precious faith with us"—the whole Christian church (2 Pet. 1: 1). James also wrote to "the twelve tribes scattered

abroad;" and Jude—"To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus and called." Thus we have letters to three ministers of the Word; to six churches, eight districts and to "all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord." Paul and Peter both wrote to the churches of Galatia; Paul and John both wrote to the churches of Asia, while Paul, Peter and Jude all wrote to the whole church of God. If these facts prove nothing else, they prove that the Holy Spirit favored a general care over all the needy churches of Christ in every land. They prove also that the work of the evangelist in the church is not done as soon as it is organized with elders and deacons, but that a kind and wholesome help is to be afforded them while the world stands.

*Division of labor.* But to economize both time and labor and have each man in the field he was best adapted to, required a sensible and natural division of labor between the two great leaders of the hosts, Peter and Paul. When Jesus sent out the seventy, two by two, the territory, as a matter of plain common sense, must have been divided so that labor should not be unnecessarily duplicated in any one place. So, when Paul and Peter met in Jerusalem (Acts 15: Gal. 2), they divided the field between them as general managers, the one to go to "the circumcision" and the other to "the Gentiles;" and although Peter sometimes preached to

the Gentiles, and Paul "to the Jews first," this general arrangement was, for the most part, adhered to (Gal. 2: 7-10) for the sake of a more thorough supervision.

*Peter's department.* Though we have but a meagre account of the labors of Peter after the Jerusalem Conference, yet, as his custom had been to "pass through all quarters," we may assume his continued activity in the field. The fact that when he wrote his first Epistle he was away in Babylon and had both Mark and Silas with him (1 Pet. 5: 20) marks his unabated apostolic zeal. It manifests an unnecessary amount of Protestant zeal to say that this was spiritual Babylon, for "the Man of Sin" had not yet been developed; besides, this city was still headquarters for the Jews, only about 50,000 of them ever having returned from their captivity. It is also evident that there was a large Jewish element in the churches of Galatia when he wrote to them and four other districts of Asia Minor. Although his catholicity of spirit interested him in "all them that have obtained like precious faith with us," his special obligations were to the Circumcision. His earnestness and effectiveness in the work were shown also in having two younger ministers and amanuenses with him—the one to write the Gospel according to Mark and the other the first Epistle of Peter. 1 Pet. 5: 12.



*Paul's department.* The labors of Paul were more fully detailed. His three tours through Asia Minor; three through Macedonia and Achaia; two to Rome, and his fourteen Epistles, not counting his labors in Damascus, Arabia, Jerusalem, Cilicia and Antioch, occupy forty-four per cent of the entire New Testament. Although he always preached "to the Jew first," it was "also to the Greek," and although he was oppressed with a continual sorrow and heaviness of heart for his brethren according to the flesh, yet when they rejected their Messiah he was accustomed to say, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles," "for inasmuch as I am the Apostle to the Gentiles I magnify mine office." When many congregations had been established he was found taking care of them, not only by numerous letters, but also in personal care over all their spiritual interests, and this brings us to the special supervision of the individual church.

In this line of investigation we will find *local* care of needy churches a large part of the evangelist's duties, as well as of the elder's. The apostles at first discharged the duties of evangelists, elders and deacons in the Jerusalem church, all in their own persons. A part of this burden was lifted by the seven deacons (Acts 6: 1-6). And although there is no account of the election and ordination of elders in that church, they are named in Acts 11: 30 as bearing another part of

the apostles' care, and left them free to give themselves continually to "the ministry of the word and prayer," after they had "set in order the things that were wanting." This threefold division of labor, having been fixed in the Jerusalem church by divine authority, became the established order for the ministry in all the churches for all time. But if the edification of one local congregation requires the labors of preachers, elders and deacons, it would be natural to look for some general arrangement by which the same "care of all the churches" might be secured, especially where there is no competent local ministry, and the Holy Spirit has not disappointed these reasonable expectations, as developed still further in the following details in the evangelistic department.

*Local supervision by Peter and John.* When the persecution that arose about Stephen had driven so many from Jerusalem, Philip went down to Samaria and turned many to the Lord. Soon afterwards the Spirit sent him southward to preach to the eunuch, leaving the new converts in Samaria without a leader. "But when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, *they sent unto them Peter and John.*" And now observe:—

1. The apostles did not wait till some minister should "happen to pass that way," but "sent" two good evangelists to carry forward the work

already begun. They did not expose those young disciples to the incursions of all the grievous wolves that might enter the fold, by leaving them alone.

2. This beginning of local supervision abroad was the work of inspired men, and should dispel every doubt as to the necessity of such labor for the weak and uninstructed in all ages.

3. The Holy Spirit did not hesitate to establish such evangelistic supervision lest it should grow into an ecclesiasticism, for he well knew that the Pope would some day be "an overgrown *elder*, and not an overgrown *evangelist*" (Milligan, in Scheme of Redemption), for the latter being always an itinerant and laboring among the weak and needy, never could locate himself in some civil metropolis and reduce surrounding congregations to his own will, and make himself a pope.

*Supervision by Barnabas.* While Philip was flying from persecution to Samaria, others fled "as far as to Cyprus, Phenice and Antioch, preaching the Word . . . and a great multitude believed and turned to the Lord. Then tidings of these things came to the ears of the church which was at Jerusalem; and *they sent forth Barnabas*, that he should go as far as to Antioch, who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord; for he was a good

man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord." Acts 11: 22-25.

Here, again, several lessons are to be impressed:

1. The necessity of evangelistic supervision was never questioned in the Jerusalem church. The work was begun on the very first occasions making it necessary—first in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, and now in Antioch. They set up no caveats against a possible ecclesiasticism. They never refrained from inaugurating a good work lest it might be abused. "They ordained elders in every church," knowing that one of them would some day "exalt himself above all that is called God." They did not regard this supply of needed help as "lording it over God's heritage." This exaggerated precaution that has so long stood in the way of "a care of all the churches" was reserved for modern Christians who ought to take the Bible alone for their guide, and not seem to be *giving advice* to it.

2. The evangelist sent "was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith," which teaches us that such messengers should always be among the best, most pious and strongest men in the church. No novice, no crank, no self-seeker should ever have a chance to mar a work like this. Nor was Barnabas alone, for they afterwards sent Judas and Silas (Acts 15: 32), and others at differ-

ent times to build them up in their most holy faith.

*By Paul and Silas.* By the time the Jerusalem Council met, churches had been established all through Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Syria, Cilicia, in many parts of Asia Minor and elsewhere. The more numerous the congregations and the more complex their working arrangements, the more occasion would naturally be offered for friction, both in theory and practice. So the Council met to settle the trouble concerning circumcision, which had threatened the peace of the disciples far and near. As soon as "the apostles and elders and brethren" had settled this question, "they sent chosen men of their own company—Judas and Silas—with Barnabas and Saul to Antioch," in order to quiet the minds of the church in that centre of discord, and "when they had delivered the epistle, they rejoiced for the consolation" (Acts 15: 31). Nor did these evangelists soon leave them, but "exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them." "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord, with many others also." The Holy Spirit never taught us that as soon as local officers were appointed in a congregation the evangelist had nothing more to do with them (See Titus 3: 12, 13; Acts 20: 20-34; Eph. 1: 1).

2. The next movement by Paul and Silas, in furtherance of the "decrees of the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem," was to "pass through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches" in reference to this same trouble (Acts 15:41). *Primitive Christianity had a "care of all the churches," while certain modern improvements upon the Bible lets every church take care of itself, without evangelistic or any other supervision.*

3. Their next journey was to Derbe, Lystra, Antioch and Iconium, when they added Timothy to their ministry and continued the work of special supervision. "And as they went through the cities they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. So were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." Acts 16:1-6. After this "they passed through Phrygia and Galatia on the same errand.

4. They next traveled westward through Asia Minor and on to Philippi, to Thessalonica, to Berea, to Athens and to Corinth, then returning through Miletus to Cæsarea and to Antioch, "and having spent some time there they departed; and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia *in order*, strengthening all the disciples."

From these facts we may see again:—

1. That in the administration of the gospel of

the uncircumcision, as well as in that of the circumcision, a careful, painstaking and laborious watch-care of all the needy churches *was the uppermost thought in the apostolic mind*, and that as the Holy Spirit inspired the workmen in both these generic departments, it is not possible to improve upon their methods.

2. Whatever may have been their system of supervision, they certainly aimed at covering all the ground where there were any churches. They "went through Syria and Cilicia;" "went through the cities," went "through Derbe, Lystra, Antioch and Iconium;" "went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia" again; "went through all quarters," "through the upper coasts" of Asia Minor, and wherever there were disciples "whose hands hung down and whose knees were feeble." Now, whatever modern religious body has made no arrangements to do the same kind of work for the church of to-day must lay no claim to apostolicity in this respect; and whatever theory of church government and of general co-operative organization stands in the way of such a supervision, and of such "care of all the churches," must support its pretensions from some other book than the Bible.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE THINGS WRITTEN AFORETIME.

*The Jewish Ministry.* Why the things "written aforetime" should not have been "written for our instruction," as to the subject before us, as well as to other church relations, is not readily understood. The Jewish dispensation roughly projected the plan of church organization for the Christian dispensation. They had their preachers, elders and deacons, appointed in the order here named. Their prophets were their preachers. These were the first appointed, and evidently the first officers in the kingdom of Israel. "Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Ex. 7: 1). "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me" (Deut. 18: 15-19; Acts 3; 22). Both of these prophets were divinely chosen *before* the seventy elders were chosen. "Gather unto me seventy elders" (Num. 1: 16, 17). The service of the Levites was more like that of New Testament deacons than any others, as may be read in Num. 1: 50, 3: 7, 8 and elsewhere, for they were placed "over the tabernacle of the testimony and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong



to it. They shall bear the tabernacle and all the vessels thereof," etc.; that is, they shall attend to the secular service and the business part of their religion as Christian deacons do; for Levi "shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, to do the service thereof." The duties of the elders had more to do with the spiritual welfare of the people, as when God called Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and "seventy of the elders of Israel" up into the mount (Ex. 24: 1), and as when he commanded Moses, "Gather me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears"—words relating to the moral purity of the people. And in Judges 2: 7 it is said, "The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of *the elders* that outlived Joshua," all of which shows that we have not missed the relative positions of the preachers, elders and deacons in the Christian church very far.

*The Christian Ministry.* From the above it is manifest that as the New Testament has its evangelist-preachers, elders and deacons, so the Old Testament had its corresponding prophet-preachers; elders and deacons, and that the whole circumference of the Christian ministry was plainly shadowed in the previous dispensation—a fact that is still further evident in that the New Testament preachers were frequently called prophets,

making prophets, elders and deacons in both dispensations. Several ministers in the Antioch church were called prophets (Acts 13 : 1). Judas and Silas were prophets (Acts 15 : 32), and the whole church was "built upon the foundation of apostles and (Christian) prophets." That the Old Testament prophets were preachers, see Is. 61 : 1. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me *to preach* good tidings to the meek." Jonah was commanded to "preach" to the Ninevites. David the prophet says, "I have *preached* righteousness in the great congregation," and Jeremiah, like a true superintending itinerant evangelist, was "set over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant" (Jer. 1 : 10). With a broad commission, God's prophets were sent to preach to many surrounding nations—to Egypt, to Edom, to Moab, to Syria, to Babylon, to Nineveh and elsewhere. This line of thought has been thus briefly pursued for two reasons—because it seems to have had heretofore but little attention, and also because it both fixes the order of the Christian ministry and shows that in both dispensations a general supervision prevailed over all the interests of the church. The evangelist first, then "the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1 : 1).

*The Elders need Evangelists.* Jesus did not first create a church miraculously without an

evangelist, but prepared and sent out the twelve primitive evangelists to preach the Word, to convert the people, to found churches, to ordain and instruct the local officers, and, like Jewish prophets, to keep an oversight of all as long as was necessary. The average elder of ancient times was no more able to dispense with the evangelist than in modern times. The "rulers that had spoken unto them the Word of God" corresponded to our pastors who "teach publicly and from house to house" (Heb. 13: 7). Where they were able to take care of themselves, as in Antioch and Jerusalem, evangelists were not sent to set them in order, any more than we now send them to Cincinnati, or St. Louis, but that the local ministry of many congregations could not dispense with the evangelist is evident from the following facts:

1. In Titus 3: 12, 13, Paul directs the evangelist not to leave Crete till another should arrive to take his place. "When I shall send Tychicus or Artemus unto thee, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis," *but not till then*. He had doubtless "ordained elders in every city," but they were so much like most modern elders they could not be left without help.

2. On Paul's last journey to Jerusalem from Europe, he was carried past Ephesus to Miletus before the ship landed, and from there he sent back to Ephesus, a distance of thirty miles, for

the elders to meet him in holy conference, advice and prayer before the ship would weigh anchor. This precious and tearful interview, recorded in Acts 20: 17-38, shows in every line his distrust of their ability to manage the affairs of that great church, shows his fears that "grievous wolves," after his departure, would "enter in among them, not sparing the flock," and the still sadder thought that some of those wolves were then before him, like Judas at the Lord's Supper. His address needs only a careful reading to convince any one of the recognized and acknowledged inability of those elders to dispense with a leader wiser and abler than themselves. Soon after we find Timothy there, struggling with the burdens the elders could not move, and when he was called to Rome, Tychicus was "sent to Ephesus" (2 Tim. 4: 12). In addition to these facts we find the apostle James was permanently located in Jerusalem, notwithstanding their numerous and intelligent elders. It is also a fact that Lucius and Manaen, who were among the prophets and teachers in the Antioch church, remained there after Paul and Barnabas had been sent away on their first westward missionary tour (Acts 13: 1). So, upon the whole, it seems undeniable that ruling elders who have *not* "spoken unto you the Word of God" need the aid of Titus, *whose office in the Kingdom of Christ is as permanent and as fixed and as well defined as*

*that of the bishop whom he first converted, baptized and ordained to his office.* This leaves our present system of ministerial labor and oversight with evangelists, pastors or overseers, and deacons, not far from apostolic order, except that while all elders should be pastors, the preacher alone bears that name by pre-eminence, because in most cases he is the only real pastor of the church. But the wisdom of God is again manifest in having a *presbytery* in every church, for while it is not necessary that they all be public speakers, it is necessary that a class of men with the qualifications as given in 1 Tim. 3 : 1-7 be chosen and ordained, who, in official council together with the preacher, shall consider every question of church order, discipline, finance and work of every kind.

*What has been done.* Let no one conclude that progress has not been made in restoring the apostolic ministry since the protestant reformation of the sixteenth century, for while the extended jurisdiction of modern Episcopacy has no divine authority, the Episcopacy itself is a vast improvement on that of the Middle Ages, after which it was, in a general way, modelled—improved as to ecclesiastical and prelatical authority, and as to the nature of the work performed by Protestant bishops, who are, to a great extent, doing the work of evangelists under the wrong name. The bishop of the Church of England, and also of the

Methodist Episcopal Church, is something of an itinerant, traveling from place to place, looking after the general interests of their respective charges, instead of locating as kings or governors and ruling the churches from some political centre, which is the characteristic of Roman Episcopacy. Protestant bishops, however, still retain a degree of ecclesiastical authority and control over the inferior clergy not justified by the conduct of Paul toward the ministry co-operating with him, as seen in 1 Cor. 16:12. "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren, *but his will was not at all to come at this time*, but he will come when he shall have convenient season." Not only is their episcopal control unscriptural, but instead of placing scriptural evangelists as general workers over States and districts, they extend the jurisdiction of the bishop from a single congregation to dioceses and States, and thus break up the New Testament order of the Christian ministry.

The effort made by Episcopacy to cover all the ground and to have a "care of all the churches" is commendable, and so far is nearer Scripture teaching than such radical congregationalism as allows, and even compels, every little band of disciples to fight all their battles alone, without a friend in sight whose official duty may be to help them in their time of need. And yet there are few propo-

sitions that were once in controversy more generally accepted now than that the terms elder, bishop, overseer, shepherd, pastor and ruler, all refer to the same office in the local congregation. The Methodists, while calling their more general workers "bishops" for the sake of distinguishing them from others, admit that their rank is simply that of elders or pastors, and might quote 1 Pet. 5: 1; 2 John. 1, to show that both these apostles were elders, notwithstanding their extensive fields of labor. But the application of this title to Peter and John, and perhaps applicable to all the Twelve, arose from the fact that the apostles, as all other evangelists breaking new ground in unchristian lands, were obliged, as we have seen above, to act the parts of evangelists, elders and deacons until material could be developed among the recent converts to fill these local offices. But when the Twelve were relieved of the local labors and cares at Jerusalem they were at liberty to work simply as evangelists, like Paul and Barnabas in Lystra and Derbe, until the establishment of new churches again required their labors as overseers of the single church, the same as all missionaries in heathen countries are compelled to manage till this day.

*The Apostolic Office Inclusive.* The labors of the Twelve, especially of Peter, James and John as well as Paul, show that the duties of evangel-

ists, elders and deacons were included in the apostolic office, for they executed them all, or any of them, as occasion might require.\* They served tables, as the deacons afterwards did (Acts 6 : 1-6), they took charge of the charity funds, as the elders afterwards did (Acts 11 : 30), and preached the gospel, as Timothy, Barnabas and Titus did. Like deacons, they raised and disbursed money for home and charitable purposes (Acts 4 : 35-37 ; 2 Cor. 8 : 9), and like elders, they visited "from house to house," "watched for their souls," "taking the oversight thereof," and like ordinary preachers, they proclaimed the "glorious gospel of the blessed God." *But their office was exclusive* as to inspiration, as to eye-witness testimony, and the confirming of the Word by signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his will" (Heb. 2 : 4). The same principle of inclusiveness holds with evangelists who preach, baptize, organize and take care of young or disordered churches, for until they shall have developed material for elders and deacons, they are compelled to do the work that afterwards falls to said officers; and in this way the preachers become familiar with all the details of church work, as to all the secular and business

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\*Some writers think it more probable that the apostles had not been serving tables, but that others had been serving not satisfactorily, and that the Twelve in the above simply refused to take the places of the first deacons.



interests thereof. The apostles would have been but poorly prepared to give directions to others on all these practical affairs, had they not first learned the lesson of "The work of an evangelist," and of every other church officer from first to last; nor is any preacher prepared to take charge of a church who is ignorant of everything except the preparation and delivery of sermons.

*A Popular Error.* For a long time the notion has reigned among many Christian people that the labors of the preachers, whether pastors or evangelists, should be strictly confined to his studio, his pulpit and his social calls—that he has, and should have, no responsibility as to church finance, discipline or anything else that belongs to the business side of religion. This is a mild sort of a heresy, but it has wrought incalculable evil, both to the preachers who have thereby neglected all study of these matters, and to the churches which have always needed such aid, and seldom received it. This evil is found more frequently in the country than in the city, and is chargeable to Congregationalism more than to Episcopacy. That the apostles and early preachers did interest themselves in all the financial affairs of the church, observe,

1. That the apostles were the prime movers and managers of the large amounts raised and paid out for the first home expenses of the Jerusa-

lem church (Acts 4: 35-37; 6: 2), handling the proceeds of all the "possessions and goods" sold for the common cause.

2. That Paul, Barnabas, Titus, busied themselves in church finances, see Acts 11: 30; 1 Cor. 16: 2 and 2 Cor. 8th and 9th chapters.

3. That they also took hold of disciplinary matters in the church, is clear from 1 Cor. 5: 1-13; 2 Cor. 2: 6; 7: 11; 1 Tim. 5: 19, 20: 2 Thess. 3: 14, 15. "If I come again I will not spare" (2 Cor. 13: 2).

4. That the primitive evangelists had a general care over all needy churches and inexperienced officers, has been abundantly proved in preceding pages of this work. No greater calamity afflicts the church of God to-day than that teaching whereby extreme Congregationalism has coldly separated every church to itself, and so prevented any united ministerial effort to have "a care of all the churches," as to the business department of church life, as well as the spiritual.

## CHAPTER III.

### DISORDERED CONGREGATIONS.

So far, we have discussed only the general supervision the Lord has ordained to meet the wants of the church at large. But after all this "care" has been exercised, many congregations will nevertheless fall into disorder, as in case of the seven churches of Asia. In many instances their organization has never been completed, as in Crete and Lycaonia, and in all such, the command is to "set in order the things that are wanting" (Titus 1: 5). This, if it does not require a special class of workers, requires special work, and enlisted the deep concern and most earnest labors of apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the early church. Paul, Timothy and Titus were the chief laborers in this direction, but as Titus was specially directed to attend to this work in Crete, we will consider him as a typical officer in that department, who, like Timothy, was to "do the work of an evangelist." Although the evangelist is the first official worker in the Kingdom of God, neither Episcopacy nor Congregationalism has restored him to his place. Uni-

versalists, Unitarians, Baptists and some others are Congregationalists in church government, and so are unprepared for it, even if they desired to arrange for a general care of all the churches. But in hope of making clear what can and ought to be done in very many tottering congregations, I will here describe in detail what the evangelists sent out by State and district conventions find to do wherever they may go. What, then, is it to do the work of an evangelist in our day? What does he find to do, and how can it be accomplished?

*How to approach the churches.* But before approaching any such feeble church he must be sure he has a Christ-like sympathy for "that which is lame" or "out of the way." He must "naturally care for their state" (Phil. 2:20), study their wants, take in the whole situation, and ask wisdom from God in managing the interests of the kingdom, that he may do nothing to injure the cause he is seeking to build up. In such a frame of mind, and with no parade of the favor he proposes to confer upon the brethren, he should first, or very soon, seek a private conference with all the elders and deacons, and preacher, if they have one; and if there be but few, or no officers, let him call in a sufficient number of leading members who could fully represent the condition of the church. Then talk over their financial troubles and show them the way out; explain the necessity

of pastoral labor as well as public preaching; show the evil of having only a few persons pay all church expenses; and urge that a financial system be adopted that will bring every member to pay his just proportion, and explain in detail what the financial system is, as herein described.

If the officers approve your suggestions and plans of working, go before the church and tell them what you are about to recommend to them has been carefully considered by their own leading men, and is fully endorsed by them, and that they join you in recommending the following measures for adoption by the church. Here then you must explain in full the changes you wish them to make, somewhat in this manner:\*

1. You know, brethren, the Church of Christ set out in this Reformation to restore primitive Christianity. Much has been done in this direction, but we have not yet completed our task. In several particulars we still have to set the churches in order, one of which relates to "*pastoral labor*," or as Paul calls it, "*teaching from house to house*." In this, we, as well as other Protestant people, are sadly out of order. We call a brother to preach for us on Sunday and go home. The members are not visited. The pulpit

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\*It is often better to explain to the whole church first, officers and all, then have your private conference, and if they agree to your suggestions, tell the congregation so at your next meeting. Be sure to have all the officers present on all occasions.

is everything with us, while the "going about doing good," as Jesus did, is not in our practice at all, except in our city churches. The country churches are sadly neglected. Whether this comes from too little support from the church, or too little religion in the preacher, it is sad enough. Those members who need the most care are the very ones who seldom come to church to share what little good they might receive from the mere sermon. Habitual absence and the irreligious influences they are sure to fall under, soon do the work of ruin. Now, what you need is no less preaching in the pulpit, but a great deal more out of it, by some minister who can, with pious care for their souls, "lift up the hands which hang down," "comfort the feeble minded and support the weak," by going to their houses or to their fields or shops with edifying and encouraging words of grace.

If your lack of pastoral labor comes from such a slender support of your preacher that he is compelled to return home to work for his living, increase his support; but if it comes from a lack of industry, or a lack of religious zeal on his part, be sure to make a change as soon as possible, and get some one to help you, who, as Paul says of Timothy, "will naturally care for your state." An irreligious preacher is a curse to any church. So, then, a pious, industrious "man of God" is the

first great need of your people, and I, in doing "the work of an evangelist," advise you to restore the primitive order in this particular, and if I can in any way aid you, I am here for that very purpose.

2. But an increase of work may bring on an increase of support for your minister, and if he gives up every other means of living to devote himself to the ministry all the days in the week, his family must be supported by the churches. And this increase of money can be very easily brought about if you are willing to adopt another improvement which your own officers also most heartily approve, and which we recommend to you. It is simply this: That you every one pay your just proportion of church expenses, and not leave it to a few members to pay it all. One of the greatest injuries to a church is for the great majority of the members to pay no money for church purposes. The damage is not chiefly to those who pay, but to those who do not pay. This is the first great damage, because, if a member pay nothing and do nothing for Christ, he cannot feel much interest in the church; his spiritual life is apt to decay and finally altogether die away.

Now, to supply sufficient means to support pastoral labor and to give every member something to do, let the officers of the church meet and make an apportionment to every brother and to

every sister, young and old, in such a way that they will be called on to pay according to their respective abilities. The officers may in some cases over-estimate a member's ability, or under-estimate it, but generally they will make it about right. As soon as the apportionment is made let the deacons divide the names and their amounts among themselves, and at once pass round their respective districts and ask each one if he is willing to pay the amount asked, more or less, and just put the figures up or down accordingly. Let the deacons in a day or two report to the Board how much of the apportionment has been agreed to, and you will know what you have to depend on. If other members are added to the church any time during the year, apportion them also, and at once. Let each deacon keep his list and be collector for his district; and as fast as he collects, let him credit the members, and then pay over to the secretary of the Board, who has a list of all members, and who will credit on his book also those who have paid to the collector. When the secretary has received moneys in this way he is to pay it over to the treasurer and take his receipt. All the deacons will thus pay to the secretary, and he will pay over all amounts to the treasurer.\*

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\* Where the church is weak and the amount of money is small the collectors might pay directly to the treasurer, who would credit each member that has paid.



No member should pay money *to the minister*, but only to his proper collector, lest it should throw the accounts into confusion.

The treasurer should never pay out money for any purpose whatever, unless he has first received a written order from the Board of officers through the secretary, whether it be for fuel, lights, minister's salary, or for any other purpose. The treasurer should always have this *written* order from the Board, all of which orders he should carefully preserve, to show in his financial report at the end of the year what has become of the money. He should also keep a blank receipt-book—to be had at any book-store for a few cents—and give a receipt to the secretary for money received of him, keeping a memorandum of the same on the stub of the receipt; and also when he pays out money he should never fail to take a receipt for it in the same blank book. Thus he will have a memorandum of all money taken in, and a receipt for all he has paid out, and have it all in the same book; and at the end of the year he will have no trouble in making a settlement with the Board and with the church.

If the secretary should always have his book present when the collector pays him money, and both of them see that every member is properly credited with what he has paid, no receipt to the collector would be necessary; otherwise, it would

be very unbusinesslike not to pass the receipts.

A financial report should be made by the Board to the church toward the close of every year,† so that the members may understand how the business has been managed, for although they may have perfect confidence in the honesty of the officers, they have a right to know how their money has been used. When this is all satisfactorily stated they will the more readily give for the following year. The Board can then meet about the first of November and apportion for the expenses of the year to come, for all dues should be paid before the close of the year. If all collections could be made the first six months, how easy the members would feel all the rest of the year.

But just at this point we often have the officers put this question to us: "What shall we do with those members who either *will not* or *cannot* pay what they have promised?" If they cannot, let the collectors report the fact to the Board, and let the Board excuse them at once. If they can, and will not, or through negligence do not, pay their dues, the question is more difficult, but the following plan will seldom fail to bring all right: Let the collector say to the one that refuses, or that indefinitely postpones his payments, as follows: "This is no individual matter of mine. I am sim-

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† By Nov. 1st.

ply working under the direction of the church through its officers. I am to report monthly to the Board what I do, showing who pays and who does not. The whole matter comes before them. Perhaps they will excuse you if you have any good reason. What shall I say to the Board for you at their next meeting? Shall I say that you are unable to pay it, or that you are able, but simply refuse to do it? I will tell them whatever you wish me to, and will return you their answer." In most cases this will be sufficient, for if he is a man of honor, merely, to say nothing of religion, he would rather pay his few dollars than to have his name and financial circumstances canvassed by the Board. This will be felt to be a very different thing from elbowing off the collector a few times till he will call for the amount no more, and no other notice ever be taken of the affair.

But what if some of them will still refuse to pay? Then I suggest the following: Let the Board, on making their annual report to the church, say publicly: "We have on our church list 150 members. All of these were apportioned at the beginning of the year as justly as we knew how, and the amount each was to pay agreed to, and 140 of them have paid, five were excused by the Board for reasons that seemed good to us, while the other five that have not paid have not been excused, because they could give us no reason why

they should be. We have done our best to show them their duty in this matter, and have tried to induce them to do it, but as they have disregarded us and the whole church, we report them as worthy of censure, and we now read their names and the sums that they were asked for, that others may know the wrong they are doing to the church as well as to themselves." This will be sure to have one of two effects: It will either bring them to shame and reformation, or it will develop the irreligious elements of their natures so as to show clearly what steps ought next to be taken with them, even if it should be exclusion from the church. Of one thing you may be sure, that you will after this have little or no trouble with any such delinquents, because of the wholesome fear of the exposure of their unworthiness.

Much of the disorder in certain churches is for want of official management. To allow any one to have his own way in such a matter is a sorry exhibition of official weakness. To allow any member to escape paying his dues merely because he puts up some trifling excuse, or because he frequently puts it off, or finally insults the collector, shows that the officers are not prepared to have charge of the finances of the church. If they will exhibit a little firm control once or twice, there will be no trouble in collecting all that ought to be collected. A tyrannical government is offensive

both to God and man, and so is a feeble, timid government. Few things are more censurable or more undesirable than a feeble, shrinking, timid eldership in the church. If a man's head were as large as a bushel, it would be too much for his body, but if it were only as big as his fist, it could not rule his body at all, and this is the way with most rulers in our country churches. Their imperfect ruling or management may result from too little knowledge of the Scriptures or of church affairs; but whatever may be the cause of it, it must be admitted that the neglect or refusal of so many members to pay their church dues is owing more to a lack of force of character in the officers than to any lack of principle in the members; for wherever the above-named policy is carried out the dues of almost every member will be paid without much trouble.

This is a matter of so much practical difficulty in most country churches that when we make an apportionment for two or three hundred dollars, the official Board usually begin to count up how much of it may be relied on, and generally say that not more than two-thirds, or at most three-fourths, of it will be collected, and in some cases not more than a half. They say from past experience they know what can be relied on. I say to them "such refusal to pay what they have promised is *covenant breaking*, which is a sin Paul so earnestly

denounced in the first chapter of Romans." They say: "We admit it, but what can we do?" I say again: "Every time you allow them to do so, you are teaching them to commit this very sin—training them in covenant breaking," and then I point out to them the remedy suggested in the paragraphs above; and in every case so managed they will be sure to find an easy solution of the problem that has so long embarrassed the treasury and damaged those members. In all cases where the *apportionment* has been adopted instead of the old subscription paper, and the slow members properly managed, the money is all, or nearly all, collected—all except such as are excused by the Board.

The plan of raising church funds by subscriptions of a few requires that all deficits at the end of the year be made up by that same few; but on the other plan it comes from all alike, according to their ability, for should there be a deficit, it can be raised by the apportionment of the next year.

In some cases we want some money before the meeting closes, and instead of raising this again from the same few, any of the members can pay it on their apportionment and get credit for it on the secretary's book. If some incidental expenses of the meeting are to be paid for, if they want to buy a decent set of plate for the Lord's Table, or to send a donation to the Missionary Board, any that

pay to these ends do it cheerfully, because it is only a part of what they agreed to pay, and not an extra demand.

Another advantage in the apportionment plan is, that it is not only *acceptable* to the members when fully explained to them, but they are generally *very much pleased with it*, and cheerfully accept the amount they have been asked to pay. When they see that every member is treated alike, according to his ability, it appeals to the honor of each one not to refuse when all the rest are doing their part. If the church, by a vote, adopt this plan, and if there should be a few members who object to it, have no dispute with them. Ask them what they are willing to pay and set it down, and before the next year comes round they will see the plan to be all right. Let the church move right along with the plan adopted. Some members will lower the amount they are asked for, and some will raise it—generally as many raising as lowering it. All like the arrangement when understood, and it soon becomes popular with all. It becomes so because it is just and fair to all; it consults the will of all; it puts more money into the treasury and is paid more cheerfully, when each member knows that every other one is honorably bearing his part in supporting the house of the Lord.

3. The third and last general deficiency in the

churches is *the lack of official meetings*. The preachers, elders, and deacons in many cases, have no regular meetings for counsel and for the transaction of church business. Business comes before the congregation, if at all, without previous consultation of the officers. If there be no such consultation, every interest of the church is unavoidably neglected. This officary should be organized by selecting one of their number as chairman, who will have a right to call to order, have the meeting opened by prayer, by himself or by some other officer present, put motions to vote and bring up point of business; they should select a secretary to keep the minutes of their meetings and do all writing on church business; they should also select one of their number as church treasurer, to whom all moneys must be paid by the collectors, and he should pay out nothing, as said before, without a written order from the Board. No business should ever be allowed to come before the church that has not first been carefully considered by said officary. If a preacher is to be engaged, let the Board first ascertain who can be had, on what terms, and then let them recommend the most suitable man to the church for their acceptance by vote. In no case should the names of two or more ministers be brought before the church to see which can get the most votes or the largest subscription. This is sure to bring



confusion, and sometimes division, into the church, and is a dishonor to the ministers. If the chapel needs a new roof, let it be first decided in an official meeting when and in what way may be best to undertake to raise the money; in case an unruly member needs public rebuke, or even exclusion, let the officary carefully consider the case, and decide when and in what manner it should be brought before the church. In many instances disorders can and ought to be settled privately. Nearly all church business can be transacted by the Board, without troubling the congregation with it. But, when a minister is to be secured, or when additional elders or deacons are to be elected, let the officary carefully fix upon the most suitable men for such positions and then nominate them publicly and ask the church to vote on the nominations at the next meeting. But if a new church register is to be purchased and all the names to be transferred to it, or if a sexton is to be employed to take care of the house, or any other matter of order and propriety that makes no great draft upon the treasury, it is unnecessary to parade it before the public. Let the officers attend to it.

In case it is necessary, after all proper efforts are made, to exclude any one from the church, it is seldom best to do it by a formal vote of the congregation. People are slow to lift their hands or

to stand up against their neighbor, and so you get but a poor expression of the public will at best. Sometimes the excluded party has a large number of relations in the church, whose opposition might do more harm than the exclusion would do good. Besides, it is very unjust to present one's name for exclusion and demand that if any one has any objection that he shall arise and make it known. Many a one is too timid to arise and say anything, even if he knew some good reason why he should not be excluded. The same embarrassment is felt when we propose to give letters to members of doubtful standing. We say, this letter will be granted if no one rises to object. There may be good reasons for not objecting publicly, but if the minister should say: "This letter will be granted if no one comes to us within a day or two with a reasonable objection to his receiving it," it would give a fair chance for the offering of objections, and if none are made, it may be considered the voice of the church. So, in case of an exclusion, it is best for the Board to say to the church: "We have done all we could to reform this brother, and have utterly failed, and we report him to the church as one that ought to be expelled from its fellowship. We, as officers, want to get the voice and authority of the church expressed as to this case, and we will do it in this way: If any member knows any scriptural or other good reason

why he should not be expelled, you will please let one of us know it before our next meeting, and in case we have no such reason we will on that day pronounce him expelled by the authority of this congregation.”\* If any member wishes you to wait till he tries to reform him, you will cheerfully give him the opportunity. If he succeed, you have saved your brother; if he fail, he will not object to the exclusion which ought always to be followed by the whole church rising in prayer for the erring one now put out of their fellowship. But if the officiary never meet to deliberate carefully and prayerfully about such things, how can “everything be done decently and in order,” and how can they “give account” to God for their stewardship? If the elders cannot “labor in word and teaching” there is no excuse for their not “ruling well” as private counsellors and managers of the affairs of the church.† Let them therefore meet monthly, or oftener if need be, and meet on Lord’s day afternoon to attend to the Lord’s business. All can attend best at that time, and the Lord’s day is none too good on which to attend to the Lord’s work. And let them meet *promptly* at the hour appointed, for if one man keeps four men

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\* If the church is strong and under good management there will be less danger in taking a vote.

† “Apt to teach” does not necessarily imply teaching. Any elder can teach privately if he studies his Bible—teach “from house to house.”

waiting on him fifteen minutes, it is the loss of an hour in all, which he has no right to inflict on the rest through his own tardiness. The meeting had better be held on the preaching day, so that the preacher can be present and help in the deliberations. If he is a good worker among the people privately, he will always have a number of items for consideration concerning the welfare of certain members, or some other interest of the church. If the preacher does not urge these meetings and earnestly attend them himself, he is probably not the man you need. Get a preacher that will take a deep interest in all *church business*, and who will always have a number of items on his list to present to the Board for consultation. If he is a live man, and at work like the Savior, "going about doing good," teaching "publicly and *from house to house*," he will always have points to consult about. If he does nothing but preach his sermons, and put up with two or three of the best families, and never visit the poor, the sick, the discouraged, the backslidden and the aged, he will not urge up the official meetings, and he is not the man you need. Better make a change.

All that is necessary, then, to put any disordered church into good order is: 1. A good financial system. 2. Pastoral care of the church. 3. Regular official meetings and business management of all the interests of the church; and in the

absence of these three elements of success, or any one of them, no church need expect to prosper in doing good.

*Social Meetings.* After all the foregoing instructions have been given as to finance, pastoral care and official management, the evangelist, before leaving, should make practical suggestions as to their local meetings—some way of making them more interesting and edifying than they usually are. Too often they consist merely of singing, reading a chapter and prayer, by the same few. If the element of Bible reading could be introduced, it would add greatly to the edification of all, when we have no preaching. Suppose it is decided in an official meeting to vary the exercises by alternating in leading the social meetings—elders, deacons and others—and that each leader prepare himself the previous week, by a suitable selection of scriptures, hymns, etc., for the following Lord's day. Let him be on time and take his place promptly, and announce the first hymn, and keep his place till the meeting is dismissed. Let each leader offer the opening prayer himself, instead of calling upon some one else, but call upon others as the meeting proceeds. Before dismissing, let him appoint the leader for the next day. They need not be confined to any one method of Bible readings. Here are several

methods that are frequently adopted, and are very edifying :

1. Suppose the leader of the social meeting should name five or six members, not always the same ones, and request them each to select some passage of Scripture suitable to read on the following Lord's day. Let him not find the passages for them, but ask them to search them out for themselves. This will give them something to do during the week, and make them more familiar with the Bible. Ask them to read the passages over and study them carefully so they can read them both intelligently and intelligibly in the next meeting. Ask each one to select ten or more verses, and when the time comes let the leader of the meeting for that day, after reading, singing and prayer, call on the first one to read. Let him or her arise and read, if willing to do so, or if too timid to stand up, let her keep her seat, and read distinctly and loud enough to be heard by all. If the reader, in his study of the passage, has any question to put, let him ask it. If not, perhaps the leader will have a remark or two, to emphasize the truth taught in that Scripture; only, his remarks should be brief. Then let another read with similar opportunity for question or remark, either by the reader or the leader. Then have a song in which all are urged to take part. Then two more passages and another song, and so on.

2. Another method that works well is, to ask eight or ten persons to select a few verses, more or less, on some specific subject, such as prayer, or faith, or giving, or working, and have these read with singing interspersed, being careful not to call on the same members every time. Give free scope to questions and remarks, only, never let it run into debate or dispute. If the leader sees a tendency among the members to get into an argument with one another over any disputed question, let him check it by calling up the next reader and advising that they watch that danger, for the church is no place for a debating club.

3. A very interesting method is this: Let the leader for the day select twelve or fifteen passages and write them down on as many different slips of paper, each one of which shall be numbered. Let these passages all refer to the same lesson or truth to be taught, such as weekly meetings, searching the Scriptures, the instruction of children in the family, the conversion of sinners, or forgiving offenses. After the meeting has been properly opened, let the leader call on number one to read, and, after pointing out the main truth taught in the verse, or verses, call on number two, and so on, interspersing songs and prayers at proper intervals until all have read.

By these, and such like methods, our social meetings may be made exceedingly interesting and

edifying. But to insure success *the leader* must be *sure to study the lesson well himself* so as to be ready and alert in managing the exercise. If he be unprepared and slow and timid and hesitating, the church will not be edified much. All the members should bring along their Testaments. These proceedings should not be very long. If the reading should only last fifteen or twenty minutes, it will do much, nevertheless, to relieve the usual monotony of such meetings. Any elder, or intelligent member, can prepare such reading lessons, if he is at all desirous of edifying the church.

But suppose the elders and deacons are backward and timid in preparing such lessons; what is the preacher's duty in the case? Let him assist in preparing them so that the church can have a Bible reading every Sunday till his return. If they do not know how to conduct such a meeting, let him conduct one himself occasionally. Let him appoint Saturday night or Monday night, or even Sunday morning for such a reading, and the brethren will soon learn how to proceed. After showing the officers how to arrange such lessons once or twice, let him request certain ones to try it themselves, and have several readings ready for him to examine the next time he visits them, and in this way he can train the officary, as well as the whole church, in methods of edification that



may work for good when he is no longer with them. The preachers generally are too negligent in showing the officers how best to discharge their duties. The sermon still seems to be everything with them, whilst the duties that are less showy are often neglected, to the immense disadvantage of the church.

## CHAPTER IV.

### WORK OF THE PASTORS—PREACHERS AND ELDERS.

*Their Greek Names.* In all church work, except that in the pulpit, the preacher and the elders were always associated, and will be here together regarded as the pastors.

The Greek word *Presbuteros* (elder) is an adjective of the comparative degree, and signifies *older*, and overseers of churches are to be selected, not from the oldest, but from the *older* men, because both maturity of mind and physical ability are needed in the office. The idea is Jewish, and came into the Christian church from the Jewish religion, without discussion. As one of the older brethren, he is expected to possess prudence, patience and vigilance, as also vigor, decision of character and executiveness; not so much prudence as to prevent and defeat wholesome discipline, nor so much vigor as to render him hasty and impetuous, but a well rounded man who can "take care of the house of God."

The work of this office is also indicated by the Greek noun *Episcopos*, which was the name of a commissioner of a Greek military district. By

various clippings and additions of letters, the word came finally to be spelled *bishop*, which still means *overseer*. Looked at from this angle, the elder is the overseer, for which his age and wisdom are supposed to qualify him. This word was used to describe the duties of elders when the apostles wrote to countries in which the Greek language and Greek thought was dominant over the Jewish—Philippi, Ephesus and Crete. It implies that an overseer is to know all about his people—where they are, what they are, how they are prospering spiritually, and be ready always to protect them from harm.

The word *Poimeen* looks at the elder from the view point of a *Shepherd*, or pastor, having oversight of a flock that is to be both protected and fed, or pastured, in a country infested with wild beasts. The whole of an eastern shepherd's duty was to lead his flocks out into "green pastures," protect them from all harm, take care of their sick, to safely bring them home, and give an account to the chief shepherd of the way in which he had discharged his trust. Hence, the elders (pastors) are exhorted to feed the flock of God, "which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly."

*Heegeomai* is a military term, meaning to *lead* or *guide*. Hence, "obey them who are guiding

you" (Heb. 13:17), and stands opposed to the idea of "lording it" over you.

These four words — *Presbuteros*, *Episcopos*, *Poimeen* and *Heegemon*, embrace both the qualifications and the duties of the overseers of the church of God. Of the four, *Poimeen* is the best, as it implies all that is in the other three and something more, showing to all ages a picture of tenderness not necessarily included in mere age, oversight or leadership, but taken together, we have maturity, watch-care, feeding, protection abroad, and shelter at home.

*The Office no Sinecure.* From all this, it is evident that the position of pastor is no such sinecure as that to which in some places it has fallen in modern times. While we may safely conclude from 1 Tim. 5:17 and other Scriptures, that the bishops in the primitive church were not all public speakers—perhaps but few of them—they certainly included such men as the modern pastor (*Poimeen*), who devoted their time to the ministry and were supported by the church; otherwise, there would have been no propriety in warning them against "filthy lucre." The expression, "especially they who labor in word and doctrine," implies the same thing. This distinction between the elders seems to have been dimly recognized among the Jews—priestly elders and lay elders (2 Chron. 19:8; Jer. 19:1). The importance of

the office has not been supported to this day in the popular mind, for as soon as an elder becomes useful as a public teacher, he is not expected any longer to be an elder. Moreover, the small value placed upon the office is seen in the small sense of responsibility to God for a faithful discharge of its duties, and in the oblivion of the fact that as rulers, they must watch for the souls of the church, "as those that must give account," (Heb. 13: 17). In oriental lands, the chief shepherd might own 10,000 sheep, and trust them to the care of ten under-shepherds who would take 1,000 each to pasture and care for during the season, and then be held responsible for any that had been torn by wild beasts or otherwise lost through his carelessness. These sheep all "knew his voice and were known of him," but there are thousands of church shepherds who know neither the names nor faces of half the members, not to mention their spiritual condition. When a Titus comes to help them into good order, and asks for a session of the officiary, he often finds that the church register has not been revised for years; no officer knows where half the members are, nor what has become of them. This, however, is seldom the case where the church has a good, active pastor—not a monthly preacher who seldom does any church work outside of the pulpit, but a pastor who "labors in word and doctrine." It

would be unreasonable to require the ruling pastors either to know as much or to do as much as the preaching pastor, who can go into any community of Christians "whose hands hang down," but are holding on in sombre devotion to the Sunday School, and praying for a brighter day—such a pastor can cause all hearts to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. But where they have no real pastors; where the shepherds know every lamb and the condition of every hoof on their farms, they shelter, feed and care for them; but the poor human soul that has become discouraged in its profession, that has fallen into bad company, that has been decoyed into vice, tricked into some sinful amusement and never received one word either of caution or of tonic—who cares for him? That young man made confession, was baptized, was warmly received into the church, but was never shown any attention afterwards by elders, preacher, or any one else, and soon ceased, as the popular expression has it, "to consider himself a member." The reasons why many such persons absent themselves from church are, chiefly, that their rude associates are there too, before whom they feel ashamed to take the Lord's Supper when they remember how wild they have been in their company; and also because they feel afraid to do it, lest they "eat and drink damnation to themselves." They have no spiritual confidant,

none to whom they can tell their temptations; the elders never seem to have understood them, and if they say anything to them, it is only to urge them to "come to church and commune"—never suspecting that the Devil has his agents out of sight and secretly binding this young brother, hand and foot, and laughing at the unsophisticated officers on Sunday. What are the shepherds doing all the time these bears and lions are carrying off their lambs and tearing the flock? Where are the overseers, who appear never to see over, nor to see through, any of these machinations of the Devil? Happy is that church whose pastorate has a faithful preacher in it, "who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way," and wisely "watch for their souls."

*Fostering Discipline.* When the members enjoy the kind oversight and pastoral care described in the last few pages, but little penal discipline will be necessary. The ordinary notion of discipline is that it consists chiefly in exclusion from church fellowship. The nurture, care and protection of a young life, which, in most cases, prevent the necessity of exclusion, are seldom thought of as the better part of discipline. To make the preceding strictures available, and to open a way whereby the pastors may practically enter upon their official duties, in order to be able to "give account for their souls" when the chief shepherd

shall appear, may require a little repetition, but line upon line will do no harm in a matter involving the salvation of all—pastors as well as members.

1. Let the preacher, elders and deacons, as before detailed, have their monthly sessions on Sunday afternoon, so that if any are poor men that cannot spare the time from their daily business, they need not lose an hour, and can have no apology for the neglect of this duty. Idleness and indifference to this sacred work would be less excusable on the Lord's day than at any other time. They have no other work to do on that day, and can go through with the *order of business* "appended to this work, if they wish to please God and take heed to the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made them overseers" (Acts 20 : 28).

2. Among the items that will come before them in examining said order of business, no one will be of more importance than the examination of the church register with its hundred names. Among others, *they will find their own names*, and a very honest understanding should be had that *they* are to be held subject to discipline, like all other members of the church. Then, if any one of the officary should know of any mistake or impropriety in any other one, let it be corrected, if possible, privately ; if not, let the matter be brought before the Board in a kind, but candid



manner. A Board of officers that does not take cognizance of the conduct of their own number, has no right to arraign any of the members for misconduct. A drunkard has no right to rebuke drunkards, nor has a disorderly or indiscreet officer any right to rebuke disorder or indiscretion in others. To illustrate what is meant, and to indicate a method of procedure in such cases, although extremely rare, a few examples are here given that have come under our personal notice:

a. A congregation once visited to "set in order the things that were wanting," in which were found two irreclaimable drunkards, and a dram-loving deacon who seldom went to the county seat and came home without enough whisky to make him happy and very religious. In an official session, which he seldom attended, I said; "Well, brethren, what have you done to correct this member of your Board?" They replied, "We have done nothing." "And what do you propose to do?" "We don't know what to do; we would like to have your advice." The reply was: "If he were a private member, and the sin a private one, you could treat the case more leniently, and admonish privately. If that does not correct him, ask him to meet the official Board, where you all could admonish him; should you fail in this effort to reform him, a 'rebuke before all' would

be next in order (1 Tim. 5: 20). If every effort fails, exclusion is the only thing left."

b. An elder in a certain church had the reputation of being unreliable in business, and disposed to take any unfair advantage he could in trade. His brethren in the Board believed him to be an honest man, but knew he had a way about him that made a bad impression upon those not so well acquainted with him. The talk was doing harm, both to him and to the church; and so the matter came up in one of their private sessions, and he was told how his peculiar bearing among business men was injuring his influence as an elder of the church. The brother was thankful for their frankness, and resolved at once to be thereafter, if possible, an "example to the flock" (Pet. 5: 3). The manfulness of the Board, if it did not "save a soul from death," prevented a multitude of sins that might have resulted if pusillanimity had ruled in their deliberations. This was true brotherly discipline.

These details are presented as being more helpful than the usual generalities, and will throw a strong light on the path of those evangelists and pastors who may have had but little experience in such matters and know not how best to proceed. They clearly demonstrate the necessity of Christian manfulness and candor on the part of the officary, and also the necessity of having a true

Titus to "pass through all quarters," and help either officers or churches that may need his aid; for if any feeble, disordered church ever righted itself, corrected its erring officers and put itself into good order, *the writer has never seen or heard of it*. It is not denied that churches in trouble have, during protracted meetings, agreed to drop all contention, issue a general amnesty and live in peace thereafter, but this falls far short of the work here spoken of.

Were it necessary still further to accent the necessity of the Board's oversight of its own members when out of the way, it will be found in Acts 20: 28, which cannot be too often quoted—"Take heed *to yourselves* and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers"—*to yourselves* first, *and then* "to all the flock." These suggestions are not made to the elders and deacons because any such derelictions are of frequent occurrence, for from all our acquaintance with them, over many States and for many years, we can truthfully say that a better class of men, both as citizens and as Christians, is seldom found in this world. But, while delinquency as to moral character is most infrequent among them, neglect of duty is entirely too frequent, where any irregularity does occur with any of their own number, in which cases, there seems to be a lack of faithfulness in telling a

brother of a fault that is every day doing him an injury.

*Protecting the Flock.* "Take heed to yourselves *and to all the flock.*" One of the first ways in which pastors can take heed to the flock is by protecting them from evil reports and false accusations. Here again, teaching by practical examples that have fallen under our own observation will be the most useful method. In a church I was "setting in order," in the year 1881, two widowed sisters were, and had been for nearly a year, suffering on account of floating rumors in the community very seriously affecting their characters as ladies. After a good financial system had been established in the church, the officers ordained, and their regular official meetings established, with instructions in detail as to all such duties, the church register again came before us to see if the members were all doing well, and, among other items, came up these reports. After the elders and their preacher had fully stated the case, I inquired as usual, what they had done about it, or what they proposed to do. They said they had done nothing, and did not see what they could do, as they had no evidence that the reports were true. "But had you not better go and look into the matter?" we suggested. "If these stories are true, you ought to know it, and if they are not true, the ladies involved ought to be defended. If

innocent, you, as shepherds of the flock, ought to protect them against the slanderous tongue." They replied that it was a very delicate matter to handle, when they had no charges to prefer. We replied that Paul looked into a *report* (1 Cor. 5: 1), and that the brotherly thing to do was just to go and tell them plainly of the damaging rumors, and that you hoped to be able to correct them by having a conference with them. Two of the elders went to see them the same day, and found out the whole story to be a most malicious falsehood, gotten up and circulated in revenge for some fancied wrong the party claimed to have sustained. The elders returned to the church the next day and stood up before all the people, and told what they had done, and denounced both the lies and the liars, in no stinted terms, and delivered those two members, like true shepherds of the sheep, notwithstanding their previous neglect had been rather unmanful, if not spiritually imbecile.

On another occasion, a case came before the officary of a certain church, of a very different character. Two old brethren had fallen out on account of a piece of timber land, lying between their farms—one had deadened over the line. The difficulty grew till they got the case into the court house. When this became known to the pastors, they began to consider how they would manage

the case, and soon decided to require them to withdraw that suit at once (1 Cor. 6: 1-8), and refer it to two lawyers who were members of the church for arbitration. This demand they immediately obeyed, and the trouble was soon settled fully as satisfactorily, and far more honorably to both parties, than it would have been before an ordinary jury, and without any disgrace to the church. Here the overseers protected both these brethren from public disgrace, not being feeble enough to allow a violation of the law of God for fear of hurting some one's feelings. These elders, having already "taken heed to themselves" in never going to law with a brother, were prepared to "take heed to the flock," and to prevent two angry men from injuring each other.

To place one more view of the work before the minds of officiators, a case is named far less demonstrative, but no less important. While helping a feeble church, an elegant young sister was there whose recent reception of the gospel had filled her with joy and good feelings toward everybody, insomuch that some thought her manner was rather too free among both sexes. It soon developed into remarks not very complimentary to her. The elders mentioned the fact in an official meeting, and expressed fears that she would innocently injure herself. I said, "Had not some one better warn her a little, and protect her from one of

the wiles of the Devil, by which he seeks to carry her off captive 'at his own will.' "One of them said, "there is nothing wrong in her, and it is too delicate a matter to hurt her feelings about." "But suppose you get your wife to tell her how some are trying to use her free and happy manner to injure her, and suggest that she be a little more reserved, especially toward the other sex?" That elder's wife did see her, as if it were simply her own suggestion. The young lady was greatly surprised that she had been so misunderstood, but was very grateful for the kindness and love of her aged sister, who had thus protected her from any further injury inflicted upon herself. This is true, pastoral labor and watch-care.

Ancient shepherds had to "watch their flocks by night," and so ought Christian shepherds to watch their flocks by night—from night orgies and bacchanalian revelries, frolics, dances that always "war against the soul" (2 Pet. 2: 11). If their young brethren, boys or young men, spend late hours upon the streets, they should tell them of their dangers—keeping watch over their flocks by night.

*Feeding the Flock.* Next to protecting the flock from the "grievous wolves" and machinations of the Evil One, is to feed them. There are two ways by which those elders, who do not labor in word and teaching, can help to feed the flock:—

1. They can help to secure the labor of ministers of the Word who can teach "publicly and from house to house." If no such officer is already engaged, let the brethren remember that the preaching of the cross "*to us who believe*," as well as to others, is "the power of God" (1 Cor. 1: 18), and especially is this true of those young disciples who need the most care. By all means, have the pious, devoted preacher in the pulpit.

2. The godly ruling elder, with no ability to teach publicly, can do much to feed the flock in a private way. He may be "apt to teach" "from house to house." In this way, he can teach the word "in season and out of season," at regular and at irregular times, as occasion may serve, without ever standing up before an audience. A kind word to a young member, a word of tonic to a discouraged heart, of warning to the wayward or of praise to the deserving, will all do good and feed a hungry flock. All men both deserve and need discriminating praise. The Lord first praises, then blames and then praises again, when he is trying to cure a fault (Rev. 2: 1-8). "I know thy works and thy labor, and that thou canst not bear them that do evil. . . . Nevertheless, I have a few things against thee, because thou hast left thy first love . . . but this thou hast, that thou hatest the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." There the rebuke is sand-



wiched between two praises. Let elders follow this divine wisdom whenever they need to censure any one. You could say—"Well, my young brother, we are all very glad you came into the church and have started in the Christian life. You can be useful in the church and Sunday School, if you pray and study the word of God daily, but let me warn you not to indulge in frivolity any more in company with your young friends, as it is scarcely becoming your profession. But don't be discouraged because of this, or any similar fault, for we have all had a youthful inexperience to pass through." If you begin roughly upon his tender feelings, you may discourage him so he will not recover from it. First praise, then blame, then praise.

3. Some members refuse to attend church because they fear to take the Lord's supper. They think their unworthiness is so great that they would, in so doing, "eat and drink damnation to themselves," knowing themselves to be guilty of some sin. They need instruction as to the Lord's supper, more than censure for non-attendance. They need a spiritual confidant, to whom they could commit the secret troubles of their hearts. A little girl whom the author had baptized once said to him—"I have ceased to pray because it don't seem to me that my words reach the Lord, nor go any higher than my head." The dear child

was, I found out, laboring under the old idea that God is very far away, beyond the Moon, beyond the Sun or the Dog Star, and that her little prayers had to pass through all that, in order to reach him. But when she listened and learned that the Lord was always very near to her, her soul revived and has been happy in prayer ever since. Had she received no assistance at this critical juncture of her life, there is no telling the result. Pastors can, in this way, feed the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers, if they only love God and the people as they ought. This also was true pastoral labor.

4. Some Christians that mean to do well are never happy in their religion. They are about half happy and half miserable. They are laboring under a kind of legalism, supposing that their acceptance with God depends upon a great preponderance of their good deeds over their bad ones. They have never understood the doctrine of pardon. They do not see that their sins were all so forgiven and forgotten when they first came to Christ, that they are "never to be mentioned" to them again (Ezek 33:16), and that in the day of Judgment they are to hear nothing said of themselves but the good they have done (Mat. 25:34-39), and that we are "not to be ashamed before Him at His coming," Let the pastors gain their confidence, remove their fears, and so "lift up the

hands that hang down and the feeble knees."

*Pastors' Visits.* Ruling pastors usually assume that they have no time to visit the families of the congregation, because of the demands made upon them to support the church, as well as their homes. It is clear, from Scriptures already quoted, that at least some of the pastors received compensation for their services, somewhat as our regular preachers do now; but it is not likely that those who devoted no more time to the church than modern elders do, were compensated. Such brethren, however, by a very simple arrangement among themselves, could make many friendly calls during the year, and do much to build up the church without losing a day from their business. Suppose a church of one hundred and fifty members have three elders, all men of business every working day of the week. Let these three take the church register and divide the names among them—fifty each—and make but one visit apiece each week. This would make one hundred and fifty visits a year, and would reach every family every six months, or twice a year. If the elders are busy every week day, they could take Sunday afternoons for it, and whoever is too indolent to average one call on every Sunday, some time of day, is too indolent to be an overseer of a church of Christ. It will not be necessary to go in a very stilted or perfunctory manner, but to call round as

a friend, not with a prepared lecture, but to let them see that you think of them as members of the church, and are interested in them and their children. What makes all such visits unpalatable to elders and sometimes to families, is the notion that they are generally to be connected with some disciplinary or financial matter, or something else not very agreeable. This grows out of the fact that most, if not all, visits of the officers are made only on such occasions, and it is high time visits were made for other reasons—for social acquaintance, and to let the members see that you remember them pleasantly and visit them when you have no fault to find, but to encourage their religious life.

*What to Talk About While Visiting.* First of all, while you are never to forget that you are an overseer of the church, you had better not go with an official air that will put any constraint upon the family or individual. And yet you can have, in many cases, something you intend to say that will do good. While we are always to feel, and actually to be, removed as far as possible from the character of a church constable, we can still wisely and kindly make suggestions, during a social talk, that will correct errors, encourage the right and “strengthen the things that remain.” You can always manage to mingle the social and religious in the same conversation, leading them

to see that the religious is not far from your thoughts; and if on retiring you say nothing but to ask them to "not forsake the assembling of themselves together," you will have made an impression for good. Sometimes you can visit a family to secure the attendance, or the more regular attendance, of their children in the Sunday School, or the parents and children in the prayer meetings, or simply to cultivate a social acquaintance, and if anything is going on well in the family notice it and praise them for it; and if not well, you will find it out and will give your influence against it.

*Bible Reading at Home.* Among other topics of conversation in the families you visit, is that of Bible reading in the family, especially now since the Sunday School lessons are so generally introduced. It would require no great courage for any elder to bring up these lessons and ask the parents to study them every week with their children, and help them to understand them before going to school the next Lord's day—no great courage, unless he neglects it in his own family. They might not only study the lessons every week, but they might read together as a family the passages marked for each day. This would be no unreasonable task to take upon themselves as parents, and many would do so if any one would suggest it and prompt it occasionally.

What a happy family, what an intelligent Sunday School, and what a growing and spiritually-minded church would grow out of such a work on the part of the pastors! Suppose you are starting out Sunday afternoon, to make that one visit proposed above for the week, and you want to think of something pleasant and useful to talk about when you reach the house; you could, after kindly saluting all, begin in this way: "The elders are anxious to build up our Sunday-school in the knowledge of the Word of God, and to get all the pupils to study the Sunday-school lessons every week, so they will be able to recite well when they come before their teachers; and we have decided to ask the parents of every family, whether Christians themselves or not, to go over these lessons with their own children every week. This, we think, will be a benefit to both parents and children. And besides studying the direct lesson, we advise that the daily lessons be read together, also, which would soon make the whole family more intelligent in the Bible than they otherwise would be." Better have parents and children all together when you have this talk. Some of the families would readily undertake it, and if visited a few times to see how they get along, they would continue it. Other families might require more than one call to get it started, but *let the elders be sure they do this in their own*

*families before they recommend it to others.* "Take heed unto yourselves" and then to "the flock." The necessity of this work was most earnestly enforced in the law of Moses. Was it binding upon Jewish parents to teach their children the "Words" of Jehovah? Read the following: "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shall write them upon the posts of thy house and upon thy gates" (Deut. 4 : 7-9). In order to give line upon line, the Lord repeats this command to parents in the following words: "Ye shall teach these my words unto your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up, and thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thy house and upon thy gates" (Deut. 9 : 19, 20). What is it they were so carefully to study and teach? It was "*These my words.*" Observe also they were to *teach* them, and "teach them diligently unto their children," they were to teach them on all occasions—"in season and out of season"—every day in the week and every morning and every night. This is better than the

Sunday-school that can work but one hour in the week. The Sunday-school is said to be "the nursery of the church." This is saying too much. It is *a* nursery, but *the* nursery of the church is the family. At least this was and is God's plan for a nursery. If children were properly taught in the family, what glorious Sunday-schools we would have. We cannot dispense with the Sunday-schools, for they are the only help some poor neglected children ever receive. It is the best substitute we have for the criminal neglect of parents. But it can never take the place of God's *every-day school in the family*, and until this divine plan of child-culture is established in Christian families, the church can never be what God designed it to be. The same directions in the New Testament, if not so detailed and specified, are equally emphatic. Parents are exhorted to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 4:3). It is assumed that *Christian* parents will of course be anxious about the instruction and conversion of their own children, even if no command had been written concerning it. But why do many neglect it? Is it because they do not love their children and desire their salvation? No. Is it because they do not love God and his word? Not always this, for some that are really pious people never teach the word of God to their children.



The main cause of this parental neglect is *their ignorance of the Bible* and their consequent inability to teach. The Lord, knowing, this same thing to be true of Jewish parents, commanded them to *study his words first*, and then to teach them to their children. In Deuteronomy 9: 18, he tells them, "*Thou shalt lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul—and ye shall teach them to your children,*" &c. And in the New Testament we are commanded as a precedent to "teaching," to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." How, then, can we expect to establish these every-day schools for the children at home unless we can induce the parents to begin to "lay up" the word of God in their own hearts first? Jewish parents were commanded first to "take heed to themselves" (Deut. 9: 16), and why should not Christian parents "take heed" to *themselves*?

*Penal Discipline.* Such discipline as the preceding will prevent all, or nearly all, penal discipline. But few private admonitions will ever be needed, fewer public rebukes and the fewest exclusions from the fellowship of the church. The object of true discipline is to prevent exclusion; but as penal discipline cannot always be avoided, the following suggestions are submitted to aid the pastors in the management of a given case through the several stages to the last necessity.

1. Never entertain a complaint against any

member, if the plaintiff has not, according to Matt. 18: 15, first gone to the offender and tried to settle it between themselves. The unfailing wisdom of the Bible is manifest in nothing more than in this passage. In case a real trespass has been committed, and this injunction has not been obeyed, you can show them both to have been in the wrong, which will make them both more ready to forgive. Then require this duty first to be performed, and if it fails, let the offended party take one or two with him and see him, and if that fails, "tell it unto the church"—that is, to the officiary who represent the church, for nothing was more common among the Jews than to represent the whole congregation as doing what evidently only a few representatives actually did. In Num. 16: "the congregation" are said to have "laid their hands" on the Levites when they were consecrated, but it is certain that the three millions of Israelites acted by their leaders in this ceremony.

2. In case the matter is brought before you, be sure to find, if possible, the real wrong, or wrongs, on one or both sides, decide what *ought* to be done, pronounce the judgment and dismiss the case, requiring each to abide the decision. Beware of keeping the church in a turmoil till the parties see fit to drop it and be reconciled. Reconcile them if you can, but it is a piece of pitia-

ble weakness in the eldership to allow the parties, or either of them, to decide how long the church shall be annoyed with it. In many cases the only thing that can be done, is to render your verdict, dismiss the suit and command the peace, stating, however, that if either party has reason to demur at the judgment, they must present it to the officary *without saying a word upon the street about it to any one*. This case so far is supposed to be one that needs not to be brought before the congregation, unless it be thought best to state publicly that the matter has been equitably or amicably settled.

3. If either or both parties refuse to abide a just decision, a public rebuke should be administered before the congregation, stating what had been done and how the case had been settled. Then exhort the recalcitrants to drop it and give the church no more trouble. If they again disobey, exclusion may be the only thing left for you to do.

*"Rebuke Before All."* This direction of the Holy Spirit (1 Tim. 5: 20) has never received its due attention. It is a degree of penal discipline that evidently comes in *between* the private admonitions and exclusion, which often is executed without the intervention and aid of the public rebuke. But in this requisition upon the officary of the church, the divine wisdom is again most

manifest. If a member is really in the wrong, and the case is stated to the congregation with the proper rebuke, and advice kindly but firmly given, two results are sure to follow—the judgment of the whole church and community is added to that of the officers, and the party concerned, feeling that, as he would have so many to argue with, should he continue the strife, he will conclude that he must be in the wrong, and will give it up. Besides, it will cause him to examine himself and his case very closely, before he will allow it to come before the public in that shape. Moreover, it is his due to have this degree of censure and the advantage of it before he is threatened with exclusion. The Holy Spirit provided this intermediate step for the benefit of the human soul, and no one has a right to deprive him of it. A single instance of its administration shall here be given to show its practical workings when properly handled.

While a Kentucky State Evangelist was aiding a disordered church, he was asked to help the officary in a complicated difficulty between two sisters in that congregation, that, for six months, had been annoying the whole community. It was a case of gossip of a slanderous character, which they had taken no measures to settle, but, like too many officaries, they had stood and looked on as if utterly unable to do anything in the matter—as

helpless as "the babes in the woods," knowing neither what to do, nor how to do it. This again presented the eldership of many churches as a mere phantom, because they have never enjoyed any training worthy of the name, and are really unable to manage any serious case of discipline. And this again emphasizes the plea made in a former section for their instruction in all that pertains to their official duties—a work that properly devolves upon their own preachers and the itinerant State and district evangelists. If there is any fairness or justice in requiring qualifications of elders which they have never had a chance to acquire, it has never yet been shown. But to our case.

It was agreed that I should go with one of the elders and simply *ascertain the facts*, which we did in two hours, and reported to the officary the same evening, that sister A was wholly in the wrong, and that, as the matter was of such public notoriety, she ought to be rebuked, and sister B justified before the people. To this, they all agreed, and requested the evangelist to attend to the business before the large audience that night. This he agreed to do *in their name*, and just before the sermon was to begin, both ladies being present, he spoke to the congregation to this effect—"You all know of the unpleasantness between sisters A and B, of this church, the real causes of

which have this day been looked into and ascertained. We have found out, beyond a question, that sister B is altogether blameless in this matter, and that sister A, although generally so blameless in her Christian life, in this matter is very censurable; and I am authorized by the officers of this church to say to sister (naming her), before this audience, that they will expect her to be more careful hereafter in speaking of others, and hope that she will try henceforth not only to injure no others, but will maintain that kind and graceful bearing toward all, of which she is so capable." That was about all that was thought necessary. We went on with the sermon, which closed with several confessions, for it always creates confidence in, and respect for, a church when the people see them trying to keep themselves "unspotted from the world." A few weeks after, the senior elder was asked what effect that public rebuke had in settling the difficulty, and he replied that he had never known any trouble killed so suddenly and so effectually, as soon as the town talk the next day over the public statement had passed. All were pleased that the innocent had been justified, and all saw the wisdom of God as written in 1 Tim. 5: 20, and all were satisfied that we cannot improve the Bible plan of attending to discipline.

*Sins Against the Church.* There is another

kind of sins demanding attention, that are not transgressions against any individual, so much as against the church or society at large, that require a different treatment; such as drunkenness, covetousness, absenteeism, delinquency as to church dues, profanity. All such cases, as long as they are private offenses, require but private treatment, and involve no settlement, necessarily, with any other member. But if the drunkenness is known abroad, the acknowledgement or rebuke or final exclusion must be as public as the reception of the offender into the church was; otherwise, the congregation will have to bear the just public censure for retaining such an one in their fellowship, even if the penalty was inflicted privately. It is remarkable that the Bible makes no apology for a drunkard because of his apparently uncontrollable appetite for whiskey, for "no drunkard has any inheritance in the Kingdom of God and of Christ" (1 Cor. 6: 10). The Lord assumes that a man can leave off any sin if he feels a true penitence, a *moral revolt* and disgust against it, and holds that if any one that has been washed returns like a "sow to her wallowing in the mire," he is responsible; and this teaches the church to trifle no longer with that sin, after due effort has been made to eradicate it. Exclusion sometimes is the only discipline that will cause the drunkard to think seriously enough to reform and save his soul, and

the elders that will assume the right to change the law of God somewhat, and neglect to exclude him "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," will have to "give account for his soul."

*Covetousness.* In case of covetousness, the chief difficulty is to diagnose the case so as to determine whether it is covetousness, or lack of religious culture in the habit of giving. If the latter, no discipline would be appropriate, but further instruction and insistence upon an increase of giving according as the Lord prospers them. The symptoms of covetousness are not always readily discerned, but if a brother (1) pays less as his riches increase; or (2) if he keeps up his complaining at every call for money, when you well know he is prospering financially; or (3) if he begin to draw away from the church to avoid paying anything, it is a pretty sure case of "covetousness which is idolatry." Sometimes the disease assumes a bolder front, and refuses for years to pay any church dues, defies both his honest obligations and the authority of the church. In such case at least two of the elders should visit him officially, or what would be better, have him meet the Board of officers, and so explain to him as to leave no excuse. The next thing is a "rebuke before all," which is apt to be sufficient. If nothing will do him any good, it will be best "to



deliver him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

*Absentees.* This sin against the Lord, the church and one's self, is even more difficult to treat wisely than the last named, for there are those who pay liberally, live honestly and maintain a good moral character, and yet habitually "forsake" the assemblies of the saints. The diagnosis is more difficult than that of covetousness, because, as said in another place, the habit is induced sometimes by false notions and unnecessary fears as to partaking of the Lord's supper "unworthily," sometimes because they are not willing to face the scorn of sinners who know of some of their bad conduct, and sometimes because of a shallow conversion in the first place, that prevents any deep love for Christ or any great desire for private prayer or public worship. The case needs tender treatment, in most instances, because the trouble is not so much any special sin that is cherished or practiced, as some false view of Christianity, or a lack of spiritual life, which is a tender plant and needs careful nourishing instead of harsh rebuke or exclusion. Of such cases, it is said, Jesus "will not break the bruised reed, nor will he quench the smoking flax"—though your faith is weak as a weed crushed by the wheel, though your love be

no flame at all, but shows only the smoking sign of fire, he will handle you carefully and breathe gently upon your incipient love till it rises to a flame. Here is work for the sympathizing preacher or elder, a spiritual confidant to ascertain the real trouble in such a brother, and help him out of it. What should be done after all has failed, is not very clear; only, it is by no means certain that such a member should be excluded, lest you be found doing what Jesus will not do—breaking the bruised reed or quenching the smoking flax. It is at least better *to hesitate till you feel that you have done your whole duty toward him*. Sometimes his shallow conversion was the result of shallow preaching—preaching that discouraged the sinner's prayer, and that laid more stress upon ordinances than upon "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." If the one cannot reach the trouble, let another try his superior knowledge and spiritual influence to ascertain the real cause of his habitual absence, and try to remove it, remembering that pure, heart-felt sympathy for humanity lies at the base of all success in managing the souls of men for good. "He that winneth souls is wise."

*Delinquency in Church Dues.* Not the least of the sins against the church is that of delinquency, and so difficult is it to manage, it is thought best, besides what has been said in Chapter 1, to illus-

trate by giving an example as it actually occurred, that the officary may have some suggestion as to what ought to be done in such cases.—

The church referred to had about 200 members, located in a small village, and engaged a minister one-fourth of the time. They proposed to raise \$250, annually, for all purposes. This was pledged on the old subscription plan, asking each one to say how much of said sum he was willing to pay. They were in debt to their minister not only for the year just closing, but, for each of the two preceding years, about one-third of his salary. On examining the subscription list of the last year, it was found that about four per cent. of the pledges were unpaid, it being now February. I said to the officary, "let us, the first thing, collect these unpaid pledges, and pay off your preacher—begin our new arrangement by being just and honest." The officers replied—"We have collected all we can on that list." "And what do you propose to do with all this delinquency?" "We'll have to just let it go." "And how do you expect to pay the balance due to your preacher?" "We won't be able to pay him at all; he'll have to let it go, too." "And how much of the subscription did you collect last year?" "About the same as this year." "And what did you do about the delinquency last year?" "We had to just let it go, and the preacher did the

same." "And how was it the year before that?" "Just about the same. We never can collect more than two-thirds of the pledges, and the preacher never does get all his dues." "Well, brethren, do you think that is fair and just to him? And are you not afraid of injuring the moral character of all the members whom you allow to act so dishonestly, year by year? It seems to me, you are keeping a kind of school to teach your members practical covenant breaking. Would it not be better never to ask them to subscribe? Solomon says, "It is better not to vow than to vow and not pay." If you now, again this year, go around with a subscription, or with an apportionment, and get them to agree to pay certain sums, will it not be with the understanding, both on your part and on theirs, that they can defraud the church and the preacher again if they wish to? What do you say to all this?" The officers replied—"What you say is all true; but how can we prevent it? We ask them again and again; and after soliciting them three or four times, the deacons get tired and give it up. Now what shall we do to prevent this delinquency?" We replied, "there is a remedy, if you will adopt it, but you will perhaps think it heroic treatment, and be unwilling to use it. But if you wish to save your church, this peculiar species of dishonesty must be stopped. You wonder why you

have not a zealous church. You are unconsciously damaging the spiritual life of all these members, I think, because they are doing nothing for Christ, investing nothing in his name, "and for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11 : 30), and you ought to say to them "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." We then proposed the plan recommended in the chapter on Disordered Churches, which they adopted with good results.

*This Method Tested.* The foregoing plan of preventing delinquency as to church dues is not a mere untried theory, but has more than once worked a complete reformation in the offending parties. A church in Brocken County, Kentucky, that had been regularly "set in order," found a man who defied all church authority as to this matter, and refused to pay any part of his assessment the first year, as also the second year, till near its close, though abundantly able. The officers who proved themselves to be not too weak to carry out the instructions they had received, after all the gentler means had been used to have him do right, informed him of their purpose to go forward to the point of public rebuke, and even exclusion if necessary, because he was not only damaging himself, but defrauding the church, and causing other members to refuse to pay till he

should be dealt with. This notice was dropped into the post office for him, signed by all the officers. The struggle was brief. He read it, thought over it, paid for both years, and is a good member of that church to-day—saved by the kind manfulness of the officary.

In an adjoining county, a case a little different, but fully as instructive, occurred like this: A rich brother was assessed *fifty dollars*, which he absolutely refused to pay, although less than he ought to have been asked for. The next year's account came around, and the same brother went to him and asked him for *one hundred dollars*—fifty for each of the two years. He grew angry, and asked if the church wanted to insult him. The third year they asked him for *one hundred and fifty dollars*, when he broke out saying, "See here! how long is this thing going to be kept up?" "As long as you live," was the gentle reply. "And if I die, and never pay, what then?" "We'll just send the account up after you." He thought over the matter very seriously for a while, and wrote the deacon a check for the whole amount, and was a better man ever after. A little more nerve and manfulness on the part of the officary is all that's needed to cure all such delinquencies, and to deliver hundreds of otherwise good congregations from this terrible incubus.

*Exclusion.* If, after all has been done in the way of care, culture, private admonition and public rebuke, a soul is still incorrigible, exclusion, the catastrophe in discipline, must finally be resorted to. A few persons who know but little about the Bible think that expulsion from the fellowship of the church for covetousness, drunkenness, or any other sin, is unauthorized in the Scriptures. Without spending much time on this question, we may refer to only one passage in the New Testament—the fifth chapter of first Corinthian—and will note the following points :

1. In this short chapter of only thirteen verses, the *exclusion* of the incestuous man is five times referred to in unmistakable language, “And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be *taken away from among you.*” “To deliver such a one *unto Satan* for the destruction of the flesh,” by turning him out into the world where he came from. “*Purge out therefore the old leaven.*” “With such a one *no not to eat.*” “Therefore *put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*” These five expressions, if there was nothing else in the Bible on the subject, are quite sufficient to settle the duty of exclusion as the last resort in discipline. The Savior’s language in Matt. 18:18, “Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican,” proves the same, for this is not the lan-

guage ever applied to any member of the church.

2. This instruction to the Corinthians shows that exclusion is intended to reform and save the erring one. "*That the spirit may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus." Of Hymeneus and Alexander it is said, 1 Tim. 1:20, "Whom I have delivered unto Satan *that they may learn not to blaspheme.*" And in 2 Cor. 13:10, Paul says, "Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present, I should use sharpness according to the power which the Lord hath given me *for edification and not for destruction.*" This means that the object of discipline, even to exclusion, is not destruction, but edification; and this was the practical effect of the exclusion of the aforesaid fornicator, as is clear in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians written only a few months after the first one, for it is evident from 2 Cor. 2:6-8, where the same person is referred to as having endured "sufficient punishment," and as having become so penitent that he was liable to be "swallowed up with over-much sorrow," so that now "Ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him." This result of the wisdom of God in discipline is a strong rebuke to the human wisdom, that excludes no one. The one saves the soul, the other loses it. The one delivers him over "for the destruction of the flesh," where he will "learn not to blaspheme;" the other, through timidity and unman-



fulness, leaves him in the church, where he never will repent and will never be saved.

3. There are some sins so gross that no discipline *inside the church* can ever bring them to repentance, among which are fornication, and adultery. Like the disease of leprosy, (Lev. 14: - 1 - 8), which was never treated inside the camp, the sin of adultery can never be cured inside of the church. The leper was always doctored outside the camp, and was never allowed to return till he was ceremonially and soundly healed of the disease. For some reason, Paul gave the Corinthian church no orders about going to see that fornicator, nor about sending any committee to labor with him, nor about demanding a confession from him before the church, but almost in every other verse told them to put him "away from among you." Paul knew that such characters could make a confession every morning before breakfast, and keep up their sins all the same. Such sinners always assume that when the church requires a confession only such as is demanded for swearing and getting drunk, the sin is not regarded by the church as any worse than other ordinary transgressions, and this confirms them in the same judgment, and perpetuates their crimes. Benjamin Franklin, a man of wide experience as an itinerant preacher, of large observation and practical good sense, once said that he had never

known an adulterer, nor a fornicator that was ever reformed by any discipline *within the church*, and that they always had to be excluded and delivered over to the rough handling of Satan, in order that the spirit might be saved; and his experience is surely duplicated by that of others, and the human wisdom that undertakes to prevent an exclusion of all such persons for the "destruction of the flesh," can claim no fellowship with the wisdom of God.

4. This same chapter shows that when such sinners are excluded from the fellowship of the church, the individual members should be careful "not to company with them" (verse 11), for if they are still treated just as well socially as before, the ends of discipline are partially defeated. "With such a one no not to eat," means that we are not to make them our companions as before, not to take a meal with them nor to invite them to our tables. "I wrote you in a letter not to company with fornicators." This seems to have brought out an inquiry from the church as to how they could, under those circumstances, transact their daily business with the men of that modern Sodom. To this, Paul replies that he did not mean "the fornicators of this world, or the covetous, or extortioners or idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world," but, "if any man *that is called a brother* be a fornicator, or covetous, or idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard,

or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat." Then he will feel the weight of his exclusion and repent, a thing that no member ought to prevent by causing him to think he is just as much respected as ever, in spite of exclusion.

In case of mere suspicion of a member's character, but no conclusive evidence that it is bad, such evidence as would justify the members in ostracising him from their society, it is the duty of the officiary to look into the matter and either justify him and deliver him from the evil report, or condemn him and give the church the necessary information. When this has been done, Paul's command in 2 Thess. 3: 6, "that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" is simply a repetition of that in 1 Cor. 5: 11, for in both passages it is implied that the church has settled the facts in the case—a thing that could not be left to the erroneous judgment of each individual; as this would create incessant and interminable confusion in the congregation on account of false accusations against the innocent. Therefore the elders of every church should, without faltering, exclude any one that so falls under the condemnation of the Word of God; and the church should give force to the discipline by showing the offender that "light has no fellowship with darkness." Yet the members should not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother,

that he may "recover himself out of the snare of the Devil when taken captive by him at his own will" (2 Tim. 2: 26). That is, do not abandon any member because he has been excluded from the church, as is generally the case, but admonish him as a brother, and try to bring him to repentance, "that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This can be done without making him your companion.

*Spiritual Status of the Excluded.* There are intelligent brethren who regard the excluded member as not only cut off from the fellowship of the church, but cut off from Christ, and out of the kingdom, the same as an apostate. That this notion is wholly unwarranted, may be seen as follows :—

1. *Exclusion* is simply the last step and the severest measure that can be taken in the line of *discipline*, and is executed in the hope that thereby the endangered spirit may yet be saved. We are not to count him as an enemy, but "admonish him *as a brother*,"—an erring brother, but still "a brother" that may be induced to retrace his steps and be saved.

2. The case with the apostate who has really been cut off from Christ is very different, for "it is impossible to renew him again to repentance" (Heb. 6: 4-6). Any sin may be forgiven that is repented of. Impenitence is the only barrier that is

in the way, that being a sin which is "unto death" (1 John 5:16). If a member has "crucified to himself the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame," or if he has surrendered all faith in Christ, and now "counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing," and nothing more than any other man's blood; or if "he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (Heb. 10:29; 6:4-6; 1 Tim. 5:8), his sin is not pardonable. But there are many sins that are not only pardoned when we obey the gospel (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11), but the very worst of them are pardoned after one has been excluded from the church—such as fornication intensified by adding incest to it; for comparing 1 Cor. 5: with 2 Cor. 2:6-8, we find that this sin, so mean and filthy that it "was not so much as named among the Gentiles," was nevertheless pardoned, and the sinner saved. This man, though cast out of the church by divine direction, was not cut off from Christ and his kingdom the same as an apostate, but was resting under the severest discipline "for edification and not for destruction" (2 Cor. 13:10). It is not the act of *church exclusion* that cuts a man off from Christ, but the sin that necessitated that discipline; and as exclusion may be necessary for sins "not unto death," it does not involve the extreme consequences we are opposing.

*Legalized Adultery.* This seems to be the most

appropriate place to discuss that very difficult phase of church discipline found in cases where members of the church have either knowingly or ignorantly contracted marriages contrary to the law of God. My experience, as an evangelist sent out by State and general conventions for more than twenty years, has brought up many such cases for treatment, in congregations that knew not what to do with them. The case is more complicated by the fact that not only have many persons fallen into this error innocently, but they have been so long in it, and their responsibility to their illegitimate children so indisputable, that it is not always possible to decide at once upon the best way to proceed; but if the following points will help any one else to thread his way through the perplexities he may yet encounter, my object in writing them will have been attained:

1. Teach the people that the civil law and the divine law as to legality in marriage contracts are by no means the same, and that while it is not the province of the church "to judge them that are without" (1 Cor. 5: 12), it is its duty "to judge them that are within;" but the discussion or investigation of all such cases must take place in the official Board, who shall in private council decide and prepare the case for the action of the church, should any action be found necessary. While every State has a law of marriage and divorce dif-

ferent from every other State, the law of God is one and the same, as recorded in Matt. 5: 32—“Whosoever shall put away his wife except for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and whosoever marrieth her that is divorced, committeth adultery.” The same law is repeated in Matt. 19: 9. In both these passages it is clear (1) that the marriage bond is never to be broken during life (see Rom. 7: 3), unless in case of adultery, which is the *only* sin that can disrupt it. (2) The sin of putting away one's wife for any other reason is, that she is still a married woman, and to marry another would be adulterous, both on her part and on his part who thus marries another man's wife. He thus “causeth her to commit adultery by depriving her of her rightful home, and rendering it natural for her to contract an unlawful marriage with some other man.

2. It must be acknowledged that the divine law seems to work a hardship in many cases wherein the wife is abused, abandoned, unprotected and unprovided for, when she could readily be divorced by civil law, marry another and live a comparatively happy life. And so with the kind and honorable husband, whose wife, although chaste, is disagreeable, wasteful, no “keeper at home,” abusive and a modern Xantippe. He might abandon her, marry another, and also be comparatively happy. But in both these cases, it

must be regarded simply as other hardships in life, and to be borne as other bad bargains are borne. The Lord no doubt saw that the evils above named are much less than those that would have resulted from a greater license in the marriage covenant. At any rate, as it is not our duty to revise the law of God, we propose to simply see what it teaches and urge obedience thereto.

3. What the church should do in case of a wilful violation of the law of God, was well illustrated by a case that came into the author's hands for treatment several years ago. A mutual and strong attachment had sprung up, in a certain community, between a wild young man and a young sister in the church, but was checked by her parents on account of the rakish character of the suitor. Each of them seemed to be satisfied, and each married another, but in a few years, her husband died, and the old flame was rekindled. He abandoned his wife, went to another State, and after six months obtained, through their lax legislation, a divorce from his lawful wife, and arranged to marry the said widow. She was solemnly warned of the sin she was contemplating by her faithful and fearless pastor, in spite of which the marriage was soon consummated. She was a member of the church and leader in its song. Four years after, the waning church called me to its aid. Nothing had ever been said or done



about it, and that lady still a leader in the choir. No clearer case of adultery could have been found in the State. I asked the officary what they had done with the case. Said they had done nothing, because they did not see clearly what ought to be done, nor how to go at it. I asked, "What have your preachers said or done about it?" "They have neither said nor done anything, because they considered the discipline of the church to belong to the elders." Another sad instance of that old time heresy that still afflicts so many pious ministers, who will take no interest in anything but their sermons—not in the finances, because that's the deacons' work; not in the discipline, because that's the elders' business; and so on, leaving a load upon the hands of the overseers, which evidently they could not carry.

I said to the officary, "This is a very plain case of adultery, that has been sheltered in your church these four years. It would have been much more easily handled at the first than now; but how can your church prosper while harboring such a sin and carrying such moral filthiness in her skirts? The people don't unite with you, perhaps, because they think you all have very low conceptions of morals, and think it just as pure outside as inside the church. What, now, would you do, brethren, if another case of the kind should occur, right here in your church? Could

you discipline that, while neglecting this?" They said they thought not. "Well, suppose five, or ten, such cases should occur; could you do anything with any of them while neglecting the one before you? Then again, do you think you could consistently rebuke a man for swearing, stealing, or any other sin less horrid than this case of adultery? Do you not virtually surrender your entire right to exercise discipline in anything, great or small, by this course? There are five long catalogues of crime in the New Testament, and every one of them are headed either by 'adultery' or 'fornication' or both." They interrupted and said, "We are entirely sensible of the wrong in this matter, but we have had no assistance in it by any of our preachers, and not being very well acquainted with the Bible teaching on the subject, we would be glad of any help you can give us, that will make things better."

I then reminded them that many good enough members of the church had never been told that what the civil law allowed was not always right in the eyes of the Lord; and that perhaps this lady had done this thing ignorantly. But, on making careful inquiry, we found that she had been faithfully warned by her own preacher, and with her open eyes and stiff neck, she had deliberately committed the sin of adultery; had robbed her neighbor, only a few miles away, of her hus-

band, and was living in known transgression every day of her life, and yet unblushingly taking a front seat in the choir every Sunday. It was asked whether the elders should visit her before excluding her. "Visit her for what? Will she give up her paramour and confess her sin to the church? The very thought of thus throwing your pearls before swine seems absurd. Did Paul direct the Corinthian Church to send a committee to their adulterous member? Can there be a 'destruction of the flesh,' short of that discipline that would be administered by Satan? Can you cleanse the leper inside the camp? The brethren of Corinth had borne with that incestuous fellow till they began to be 'partakers of other men's sins,' but when roused by Paul's first epistle, they became alarmed at their indifference, and in 2 Cor. 7: 11, he commends them for having thus waked up, saying 'Behold this self-same thing—that ye sorrowed after a godly sort—what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what indignation; *yea, what clearing of yourselves*, so that in all things ye have proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' A church cannot afford to be smirched by too much forbearance 'with other men's sins.'" Suffice it to say that the adulterous member was solemnly and prayerfully excluded, while the church proved herself "clear" in the matter, and regained her standing before "them that are without."

## CHAPTER V.

### WORK OF THE DEACONS.

Having spoken of the character, qualifications and duties of the evangelists and pastors, it remains to present a brief statement of the work of the deacons, which is more abundant when well attended to than is usually supposed. Their qualifications and character being so nearly identical with those of the overseers as to need no separate treatment, we can advance at once to their duties.

1. While it is most natural to think that they served the primitive congregations in the administration of the Lord's Supper, this was not the first work assigned them. The apostles said to the multitude, "It is not meet that we should leave the Word of God and serve (*Diakoneo*—act the part of deacons as to) tables," for although the Twelve may have been, up to this time, supervising this work, "the multitude of the disciples" was becoming so great that, without help, they would have been actually compelled to leave off preaching. But their former experience in feeding the four and the five thousands in the desert,

as well as this last experience in Jerusalem, qualified them to give directions to the Seyen. The first work, then, to be done by these deacons, was a matter of *daily business* in the church, akin to that of looking after the poor, as it is this day. Here is hint enough to the deacons to see to those members who may be *neglected*—"their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations" of food (Acts 6: 1). The ones neglected in this case were not the rich men, nor the married women, but the widows, who may represent all the helpless, whether men, women or children, who need friends whose business is to "visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction."

2. This passage also teaches the deacons not to visit the needy with empty hands, for their business is in such cases to "serve tables," by taking food to their dwellings and raiment to put on. To merely hand them a New Testament and some religious tracts, and to pray with the family before leaving, exhorting them to trust in the Lord, is the benediction of sheer stinginess, as it leaves the children still crying for bread. Such visits, if not altogether execrable, are nearly so, for your own well fed appearance only tantalizes the hungry and destitute widow whose children beg her every hour for food. Be not afraid to ask her if she needs assistance. Ask if her rent has been paid; go and look at her coal house, and

don't be quite so modest. A barrel of flour has much more practical religion in it than your five cent Testament. A shoulder, a side and three hams are much more potent than all your prayer, exhortation and unreal sympathy put together—more potent in that frugal home, as well as in the day of Judgment, when Jesus will say—"Inasmuch as ye did this to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." How often a Christian woman, whose house was once a centre of attraction for all comers; whose hands were full of kindness to every minister of the gospel, and to every other friend of Christ, is suddenly deprived of her faithful husband, and almost as suddenly deprived of all her former visits and all further attention. The day after the burial is her saddest and loneliest day, however removed from want, but if poor, without means, without husband and without friends—how sad to see that she also is "neglected in the daily ministration." And many such instances of neglect there will be, especially in large congregations, unless the deacons divide their work and oversight into wards or sections, so as to know every case that needs assistance from the common treasury of the church. This gives occasion to speak again of the necessity of having *one church treasury for all purposes*, for salary, for State work, for sexton, fuel, lights, the poor, etc.—all included in the one annual assess-

ment upon each member, male and female, old and young, so that the members will know at the beginning of each year just how much they are to pay for all current expenses of the church, and, as elsewhere advised, let a written order from the officary be given to the treasurer whenever money is to be paid out for the poor, as for any other purpose, and a regular account kept, and an accurate statement made, at least once a year, of all moneys received and disbursed.

3. A deacon's work need not be limited to the secular interests of religion; for he has many opportunities of doing good. His official duties calling him occasionally to the homes of all the members, he may not only induce them to give their means to the Lord *religiously*, but prompt their regular attendance at church, wake up the Sunday-school work, induce them to take a religious paper, and make them feel that they are not forgotten by the congregation. Two of the Seven in Jerusalem became noted preachers, which indicates that they had been active while deacons in such ministries as the above.

4. As the Levites had charge of the Tabernacle in the wilderness and all its furniture, and of the outside business department of Jewish worship, so it seems Christian deacons ought to be charged with all those ministries that relate to the business of the church—the collection and disburse-

ment of its funds, the care of the church property, attention to the wants of the poor, waiting on the congregation with the elements of the Lord's Supper, seating the people and making strangers feel welcome and at home in the pews. This is a service distinct from that of the elders, and surely is no sinecure, for he that "uses the office of a deacon well, purchases to himself a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." This seems to have been written partly to prevent any one from under-estimating the deaconate on account of its being second to the presbytery, for without it the church could not long exist. But this encouragement to the deacons is a gentle hint that said office is not quite so important as that of the overseer, and if so, it follows that the deacons were not the preachers, like Timothy, as some suppose; and if this be true, it follows that the modern church is not far wrong in their views of the deacon's office.

*Position of Deacons.*—But little is said in the Bible as to their special duties, or of their positions relative to others in the officary. Some of the most faithful students of the Word believe them to have been *preachers* in the primitive church, and hold that the office now called the *deaconate* had no existence among the apostles. In support of this position, the fact that Philip and Stephen, two of the seven deacons (Acts 6: 1-6)



are well known to have been preachers; that the first money sent to Jerusalem for the poor saints was "sent to the elders," and that no mention is made of the deacons in the New Testament, as a class of men committed to any such work as we assign to them, etc. But before determining that point, let the following facts be carefully considered.

1. That wherever the elders and deacons are mentioned together, the former come first, which, among the Jews, always indicated a leading position. In giving the character and qualifications of the two orders in Timothy, Paul places the elders first. In writing to the church at Philippi, he addresses the saints "with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1: 1). The same order as to relative positions is observed in Acts 15: 23—"The apostles and elders and brethren"—where there can be no question as to the distinction. Also in Eph. 4: 11, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers," the same relative positions are named in their order, for no one should deny that the apostles were first, then the prophets, then the evangelists and then the bishops, elders, overseers, pastors or teachers, as they are variously called. We find the habit of placing the name of those in leading positions *first* in the Old Testament, for "Noah begat Shem, Ham and Japheth" (Gen. 5:

32),—Shem being placed first as being in the lineage of Christ, and the leading figure among the three sons, notwithstanding Japheth was “the elder” (Gen. 10: 21). It was Moses and Aaron not that Moses was the older, but the leader. It was Barnabas and Saul, for a while, but afterwards Paul and Barnabas.

From these facts, it seems highly probable, if not certain, that the deacons were not called to a work so near to that of the apostles as was that of the bishops.. This position is strengthened by the fact that when Jethro advised Moses to appoint assistants in judging the people, and the advice was accepted, the hard causes were still brought to Moses, but every small matter the assisting elders judged. (Ex. 18: 13-26.) In like manner, when the Twelve in Jerusalem found themselves overloaded with the various ministries of the crowded membership, they appealed to the people to appoint assistants to take off their hands the less important part of the work, which others could attend to who could not take the place of apostles, for it was “not meet that they should leave the word of God and serve tables.” These assistants, like those of Moses, took charge of the comparatively “small matters,” and as this was the first division of labor in the Jerusalem church, that we have any account of, it seems to have thrown from the hands of the apostles the

serving of tables, and that afterwards another division of labor was made when elders were appointed, who are not mentioned till Acts 11:30. When a supreme court cannot attend to all the business of a nation, the first lower court established takes charge of all those cases involving sums from the smallest up to, say \$500. If what is left is still too much for the supreme court, another court is established including all sums between \$500 and \$5000, and so on, till the division is complete; but the first court established does not work on the same plane as the second. So with the deacons' relation to the elders, whose work, pertaining more to the spiritual than to the material interests of the people, places them before the deacons in the officary of the local church, and hence, Paul wrote to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi *with the bishops and deacons*."

*Continuity of the Diaconate.* As Acts 6:1-6 is the only record we have in the New Testament of the appointment of deacons, it is supposed by some intelligent Christians that it was but a temporary expedient that disappeared with the occasion that called it forth, especially because the word *deacon* is not used in that passage. As already admitted, the noun *diakonos* is not there, but the verb *diakoneo* is used when the apostles say "it is not meet that we should leave the word

of God and *serve* tables"—*act as deacons* for the tables. The word *diakonos*—servant, minister—is a term of very general use, as it is applied to all classes of workers, from Jesus as “a *diakonos* of the circumcision for the truth of God” (Rom. 15: 8), down through the angels, the apostles, the evangelists, the Seven, to Phebe, “a *diakonos* of the church at Cenchrea;” but this does not prove that it had no special application to a special set of officers, for so were the words *apostolos* and *presbuteros* applied to church messengers, and to unofficial old men in the congregations. That the office, whatever its nature, was not dropped at Jerusalem, is evident from the fact that it was recognized in the church at Philippi, and in the church at Ephesus, where Timothy was laboring when Paul described the character of deacons for his instruction. Now, as the verb was applied to a certain work in Jerusalem, and the noun applied many years afterwards to certain officials at Philippi and Ephesus, and if we remember that Paul had a habit of organizing the churches alike everywhere, saying, “And so ordain I in all the churches,” it will be undeniable that some *office*, indicated by the word *diakonos*, did exist long after the day of Pentecost and its necessities had passed away. If, then, the office existed, and if it, as shown above, was second to that of the bishops, it remains that what we hold as the

scriptural *diaconate* cannot differ very much from the New Testament idea. If the deacons named in Phil. 1: 1, and in 1 Tim. 3: 8-13, had been the evangelists of that day, they would not have been named after the bishops, for we have before proved that the evangelist in the new dispensation, like the prophet in the old, is, since the death of the apostles, the first and chief worker in the Kingdom of God; and is placed next to the New Testament prophets in Paul's classification in Eph. 4: 11.

The necessity of this discussion of the relative positions of the several ministries in the church is manifest from the effort Paul made to teach us this very thing. If he and the Holy Spirit thought it necessary to say that "God hath set some in the church, *first*, apostles, *secondarily*, prophets, *thirdly* teachers, *after that* miracles" (2 Cor. 12: 28), is it useless for us to teach *the relative positions* of the several workers left in the church after the death of the apostles and prophets? Rather, is it not *necessary* to do this? If all the confusion and inefficiency that have come to the Christian church, the last half century, by theoretically relegating the evangelist to the rear, instead of placing him in front as the New Testament does, were seen, it would astonish many a friend of primitive Christianity. And if all the apostacy, and hierarchy, and popery, and dark-

ness of the middle ages that prevailed for a thousand years (because soon after the first century the evangelist was supplanted by the diocesan bishop) were only known, it would drive the modern church in haste to study the Scriptures, to see "whether these things are so."

## CHAPTER VI.

### APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

It is not proposed to discuss the absurd claims of Roman Catholics, and several protestant parties, to apostolic succession, which, even if established, would be worthless as an evidence of orthodoxy. Should the Democratic party, for example, continue an unbroken political organization for two thousand years, this would not prove that they were still teaching the original Jeffersonian doctrine, which, during so long a time, might have been so changed and disfigured as not to be cognizable as true Democracy. But should a new party of political reformers arise, and, ignoring all the corruptions of the centuries past, bring out the old constitution and the acknowledged standards of Jeffersonism, and upon *these* found their reformation, *they* would be the *true* successors to Jefferson—not because they could trace their existence as a party back to their leader, but because they had revived and re-established his doctrines. So, in Christianity. We must ignore the creeds, the human standards, the corruptions of centuries, and all their claims to

unbroken lines of succession, and aim at a *restoration of primitive Christianity*, and hold that this constitutes the true succession to the apostles.

*Wherein Succession is not Continued.* The apostles have had no succession as to *inspiration*, and the consequent right to declare *what the will of God is*. "Last of all, He sent His Son." His "great salvation" which he began to speak "was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." This completed "the perfect law of liberty" which can never be improved, added to, nor taken from. Paul further says, "It seems that God hath set forth 'us the apostles *the last*'" (1 Cor. 4: 9). To no one since that time, did Jesus ever say, "The Holy Spirit shall teach you what ye ought to say," for the apostles were not to be the last men in the church, nor the last preachers; but the *last revealers of God's will to the world*. From that day till this, no man has been able to add a solitary thought which, if true, is not found in the Bible. Neither the supposed angels nor the supposed departed spirits have ever produced a new religious idea through that good man, Immanuel Swedenborg, nor through any of the more modern mediums. Many have tried to utter new things, but "their new things were not true, and their true things were not new," so that we may boldly say that in the item of inspiration, the apostles never had, and never can have, a single successor, not



even he "that as God sitteth in the Temple of God, *showing to himself* that he is God" (2 Thess. 2: 4).

Nor can the Apostles have successors as to miraculous powers to "confirm" the truth, for although God "bore them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Heb. 2: 4), and although when the Twelve, after the ascension, "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and *confirming the word* with signs following" (Mark 16: 20), no other class of men can truthfully claim the same. And the reason is, that the truth, having been once "confirmed" and proved by eye witness, can never be *ab origine* proved again. No historic fact is ever proved except by those who deposited the testimony in the history of the times for the inspection of those who should come after. No man living can now prove that Washington or Napoleon ever lived, except by the evidence that was lodged in the records of their respective periods. Those evidences were "confirmed" when written, and as the "testimony of Jesus" was confirmed for all time by "signs and wonders," there is no need of repeating, from age to age, the proof of "what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life," and therefore, the apostles

could have no successors as to the miraculous confirmation of the facts of the gospel.

*Wherein Succession is continued.* All Christian preachers, since the apostles, succeed them in all the work pertaining to the conversion of the world and the edification of the church, except in the items above noted. We succeed them in preaching the same gospel, in taking the confessions of believers, in baptizing them, in organizing churches, in ordaining the ministry elect, in "setting in order the things that are wanting," in looking after their financial interests, in teaching the elders and deacons their respective duties, in protecting the pulpit by "charging some that they teach no other doctrine," in settling vexed questions by ascertaining and declaring what is the will of God in the case, as was done at the counsel in Jerusalem (Acts 15) and elsewhere; in making a division of labor among us, as in Gal. 2: 9; in raising money for benevolent purposes, (2 Cor. chapters 8 and 9), and in so managing as to have "a care of all the churches," in having evangelists "sent" here and there to care for the weak, in supplying a ministry in needy churches, (Tit. 3: 12)—that is, the present ministry succeed the apostles in every thing, except the two particulars above indicated. These things being undeniably true, we apply to modern ministers with great confidence, all that is said in previous sec-

tions as to the apostolic teaching and practice, in supervising the general interests of the churches, and in protecting them from false teachers by showing on every question what "seemed good unto us and the Holy Spirit." The same power that authorizes modern evangelists to baptize penitent believers, authorizes them also to do every other kind of work here written, and more, or else all manner of ministerial labor ceased with the death of the Twelve.

*Elders and Deacons in Succession also.* As it is generally admitted that immediately after the day of Pentecost the apostles did the work both of evangelists, elders and deacons, of course said deacons succeeded the apostles in that part of the ministry; and unless the "serving of tables" was an apostolic prerogative, the deacons to this day succeed the Twelve in their department of church work.

The reference in Acts 11 : 30 to elders in Jerusalem, shows not only that the apostles were obliged to still further divide up the labors of the church, but also that said elders were their successors to another department of apostolic labor. Peter was an elder (1 Peter 5 : 1), and John was an elder (2 John 1 : 1), and if elders have been in the church ever since, *they* certainly are successors to the apostles as to a certain kind of work. The Twelve were possessed of spiritual gifts, and

so were the elders, (James 5 : 14), (1 Cor. 12 : 1-11). The deacons also possessed spiritual gifts (Acts 6: 8, 8: 6-7) evangelists also possessed said gifts (1 Tim. 4: 14.) *et al.* Now, while objection has been made to the thought of the primitive evangelists being the predecessors of modern evangelists, because the former possessed spiritual gifts, why should not the same reason forbid the primitive elders and deacons being the predecessors of the same classes of officers in the modern church? If modern evangelists cannot look to Timothy, Titus, Barnabas, Judas, Silas, Mark, Tychicus, Aristarchus, and many other New Testament evangelists, as their patterns, how can modern elders and deacons lay claim to apostolic succession?

At this rate, no minister of any order has any scripture authority for the position he holds in the church; consequently there is no authorized church organization on earth, nor has there been, since the last apostle died. Such is the revolutionary tendency of said destructive criticism, and the only thing left is for every minister to study his models in the New Testament, that he may thereby measure up to his official duties, and no longer be weakened by this diluted system of technical theology. You are either Christ's ministers or you are not. You either have models in the New Testament, or you have not. If not, resign your positions. If you have predecessors, study

their characters, their qualifications and their work, then "go and do likewise." Let modern elders and deacons study the characters and works of ancient elders and deacons as their predecessors, and let evangelists in the modern church look to the Philips and Tituses as their models, or lay down their commissions as preachers of the gospel.

Having taken a general view of the characters, qualifications, duties and relative positions of evangelists, pastors and deacons, we are prepared to consider the question of their ordination to their respective duties in the church of God.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ORDINATION OF OFFICERS.

As the names elder, overseer, bishop, pastor, ruler, shepherd, are used in the New Testament interchangeably, their different shades of meaning arising from the different aspects from which their work in the church is considered, they all indicate but the one office. There have been fewer offices in the church ever since the whole Word of God was written and delivered to mankind, than before, as may be seen in 1 Cor. 12 : 8 - 10, where nine different offices are referred to, and the transientness of the tenure declared in 1 Cor. 13 : 8. Those of temporary existence do not include evangelists, bishops and deacons, and these remaining in the church, we are clearly taught, should be religiously ordained to their respective works. That one member is as truly an officer as another, that the elders were simply the unofficial old brethren, as some suppose, is emphatically denied by Paul in 1 Cor. 12 : 29 - 30, where he asks—  
“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?” So we may ask, Are all evangelists? Are all bishops? Are all deacons? Whoever is

assigned to a special work in any government, civil or ecclesiastical, which is not the duty of every person to perform, such as a president, judge, legislator, bishop or deacon, *is an officer*. Among the officers in the church, we place the evangelist *first*, for if any man has a work assigned him which is not the duty of every member to perform, it is the itinerant evangelist; and if any work was ever assigned to any man that must continue to the end of time, it is that of the evangelist, as is clearly indicated in 2 Tim. 2:2, where Paul provides for the transmission of the office to the fourth generation, or at least to the fourth relay of succeeding evangelists, whose work can never cease while the gospel is to be preached, churches founded, officers ordained and instructed, and a general care to be had over all the needy churches "whose hands hang down.

*Spiritual Gifts in Ordination.* An objection to ordination by "the laying on of hands" is often made under the impression that in apostolic times "spiritual gifts" were thereby conferred, and since said gifts are neither needed nor conferred now-a-days, the form of "laying on of hands" should not be used. This mistake is readily corrected, for

1. In no instance where spiritual gifts were conferred was there any officers ordained. See Acts 8:15-17, where Peter and John "laid their

hands" on the new converts in Samaria, "and they received the Holy Spirit." It is not said they spake with tongues and prophesied, but it is fairly implied; yet, there is no hint of the ordination of officers. See also Acts 19: 6, where Paul "laid his hand" on the twelve disciples found in Ephesus, "and they spake with tongues and prophesied," but evidently there was no ordination of officers at the time.

2. In no instance where officers were ordained by "prayer and fasting and the laying on of hands," was there any spiritual gifts conferred. In Acts 6: 1-6 the seven deacons were men "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom," being already qualified with gifts. In Acts 13: 1-4, Paul and Barnabas were ordained the same way, but there were no such gifts conferred, since they, too, had possessed all needed qualification for years before. Nor is there any allusion to the impartation of spiritual gifts in the ordination of the elders of the four churches in Derbe, Lystra, Antioch and Iconium (Acts 14: 23). The reason is that the Lord ordains men to office who are already qualified—not to qualify them. We never baptize men to make them penitent believers, but we baptize those who are such already; nor do we ordain men to qualify them as evangelists, elders and deacons, for we want them full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom to begin with. The laying on of hands



was simply the primitive form of conferring an office upon a church worker, and being, like baptism, a form divinely given, we are safe in using the same.

*Old Testament Ordinances.* In Num. 27:18-23, we have an account of the ordination of Joshua to be the successor of Moses—ordained by “laying on of hands.” “The Lord said to Moses, Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him and set him before Eleazer the priest, and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in their sight . . . and Moses did as the Lord commanded . . . and he laid his hands upon him and gave him a charge as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.” The Bible never encourages any loose, careless assumption of any sacred office. “The things written aforetime were written for our instruction” to show us that a mere election of church officers is not a suitable installation. Joshua was first elected by the Lord himself, as was Paul; and Barnabas (Acts 13:2) was then ordained “by the laying on of hands,” and then received his “charge.” What this charge was may be learned substantially from Joshua 1:1-9, in which the Lord, among other things, said to him—“Only be thou strong and very courageous that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses, my servant, commanded

thee; turn not from it to the right hand nor to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night; that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shall have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" — a very suitable charge for every preacher of the gospel, and not unlike that of Paul to Timothy—"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee that thou by them mightest war a good warfare." There are many charges very suitable for evangelists to be found in the New Testament, such as 1 Tim. 4: 12 - 16; Tit. 2: 7, 8; for Bishops, Acts 20: 28 - 31. 1 Tim. 3: 1 - 7, and for deacons 1 Tim. 3: 8 - 13; Acts 6: 3. These, or similar charges, should be delivered to said officers when taking upon them the responsible positions assigned, instead of being satisfied with the informal and trifling ceremony of electing by raising the right hand. The installation of such officers should always be utilized as an occasion of impressing both officers and congregation with the solemnity and importance of the

work undertaken, and of the mutual obligations thereby incurred.

*Consecration of the Levites.* A ceremony somewhat similar was observed in setting the Levites apart to their sacred trusts, as seen in Num. 8: 5-11, in which the Lord says to Moses, "Thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation, and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together, and thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord, *and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites*, and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord for an offering of the children of Israel *that they may execute the service of the Lord*. As said before, the service of the Levites resembled the duties of Christian deacons more than any other class of Jewish officers (Num. 1: 50-53), but they were not allowed to "execute the service of the Lord" until they were duly set apart "by the laying on of hands" of the representative men among the Israelites. No class of public ministers among the Jews was allowed to "take this honor" to themselves in the careless way so common among Christian churches. Prophets were anointed, kings were anointed, priests were anointed. Levites were consecrated and "offered to the Lord," and Joshua ordained very much as were Paul and Barnabas in the Christian ministry. The absence of the proper ordina-

tion of officers in the church is the cause of much of the ignorance of the members as to their duties to them, and the cause of insubordination to their rulers, as well as the cause of the slight obligation felt by the officers themselves to discharge their duties to the church, being without ordination, without a "charge" and but little responsibility felt.

*Origin of the laying on of Hands.* The first instance of "the laying on of hands" is recorded in Gen. 48: 14, where Jacob laid his hands on the two sons of Joseph while blessing them. It seems to have had no divine origin above a patriarchal example. The priests were afterward *commanded* to "put their hands upon the heads of their burnt offerings" (Lev. 1: 4 and elsewhere). The High Priest laid his hands on the head of the scape goat, confessing the sins of the people and symbolically laying their sins thereon. Christ blessed little children, laying his hands upon them. He could have blessed them without this form, and the Lord might have dispensed with the same in the case of the burnt offerings, the ordination of Joshua, or of Paul, but every ordinance must have *some* form, and the good taste of the Holy Spirit decided upon "prayer and fasting and the laying on of hands" as the most suitable form, and until we can devise some way more appropriate, we should follow the wisdom of God. The ordinance

of baptism has a certain form divinely fixed, and if we destroy that form we destroy the ordinance. As to the Lord's supper, if we change the form of eating and drinking, we destroy the ordinance; and who has a right to change the form of ordination any more than that of any other ordinance? How the notion ever obtained that, while the Lord is very exacting as to the act of baptism and the act of the supper, he is quite indifferent as to the form of installing evangelists, elders and deacons into their sacred offices, is a puzzle. We dare omit no part of the ordinance of baptism, but we take the liberty of putting men into church offices with *an election only*—with the work half done. For this there is no more authority than for scrapping the Bible in any other matter of duty. We censure others, and justly, too, for quoting "He that believeth . . . shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," and we have no more right to dispense with a part of the ordinance of ordination. Catholics refuse "the cup of the Lord" to the members, and some Protestants refuse one-half of ordination to the officers.

*Is ordination an ordinance.* It may be truly said that *ordination* has never been called an *ordinance* in the New Testament, but the same is true of baptism, which we never hesitate to call an ordinance. The same is true of the Lord's

supper—never called an ordinance. Now, if baptism is properly so called; of which there can be little doubt, so is ordination, for they are classed together as fundamentals in the Christian religion. We read in Heb. 6: 1, 2, “Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” The word “foundation” is doubtless to be understood before each of the above genitives as the objective case of the verb “laying.” It is the foundation of repentance, the foundation of faith, the foundation of the doctrine of baptisms, the foundation of the laying on of hands, and so on. Be it observed however, that these are all *subjective* genitives, and show that repentance, faith, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, are all *elementary and fundamental principles* in the Christian religion—not truths, principles and duties, based on other truths as their foundations, but they are foundations themselves, and the laying on of hands is classed among them and along side of the “doctrine of baptisms.” Now, if the doctrine of baptisms is a foundation doctrine, so is “the laying on of hands,” and if the one is an ordinance, so is the other; and if the one is a part of the basis of the

house of God, so is the other; if the one cannot be dispensed with, neither can the other. The reason is, that while we are "all baptized into one body," we must then be organized into churches by the election and ordination of officers who, in primitive times, were as uniformly installed into their respective offices by "the laying on of hands," as they were baptized by being "buried with Christ." The one was as uniform as the other, although some have, since the apostles' days, taken upon themselves the right to "change somewhat" the action of baptism, and others have taken upon *themselves* the right to "change somewhat" the action of ordination. Neither had any right to make the "change," the latter no more than the former; for God is the author of both these ordinances, and of the forms of both.

Without church organization, Christianity would not have survived a decade after the day of Pentecost. A church is a *body*, and an unorganized body is a contradiction of terms. The growth, and even the existence, of a physical body, depends upon its organization, and no less so with the body of Christ. If to-day, church organizations were destroyed from the earth—if there were no evangelists, no bishops, no deacons, no assemblies, no ordinances, no rulers—there would soon be no members, no oversight, no Lord's day, no meeting houses, no Bible, no Christianity. It is

for this reason the enemies of Christ make such incessant assaults upon *the church*, because it is "the pillar and support of the truth."

*Hebrew 6: 2 applied.* We can now see that the value of the laying on of hands is measured in Heb. 6: 2 by the value of church organization, because this ceremony was always used in installing church officers in primitive times. *They no more thought of organizing a church without "the laying on of hands," than of baptizing without immersion*, for there was no controversy in those days concerning either of these ordinances.

*The doctrine or teaching of baptisms.* John's baptism, and Christian baptism differ, in that the former was a baptism into repentance or into a state of penitent waiting and looking for Him that was to come, without being baptized *into any name*, but the latter was a baptism "into the name of the Lord Jesus" who had come. See Acts 19: 3, 4, where Paul makes a clear distinction between them. Whether the baptism of the Holy Spirit is included in the above named "baptisms," is not a question in this work. But whether it refers to the transient spiritual gifts, may be settled in the negative by the fact that no temporary gift to meet an emergency and then to pass away could be a foundation (*Themelion*) in the Christian religion. Neither could the "baptisms" refer to the Jewish washings, for the "teaching".



of said washings could not be ranked with faith, repentance, etc., as basic requisitions in Christianity. But what is the teaching of John's baptism? It preëminently taught *repentance toward God*, before they saw the face of Jesus or heard his voice. But baptism "into the name of the Lord Jesus," besides repentance, requires "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20: 21). Baptism also teaches symbolically the burial and resurrection of the Christ. Hence, it follows that as the teaching of baptism was a fundamental doctrine in the church, the teaching of the laying on of hands (*epitheseos te Chiron*) was not classed with any transient rite, or with any temporary gift, but with five other fundamentals, and therefore is itself a fundamental, teaching the necessity of the organization of the church into a body "fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," and equipped as an army to fight the battles of God.

*Election of Officers.* The proper installation of officers is not by an election only, nor by an ordination only, any more than it is faith only, or baptism only. Jesus said to the Twelve, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have *chosen* you and *ordained* you," just as, in civil affairs, there must be an *election*, and then a *solemn oath of office*.

How the elders in Acts 14: 23 were elected, we are not informed; but the word *cheirotonea* (ex-

tending the hand) is very properly rendered "ordain," and refers to the "laying on of the apostles' hands," prayer and fasting being also mentioned in the same verse. But that there was an election is very evident from the characters the elders must possess, as described by Paul to both Timothy and Titus. In what particular way Timothy was selected to be an evangelist, we do not know; but that there was care and a general agreement in the matter is evident from the following: "Then came Paul to Derbe and Lystra, and behold a certain disciple was there named Timothy, who was *well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium*, whom Paul would have to go forth with him." That great care was to be had in electing to any office in the church, is emphasized in the direction to "lay hands suddenly on no man," because "some men's sins are open beforehand," and you can see at once their unfitness for the position, but "some men's sins they follow after," and you must wait awhile till their hypocrisy develops itself. Then again, "the good works of some are manifest beforehand," and you see their fitness very soon, but "they that are otherwise cannot be hid" very long. This passage, as well as Heb. 6: 2, shows how well established was the ordinance of "laying on of hands," being thus referred to as a thing well understood. So baptism, or the Lord's

Supper, never needed, when referred to, any argument, explanation or apology.

*How to select.* We place before the mind an evangelist in a congregation of believers, whether a new church or an old one, without officers. How should he proceed to find the right men, having had but a few days acquaintance with the community? He is not like Timothy, a resident minister, but an itinerant, and cannot wait till they have developed their characters. There are chiefly two ways to make up his mind, (1) by his own judgment of men; (2) by what he can find out in the community in wisely and unobtrusively feeling the public pulse. It is not difficult to ascertain whether a given brother is of "good report of them that are without." No one need know that you are taking notes. If men are wary and conservative in expressing an opinion, the women of the church are more candid and independent. If the evangelist will, in a sufficient number of places, express an unqualified good opinion of a certain brother, he will be sure to develop some objection to him if he is not a worthy man. If you want to know whether he "rules well his own house," one or two visits to his home will leave no trace of doubt as to that matter. Nor will it be difficult to see the whisky blossom on his nose and cheeks, if he be given at times to strong drink. If he is a "striker," or a "brawler," it

will be well known to the community. If his children are riotous and are "unruly," he will thereby seem to be a man of feeble will and of small sense of order, and would not "take care of the house of God," whether he be evangelist, overseer, or deacon. After all, the evangelist must depend much upon his own judgment, for many good members are but poor judges of the qualifications necessary for such trusts in the house of God.

We have no account of the ordination of Timothy, for both passages—"the putting on of my hands" (2 Tim. 1: 6) and "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. 4: 14)—refer only to some spiritual "gift." He was no doubt ordained at the proper time, in the usual way, for Paul evidently looked upon him from the first as a future "minister of the Word," and therefore he was endorsed by more than one congregation. That is, he was selected with such care as every one ought to be, whose commission reaches out to "all the world," and therefore the piety and other qualifications of every such candidate should be looked into before he is "ordained a preacher" (1 Tim. 2: 7, 2 Tim. 1: 11).

*Fasting and Prayer.* The election having been completed, the next thing is to appoint a time for the ordination, and to explain the state of mind in which the congregation should meet for that purpose. Whether the church voted by lift-

ing the right hand, *viva voce*, or otherwise, they thereby authorized the ordination, which is always to be done under church direction. The evangelist is therefore at liberty to proceed in the manner best suited to the surrounding.

It is nowhere said that the whole congregation fasted and prayed on such occasions, but it is certainly most appropriate and necessary for the evangelist and the candidates to do so. The object of fasting is to "chasten the soul," to consecrate it for special acts of devotion, and to prepare us to attend to the ordination, "in spirit and in truth." It is well, also, to advise the church to fast also, as many as will so far consecrate themselves to the solemnities of the occasion. This spiritual preparation of mind can, as a general rule, be better accomplished by having the ordination at the evening meeting, the fast being by omitting the evening meal.

In further preparation for the due observance of the ordinance, it is generally best for the evangelists to give the candidates for ordination the main passages of Scripture that teach it, that they may have time to read and study the subject at home, and fully satisfy themselves that it is the will of God. This should seldom be omitted, since only a few good brethren elected to be elders and deacons are very well posted on the subject.

*The Church Assembled.* We will suppose the

church to be assembled on Lord's day evening, to attend to the ordination of an evangelist, two elders and three deacons. No details being given in the New Testament, except that they are to be "ordained," and this to be by "prayer and fasting and the laying on of hands," the minutiae of the ordinance are left to good taste, which confines us to one method of proceeding. One is suggested that, of course, may be varied according to circumstances:

It will always be appropriate to use the occasion to give suitable instruction to the whole church as to this divinely appointed way of installing these brethren into their sacred offices; to show what we learn from the Old Testament on this subject; to note the fact that, in the ordination of officers, no spiritual gifts were ever conferred, even by the apostles, as it was simply a form of conferring official responsibility upon them; and to explain the bearing of the following passages upon this impressive ceremony—John 15: 16; Acts 6: 1 - 6, 13: 1 - 4, 14: 19 - 24; 1 Tim. 5: 22 - 25; Heb. 6: 2.

The sermon being followed by a song as usual, the evangelist will come down and have a front seat vacated, and, by previous understanding with the candidates, have them come to said seat in order—the one to be ordained as evangelist to the end of the seat on the right; the elders next to

him and the deacons next. He will also arrange it with said candidates that, during the ordination prayer, they will, for convenience, kneel with their faces toward him until after prayer and the imposition of hands. As the candidates kneel, the audience by previous intimation, rise and remain standing till the ceremony shall have been completed. After prayer, all keeping their reverent attitudes, he will proceed at once to lay both his hands quietly upon the head of the evangelist kneeling on his right, and in a few suitable words, confer upon him the office of an evangelist; and then pass quietly on to the next leftward; and so on, to the last. Those suitable words may be something like these—"Receive, dear brother, the office of a minister of the Word to which God, by his grace and by the voice of this church, has called you. Watch and pray, and keep yourself in the love of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Or this—"Upon you, dear brother, is hereby conferred the office of an elder of this congregation, that you might take the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly, and when the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away;" and with such form of speech, when you come to the deacons, laying your hands upon the head of each one separately. When you shall have thus ordained the last one, a very suitable close of this beautiful and impres-

sive scene is to lift the hand and repeat Paul's heartfelt prayer in Heb. 13:20-21, "Now the peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Then request all to take their seats. The next thing is to read the Scripture charges to each one, as indicated on page 132 above, with such other words as the minister in charge may deem most appropriate at the time. After this, an appropriate song should be sung while the officiating preacher, and as many others as feel so disposed, should give to the newly ordained brethren "the right hand of fellowship" in their sacred work.

You will now observe as matters of good taste—

1. The minister that attends to the ordination should never kneel during the ordination prayer, but keep his feet so as to be in readiness to proceed at once, without confusion, to the conferring of the several offices.

2. If a brother preacher, or an elder, assist you in the ordination, let him stand immediately on your right during the ordination prayer, that he may proceed *at once* with you to the imposition of hands, and if he has never before rendered such



assistance, you must ask him before-hand to be *sure* to proceed *simultaneously* with you in approaching the first one, otherwise he will hesitate and lag behind enough to embarrass you.

3. After the congregation has elected and authorized the ordination of these brethren, and given them the right hand of fellowship to their responsible positions, it is a good time to give the members *their* "charge." For instance—It will be their imperative duty to give the officers their moral support in every good work; to hide any mistake they may make; to protect their good names from the tongue of idle gossip; to never speak against them before others; to never talk them down, but talk their influence up; to never speak against them on the streets, nor against any member, especially their preacher; but if they have anything to object to in any one which they cannot privately correct, to tell one of the elders, or their preacher, and let them attend to it in a proper way. Teach the church not to give the deacons unnecessary trouble in collecting their church dues, but to pay them all deference in discharging duties for which they never receive a cent; to not expect the said officers to call upon them so often to settle their accounts. Such co-operation between the officers and members will always result in a blessing to all. Such an election, ordination, and charge to all concerned, will

duly impress both members and ministry with the sacredness of the obligations they have assumed, and with the preciousness of the covenant they have mutually entered into to strive together for "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

As the questions of the sending of evangelists forth to their itinerant labors, as well as their "authority," are lightly connected with their ordination, it will be proper here to add a few words—

*Sent, and not Sent.* While that class of evangelists represented by Philip are seldom, if ever, sent by any authority to any particular place, or confined to any particular field for any given time, the other class are "sent here and there on special missions, in order to systematically look after the various interests of churches already established. This requires more regular management than is needed in the pioneer work, and therefore all such prophets and evangelists were "sent" either by the Lord, by some council, by some church, or some apostle, for no such minister has a right to constitute himself an agent of the church. The Lord "sent" Isaiah (48:16). He "sent" Jeremiah to Tophet; he "sent" Ezekiel unto the children of Israel; "sent" Zechariah unto the nations; "I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets" (Jer. 7:25). Jesus "sent" the Twelve; "sent" the seventy; "sent" Paul; while

Silas, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Judas and many others were "sent" by the church, or by Paul. "How shall they preach except they be sent" (Rom. 10 : 15).

Although Philip, and others that were scattered by the persecution that arose about Stephen, went out without being sent by the church, it does not follow that under ordinary circumstances any preacher should attempt the sacred work without the authority of his own congregation at least. Timothy "was well reported of" by at least three congregations, before Paul would have him "to go forth with him." Upon this subject, Alexander Campbell expressed himself, forty-six years ago, as follows :—

"Instead of some mutual understanding and co-operation, every little congregation of one or two scores of men, women and children, feels itself authorized to send out whom they will as evangelists and public instructors, as regardless of what is fitting as they are incompetent to act advisedly in matters of such high and public concern and importance."

"Some gross hypocrites and other ambiguous characters are sent, or run unsent by any respectable church for intelligence and high moral worth ; and, when once adrift, they migrate, like swallows, from one country to another, as their character wears out, and are ever and anon abusing

the confidence and unsuspicious benevolence of the brotherhood."

"And who does not know that a consummate hypocrite and imposter can wheedle and beg from some two or three good-natured, accommodating spirits a suit of traveling credentials, that will safely conduct a polygamist, a horse thief or a gambler, from one State to another and aid him in his diabolical projects?"—*Mill. Har.*, 1841, pp. 534-35.

"The apostles themselves, who acted sometimes as deacons, sometimes as bishops, but oftener as evangelists, furnish us the best and fullest models for those who should be chosen by congregations to promulgate the gospel in our own times and country."—*Mill. Har.*, 1835, p. 523.

"Into whatsoever house he [the evangelist] enters, it is for peace and not for war. He prays for peace on every dwelling. He is not censorious, pharisaic, nor disgustingly familiar. . . . He sacrifices everything to human prejudice, but truth, honor and righteousness. True to his Lord and faithful to men, he 'speaks the truth in love.' He sees, he knows the world is full of darkness, ignorance, superstition and error. He removes the darkness, not by inveighing against it, but by presenting the light, and seeks to reform the world more by persuasion than demonstration.—*Same*, p. 524.

“Some who call themselves evangelists in this our day more strikingly resemble the ostrich than the first preachers. The ostrich drops its egg in the sand, and leaves it to the sun and the sand—to heaven and earth—to take care of it; and then itinerates the desert.”—*Same*, p. 527.

It is wonderful how accurately Mr. Campbell surveyed all the main lines of religious thought, for when we examine almost any of the leading questions of church life and organization in a manner, to us, *ab initio*, and then look over his writings, we find he had been there before us. The sentiments above will doubtless be endorsed by all.

*Evangelists' Authority.* Paul says to Titus—“These things speak, and exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.” Is this language applicable to modern evangelists? Should they speak “with all authority,” also? Has any uninspired man a right to speak with authority? We might ask, did any *inspired* man ever speak with any authority of *his own*, or did even they simply declare the truth by the Lord's authority? Had Paul any authority, personally, more than Luther or Campbell? Or was he simply *a bearer of God's authority*—using the commands, the threats and the promises of inspiration as the power of God unto salvation? When men chose to “contradict and blaspheme,” Paul

had no penalties to inflict, except to turn away from them, just as ministers of the gospel do to-day, the chief difference being that an apostle received his knowledge and commission direct from God, while the modern minister receives his through the Scriptures, both being bearers of the authority of God to the people, saying, "Thus saith the Lord God whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (Ezek. 3: 11).

But whenever a preacher lays aside all pretense to his own authority, he begins a readiness to speak "with all authority," for God has fully authorized him to "preach the Word, in season and out of season," to take the confession, to baptize, to organize, to ordain, to edify, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and teaching, and with all God's authority (2 Tim. 4: 2). He is authorized in Titus and Timothy to reject heretics, "entreat" elders, teach aged men, aged women, young women, young men, and to see that he himself is an "ensample to the believers." He is authorized to speak "every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God," to "speak with my words unto them" (Ezek. 3: 4), and to "hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me." In this sense every "preacher of righteousness," from Noah till this day, whatever authority he may have as a minister, is sent from heaven, and he must declare the whole counsel of God,

“whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OTHER CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS.

We have now shown what the Scriptures teach concerning "the care of all the churches," as developed both in the Old and New Testaments, the work of evangelists, pastors and deacons in the establishing, the feeding and the protection of the church of God; including a wholesome and scriptural discipline and culture thereof. We have also presented the relation of the different classes of church workers to each other, their ordination and the respects in which they do and do not succeed the apostles, from all of which it appears that if the church does not "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," it is chiefly the fault of said ministry. If the church is organized in convenient territorial limits, in such a way that each of the three classes of the ministry has a fair chance to co-operate in the local and general work, growth in numbers and in piety will be the inevitable result; but in order that a faithful ministry may have such chance, the two following conditions will be found indispensable :



1. *The ministry must be educated in the details of church work.* This education has no reference to the classics, the languages, the natural sciences or mathematics. Happy is the minister if he possess all these advantages, but the education referred to looks to the business affairs of church life, as already explained in other pages of this work. But if this education can be obtained nowhere except in Bible colleges, it is not easy to see how any but the preachers will be benefitted, and not all of them. Moreover, the ruling elders and deacons seldom, if ever, have such opportunity. If, however, all the preachers of the Word were so instructed and impressed with the duty of teaching the local officers as a part of their ministerial duty, the officary of every church would soon be able to "take care of the house of God." But the ordinary preacher, without special instruction is wholly unprepared to "set in order" a disordered church, much less prepared to instruct any one else. For this reason the first thing is to arrange for the practical training of every preacher in such work as is herein presented, and to this end all Bible departments in every Christian institution of learning should have practical teachers, and text books containing at least the circumference of what the preacher ought to know as to the practical business of religion. Let this be made prominent in the ministerial curriculum, and not

be aimed at by a few lectures during the year from some unpracticed professor in the faculty, or from some popular preacher, whose experience in the actual work would furnish the Bible student nothing but platitudes, or at best, generalizations. Peter the Great, in view of the throne, is said to have worked up through all the ranks in the army, from a drummer to the highest command, that he might understand the duties and the circumstances of all his subjects, and so be able to teach them all; and no man can communicate the instruction here contemplated who has not, in company with deacons, elders, preachers and members, gone through their difficulties with them and solved their problems for them as to finance, discipline and every disorder that may be found in a congregation, large or small. Such qualified ministers would constitute a kind of portable Bible school distributed over the land, prepared to instruct every local officary, including such preachers as may not have enjoyed these advantages in college.

This suggestion is applicable to all religious bodies, both those that are afflicted with too much episcopacy, and those burdened with too much congregational independency; for while some cultivate the business capacity of their ministry more than others, it is remarkable how large a per cent of the preachers of all churches are almost

useless outside of their pulpits. Instead of being helpful to the elders and deacons in their perplexing duties, they imagine they ought to keep hands off discipline, finance and all business affairs of the church—the very things the untrained local officary are not prepared to attend to—and to educate said officiaries throughout the land should be laid heavily upon the hands and hearts of all ministers of the Word. Not only should all located preachers thus instructed teach the officiaries of their own congregations, but the itinerant evangelists sent out by the State and District conventions should teach all churches and preachers that may need it, wherever their work may lead them. With such a host of teachers, the number of disordered churches with no one to help them would soon be reduced to the minimum. Then would prosperity reign in Zion in all home and missionary work, but not till then is it possible. But if the colleges of the Bible would carefully train all young ministers under their care in this sacred duty, they could soon become efficient as itinerant Tituses to show all other preachers how to put and keep in good order all their own churches. As it is, too many itinerant evangelists, sometimes called home missionaries, know nothing about setting churches in order, not because they are indifferent to these things, but because they have never

been taught this "way of the Lord more perfectly."

2. Not only must the ministry be educated in the business side of their calling, but there must be a *bond of union between the local and the general workers*, between the congregations and conventions, between the pastors and the evangelists. This bond should be such as to show that the work is one; that the congregations and conventions are mutually dependent, as well as the pastors and evangelists; the churches should see that *they*—except in case of a few of the wealthy—are as dependent upon the itinerant evangelists sent out by the conventions as the conventions are upon them, and the evangelists should see that *their* success in raising money for missions depends upon the well-being of the churches. *How, then, can a sense of this interdependence be brought about?* We answer—

*First. It can be effected by a combined financial system that will supply the local and State treasuries by the same movement—a movement that will bring the evangelists' aid to supply the treasury of every local congregation, and that will enable every congregation to give ten per cent of what is received into their treasuries to the missionary treasury of the State. It is no uncommon thing for a real Titus, by securing the assessment plan of raising money, even in the most disorgan-*

ized churches, to raise \$500 for their local treasury, instead of \$250 by their former subscription plan. Encouraged by this advance, they were very willing to pledge ten per cent of it—\$50—to the State work, since they would still have a gain of \$250 to their own treasury through the efforts of the State or district evangelist. The convention that sent out said evangelist was also more than pleased, because they had never received ten dollars, and perhaps nothing, from that church before. So, both being profited, they would be disposed to continue their mutual helpfulness.

*Second.* To secure a continuance of said helpfulness, the evangelist must do much more for that little church than to raise said \$500. To secure the payment of the same into the treasury, he must establish regular monthly meetings of the officers, and show them how to manage all their church business, in collecting, in keeping their accounts, in paying obligations through their treasurer; he must go over their church register with them, talk over cases that need discipline, and how to manage in certain cases, urge them to visit their members, etc. He will also find it necessary to visit them again, that, as Paul said, they may have "a second benefit," and so on, until they can dispense with his frequent visits. Thus both will continue to be blessed—they, by his counsels and by their continued financial suc-

cess, and the convention by their continued contributions for missionary work, and thus—*such interdependence in financial matters involves “a care of all churches” that enter into the arrangement.*

*Third.* Nothing is more patent to the most experienced evangelist than that a disordered church *never sets itself in order.* It is admitted that the fervor of protracted meetings have at times induced dissentient members to drop their differences, and promise to be friendly, but this is scarcely a beginning of all the work indicated above. The work is to be done by some agency outside the church itself, and the wisdom of God appointed evangelists for this work for all ages. (Tit. 1 : 5, et al). The most difficult part of church management is its finances, and it requires the best experience in the ministry to carry it through successfully ; and therefore the financial *bond*, to bring about united action between all the churches with their State organizations, is hereby earnestly pressed upon the attention of the whole church in every State. Let the local treasury thus supplied pay all bills—salary, sexton, fuel, light, missions and every other expense. Let every thing be done by the church.

The ten per cent can be assessed by the officers and collected with your other expenses, by the deacons, without an additional step or an addi-

tional word, for they collect what each member has agreed to give, as one amount, without stopping to explain into how many parts it is to be divided, for the church by vote agreed so. This and the officers will disburse it accordingly. For if one will be no great tax upon each member, for if one is assessed \$5 a year, only 50 cents of that will go; go to the State work; if \$20, only \$2 would go to the but the member that is assessed only \$1 has the honor of being a partaker also in the same good work by giving 10 cents of it for the State treasury; and thus every member that pays a dime into the church treasury is a contributor to the work at large; nor do we see any other way in which this perfect co-operation of all the forces can be effected. Some may think ten per cent a little too much, but unless the congregation has a debt on their house, to be paid in a few weeks, or some other burden, a little reasoning of the case will make it plain. Less than this is not to be refused, for in due time all will be right with those who gave anything. When the officers in private conference agree to recommend such per cent to the church, let one of them, or the evangelist, explain the matter fully to the congregation assembled, and ask them to endorse it by vote in the usual way, and have the clerk of the church to put it upon the church minutes, so there will be no misunderstanding. All the money for every purpose

being put into the church treasury, and a per cent being paid out of that amount, of course if the church funds assessed are not all collected, the missionary Board will receive less, because they rise and fall together. But whatever the amount may be that falls to the said Board, it will be sent on by the church treasurer every quarter, who will have a general order from the officers to do so. This will be a true co-operation of the *churches* as such.

ADVANTAGES OF THIS SYSTEM OVER ALL OTHERS.

1. It recognizes the unity of the State work and that of the individual congregations. The Titus-evangelist helps the church to a good financial system for their own expenses, and they in turn are able to help the State treasury. We have just closed a meeting with a little congregation that had paid for preaching last year only \$32, and the year before that, only \$14. That same church has just agreed to their respective assessments individually, which make up \$350, and while they agree to pay \$35 to the State work, they are the gainers of about \$300 more than they had been collecting. If the evangelist's support depends upon the churches, the very life of many churches depends upon the evangelist. And this financial reformation is needed in nearly all con-



gregations in all the States outside of the cities—a thing that will not soon be accomplished without the evangelist of the Titus type. A preacher who is only a good recruiter seldom if ever does this work, because he has not studied that branch of church life, and does not feel prepared to go at it. He baptizes many and throws them also upon the hands of the inexperienced and uninstructed elders, to be neglected like all the rest, with but little or no setting in order. We have set the local church and the itinerant laborer so far apart, that the proper articulation of all the joints of the body is impossible. The Titus office is not in any church organically at all, and if here and there any preacher braves all the difficulties and does go to work as he ought to, he may be tolerated by some and thanked by others; but is regarded by all as a mere volunteer whose work may, or may not, be prosecuted, but he has never yet, by any modern religious people, nor by general sentiment, been regarded as an *integral part* of the organization of the body. Evangelists of late years have been sent out with instructions to help disordered churches, but if these all were discontinued—permanently discontinued—how many of the people would consider it any infraction of church organization—as really an infraction as if the elders were all left out of the church? God would not have established such delicate, mutual inter-

dependence between his church and outside parties, whose labors may be dispensed with at any time, without any violation of church order.

2. *No other way of collecting missionary money for State or other work ever necessitated this setting the churches in order.* We may take pledges from individuals for one year or five years, and collect them without ever helping the churches to which they belong into good order, because these individuals are responsible and able to pay their obligations, whatever may be the condition of their churches. We may also secure promises from some congregations *that are in order* to pay \$40 to \$100 annually to State work, but step outside of those first class churches to those that are in debt for their houses, or to their preachers for several years past, where they have preaching only once a month and no pastoral labor either by the preacher or elders, and less than half the members at church once a year, and one fifth of them paying what little is paid, no discipline, no officers' meeting, nor any other signs of church life, and see if you can get the church to pledge you anything, or to pay it if they do pledge. And even if such congregations would both pledge and pay promptly if a Titus should never visit them, is it right to neglect them and abandon them to their fate? Is it not best and *indispensable* to adopt a system of finance that

will *involve* the setting in order all churches that need it? This is especially necessary when the large mass of the congregations are in sad need of this very thing. During the last four months the writer has helped seventeen different congregations, and found plenty of hard work in sixteen of them, all of whom rejoiced in the good that was done, and pledged their ten per cent most cheerfully. Suppose we *could* secure quarterly collections from them all, when well satisfied that three fourths of them are more or less disordered, would this be as fruitful of good results as the plan whose operation *involves* the very help they need?

Suppose some other method of supporting the State treasury would bring it more money at the first than the per centage would, but would fail of the three great advantages just named—fail to recognize and make manifest the essential oneness of the local and general work; would fail to bring the aid of the evangelist to the church in making it successful in every other respect, as well as in finances; and would fail to necessarily and unavoidably *involve* not only the *setting* in order, but the *keeping* in order, every feeble congregation in the State—would it be better to pursue that method, or the one that inevitably brings in all these advantages? As the churches would grow in strength and ability under this kind of management, the amount they would raise for home

use would annually increase, and this would increase the per centage to the missionary work, and in a few years it would become a fixed habit with them, and our building would truly be "fitly framed together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).

That the reader may not be led to suppose this per cent plan is hasty and immature, the following extract is appended from my tract on "Setting churches in order; How to do it," published 1881, by the Christian Publishing Co., St. Louis, Mo.—

"There is one other work to be established for the edification and spiritual good of our members: *Contributing regularly for our State work by every brother and sister who is not an object of charity.* Not that we desire a gift merely, but we desire fruit that may abound *to their account* (Phil. 4:17). The best and most business like way to get every one to give to our State treasury with the least trouble is this:

1. Get the officers to see that it would be the best and easiest way to put it into the general apportionment for the year, and let them, with the preacher, recommend this to the church.

2. Explain it fully to the church, and ask them to agree to it. If any member or members should dissent, just excuse them from paying their per cent of it, and have no trouble about it.

3. All church expenses had better be included in the annual apportionment—for lights, fuel, sexton, salary, missions, etc., and avoid so many calls on the members for money ; and all had better, if practicable, be collected the first half of the year, that the church may feel free from the obligation the last half, and avoid all overlapping of accounts of different years. At any rate be sure that what is promised to the State treasury be paid along as other obligations are, and not of the dregs of the collections at the end of the year. The Church Board can then, by an order on their treasurer, pay it over to the State treasurer, whenever it may be needed.”

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK.

With the churches thus set in order—with evangelists, pastors and deacons; with their finances, discipline and ministerial care of all the members; with their State, district and local agencies all in operation—the work of Sunday-schools will rise to an efficiency and a grandeur never yet conceived. “The church is the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim. 3: 14), as well as the only divine agency on earth for carrying on the Sunday-school, and every other good work. But a church disordered, distracted, unofficered, without moral influence in the community, is the support of no good word nor work. A church in good order, at peace and at work, cannot be defeated. It will be a Sunday-school church inevitably, and this leads us to the following points:—

*First.* All Sunday-school evangelists have been compelled to labor under great disadvantages, on account of the unorganized condition of many congregations they have visited. Much labor has been bestowed at places where the churches were in no way prepared to carry on the

work as presented to them by the evangelist. It was labor almost lost. Only a few members attended to receive instruction, and if anything was done after the evangelist left, it was done by a few of the young people who had caught the inspiration, and not by the church as such. Even the elders and deacons neither attended the lectures nor forwarded the feeble efforts of the young people, to start and conduct a school in which the truth was to be taught. If it had been a real church, it would have supported that truth, and that Sunday-school that was trying to communicate it.

*Second.* This seems to say in no uncertain terms, that the first work to be done in such cases is to "set in order the things that are wanting" *in that church*. Until that is done, they will neither support preaching, nor the weekly worship of the Lord's day, nor raise money to defray their home expenses, nor give anything for missions, nor support a Sunday-school, nor take pastoral care of their members. But we are such fragmentary beings that we seldom find first-rate ability in the same evangelist for both Sunday-school work and for setting disabled congregations in good order, and hence up to date, we are laboring to no little disadvantage, since the same man is not trained to do good work in both these departments. It is useless to expect any evangel-

ist to do well in either of these fields without special instruction, and hence we are compelled to send different evangelists to the same place at additional expense, establishing different and confusing financial systems in the same church for the support of their respective enterprises. When we come to collect for these different purposes, often in close proximity, the different claims weaken each other, and thoughtful brethren wonder why the financial arrangements are not simplified and unified. But if every evangelist was a practiced worker *in both these directions* we could avoid the double traveling expenses, and the two systems of finance, as well as the salaries of duplicate evangelists. Can this be done?

*Third.* Suppose the State Missionary Board has engaged evangelists for each of the districts, among whom is one practical Sunday-school evangelist, who knows all the *ins* and *outs* of the State work also, and suppose the Board should send him out to every district in order to work two weeks or more with each of the other evangelists, and commit to them all the details of setting both churches and Sunday-schools in order—one such term of instruction would do more to prepare such evangelists for both these works than he would acquire in a whole year by himself, and more than he might ever acquire. In this way, at little expense, every evangelist in the State would be qual-



ified to do all the work of an evangelist in all the departments and avoid the duplex system in operation at this time in all the States. Then, when a new evangelist is engaged, he can always be instructed by his predecessor or by the State evangelist.

Let no one be surprised that we speak of *instruction* in these departments as very necessary, for the details of neither can be gathered up in a hurry without it. We know this is true as to setting *churches* in order, where we often have to deal with so many elements of discord in both unorganized and disorganized congregations that lack not only good Sunday-schools, but every other element of success. Although the church work as a whole is many times greater than that of the Sunday-school, which is only one branch of it, the whole work is so difficult as to require special instruction for those who undertake it. Moreover, it is almost useless to try to explain in print the minutiae of these peculiar works, for the same program will suit no two of them. It is a new lesson and a new problem to be worked out in each place, and it takes a practiced worker to meet every new condition. In many cases, you begin by visiting every church officer in person to secure their presence at the first conference, and see that the church register is found and on hand, inquire respectfully into their condition, point out in an in-

offensive way what is needed, and if you are sufficiently acquainted with all the details to be considered, you will find enough to engage you and the officers for not less than three or four meetings with them, of two hours each. If you know but little about the business, you will get through in an hour, or will see but little use in official meetings at all. If you can see no use of said instruction, it is because you don't know what it is. There is no good reason why the same evangelist might not learn the whole business, so that, when visiting a church, he could set in order both it, the Sunday-school and all, by the one visit, the one expense, and have but one financial system for all State works.

*If every evangelist could set in order all the things that are wanting,* we would have more Sunday-school work done than can be performed by one or two giving themselves wholly to it, would connect the church officary directly with it, and cause them to feel it claims a part of their watch care, like any other part of church work. Any system must be defective that does not lead the elders to feel themselves responsible for the welfare of the Sunday-school, and especially defective if it leads them to the opposite conclusion, and we see no better way to impress upon them this duty than to so arrange our work that when the local preachers, elders and deacons are urged

by every district evangelist to take up the whole line of responsibility, the Sunday-school will be included. Under present arrangements, and with present views, not a majority of the officials of the churches either take or feel any special concern about the school, which is left to a few young people and a few other zealous members who carry on this work with but little official encouragement or even recognition. Now any legitimate movement that can put the officials into line with the Sunday-school workers will be a blessing to the whole church, and this will be the sure result, if every evangelist that goes out can attend to *all* the things that need to be set in order. But as long as some of them work only for this one branch of church enterprise as a specialty, the result desired will not follow.

Moreover, if each evangelist will attend to both church and Sunday-school work, or rather, if each will attend to *all church work*, there will be but one financial system for *all* State work, and that system could be the percentage system as explained above. This, again, would necessitate a union of the local church work and the State work, which would result in a united effort to keep up a good financial system in every church in the State. To recapitulate :

1. Let each evangelist, State and district, especially the State evangelist, be fully instructed

by practice on the field in all departments of church work, instead of having two classes as at present, each with a specialty, or a part of said work.

2. Let that system of finance be established that will necessitate the thorough co-operation of State and local workers. By such aid from the evangelists, the local churches may always have the best possible money system for their own local expenses, and the State board may have the most reliable support that is possible by percentage from the church treasuries for their work.

3. This will not only be apostolic in having "every man according to his ability" (Acts 11 : 29) to give for benevolent purposes, but will unite the whole church and the whole ministry in one body to advance each good work as a work of the whole body of Christ. With the assessment well fixed in every congregation, and every member paying into the local church treasury the ten per cent sent to the State treasury, will constitute every member in the whole State a contributor to the general work, will establish the *esprit de corps*, the broad fellowship of saints, and "much people will be added unto the Lord" (Acts 11 : 24). Only let the above system be adopted by the State conventions, and be carried out by their State boards and evangelists, and the interdependence and mutual helpfulness of State and local work will

soon appear. This will *involve* the care of all the churches.

In the absence of the above, or similar arrangement, how often have the S. S. evangelists established Sunday-schools that ran on for years, where the wreck of a disordered congregation lay around, but no church for the young people to join when their teachers had them prepared to obey the Lord, but having been awakened to a sense of their need, have sought church fellowship wherever they could best find it. For this reason especially, the churches should be set in order *first*, that they may be prepared to care for young members wherever they may come from. In a word, we urge as to the Sunday-schools, that they, being a part of church work, should be not only organized, but built up and cared for *by the church*, which is the pillar and support of the truth, and therefore that all evangelists should be qualified to set in order all things that are wanting—Sunday-schools, finances, discipline, official meetings and all other business affairs that fall within the line of their duties.

Although we have now freely discussed both the positive and relative duties of the whole ministry, the labors of the preacher in many respects are so unique as to require a special treatment, and Part Second shall be devoted to the demands of the preacher, whether as evangelist or pastor.

## PART II.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE PREACHER.

*His Conversion.* Paul's conversion was full and thorough. Conviction of his own unworthiness and sinfulness seized his deep soul. Although he had "verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of the Lord Jesus," he now saw himself to be "the chief" of sinners—so great a sinner that he obtained mercy only "because he did it ignorantly in unbelief." That very day, all sense of his "own righteousness" perished. His previous pharisaic puritanism failed him. He saw that "the righteousness of the law" could never save a sinner that has broken the law, and so being cast helpless upon the mercy of the same Jesus whom he had persecuted, his surrender was complete; and so should it be with every man who undertakes to "do the work of an evangelist." Other things being equal, a preacher's usefulness will be measured by the thoroughness of his conversion to God, for he will never forget what sin is, what repentance, obedience, forgiveness and redemption are; and will thus be able to "have compassion on the ignorant

and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself is compassed about with infirmity."

When Bishop Benson advised George Whitefield to be ordained to the ministry, he positively declined, because of his conscious unfitness for the holy work. As Whitefield's abilities kept on developing and his unquestioned promise of usefulness to the church was evident to all, Mr. Benson kept insisting that he should be ordained in sacred consecration to the preaching of the gospel. Mr. Whitefield, feeling his utter unworthiness, both as to character and qualifications, as all fit ones do feel, for such a responsibility, went home, locked himself up in his room, prayed against it and rolled in agony upon the floor, saying—"Oh Lord, don't let me go, for I'm not fit to preach thy gospel." This is not the language of a hypocrite, or an unconverted formalist, for they never doubt their splendid qualifications for the pulpit, and, like other fools, "rush in where angels fear to tread." Having never been "born again," they do not and cannot "see the Kingdom of God." The unconverted preacher is always betraying himself to the practiced eye, for he always handles spiritual things so awkwardly, and in many ways exposes himself as one that "knows not God." True, "some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men's sins they follow after" (1 Tim. 5: 24), so

that occasionally it requires some time for his wickedness to come to the front; but sooner or later, he will reveal himself as a "Demas who loved this present world," a Phygellus or Hermogenes who "turned away" from Paul, or a "Hymeneus, or a Philetus, who, concerning the truth, have erred." So then, the very first requisite for a preacher is a sound conversion to God involving a penitent trust in Jesus, and a baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Then he will be able to sympathize with the ungodly and with those "whose hands hang down and whose knees are feeble," and can speak to the hearts of both saint and sinner. Above all, he must have the spirit of Christ if he would speak with power, for "ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1: 8). This was not a promise to the apostles of miraculous gifts, which they already possessed, but of moral and spiritual power to all, in every age, who seek to be "filled with the Spirit" and "with all the fulness of God."

*Must take heed to Himself.* "Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4: 12). "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works, in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be



condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2: 7, 8). "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them who walk so as ye have us for an example" (Phil. 3: 17): "Not because we have not power (to live without work), but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us" (2 Thess. 3: 9). These Scriptures do not favor the oft repeated saying "that a minister is not required to be better than the members of his church," for he is to be an "example of the believers," and should be as competent to lead the flock into higher spiritual life as a professor in college is to lead his student into higher literary plains. The teacher should always know more than the taught, and the preacher should both know more and be better than the ordinary Christian for whom he ministers. The modern begging apology for ministerial delinquency—"do as I say, not as I do"—found no favor with the early preachers of the gospel, and should never be quoted by any manful minister of Christ to-day. "Take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. 4: 16). This is his first duty, for he cannot lead others into the ways of holiness, if he is not there himself. "Take heed unto thyself and unto the teaching," but never mind the "teaching" until "thyself" is properly attended to. David prays—"Create *in me* a clean heart, and renew a right spirit *within*

*me, then shall I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee*" (Ps. 51: 10-13). And because of this high character set up for the evangelist "No man should take this honor to himself," (Heb. 5: 1-5), but should let others judge of his Christian life, and when endorsed by the churches around him, he should be solemnly ordained to "the ministry of the Word" by "prayer and fasting and the laying on of hands" as above enforced.

*Take heed to the teaching.* Having thus become "a vessel unto honor, sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work" (2 Tim. 2: 21), he is prepared to "take heed" to what he is about to teach. A large per centum of what is supposed to be the preaching of the gospel is pure legalism, for while one may mouth the words *pardon, mercy*, etc., these very words may be used in a sort of *quid pro quo* sense which leads the sinner to feel that his obedience is in some way an equivalent for the mercy sought. At the bottom of this mistake lies the deep seated fallacy that "good works," or "obedience" performed after the sin has been committed, in some way offsets the sin—that the sinner truly "robbed God" by transgressing His law, but that he pays Him back by the "obedience of faith," leaving little or no place for mercy, because "obedience of faith" is a legal tender, at par value, and good

enough to meet all demands the law may have against the sinner. Now, while the preacher may be far from wishing to make any such impression, he often does make it, for want of "taking heed to his teaching." All ministers have not sought out all the depths and all the hiding places of this false philosophy, based, as it is in every instance, upon *legalism*, and not being aware of such retreats, his preaching never removes the real trouble in the way of true obedience. You try to awaken spiritual life and religious activity in an indifferent professor, but fail, because he has no great reason to love God, inasmuch as he once reimbursed the Lord by "obedience" for all he had "robbed" Him of. This may seem to be a very silly conception of religion, but not too silly for a heart that is allowed to avoid the trouble of repenting and of realizing that he is lost, without God and without hope, apart from an humble, penitent, prayerful surrender to unpaid-for mercy. Such persons have never "seen the kingdom of God," because they have never been "born of God" (1 John 5: 3).

You may offer a beggar a meal on condition that he lay down his budget at the gate, walk in and eat; but this "good work" or act of obedience" could not be compensation for your favor; nor is release from the gallows paid for by merely

accepting the terms of pardon at the hands of the authorities.

*Sin paid for by Suffering.* Another resort of *legalism* in order to reach heaven without Christ, is that of Universalism, whereby *sin is never forgiven*, but always *punished to the full extent of its demerits*, either here or hereafter. But if a sinner suffers the full penalty of the law, how can we predicate *forgiveness* in his case? If, as in early times, a man might be sold for debt (Matt. 18), "his wife and his children and all that he had and payment to be made," what mercy could be found in his creditor? What, unless he forgave the debt, and set the debtor free? "Forgive us our *debts*" means "forgive us our *sins*," and if the debt of sin is never forgiven, but is to be endured until payment is made, what mercy is there in Christ? What good was there in his coming into the world, if he can save no one from "the curse of the law!" How can he be called a Savior, if he saves no man from his sins? If Jesus can prevent no one from suffering out the full demerit of his crimes, then all are damned to the full extent of their sins, and instead of universal *salvation*, we have unadulterated universal *damnation*. The *cross* was not necessary to bring about the penalty for sin, for that was the work of the *law*. We all had the privilege of suffering for our sins before Christ was ever heard of, nor

is there any phase of legalism that does not displace Christ, substitute the law for the gospel, punishment for pardon, and turn the cross into a farce. The doctrine of purgatorial fires to burn out the remnants of sin in the soul is pure *legalism*, and to that extent is a rejection of Christ as the only one that "cleanses from all unrighteousness."

*Few Sins.* The preacher must be on the alert also, when the guilty pleads that, although he is a sinner, his sins are comparatively few and very pardonable, for no sin—*not one sin*—can enter heaven. Although he that is guilty of but one sin is less guilty than the one that is guilty of a thousand, it still remains that one sin unrepented of will as effectually forbid his entrance into heaven as a thousand would, and the one sin must therefore be forgiven and the soul delivered from the love, the power and the punishment of sin.

*Sins neutralized.* Another resort to avoid "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," is the oft unformulated creed that a hundred good deeds neutralize and counterbalance as many bad ones, and that if a few more good ones than bad ones can be counted up, the balance will be enough to save the soul—pure legalism, self-righteousness, and the same principle so often condemned in the New Testament. The good deeds, if performed only in the interests of human-

ity, are all well enough, and not to be repented of; but the sins are neither offset nor atoned for by good works, for "these ye *ought* to have done and not leave the other undone."

These, and many other refuges of the flesh, are resorted to, which the evangelist should carefully study in order to know how to meet the real difficulties in the way of a full surrender to Christ, for in taking heed to "the teaching," he will find thousands of men, especially among the moral men, clinging to their morality, to their professed observance of the golden rule, or to the hope that sin will wear out in time, or that in the multiplicity of affairs in the day of Judgment, their own cases may, by some chance, be passed by or overlooked; and the sooner such persons have all these false supports removed, the sooner they will seek "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." When men plead their morality, and hold that they obey the golden rule, and therefore have no fears, it is well to convince them of their mistake by some such illustration as this: In what Scripture does it say, "He that believeth and obeys the golden rule shall be saved?" or, "repent and obey the golden rule," or he that believes and supports an orphan at school, or pays his taxes, or is kind to his wife? You might as well try to cure a cancer by morality as to cure sin by it, for "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses

from all sin." *Morality, in no way, ever facilitates the pardon of sin.* "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," can reach pardon for all the sins of a Nero at once, while the decent moralist's refusal to accept Christ for the pardon of his comparatively few sins, would not be saved; therefore,

*First.* In preaching to impenitent sinners, never begin on *the forms* of obedience, for as long as they are impenitent, one form is as good to them as another. Such persons will put away into the waste basket the form of baptism, and every other form, until they become concerned about their souls and desire to flee from the wrath to come. It would be too much like repeating over and over the form of the marriage ceremony to a couple who not only had no desire to marry, but even hated each other. But if a person is truly penitent for sin, and desires to know "What wilt thou have me to do," then the preaching of Ananias to Saul is the word for the hour. Peter said nothing about obedience till they were cut to the heart (Acts 2: 37), and desired to know the way of salvation. Had the apostle begun on forms, his legalism would have left the soul in sin, in impenitence and in scorn of remission through Jesus Christ.

*Second.* While the evangelist has no right to preach forgiveness only on condition of penitent

prayer, or anything short of full obedience, neither has he any right to discourage prayer in the serious heart that has not yet obeyed. He ought rather to encourage it, as Peter did upon the day of Pentecost, quoting from the Prophet—"It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Here is prayer by those not saved, Joel 2: 32, Acts 2: - 21. Also the history of Paul's conversion shows that the Lord Jesus looked down with approbation upon his long continued prayer before he was baptized, for "behold he prayeth" (Acts 9: 11). The saying, "We know that God heareth not sinners" (John 9: 31), though not spoken by inspiration, is strictly true, for the same verse shows it relates to those who are not "worshippers of God." The thief, the drunkard, the debauchee need not pray, but the penitent, contrite heart, seeking a due preparation of soul that he may be able to cast himself upon the Lord as he ought, will never be turned empty away. True penitence will always pray, especially if encouraged thereto by the true minister of Christ. The history of church members, if known to-day, would not only prove that those who have prayed before baptism pray more afterwards than those who have not, but would also prove that those who never prayed before, have seldom prayed much since. To this, of course, there are many exception; but the rule,



it is believed, is as stated, and happy are they who have been taught to pray from their youth.

*Third.* A very successful minister, a few years ago, was trying to move a moralist to obey the gospel, when the gentleman assured him that he had always tried to do right, to be kind to the poor, to be honest and true to all. "Very well," said the minister, "but that is not all you must do; you must confess the name of Christ before men, and be baptized for the remission of sins." Such teaching as this is fraught with great danger to the soul, because it seemed simply to add confession and baptism to the other "works of righteousness which he had done," from all of which, when performed, he might feel pretty rich in legal righteousness and lean very little upon the mercy of God. So many good works as he credited himself with, with confession and baptism added thereto, was enough to merit salvation, without much help from Christ. It is sometimes difficult for the evangelist to avoid fostering self-righteousness in the very soul he is trying to save. He must be careful to teach that "good works" have nothing to do with remission of sins, are *no part of the conditions of pardon*; that while "good works" are not to be repented of, the *sins* committed must be repented of and pardoned all the same, and on the same conditions as if no "good works" had been performed; that a man cannot

atone for disobeying God's law by obeying the law of the land, paying his taxes, etc., and that as the debt incurred in the purchase of one piece of property is not paid off by paying cash for another, so sin committed at one time is not cancelled by doing right at another time. The truth is, we were all under *sin*—which is *debt*—*debt* due to Justice whose claims must never be compromised. Jesus was able to take up our bonds and hold them for us in everlasting love, never intending to ask us for the pay. Justice first held our bonds, now Mercy holds them. Justice always demands a settlement and the pay; Mercy never does. Jesus simply claims our love and gratitude, instead of the pay. In the exchange of creditors, from Justice to Mercy, we have exchanged punishment for Mercy, hell for heaven, and death for life, and for this reason "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed" (1 Cor. 16: 22), and no self-righteous moralist ever loves the Lord.

In illustration of the passage just quoted, some may remember a newspaper account of one of those appalling accidents that used to occur more frequently than now at Niagara Falls. Near the suspension bridge, on the United States side, stood a flouring mill on top of the bank, that was operated by an iron shaft running down to the river's edge, which was turned by means of the swift cur-

rent let in on the buckets attached thereto. An incautious young man, sitting on the fixtures that turned the waters on said buckets, became dizzy by looking at the rapid waters rushing by his side, and fell over into the river. Instantly caught by the mad stream, he was hurried downward with scarcely time to sink, and was lodged upon the point of a rock projecting above the waters below the bridge. The bank was two or three hundred feet above him on the perpendicular rock, near the side of which he hung without hope. Horror-stricken people gathered at both ends of the bridge, but no arm mighty enough to save the lost. How any one could descend those hundreds of feet of perpendicular adamant, was the problem. But in due time *a man* appears—an ex-sailor, used to such dangers, strong, brave and withal a sympathizing heart—quickly made a rope ladder, fastened it to a tree above, threw it over the precipice, and down he went with dauntless courage, in the presence of all the people, reached the waters edge, threw himself out a few feet to the rock, managed to get the frail, exhausted burden upon his back and swing back to the wall. The spectators were almost breathless and pulseless, as they beheld this noble piece of God's handiwork starting hand over hand up that dangerous steep—what if his strong frame should become exhausted, or a knot in the rope ladder slip,

and all fall back into fearful death below! But when the last step was made, the danger passed and the noble fellow laid down his prize in safety upon the grass, the people tried to shout but could not, for it took some time to catch their breath, to shed their tears and to admire the "Hero of the Falls." The application is easy, for of all the tumult of feelings that struggled with the multitude, one sentiment we may well be assured rose dominant over all the rest—that if the young man did not thereafter and ever honor and love his benefactor, no one should ever risk his life for him again—that if he now "loved not" the hero of the Falls "let him be accursed" for his soul would be too mean to live among men. So "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed." Mark it; Paul does not say "if any man *hate* our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed," but, if any man *fail to love him*, because he did not merely *risk* his life for us, but *lost* it, *sacrificed* it, and resolved before he left heaven to humble himself and become "exceeding sorrowful even unto death," to "endure the cross and despise the shame." And now for us, who have experienced "so great salvation," to not love the Hero of Hades would be a sin so aggravating that Heaven has not mercy enough to save us from the second death.

But there is another view of the case: The

above so far represents only those who have accepted Christ and are already saved by him. But suppose the person in this case had refused to accept help after his friend had, through so many sacrifices and dangers, reached his side. Suppose that through pride, or any other foolish notion, he had refused to lay hold of the strength that offered to deliver him from certain death; what would you say of him? If nothing more, you would have said, "*Let him die.*" Would you ever have made another descent to save him? Would you not rather have said, "There remains no more sacrifice" for him? (Heb. 10:26). Suppose he had contended that he was in no great danger, and was not convinced that he needed a Savior. Then you would say, "You *cannot* be saved, only because you *will* not, after provision has been made for you." He might have said to the aforesaid hero, "I prefer not to be dependent on any one for my rescue; I would rather work it out alone, I think if I obey the golden rule it will be sufficient, besides I've always paid my debts, and they say 'An honest man's the noblest work of God,' and I think I will depend upon my morality to help me up this precipice." Such dementation as this would be instantly perceived, and we say to the preacher "Take heed to your teaching," for such is the patient you are trying to bring to Christ to be healed. He is laboring under all

manner of hallucinations, such as hoping to be saved by sufferings, by morality, by balancing a good deed against a bad one, and by all the deceptions of legalism that have been keeping men away from the only Savior ever since the apostles offered mercy in place of justice, pardon, instead of punishment, salvation, instead of damnation; and the "Peace of God which passeth all understanding through Jesus Christ."

*The power of the Spirit.* If the minister is truly a converted man, although he is not promised any extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as inspiration, gifts of healing, and such, he is promised and will possess, to some degree, that "power from on high" (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49) which turned Peter's timidity into the boldness of a lion. When Jesus, after his baptism and temptation, returned into Galilee "in the power of the Spirit," it was not so much power to work miracles, as moral and spiritual power, that supported him unfalteringly in the face of all his foes; and every Christian, especially every preacher, should often pray for this power unto him who will "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" in all ages. How the Spirit of God can inhabit the human body and coalesce with our spirits, is a question we are not required to understand. *How* heat can dwell in metallic and other substances, we may never scientifically know, how electricity inhabits

the wires; why its molecules refuse to traverse the pores or interstices of glass when light never hesitates to do so, may all be beyond our reach. A piece of iron or steel may be magnetized by a loadstone without making any difference in its appearance—is still the same weight, same form, the same color and the same in every respect, except that it has received some kind of spirit from the natural magnet that confers upon it peculiar powers; that enables it to guide our commerce over all seas, to and from all countries on the globe. We say, that little needle is *magnetized*; but that explains nothing as to the partiality which magnetism has for the metal, nor does it explain the nature of the fluid itself—if it be a fluid. It seems to be the next thing to spirit, as if it were a kind of connecting link between the material and spiritual worlds. It ignores material laws in several respects. It is imponderable, it passes through glass as electricity, its near kinsman, will not, besides having the peculiar power to move material, ponderable bodies through space without a visible hand. The horse-shoe magnet will drag a piece of iron several inches upon the table without touching the metal; and even if a sheet of glass is interposed, it ignores the glass and drags it all the same. Magnetism has its likes and its dislikes, attracting and repelling in the most arbitrary manner, and, upon

the whole, is a great mystery to the scientific world, and promises to so remain.

Now Jude describes certain characters as "sensual, having not the Spirit" who are as different from those having "the Spirit of Christ," as unmagnetized iron is from the magnetized. God cannot use them as guides to heaven, or to anything good. They are not, and cannot be "meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." They are like the dead, powerless, motionless metal. But those who have the Spirit are "alive from the dead and their members instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6: 13). "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins" (Eph. 2: 1). If the Spirit of Christ dwell in us, He shall also by it "quicken our mortal bodies" (Rom. 8: 10), as well as our souls; but this "life of God" (Eph. 4: 18) begins in this world, and is a spiritual fellowship with God, which, continued forever, will constitute what the Bible calls "everlasting life" (Jno. 3: 33). But between "the mind of the flesh" and "the mind of the Spirit," a great chasm is begun, even in this life. It is initial heaven and hell, for the true Christian partakes of "the Divine Nature" (2 Pet. 1: 4), and is a "partaker of his holiness." "Hope maketh us not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy Spirit* which is given



unto us" (Rom. 5: 4). The love of God in our hearts is not brought about by intellectual culture, by arguments, nor by any mental gymnastics that, by friction, might warm one idea against another, for the Holy Spirit is the *cause* of love in our hearts, as surely as fire in the stove is the 'cause of radiation, and hence, the command stands unreversed and irreversible—"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 38). This "gift of the Holy Spirit" is not a donation by the Holy Spirit, but it is the Holy Spirit itself, for God "gives the Holy Spirit to all them that obey him" (Acts 5: 32). The gift of a dollar is the dollar itself. It is the objective genitive, and not the subjective genitive, as when we say, "The gift of God is eternal life." Even so, when Jesus ascended, "He gave gifts unto men"—not miraculous gifts, but *good men*. Some of these gifts were apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4: 11), through whom "remission of sins" and "the gift of the Holy Spirit" were preached to the world.

To all preachers of the gospel, then, does the exhortation come with unusual force—"Take heed" that you have the Spirit of Christ to nourish the life of God that is *in you*, and to be

“strengthened with might by His spirit,” and to see that you so preach “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” that those who hear you may not have a mere “form of godliness,” but whose lives will be a chronic denial of the power thereof. See that you not only lay the true foundation in their hearts; but that no wood, hay, or stubble be built thereon, and so “thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good teaching, whereunto thou hast attained” (1 Tim. 4: 6). Therefore, to repeat our text, “Take heed unto thyself and to the teaching; continue in them, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee” (1 Tim; 4: 16.)

## CHAPTER II.

### PREPARATION OF SERMONS—FOR WHOM.

The best preparation for preparing sermons is the conversion and spiritual mindedness of the preacher, as intimated in the previous chapter. A mellow heart in sympathy with the weary and heavy laden of mankind, can scarcely fail in preparing sermons to meet their real wants, and happy is the preacher who knows the

*Heart wants of the congregation.* Beware of treating mere *subjects* as such, that may meet no want of the soul, that may lift no burden, comfort no heart, nor enlighten any mind on questions that lie in their way. It is true that young ministers who have not had time to fill their minds with varied knowledge and experience, will always, the first few years, be compelled to preach such truths as they can handle, whether they are very well adapted to the audience or not, but if he is a praying man and a close student of the Bible, and of the heart-aches it alone can ease, he will, in a short time, have explored territory enough to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" to many a needy soul. To illustrate; here comes a

poor woman to church on Sunday morning, who has been nearly worn out during the week in trying to provide for her little orphan children. She sits down, hoping to hear some blessed promise of the Savior about the "rest that remains for the people of God," or the saying of David, "Though I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me." She enjoys the "Rock of ages cleft for me," and the "Hungry and faint and poor, Behold us, Lord again;" but unfortunately for her, the sermon is a refutation of the *development theory*, a reply to Ingersoll, or a verbal criticism of some difficult passage of Scripture. She assumes this was all right, and that the sermon must have been a good thing, though it did her no especial good. She returns to her daily and hourly trials, un comforted, un strengthened. It is not assumed that every want, or even the most of them, can be met in any single sermon. The duty we are illustrating is that the preacher ought to study all heart wants, and meet them the best way he can, and as many of them as he can, from time to time. The sermon that would send said poor sister rejoicing to her home, might sadly disappoint some penitent one who came to hear what else he ought to do to become a Christian and a member of the church, and these, with all similar cases, emphasize the importance of teaching "from house to house" in order to become

acquainted with the wants of the world, and especially of the community where you may be laboring.

*Why they do not Come Forward.* If preachers had more personal conversation with those who attend their ministry from year to year, but do not confess the Lord, they would better understand the reasons thereof. Then, besides his private instructions, he would know better how to shape his sermons to bring them to Christ. The obstructions in their way may be very trifling, but are sufficient to hinder them, and can never be found out without personal contact with them. One has the keenest sense of his sins and unworthiness, and fears that he would but disgrace the church were he in it; another is self-righteous, and has never been convinced of sin; another is simply too timid to come to the front; another is ashamed before his old comrades to join the church, but all need a kind word of encouragement or warning from him who is seeking to save their souls.

*Authenticity of the Bible.* But here is one that is beset with none of these troubles, and yet, is sorely troubled about the *authenticity of the Bible*. He needs a set of Sunday night lectures, the material for which may be found in "Horne's Introduction;" the "History of the Transmission of Ancient Books" by Isaac Taylor; "Hins-

dales Four Gospels," "Rawlinsons' Historical Evidences" drawn from the excavations and researches among ancient cities in the East and Horæ, Paulinæ—these, and such like works, will furnish you with a whole armory of defensive weapons, and just the kind to meet much of the scepticism of to-day. Study them thoroughly, use the blackboard, and give special invitations to those you know need such information, and they will appreciate the masculinity of your arguments. This class of community are generally of the more intelligent people, and cannot be moved by dawdling sentimentalism. You must carry the fortifications by storm, without begging the question in any way, and command the surrender of every "high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." There must be no lack of manfulness here, no craving for quarters, no compromise; and if you find you cannot defend the Bible from infidel assaults, be honest enough to quite the pulpit, get out of the way, and leave it to those who can.

*Divinity of Christ.* Another class of hearers for whom sermons must be prepared will occasionally be found, who doubt the divinity of Christ—do not doubt that the Bible claims that distinction for him, but hesitate on philosophic grounds. It seems to them inconsistent, if not absurd, to predicate two natures—a human and a divine—in

one person. This trouble is not met by quoting Scriptures, because this leaves them in the belief that you abandon philosophy to them. While we do not consider it a question to be settled by philosophy, there are certain casts of mind that need to be shown at least that their philosophy is not sound; and it is well to let them see that the divinity and humanity of Christ united, is no more unthinkable than the union of a human spirit with a human body, for that is *duality in unity*. Nor is it any more unthinkable than the four systems that go to make up a physical body—the osseous, the muscular, the venous and the nervous systems—which constitute what might be called a *quadrinity*, or four in one. As to analogies in nature, nothing is more common than to see elements of totally distinct qualities chemically united into a *tertium quid*—a third something—different in every respect from either of its component parts. The oxygen and hydrogen gases bear no resemblance to water, although they are the chief elements that compose it. We do not say that this illustrates the mysterious union of the divine and human in Christ, but that the one is no more unthinkable or inconsistent than the other, which is a fair logical offset to the only argument they can produce against the phenomenon of “God manifest in the flesh.” Remember that you can accept no view of the divinity of

Christ which either affirms, or implies that he did not come down from heaven, that he was not "with the Father before the world was," that "he was in the beginning with God and was God" and that "all things were made by him." To drop a stitch at this point is fatal to the whole web, as has been verified by modern Unitarians whose first admission that Jesus, though a man of phenomenal greatness and purity; was nevertheless a created being—an admission that has dwindled his claims with many of their communities to that of being merely a good man with virtues exceptionally high and pure. But this robs him of all that is called God, destroys the atonement, denies the resurrection, and ruins all legitimate hope of salvation through him. "Take heed to your teaching" all along this line, for without this central truth, theology is but a corpse, "your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins."

*Formalism and Transcendentalism.* No man can even begin to prepare a sermon that can benefit the people, till he knows their faith, their unbeliefs and disbeliefs. He needs to know also some thing of the various shades of theological thought among them. *Formalism* will honor God with its lips, while the heart is far from him, will confess with the mouth, without faith in the soul, will be buried in baptism, but not "buried with Christ," because Christ is not in them. Formalism will



count beads, repeat forty-year old, thread-bare prayers, sing without the spirit, eat the Lord's Supper without remembering him; while on the other hand, Transcendentalism denies the necessity of any form to aid our approach to God. With this part of your audience, neither the church nor any of its ordinances are needful to our fellowship with God, to whom they profess to go without any such aids whatever. This is what Theodore Parker and others call the *Absolute Religion*. They profess to enjoy a pure spiritual communion with God without the aid of a Mediator, or his church, his word, or any such pretended helps to the soul. They claim that they enjoy the substance of religion without its forms, forgetting that all substantial food is found in the forms of food. The substance of bread is obtained from the form of bread; and so of all food. So, without the forms of religion—without Christ's body, his preaching, his church, his "*form* of sound words," the "*form* of teaching," Christian assemblies, the Lord's day, the Lord's Supper, baptism and such like forms—there would be no religion in the world. Had there been no church organization after the day of Pentecost, a few decades would have thrown Christ so far into the rear, that he would now have been ranked in history along with Thendas, Judas, and other Jewish malcontents of that day. We must have "the form of

Godliness" as well as "the power thereof," (2 Tim. 3: 5), and the exposure of such errors, where they exist, furnishes a good opportunity to present the whole truth in a full, rounded view of "all the counsel of God." Man is not made up of mere spirit, nor of mere body; but of a body and spirit, and the same is true of religion, for it consists of the spirit of God in the spirits of men, with a body consisting of all the forms and activities necessary to carry on the work of saving and edifying the soul, and when Paul exhorts us to "take heed to our teaching," it includes both what we ought to commend as true, and what we should resist as false.

*The Plain Truth.* While it is important to correct these and other errors in the public mind, which often stick like a cork in the bottle to prevent the ingress of truth, the preacher's main chance to enlighten the mind is in presenting the straight-forward facts of the gospel. Draw the straight line of truth, that the deviations of error may be measured thereby. The windings of a crooked path can best be perceived by an adjacent straight one. Truth is proportional and symmetrical, and is best understood when seen as a whole, and not in fragments and sections thereof. To explain the different dispensations as the star-light, moon-light and sun-light stages of revelation, to fix Pentecost as the beginning of the new

church, to show the difference between the law and the gospel, the shadows and the realities, will sometimes do more to create faith in Jesus Christ and in the Bible, than any argument directed against any particular error or unbelief. The apostles depended chiefly on preaching the facts concerning sin and the Savior. Spurgeon says he seldom states infidel objections in order to refute them, for to hearts wanting an excuse, said objections may seem stronger than your answers, and will do nothing but harm. He says the great duty of the preacher is to "inculcate," go ahead and affirm it, say it, teach it and "inculcate it," without stopping to prove what has been proved often enough, and when sinners believe with the whole heart, and confess with the mouth, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins, just as if the doctrine of the Cross never had been doubted and never could be.

*Impracticable Religion.* In preparing sermons for young Christians, or for those not well advanced in divine life, the preacher should be careful not to set up a rule of Christian life that may discourage them. If it is *very* high, they feel unable to reach it and refuse to try. It is too common to use extravagant language in describing Christian life; they must have a "*burning zeal*," a "*flame of love*" and a "*restless anxiety*" to

save sinners. They must be "perfect, even as the Father who is in heaven is perfect," they must "pray without ceasing," they must "rejoice ever more," they must be "filled with all the fullness of God"—these, and all such measureless ideals that were intended to be aimed at as *finalia* rather than as immediate attainments to the full, are often held up to the utter disheartening of conscientious, tender souls, who retire from the church with less comfort and less hope than when they went. Christians must not be expected to leap from the lowest to the highest round in the ladder at a single bound. We must be content with a little at first, we must nourish whatever faith and attainments they already possess, and say, "Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3: 16). Many conscientious Christians have their doubts and misgivings, at best, as to their own standing before God, and need instruction and encouragement. The Bible recognizes the need of "comfort," and often says, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words," "I will not leave you comfortless," and words to that effect. God never authorized any minister to demand of mortals an angel walk through this world. He only wants us to be good mortals. The unwisdom of these ideal demands upon tender hearts is like that which some par-

ents make upon their children—"You must be a little man. You must be a little woman," when the proper thing is to let them be little boys and little girls. Let them alone, or by such overstrain, you discourage and dwarf their powers, and keep them "little" all their days. Give weak Christians a fair chance, give them the food they need, don't put religion out of their reach, and they will grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ" (2 Pet. 3: 18).

## CHAPTER III.

### ACQUIRING MATERIAL FOR SERMONS.

*General reading.* Whoever will study the Bible daily and carefully, without direct reference to sermons, will be so filled with its spirit and thought that material for more sermons than he can prepare or have occasion to deliver will fill his daily memoranda. One minister formed a habit of reading and thoroughly studying a portion of the Old Testament, and also of the New, every day, and declared he had more to say to the people than he had time to say. His studies were without reference to sermons directly, but he got clues to many that required comparatively little study to complete, because the whole connection of the text already studied furnished matter profitable for the congregation. Study for your own sake, to increase your own knowledge and love, and the most of what profits you will profit your congregation. The temptation, however, always presents itself to think of its applicability to the church, before we absorb it for our own use. Bishop Simpson once wrote that whenever he came upon a precious truth that could be so valuable

for home consumption, he found himself giving it, in thought, away to his congregation before preaching it to himself. If the preacher can read the text in some other language, or even in some new translation, he will find it helpful in throwing his mind out of the old forms of expression, which often brings up new forms of thought.

What is meant by studying carefully may be illustrated thus, where something historical is involved—The Pharisees sent to Jesus their disciples “with the Herodians,” to entrap him in his speech. Now, suppose you are reading this passage in Matt. 22:17, and you feel that if you were asked to give some account of the *Herodians* you could not do so very well. This will drive you to your Smith’s Bible Dictionary, or some such work, to read up their history, and when done, you will feel glad that no one asked you while ignorant of their political status. But reading about the Herodians will necessarily create a desire to know something, if not all, about the Herods; and after hours of close study, you will return to Matt. 22:17, feeling that you understand it better than ever before. Henceforth you will be ignorant neither of the Herods, nor of the Herodians, with which but few men are familiar, unless they have had the necessary advantages. All this side study, while the Bible is lying on the table, is really studying the Bible itself, and does

the people no harm, if you explain to them briefly what you have so recently learned yourself.

Again, you are studying your Old Testament lesson, and in Exodus, 14th chapter, read of Israel's crossing the Red Sea. As the Bible account of this wonderful act of divine power is the only one you have ever seen, you are led to ask what other historical evidences are there, if any, to the same facts. You think of Josephus, and besides other things of interest, you read his work against Apion, and learn something about Manetho and the shepherd kings. But as Manetho was 1200 years too late to be an eye witness to the triumph at the Red Sea, you push your inquiries back to all that can be known of Egyptian history from their hieroglyphics and their mummy kings, among whom you find some of the very actors in the oppressions of Israel in Egypt, and though without the aid of any contemporaneous history of that day, which was eleven hundred years before Herodotus, you return to Exodus convinced that it contains a true history of that far away event.

Again, you will be reading about the crowd pressing Peter's house inside and out, when a company came and went to the top of it, tore up the roof and let down the paralytic into the presence of the Lord, to be healed—a capital text, but



before beginning your sermon you would find it interesting to trace the travels of Jesus on the map from place to place, and see the circumstances under which he came here to Capernaum. You would also find it interesting to the people to briefly point out that journey on the map, for it would prepare them much better to follow your discourse. This would refresh your mind on the geography of his travels generally, and create a habit of knowing everything about your subject, and would lead to a close analysis of the spiritual truths in the text. \* For instance, the case of the paralytic shows that men are often mistaken as to their real wants. This poor fellow and his friends thought the main thing he needed was the healing of his body, but, after all their painstaking, it must have surprised them to see Jesus ignore his paralysis at first and go straight to the disease of his soul, saying "thy sins be forgiven thee;" This will open a fruitful field of thought and illustration to show in how many things men are mistaken, and how gladly we should rely upon the wisdom of the great Physician as our only safe guide through all the intricacies of life.

Upon the whole, then, we recommend the study of the Bible in a general way, without special reference to sermons, as one of the most prolific methods of acquiring material for a vast variety of sermons. Unless special occasions call for spec-

ial studies to prepare special sermons, it is a poor plan to take up isolated verses and try to carve out sermons that anybody will care to listen to, or be edified by, for they are apt to be angular, dry, tedious and unprofitable.

*Secret Prayer.* After the mind is filled with the necessary knowledge and all arranged in proper order with proof and illustration, there is great need of a season of secret prayer and meditation to fitly dispose the heart for the pulpit. Such has been the practice of all ministers who have ever been of much use to the world. George Whitefield, it is said, usually spent an hour in prayer just before going into the pulpit, and no wonder his tongue was loosed and his face aglow, somewhat as was the face of Moses coming down from the Mount of God. The experience of all good preachers is that, often after the most careful preparation of mind, their sermons are partial failures, not seeming to meet anybody's spiritual wants, and generally, if they will carefully scrutinize the circumstances, they will find that the neglect of a prayerful preparation of their own hearts was the main cause of the failure. In many cases, had he upon his knees asked himself, "what good am I to accomplish by presenting this or that thought or argument," he would have found that it would neither convict the sinner nor comfort the saint, nor send any one home the bet-

ter for having heard it. During such a season of self-examination, he will likely lay aside all such cold and formal arguments, and substitute others that will rouse the conscience and purify the heart. So, then, let every preacher pray before entering the pulpit, that he may have "a door of utterance," that he may "open his mouth boldly" when he undertakes to "preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."

*In the pulpit*, a neat personal appearance is not the chief preparation, though it should never be neglected. Let all clearing of the voice, coughing, expectorating, and such like, be attended to before entering the chapel. Have no water upon the stand, and never contract the habit of drinking before the people and during your sermon. Besides having no edification in it, it gives time for a cold wave to pass between you and the audience. No speaker that uses his voice aright needs moisture for his throat during an address of ordinary length.

*Make your announcements* just before beginning the sermon, and speak so that all can hear every word. Do not hold your head downward and speak to a few around you. Let your first word be heard all over the house as distinctly as your last one, and be sure to avoid the slovenly and unpardonable habit of dropping your voice at the last of a sentence, so that several final words

are entirely inaudible. No man has a right to claim the attention of an audience who is too indolent to sustain an audible enunciation throughout every sentence. In reading the Scriptures, many a minister begins with such a feeble unmanful voice that he is half through the chapter before all the people are able to hear him. This is mere trifling with an audience, and misusing them, for they did not assemble to witness his vocal lassitude. Instead thereof, there should be a manfulness of enunciation in reading the Scriptures that will overcome any little noise or rustling in the house, and quickly gain the attention of all. This is of so much importance as to call out the following from the *Sunday-school Times* :—

“Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing as well as it can be done; and nothing can be done as well without acquired skill, as with it. The reading or the giving of notices in the pulpit, or in the superintendent’s desk, is a little matter in its way, but the difference in its doing marks the distinction between the man of thoroughness and the man of sloth. One man knows beforehand just what notices he is to give, and just the manner in which he is to give them; and he is as careful in their expression as in his reading of a hymn or in his announcing of a Bible text. Another man is not quite sure what he has to

announce, or how he is to announce it, until he makes the bungling public attempt in that line; and then his halting manner and his slovenly ways mar the unity of the service, and put him at a disadvantage before all his hearers. In preparing for the Sunday service, a pastor or a superintendent ought to give due attention to, and if necessary, he ought to practice himself in, the making of his announcements, however few or many, however important or unimportant they may be; for until he is ready to do this work intelligently and with ease, he is not fitted for his place in the pulpit or in the desk." And this pantomime of moving the lips, head and hands before any audience, is more reprehensible before a religious assembly than any other, because the people often lose a whole sentence by the loss of three words.

*Tobacco in the Pulpit.* No minister that would ever use tobacco in the pulpit, be it done ever so furtively, should expect to be tolerated by people of good taste. He should not use it anywhere, and so set a bad example before people's boys; but in the pulpit especially he should be a gentleman above criticism. Never hunt for appropriate hymns in the pulpit. Do that as a part of your preparation. Know all about your announcements also beforehand, and don't go around to the elders before the congregation, consulting about

business that should have been understood before. Do not make a habit of talking with any one while the congregation are singing. Better have a hymn book and sing with them. Never say "Let us have another song while the people are gathering," "As the people are not all here yet, please sing another song." It makes the impression that singing is not worship, but only pastime. You never say, "As the people are not all here yet, we'll have another prayer." Be careful not to make the impression that any of the opening exercises are merely introductory and conventional. Better often remind them that whether we read, sing, or pray, it is all worship.

*Public rebukes* should seldom be administered. Better see the young person privately, and in the gentlest manner intimate that he probably forgot himself the other night, and when he sees you were careful to protect him from public censure, he will respect you the more, and will feel that you are his friend. Be sure at the same time to let him feel how glad you are to have him attend church, and ask him to introduce you to the young friends that come to church with him, and you may, instead of gratifying a little bad temper at the time, win all these young people for Christ. Nor can it be thought necessary to form a habit of adjusting your necktie, of brushing your coat, or of lounging in the pulpit, either on the sofa or on

the desk. Remember that the best way to avoid all mistakes and to make all proprieties easy and natural to you, is not to study good manners before the glass so much as first of all to see whether you are a true servant of God and are working for his honor in the salvation of men. This being settled, a fair degree of attention to the ordinary rules of good conduct will put you beyond the reach of harmful criticism, for it will in due time expel from your mind all the more damaging faults here and elsewhere named. Still, there are faults that will show themselves occasionally, even where Christ reigns without a rival. A good man may be embarrassed in the pulpit for want of knowing what is and what is not proper, and the object of being so specific in pointing out such apparent trifles, is to help young preachers as to the very items that are so often passed over. For instance, the writer recently heard an excellent sermon delivered by an excellent Christian gentleman, who was exceedingly anxious to pronounce every syllable distinctly, and had a peculiar habit of overdoing it by making three syllables out of certain words of only two syllables. The word *hundred* was always pronounced *hundered*, and the word *children* was uniformly *childeren* which, though not a very fatal blunder, laid him liable to the suspicion of a little affectation. Another very good man, being desirous of

having sufficient variety of topics in the pulpit, announced that his subject for the next Sunday would be "Vaccination." The criticism upon this was that although Paul preached and wrote to the people to whom this word (*vaccina*) was vernacular, he was never at such a loss for topics as to need it, and that if the minister referred to had studied the Bible for material for the pulpit, he would not have resorted to this little piece of innocence to "attract." Never try to roll the *R* in the pulpit.

*Apostolic Modesty.* It is refreshing to read how the apostle Matthew, and others of them, tried to turn away attention from themselves and to fix it wholly upon the Christ. Soon after Jesus had called Matthew, this publican, also named Levi, "made him a great feast in his own house," but you would never find out who did it from anything said about it by himself, for in Matt. 9: 10, he only says, "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat *in the house*, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples"—it was simply "*in the house*." But in Mark 2: 14, after describing the calling of Matthew, it is said that "as Jesus sat at meat *in his house*, many publicans and sinners sat also with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many and they followed him." Mark could with propriety say what Matthew chose not to say, but when we come to



Luke (5: 29), he could afford to say that "*Levi made him a great feast*, and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with him," showing that when we are animated by the divine Spirit, being made "partakers of the divine nature," we do not seek our own honor, but the honor of him that sent us. Solomon says, "to seek one's own glory is not glory," for the slightest indication of egotism in a minister becomes a heavy discount upon his influence for good. In this instance, Matthew, by not praising himself, has sent his praise down through all the centuries of time." Such was his sanctified spirit that he not only refused to praise himself in writing, but we may assume the same modesty in his preaching; for he must have been a man that would not "rack up and down the platform, and show them all his gaits," for his gaze was fixed upon a worthier person than himself. Nor is it sufficient to avoid the "I," for the makeshift "we" may contain just as much self-laudation under the guise of modesty; but when a preacher is wholly consecrated to Christ, no accidental misuse of words will do him any harm.

*Criticising Prayers.* There is a species of indelicacy, or at least impropriety, more easily felt than defined, in criticising, or even in making suggestions about the manner of, public prayer, when offered by true Christians. Jesus criticised

the public prayers of hypocrites, and gave directions to his disciples to guide them in the closet, but no passage comes to mind in which he directed the manner of public praying on the part of his own people. It would seem to be a kind of meddling in a thing too sacred, or a danger of turning aside the thought from the Son himself to mere proprieties. The same undefined impropriety presents itself to a highly sensitive nature, in printing *sample prayers* for the instruction of others, and yet there are some mistakes that ought to be pointed out in order to prevent their repetition. If a good young preacher falls into set phrases and useless repetitions of certain words, to the damage of his ministrations, it is but an act of brotherly kindness to mention it to him. It would always be better to name any such mistake to himself privately. This we have always found to be best, and, if he be a good man, the most successful way; but as many a one hesitates to make so free with others, the mistake passes uncorrected for years, and this necessitates some other way of reaching those who need it. For instance, a very good young minister was offering a heartfelt, fervent prayer in the pulpit, and used the expression—"Our heavenly Father" at the beginning of almost every alternate sentence—about thirty times in all before he closed. How kind it would be if any brother minister, or

any disciple of Christ, brother or sister, would take occasion to say to him privately—"We are all glad that you propose devoting your life to the preaching of the gospel of Christ, for we believe you will do much good in the world. Try to improve yourself in every way, both in the pulpit and out of it. I noticed, this morning, in your prayer that you repeated the phrase, "Our heavenly Father," in almost every other sentence, but you can soon correct yourself in such habits as may diminish your usefulness." In some such way you can cure without crushing. On other occasions, it may be manifest to an experienced Christian that the young minister, either through neglect or haste in other preparations, has spent little or no time in private prayer before coming to the pulpit. This will be seen in the fact that his prayer is mechanical, and made up somewhat of set phrases, or borrowed ideas, and in the fact that it has but little power to reach the wants of the heart. This is a misfortune, and any true friend of his, if he did not wish to approach him directly, could speak of the habits of distinguished men of God who never went to their pulpits without a precious season in preparing *the heart* before God, in humble prayer, for spiritual "power from on high," that they, in preaching Christ, "might speak boldly as they ought to speak." This would be a proper time to empha-

size the fact that all true power in public prayer or in family prayer is acquired in previous private prayer. Such is the experience of all true Christians, for there must be a beaten path between our souls and the Lord before we undertake to lead others to the throne of grace. Otherwise, public prayer will be a mere performance to which the Lord can pay no attention whatever, in whatever words it may be presented. If the Lord could be entertained by any human performance, he could find better ones almost anywhere.

*Difficulty in Public Prayer.* This brings us to the most difficult part of our duty in public prayer: that is, *to keep the mind on God* and not on the people, nor on ourselves. In the closet this is not difficult, for there the audience, as well as ourselves, retire out of sight and the soul communes with God alone. But it is useless to say there is no trouble in this matter, when our minds may be distracted by any little inaccuracy of speech or any temporary loss of words, and by the consciousness that some in the congregation may be sympathizing with us, while others criticise. To be unable to hold the mind steadfastly on God through all this and beyond all obstructions to thought, and to ask for the things we desire of him, is by no means unpardonable, but should be overcome by the proper preparation in the closet. There is no other way of securing that "liberty,"

either in preaching, or in prayer, because it is only by having this fellowship with God that we can be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3: 17-18). And whenever we all thus "with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," we will find less difficulty in leading a whole congregation to the throne of grace; we will find fewer mistakes in ourselves, and much less disposition in the congregation to criticise anything that may seem to them exceptional. This previous conference with the Lord will enable us to come into his all absorbing presence, and our people with us, without distraction to the right or to the left. All other resorts are vain as aids to prayer before and with the church of God. As the generic arrangement for lifting all the nocturnal miasmata from the earth is to let the sun pour down its light and heat in the morning, so the generic plan for banishing many a blunder from our ministrations in the pulpit is to let "the Sun of righteousness arise" upon our souls, "with healing on his wings." So strong was this impression made upon Paul's mind, that he considered that the ordinary possession of the Spirit of God guided his judgment even in secular matters, where no inspiration was claimed. Giv-

ing directions to the Corinthian church as to certain domestic interests, he says, "But she is happier if she so abide, *after my judgment*, and I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 9: 40). The inference seems clear that his having the Spirit of God, as other Christians, clarified his natural "judgment" as to the proprieties of things in common life, and there can be no reasonable doubt that the pure in heart have clearer "judgments," less liable to be clouded with sin, than those who are subject to "the works of the flesh." And so with the preacher in the pulpit and everywhere; he will be less liable to criticism, because the spirit of Christ in him will give him finer moral perceptions and will guide him into such a ministerial deportment as will be approved of both God and men.

With such a preparation of head and heart for the pulpit, and with the observance of such proprieties, and the possession of such a Spirit in it, you can risk a proper delivery of the sermon. As to the study of Homiletics, and all that pertains thereto, the preacher is referred to the work of Broadbush and others, who do not treat the details of ministerial life and labors into which we enter here. Let no student of the Bible under-estimate the value of the careful study of Exegesis, Hermeneutics and all that belongs to style of delivery, but let every minister know assuredly that though

he may have studied and even mastered all the mechanical parts of "Preparation and delivery of sermons," two other achievements must be reached—1st. He must, by fellowship with God, attain to (not the miraculous, but) the spiritual "power from on high," that gave the apostles their boldness on the day of Pentecost. "Spiritual gifts" did not necessarily make the preacher bold, for bad men, even Judas, possessed them (Matt. 7: 21-22), but every Christian may be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," (Eph. 6: 10). 2d. He must be acquainted with the people and understand the details of his work in all directions. With such qualifications, the "Man of God" will be "thoroughly furnished unto every good work" in the pulpit. He will not be one of those "holy lumps of ice," nor will his chapel ever be converted into a Sunday dormitory.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PREACHERS OUT OF THE PULPIT.

*Their General Character.* The number of ministers in the United States is over 80,000, and the per cent. of them that fall into any disgrace is exceedingly small, although the noise that is made over each unfortunate, and the ringing of all the bells kept up by the secular semi-infidel press, would indicate that the number is very large. More than this, we can say that the number of ministers that are guilty of slight improprieties is very small. Most of them are men of humble piety, Christian gentlemen of the highest order, and the various caveats issued by the Christian press, pointing out every trifling fault into which some have fallen and others might fall, only show how a sensitive and refined Christianity would guard her public defenders from unnecessary censure—being well assured that the men of the pulpit are the defenders of the church, without whom Christianity would soon disappear from the earth. When Philip of Macedon was trying to conquer the Athenians, he found their orators, who were constantly nerving the people to resist him,



were his greatest enemies. He therefore proposed to them that if they would give up their orators to him, he would make peace with them and defend them against all comers. They mentioned it to Demosthenes, who replied,—“That’s what the wolf said to the sheep: Give me up your watch dogs, and I will protect you.” This tells the reason why the Devil is so anxious to disgrace the preachers, well knowing that the church would perish if the ministry were all banished from their pulpits. Now, as much of their success depends upon their bearing as “men of God” among the people, the following points are made for such as may need a little caution along this line:

*A Man Among Men.* It is generally admitted that the preacher, above all others, should be many-sided, not only as to meeting all classes in the church, but men everywhere. Should he fall into company with an astronomer and had never heard of the *Nebular Hypothesis* of creation, it would not prove that he does not understand the gospel, but the astronomer would be liable to conclude that a man of so little reading might be uncultured and narrow as to religion, and might refuse to hear him preach. Should he meet an intelligent physician, and know nothing of anatomy and physiology, of the circulatory system, nor of the number of bones in the body, nor of the revelations of the microscope, he would have less

influence with that doctor than if he had shown himself a man of some general information. If he has been reared chiefly in the city, he need not be a child when he goes into the country. So, in his own town, city or county, he should be known as a good *citizen* that pays his taxes and votes, especially on all issues involving a moral principle, but avoiding all primary elections and political squabbles of every kind. He should lay aside all that backwardness that prevents many ministers from forming the acquaintance of business men of all kinds. He is expected to call at places of business, not obtrusively, of course, nor to always introduce the subject of religion; but to form, it may be but a hasty acquaintance; and if he wish to call where he sees no other excuse for it, he can purchase a pencil or some other article, during which transaction he will have formed a small business relation that will be of use some other day. Many of these same business men are Christians, or their families may belong to your church, and will be glad to know that a real, manful preacher is to be a helper to his children in the Sunday-school and church. A wise minister will be careful never to detain such a one very long during business hours, but a few minutes well spent will open the way for future good.

*Study Hours and Visiting* The difficulty of maintaining any regular hours for study is well

known to all pastors, for calls from the sick, calls for funerals, and many other duties, will inevitably break up all such arrangements occasionally, and yet the pulpit *must not be neglected*. No amount of faithful pastoral labor during the week will atone for a poor, unprepared, unstudied sermon on Sunday. Nor will the grandest pulpit ministrations atone for neglecting the people at their homes; and it is no easy task to so divide the time that the one or the other will not be partially neglected. This may happen, not only because of the great demands in both directions, but because the preacher may become so interested in his books that he will soon be disposed to give them the preference; and he may become so interested in the people and see so much to do by pastoral visits that he will lose the habit of studying, and so begin to fall below the demands of the pulpit; so that rigid economy of time and a watchful distribution of the same to the various duties of a pastor's life become a most important care. As the best methods of study have been taught in colleges and schools and in many books, and will need no attention here, we will proceed to give some directions as to

*Pastoral Visits.* The very first requisite to success in this work is a heart of sympathy—sympathy for mankind; such a love as will incline you to help them. There is no use in troubling

oneself about the *feeling* or emotion of love more than will induce you to do what you can for their good. Love may at one time consist in a quiet *affection* for another, and at another, it may rise to an *emotion*. Wind is atmosphere in motion, but the atmosphere was there before it was put into motion. Even a mother's love for her child may at times be a mere potency, ready to be developed into the strongest emotion when she sees it fall into sudden danger; and so the preacher is not to imagine that he is destitute of love for his people because his emotions are not always astir, for as your love for God will always be satisfactory to him when you are trying to obey him, so will you always possess sufficient affection for the souls of men when you are trying to do them good. If we possess no such love for them, we ought to suspect our own conversion, for "whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." A young minister once said to the writer, "I don't enjoy visiting the poor, ignorant people; they are no company for me." I ventured to remind him that Jesus might have said the same about visiting this world, for we are infinitely farther below him than these ignorant people are below us. It is not likely he enjoyed our company much, for he was the loneliest person that ever stepped this earth. Nor is it likely that the Holy Spirit, nor even the angels,

enjoy our society very much, and like them we must work for the good of others and not merely try to please ourselves. So, love first, and then work.

*Your Pocket Register.* The next thing to do is to write off the names of all the members of your church upon your pocket memorandum—all, whether zealous, or lukewarm, old or young, good or bad, for if they are good and earnest, you should encourage and counsel with them about the work. If they are the most indifferent professors, they need your kind attention all the more, for perhaps you will find they never before enjoyed a minister's visit to their houses since they were baptized; they neglected the church and, as no one ever came to see them about it, their lives became unworthy of their profession, and no one seemed to care. Then you should write on another page the names of all who have ever been excluded from the church and are still living in the community, for they perhaps have never been asked to reform their ways and come back to the church. The usual way is to expel, and then never think of them again. No device of the devil has been more successful than that of influencing the local officary of the church—the preacher, elders and deacons—to consider such a one as cut off *from Christ* and unworthy of any further attention. As said in the chapter on discipline, exclusion is

but the last and severest act of church penalty, but is merely disciplinary, ministered in the hope "that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil;" and for the church to stand off and let Satan have his own way with them, is a piece of insensate and inexcusable neglect, if not cowardice. Therefore, secure the names of all such from the old church register, and let them feel that there is at least one man on earth who has not abandoned them, and they will appreciate your call, give you their side of the case, and in most cases will return to the fold again.

*Visiting too Much.* This is possible, though the fault is by no means epidemic among the ministry. There may be too much of it for the good of your studio, or too much for the edification of your people, especially if the congregation is small. Some pastors, being very anxious to see their people all at church every Lord's day, have established a habit of visiting every Sunday absentee the next morning to see why they did not attend church the previous Lord's day. It must be admitted that many are negligent and need just such prompting, but many are in no way to blame, and should not be required to give account of themselves on all occasions. One third of a congregation are frequently absent from some justifiable cause—either sickness, absence from home, or because in many instances some of the

family must "stay with the stuff" while the others go to church. The preacher should know how to appreciate all these delicate circumstances, and act accordingly, for to rush into people's houses at all hours, with such a perfunctory air, would be considered an intrusion, and fail of the intended good. He will always, if he be wise and sympathetic, be received as a friend by both parents and children, and will always be a welcome guest, because he is sure to say something before leaving, to the children or some one else, that will make all feel that it is good for him to be there occasionally. This he will do without any formal effort, but somehow, the children will be at Sunday-school and the parents at church without knowing scarcely how they happened to reform.

*Time of Day for Visiting.* It is easier to tell the times not to visit, for while families are generally less engaged in the afternoon, it is not so with all of them, but certainly no formal call should be made when they are likely to be busily engaged in domestic duties—too soon in the morning, or just at meal time, or when a farmer is killing hogs, or his wife at the wash-tub, or when they are preparing for company. Moreover, most of your visits should be made when the head of the family can be there, if practicable, especially when the gentleman himself does not profess to be

a Christian, or has any prejudice against such things. No reason need be given for this last suggestion, except what delicacy and propriety will present to any cultured mind. One of the most propitious hours for a social call by the preacher is in the evening, not only because most of the family may be present, but also because it affords the best opportunity to unite with them in family worship. The labors of the day are past and all is quiet, and if you will watch your opportunity before it grows too late, before the little group begins to scatter around the premises or retire for the night, you can just say—"Well, we've all passed another day under the kind care of the Lord; suppose we read and pray together before we separate," or some such words, and forthwith they will bring out the Bible and hymn book, if they have one. This will give you a chance to read and explain a little and say things useful to the children and to all, and if the children have not been in the habit of seeing such exercise, you could just say—"Now we are about to kneel down in prayer, children and all, for the Lord loves little children and likes to have them pray, too; so now let us all kneel;" otherwise they may not kneel with you, and you have only half succeeded in your purpose. After leading all to the throne of Grace and praying for the family, the parents and the children, the best you can, it



is generally best on rising to sing a verse or two, whether the others can join you in it or not, or else continue your remarks for a few sentences, to fasten any special thought upon the minds of all you think would do good. Soon after this you will find yourself disposed to get ready to leave, with the good feelings and good wishes of all. This exercise must not be made tedious or irksome, but properly managed, all will be edified and will feel *that you are their spiritual guide and confidential friend*. They will entrust you with their secret burdens and heart troubles, because they feel sure you will never betray their trust. A daughter is about to marry a man wholly unworthy of her; their son is beginning to run with bad company; they have had bad luck in business, and they have not been to church for several weeks because they felt so discouraged, or because they had no suitable outfit, and they want your helpful advice all along this line. This will tax both your head and your heart, but you are reaching the real wants of your people, and are becoming a real pastor, somewhat as Jesus was, who "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53: 4). Now you can preach to meet the heart wants of that family the Lord's day following, and, in meeting their's, will meet similar wants in the hearts of other families, or at least others will feel that you can help them, and they

also will make you their spiritual confidant, and thus you will, after awhile, get the whole church *by the heart*. Then you will begin to feel like *a preacher indeed and in truth*; their souls seem precious to you and you seem precious to them. There is then no fear of a short pastorate, for neither party cares to know when your year is out, for nobody wants it to close. The world will begin to feel the power of Christ in the church and in her ministry, "and so falling down on their faces, will worship God and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. 14: 25).

*Visiting Individuals.* This is in some respects a different thing. A young brother may be the only disciple in the family, and he may be working every day in a nail factory. But you can find your way to the third story, where he is too busy to talk to you at all, and what you can do is to learn from him his street and number, where you may call on him at an appointed time. You find him at home, and learn that he was baptized several years ago, but had received little or no attention since. He formed no acquaintances in the church, for no one ever made it his business to speak to him and introduce him to others, and so he has absented himself, for the most part, ever since. But the fact that you interested yourself to find him in the clicking nail factory is new, strange and refreshing. He never expected such

attention, and feels gratified when you invite him to come and join your Bible class, to take part in the prayer meetings, and to come to the front with his hymn book every Sunday. You will easily ascertain, in the course of your conversation with him, that he has never formed any habits of reading the Scriptures and secret prayer, and will advise him as you find best; for here is a soul you have saved from utter discouragement, from consequent backsliding and possibly from spiritual death.

In other cases, the new convert may be attending church and, to all appearance, doing well enough. The writer has often met with such cases. In numerous instances in which we desired to find out the spiritual status of the member, conversation on the way has occurred something like this—"How long has it been, brother, since you were baptized?" "About two years." "Glad to hear it, and I suppose you are not tired of the Savior yet?" Oh, no, I've no reason to be tired of him." "Well, have you established the habit of daily private prayer yet?" "No, I have not begun to pray yet." "You intend to, though?" "Yes, I think I will; indeed, I ought to have begun long ago, I suppose." "I am glad to hear you so speak, and I have always found it very profitable to have my little Testament in my bedroom and read some in it before prayer, and I ad-

wise you to make Scripture reading and private prayer a daily habit, before you go out to the business of the day." "But," said he, "as I never made a prayer in my life, I wouldn't know what to pray for." "Well, if you realized that you were a sinner and in need of salvation when you first came to Jesus, he, according to his promise, forgave every past sin of your life up to that time." "Yes, I understand that, and rejoice in it." "But have you done no wrong since then, before the eyes of the Lord?" "Yes, many a time." And what did you do about it?" "I was just sorry for it, and thought I would try not to do it again." "That was all right so far, but the Lord tells us Christians under such circumstances to "confess" such sins to him, and to pray for their pardon; and I will just give you two or three passages of Scripture to hunt up and read when you get home. Will you be sure to do it?" "Surely I will; just give them to me on paper." <sup>1</sup> John 1:9, Acts 8:22, Matt. 7:7, and a few others were given him in the hope of good results from our happy and profitable interview.

Does any preaching pastor now say—"I never worked in that way, and can scarcely conceive of any member of the church being so ignorant. Is not the picture a little overdrawn?" I can only say, the more you go down into the souls of the people, dwell among them and strike the plain on

which their daily battles are fought, the more you will consider the above a very moderate case of spiritual want. But you see what a grand thing it is to co-operate with God in saving souls, for "he that winneth souls is wise;" and all such work, so delicate, so holy, shows why the Lord requires the ministers of his grace to be men of pure hearts and clean hands, "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." (Heb. 5 : 2).

*A Spiritual Confidant.* One of the most valuable results of this private intercourse with the people is the commitment of their religious troubles, their doubts and fears to you for such help as you may be able to render. Of course, no minister worthy of the name will ever reveal such privacies to any one else, for one will tell you—"It seems to me I'm not fit to be a member of the church, nor to go to the Lord's table. Sometimes I think it would be right for me to just leave the church and make no more pretense to religion." And you may find all such sincere people are embarrassed by the old legalistic idea of self-righteousness, not knowing how to trust to forgiveness for all their sins. Another will say—"I wouldn't fear to die, nor fear the judgment, if I were only prepared for it." Here again "they are all their life-time kept subject to bondage" (Heb. 2 : 15). The best you can do to relieve such honest hearts

is to show them how the Son of Man makes them free from all sin by his atoning blood, and brings to them that "perfect love that casts out fear," and so on, as explained in other parts of this book.

Much of the ground concerning pastoral labor was passed over in the chapter discussing the duties of preacher and elders together, as pastors of the church. That, with what has just preceded relating more particularly to the acting pastor, has left but little more to say on this part of the subject, except that most difficult of all kinds of pastoral visits—

*Visiting the Sick.* As this requires more carefulness and good judgment than most other visits, a few special directions are here suggested:

1. While the pastor is expected to pay more attention to his own flock than to any other, he ought to show a ready sympathy with the sick of any church and of no church, especially the poor, "the fatherless and the widows in their affliction;" his sympathy will be appreciated, and he will soon become the recognized friend of all.

2. He is expected to be at least one of the first to see the family in case of sickness or trouble, whether he has had any chance to hear of the sickness or not. They will send for the physician, but let the pastor hear of it by accident, or know it by intuition, and then wonder why he is not

there. It is best for the preacher to explain this matter to the congregation when there is no sickness on hand, so that in case of any serious trouble they may treat the doctor and the pastor alike.

3. The first duty of the pastor, in such a case, is to consult the physician as to the probable danger in the patient, and ask for any advice he may think best to give as to calls from the pastor. True, physicians, especially those who do not know the Lord themselves, are often poor judges as to the influence of a wise preacher in a sick room, and yet it will not be best to go contrary to his advice, as the case has been put into his hands. Besides, ministers have occasionally been unwise in the sick-room, and have left the patient more restless and nervous than they found them. However, the physician may soon find out that *your* influence is rather soothing and profitable to the patient, and after that he will not hesitate. The two should co-operate in reviving the strength of both body and mind.

4. The next thing is to call upon the family before pressing into the presence of the patient, especially if it be a lady. Let them see if your presence is desired just then. If so, they will notify you at the right time. If not, it will be your pleasure to call again. Do not fail to call again, and frequently, to show your sympathy with the

family, if you are never called into the room, though this will seldom be the case.

5. While you are never to seem in a hurry to leave the house, you should waste no time when you wish to engage the attention of the patient. Sit right in front of and near to the sick, so that they can both see and speak to you without turning the head around. Sympathy expressed for them in their pains and weakness and the healthy hope that the means used will be blessed to their speedy recovery will always be in place, with the assurance that you will be pleased to help any way in your power. If the physician is absent, and you know it is his wish that not more than two or three should be in the room at a time, the pastor can gently make the suggestion to one of the family that none remain but those needed in the service, and so keep the room quiet and well ventilated. The time he should remain with the sick will depend somewhat upon whether the patient is a man or a woman. True delicacy will always suggest what is proper.

*Prayer in the sick room.* Whether the minister should suggest family prayer at such a time, is one of those delicate questions not readily decided. If you are in doubt, but see no certain reason against it, you will always feel better as you retire for having prayed with them, than if you do not. Better always have your little pocket



Testament in reach, and if things in the room are quiet enough, you could say—"It is always well to call upon the name of the Lord in sickness as well as in health, and if you (the sick one) would like it, I will read a few verses and we can all pray together." In most every case they will request you to proceed, in which you will spend but a short time, and then if you can softly sing a stanza or two, it will be all the better. After this you can take your leave in a hopeful manner. This is supposed to be an acute attack where sudden danger is apprehended. But if it is *chronic sickness*, where you will visit perhaps once a fortnight, the case is very different, for at such times you would never doubt the propriety of reading and explaining the Scriptures at greater length, with prayer. Besides this, the visitor should always keep cheerful and hopeful. Florence Nightingale gives some excellent suggestions for helping this kind of clinics. She says you must tell them of some good being done in the church, at home or abroad. Do not spend your time in giving them advice how to bear their sickness, but draw their minds off the old subject. Tell them the news, show them the baby, or anything to wake up another train of thought. But if any one is weighed down with trouble, let him tell it all over to you, and it will help him, for the communication of sorrow lessens it. If any have

domestic troubles, listen to their recital kindly, and if you had no topic of conversation before, you will now feel like weeping with those who weep. Besides these general directions you may observe,

1. If not accustomed to sick rooms, it will be best to prepare the mind before going, by thinking what word of comfort or what Scripture you could quote, or what hymn to sing. This is necessary often in making calls where there is no sickness. There is what may be called *spiritual alertness*, or a readiness to seize the opportune moment to say or do the right thing at the right time, and every sensitive minister has regretted his failure at just such a moment more than once. The same alertness is needed on the street and everywhere, and is secured chiefly by due preparation of mind and heart for the work.

2. It is not well to whisper in the sick room, as it causes the patient to think there is immediate, or at least great, danger in the case. They may be neither asleep nor unconscious, and may know everything that is going on. In cases of syncope, persons have often shown after recovery that they heard every word that was uttered and knew everything that was done. In the dying hour, when you can do nothing more, do not hold the chief place at the bedside; that is now the right of the family. All others should stand

farther back. But it is greatly becoming to visit the family very soon after the dead are laid away in the tomb, for the bitterest pangs are apt to be felt on return from the grave or during the next few days. Do not forget them, especially if they are poor and needy.

3. *The backslidden sick* need kind but candid treatment. It is wrong to deal in nothing but rebukes while visiting such. It is best, first of all, to speak to them as Christians, and if the conversation is wisely directed, the sick will bring forward their derelictions from duty themselves. This affords the best chance to ask them if they have left off praying, and how far they have strayed away from the Lord. Ask them candidly, and they will tell you as candidly. Impress upon them the sinfulness of their departures from God and secure a promise, if possible, that they will at once return to him. Quote the prophet, who spoke for God, saying—"Return unto me and I will return unto you, O backsliding Israel." Better manage to be alone with such persons, while talking this way, unless those present be members of the family, in which case it might do them all good. But sometimes there are others present in the sick room who simply "sit around" to catch all that's going on for the sake of gossip, and as the patient may not wish to tell his most secret purposes to the whole neighborhood, it will

be better to see the lady of the house and ask her to invite them out into another room. In any event, try to hold the confidence of all so that another visit will not only be acceptable, but desirable. Keep your eye on this friend after he gets well, and try to keep him to his vows to serve the Lord, reminding him that Solomon says, "It is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay," and never let him forget that the way back to God is through prayer and confession of sin, hoping for forgiveness through Christ. If at all suitable, have prayer with him.

4. *The Impenitent Sick.* To do good work, it will require a prayerful preparation of your own heart especially. Several obstructions will be met with—your own inexperience, possibly, in such cases; the possible indifference or unwillingness of the patient to speak of religious matters at all; the uncertainty as to his chances for recovery, to be learned chiefly from his physician; if the patient feels no danger, he will not like to be spoken to as if about to die, a thing that seldom ought to be ventured on. In many cases, it is best not to speak of religion at all the first visit, and especially in the presence of others. Your next visit may afford a better chance, for we must not be too timid. A wise man can approach such an one inoffensively, and, gaining his confidence do it effectively. For instance, you could begin by

saying—"What a good thing it is that we are not doomed to live always in a world of sickness and death. Of course, we have no fear of dying just now, but it will come some time. You hope to get to a better world when you die, I suppose?" "Well, yes; but I don't feel fit to die now." "That may be, but every one may be ready who will accept Christ as his Savior. Is not that your belief?" Now that is as good an opening for preaching the gospel to him as you need. Any preacher that could not enter such an open door as that certainly had not prayed that morning. But if the physician has intimated the speedy departure of the patient, he should be addressed more directly. You might then say—"Your physician thinks you have but a short time to live, and you have neglected your soul's salvation till this late hour. What, now, do you wish to do?" "What can I do? What must I do? Oh, eternity, eternity!" "There is only one thing you can do." "What is it?" "You can believe on Jesus, who died to save you, provided you are penitent for all your past sins. Do you not realize that you are a sinner against God?" "Oh, yes, but how can I be saved from these many sins now?" "Well, Jesus says, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Can you trust him to save you, and surrender every other hope, and as a guilty sinner, call upon him for mercy? And are you

willing to do whatever he commands you?" "Anything, anything will I do." "Well, he says that 'Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'" "And can I be baptized even yet?" "You may be, but perhaps you are willing for anything only through fear of death, and perhaps you do not love Jesus at all, and are only trying to escape punishment instead of trying to love God and to have the pardon of your sins. How is this?" "All I can do is to cast myself upon his mercy, and if I perish, I perish. Will you baptize me?" "Your request will be granted as soon as preparations can be made here in the house for you, but, meantime, keep on confessing your sins to God and looking to him for salvation, and not to your own good works."

Now, although you may not have full confidence in the conversion of such a one, it is the best you can do. Baptize him, if he is a believing penitent. If, on account of weakness or some insuperable inconvenience, he cannot be baptized, the best you can then do is to point him to Jesus, and ask him to pray and cast his soul upon him for pardon, while you kneel down and pray with him and for him.

Here we must close our suggestions as to the work of pastoral visits under the varied circumstances considered, assuring all concerned that it requires more grace and more religion to do this

kind of service than to preach public sermons; it requires a closer walk with God to be "meet for the Master's use" in this department of ministerial duty than to write books, edit papers, or to preside at conventions. The real and direct qualification for it is to be "filled with the Spirit" yourself, which is the true anointing from on high that completes you for every good word and work.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*Abuse of this Ordinance.* No Christian institution has been more misunderstood, and more grievously misrepresented, than this. Although simply *commemorative* in its purpose, it has been perverted both by Catholics and some Protestants. The former, in displacing it from its proper position, have made what they call a *sacrament* of it. The Latin word *sacramentum*, from *sacer*, sacred, meant originally a solemn oath or vow, and when applied to the Lord's Supper, made this the time to renew our vows and binding obligations to serve and follow Christ. To this there might have been no reasonable objection raised, but it was also supposed to be the means of special graces and spiritual blessings, such as remission of sins, when ministered *by the hands of a priest*. This took it out of the hands of ordinary people as a means of remembering Christ simply; for the sacramental idea being added to it, the common people did not dare to touch it, which made the Lord's Supper a lever of tremendous power in the hands of the clergy. Baptism was also made a



sacrament, and no layman could venture to baptize any penitent without invading the prerogative of the clergy. Besides these two there are five other sacraments in the Catholic and Greek churches — confirmation, penance, holy orders, matrimony and extreme unction—and the force of a sacrament is to forbid, with pains and penalties, any layman either to baptize a penitent, as Ananias did, or to meddle in any way with any one of these seven sacraments. This forbids a dozen disciples, whether in a chapel, a private residence or a cave, to remember Christ by tasting bread and wine, and such is the havoc man makes by meddling with the Word of God.

Protestants have improved upon this very much in reducing the number of sacraments from seven to two—baptism and the Lord's Supper; but these two still so retain the sacramental element that none but a clergyman is allowed to administer them to the people. But the claim that remission of sins and other graces are accessible through these as sacraments is not insisted on by Protestants, for they rely for spiritual good upon the fellowship of the soul in thus remembering Christ. And the object in restricting the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper to the clergy is, not to restrict their benefits to mankind, but to secure the proper handling of the same. But while Protestants all hold baptism and the Lord's Sup-

per both to be sacraments, they have abused the latter especially by making it a test of denominational fellowship. To "break bread" with another religious body is felt to be a kind of endorsement of their supposed errors and a surrender of your own views on points of difference. They can all sing and pray together without any such fear, but to taste bread and wine together is felt to be an equalization of merit and demerit all around, or a general averaging of truth and error, having the effect of promiscuous endorsement of one another. This converts the Lord's Supper into

*An Endorsing Institution.* And this involves another error—that the Lord's Supper is a *fellowship one with another, instead of a fellowship with the Lord.* The exhortation is, "Remember me;" you show the *Lord's death*; it is "the cup of *the Lord.*" It is "communion of *the blood of Christ*" and "the communion of the *body of Christ.*" We do not remember any passage making this supper a communion one with another, as so many churches regard it. Hence, the common saying is—"We cannot commune with you." And even in the same congregation, one member will often say, "I can't go to church and commune with him." Hence, the doctrine and practice of close communion, even among some immersed believers, is based upon the same error.

*A genuine close communionist* will not only

refuse to *commune*, as it is called, with different religious bodies holding to the one baptism, but refuse to allow members of "the same faith and order" to commune, if they happen to worship in different chapels a few miles apart. Now, the foundation of the whole blunder is laid in the notion that the Lord's Supper is a communion with one another, instead of a communion with the Lord—with "the blood of Christ" and with "the body of Christ." And this absurdity, we expect, extends not only through any one denomination of Protestants, but to individuals in many congregations of all Protestant peoples. Often we hear otherwise sensible members saying, "I will not go to church and commune with him," showing how generally this mischievous notion has made its way through the church. The notion is especially mischievous as it tends to draw off the mind from Christ to the membership around you, to examine them instead of examining yourself. The close communion mistake is not the foundation and cause of the evil thus done, but is one of the evil effects itself, of the other heresy that the Lord's Supper *is a fellowship with one another*. But this criticism in no way implies any loose, unguarded "open communion" so called, for in the first place, non-professors have never intruded themselves upon any church, and the question is confined to the admission of professing Christians,

who may entertain more or less religious error, and there certainly may be such departures from the truth as to justify the church in refusing all recognition of them *as Christians*—the Nicolaitanes, for example, with whom you would associate neither at the Lord's table nor in any other religious service. But if I could recognize them at all as *Christians*, I would find no more trouble in going to the Lord's table with them than in uniting in any other act of worship with them. The Bible never said that "the communion" is any more sacred than song or prayer. And if a close communionist can take his seat with an unimmersed Pedo-Baptist minister in the pulpit, where is the Scripture that justifies his refusing to "break bread" with him, also? Where in the New Testament is the Lord's Supper described as more sacred than preaching, prayer or song. Where is it called a sacrament? If I refuse the Nicolaitane at the Lord's table, it will be for reasons that would reject him *as a Christian everywhere*. But apart from all questions of controversy touching this ordinance, it may be profitable to notice briefly a few

*Helps at the Lord's Table.* (1). And first of all, it may help the soul to remember that the word of Jesus, "Do this in remembrance of me," is as much a kind invitation as it is a command. He does not expect those who love him to require

the authority of the decalogue to induce this loving obedience.

(2). He does not bind us to a rigid frequency in observing this supper, but prefers to leave it somewhat to the impulse of loving hearts, as when he said, "Do this, *as oft as ye do it*, in remembrance of me." But the margin hereby left was filled up by the early Christians, weekly, as is seen in two passages, Acts 20: 7 and 1 Cor. 11: 20. The former passage has often been quoted, but the latter seldom. It reads "When ye therefore come together into one place, *this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.*" It is fairly implied that this *should have been* their object, but their uncultured minds had forgotten the real purpose of assembling on the Lord's day, and had been drifting far from the Apostolic order in many things. "This is not to eat the Lord's supper," is a rebuke for having perverted the real purpose of the meeting, and is as much as to say—"the object of those meetings is to eat the Lord's Supper." And as we learn in 1 Cor. 16: 1, that said assemblies were on "the first day of the week," these two quotations unite in saying that primitive love for Christ converted the "as oft as ye do it" into a weekly "remembrance."

(3). It would also be a help to deliver a brief sermon occasionally, correcting the above named blunders, when thought necessary, before all the

people, removing difficulties in the way of some honest Christians who fear lest some wrong they have done would render them liable to the penalty for "eating and drinking condemnation to themselves." But this want cannot always be met in the pulpit. If you find that certain members absent themselves from church, it is best to find out privately what the trouble really is, and among other hindrances, you will be apt to find them confused in some way about the Lord's Supper.

(4). It is seldom best to make extended remarks at the Lord's Table, if remarks at all; but it is always appropriate to read five or ten verses (not more)—and perhaps a few remarks—verses not necessarily about the Supper directly, but selected from accounts of the crucifixion, or "God so loved the world," or "He tasted death for every man," and such like, to fix the mind on the cross. It is seldom best to sing or to say anything while the elements are being served in the congregation. Advise the members to always close the eyes, or at least not to look around during that time, but to keep thinking of him by whom we have been saved from so great a death.

*The order at the Lord's Table.* The Table should always be prepared before the congregation assembles. If Sunday-school is held in the same room just before preaching, the Table can

be arranged immediately after the school is dismissed. In no one thing can bad taste and bad manners be displayed more egregiously than when a deacon comes in late with the emblems, and parades before the assembled congregation what should have been done before. Worse than this, the writer has been in churches where they spread the Table *after the sermon* was over, but the strangest part of that performance was that a good honest minister had been preaching for one of them the last eight years, and had never seen any impropriety in such proceedings. One is led to doubt his call to the ministry, who can look upon such disorder in the church of God for years and see nothing amiss. More than this—that same minister could see the same deacon, after church was dismissed, go to the Lord's Table and distribute the bread that was left among the children that had learned always to come around for it. One need not believe in transubstantiation in order to resist such violations of good taste, as common sense ought to be quite sufficient to point out the indelicacy of such proceedings.

Be sure not to compel the deacons, after serving the members with the bread and wine, to stand up and serve themselves. Let them take their seats conveniently, and be served by the one at the Table. It is also in better taste to have the deacons come to a front seat at the same time one

goes forward to attend to the Table, in order to be ready for duty—better than to come from their distant seats to receive the bread and wine. Beware of tedious remarks on such occasions, for they seldom do any good. Fix the minds of all on Jesus and his love. In giving thanks, do not make it a promiscuous prayer about things in general, but simply give thanks for Jesus and for these emblems of his love.



## CHAPTER VI.

### MISCELLANEA.

As is usual in such cases, many points of thought that might have been put into the body of the work have been inadvertently omitted, but in hope that they may be of more or less use, are here appended as independent items under a general heading.

*Household Churches.* Whether it be true or not, that it was 250 years before chapels for public worship began to be built, it is true that in apostolic days chapels oftener consisted of private residences, a number of which sometimes were doubtless in the same city. Philemon 2, shows that this preacher had "a church in thy (his) house." It is not probable that there was a second place of assembling in Colosse, but it is pretty clear that there was more than one in Laodicea near by, for in Col. 4: 15, we read "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house." There could be no reason for distinguishing between "the brethren which are in Laodicea" and "the church which is in the house of Nym-

phas," if the two companies were identical. The church in the house of Nymphas may have been the chief assembly in the city, and it is not probable that a people who could say "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," were so insignificant in numbers as to all meet in one private house (Rev. 3: 17), and yet we read of no *churches* of Laodicea. It is "Unto the angel of *the church* of the Laodiceans."

"Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord with *the church that is in their house*" (1 Cor. 16: 19). This epistle was written in Ephesus, and shows that Priscilla and Aquila had a church to meet in their private residence in said city, and who can believe that the whole church of Ephesus assembled every Lord's day in any one private house? The Ephesian church seems to have been the chief one of the seven, and so was addressed first in Revelation. Paul labored there three years and a half, and it is not likely that he had now only a few dozen disciples. And yet we hear of none but "the church at Ephesus," (Rev. 2: 1), "with the bishops and deacons" (Eph. 1: 1), and at Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for "the elders of *the church*." The year following, Aquila and Priscilla were living in Rome, and again had "a church in their house" (Rom. 16: 5), but surely not all the disciples of Rome. Writing to Rome from Corinth, Paul says, "Gaius, mine host, and

(the host) of the whole church, saluteth you;" but this must have referred to the hospitality of Gaius, and could not have meant that "the whole church" assembled in his house for worship, for "*many* of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18: 8), and after this Paul preached on there a year and six months, for the Lord had told him "I have *much* people in this city." Therefore, they may have had ten different places of worship, and yet it was only "The church of God which was in Corinth" (1 Cor. 1: 1). And so with the "three thousands" in Jerusalem; then the "five thousands," and after this the "many thousands" (Acts 21: 20); and, surely, they met to worship in many places, and yet were but *one church*. Their five thousand, meeting five hundred in each place, would have made what moderns call ten churches in Jerusalem, but the New Testament knows of only one church in Jerusalem. Next above this, is "the church" of all Palestine (Acts 9: 31) and after this "the Church of the First Born." This, without further argumentation, destroys the doctrine of extreme Congregationalism, or such independency as forbids the organization of "the church" of Kansas or the church of Kentucky; for missionary, or other benevolent enterprises they may wish to undertake for "the church," is not limited to the Disciples worship-

ing in any one locality. One hundred thousand might be in the army of the United States, distributed among all the States. In such case, it would be proper to speak of those in Maryland or Missouri as the army of the United States, and so it is proper to speak of "the church" in the house of Philemon, "the church" in Jerusalem, "the church" in Palestine, "the church" in Kentucky; and of "the church which is his body." And as the ten or twenty congregations in Jerusalem *did act as one body* (Acts 11: 22; Acts 15: 22), it is folly to suppose that *the church* of a country or a State cannot do the same in "sending forth" evangelists, or in any other co-operative work for the spread of the gospel—all of which goes to annihilate the mischievous fallacy of independency that has so long fettered the hands of so many true servants of God.

*The building of Chapels.* This is a better name for a house of worship than the word *church*, because the same word would not be compelled to do the double service of indicating both the house and the congregation. As the attitude in public prayer is of no little importance, chapels should be built with reference to a posture that would be both convenient and devout—that is, place the seats near enough to each other to give the occupants of each pew the chance to lean forward upon the back of the seat in front of them.

The Episcopal churches have not so arranged their pews without good reason. It is not always practicable to kneel, and to most pious people, standing does not, like bowing, promote a prayerful spirit. But if seats are arranged as above, the whole congregation can bow the body to a devotional attitude. To sit stock straight, or to stand up and look over the audience during prayer, is hostile to every feeling of devotion; and it would be well for the preachers to consider this question in building and in repairing their chapels.

*Uniform length of sermons.* This is not necessary. Forty to forty-five minutes for a sermon is about the normal time; but it would be well to condense it all into twenty-five, occasionally, and this would be an offset to a longer sermon when found necessary. A gentle surprise might be healthy occasionally.

*A Supperist.* A pious Baptist minister of a very catholic spirit said recently he did not like to be called a Baptist, simply because he believed in the practice of immersion. He said he also believed in, and also partook of, the Lord's Supper, but that was no reason why he should be called a *Supperist*—named after an ordinance—the latest and the best on the name.

*Value of general information.* Just before the late war, President Garfield was addressing a Sunday-school in Cincinnati, and advising them to

gain knowledge of every kind, for they could never know what hour they might need it. In illustration of this, he said when he was at school years before, in reading a certain book he came across the words *depository* and *depositary* frequently within a few pages, and not knowing the difference in their meaning, he consulted the dictionary and found that *depository* was the *place where* things were placed, and that *depositary* was *the person who* kept them. Years after that, when he was sent to the Ohio Senate, a gentleman brought in a bill relating to the better disposition of the public school fund, recommending that it be placed in the *Depository*. Mr. Garfield, suspecting nothing worse than a slip of the pen on the part of the author of the bill, suggested a verbal change and have it read *with* the *depositary*. The gentleman considered the change suggested rather hypercritical and opposed it as unnecessary, but Mr. Garfield was sustained, and from that trifling circumstance, his reputation in the Senate as a man of letters began to grow. The application to ministers is easy—be greedy of knowledge.

*Repeating mistakes.* Some men never mispronounce or mis-spell a word after being once corrected. One minister of some literary pretensions had the inveterate habit of making four syllables out of the word *sovereignty*. No matter how often reminded of it, the next time he pronounced

it in the pulpit it was invariably *sovereignty*, of which he seemed wholly unconscious. For this species of stolidity there can be but little excuse. The writer knew a young man, who, thirty-eight years ago, presented an essay to Prof. Pendleton, in which the word *partaker* was spelled with an e in the first syllable, but he has never had to be corrected since as to that word. Some speakers have been told so often about dropping the last words in a sentence in preaching so that the hearer loses the force of the whole sentence, but as soon as they are in the pulpit, "Gallio cares for none of these things."

*Worshipful singing.* The choir should be pious rather than artistic. The preacher should never be weak enough to give up the control of the church music entirely into the hands of others, for there will likely be too large an infusion of new tunes, or too much of the singing-school air about it; and sometimes too many disagreements among the singers. This matter, like the general management of the Sunday-school and Prayer-meetings and general order of the church, should be considered in the official meetings of the Board. If the preacher wishes to select a part or all of the hymns for the day, he should give the numbers of them to the singers in time for them to look over or practice them if they desire.

*Periodical visits.* Instead of visiting the whole

congregation once a quarter, or other period regularly, better visit those who need it most, unless it be those members whom you wish to consult about the work of the church. It is not always best to happen around about meal-time, for in many families, you know not how much trouble such a call makes at an unpropitious hour.

*Order of the Books of the Bible.* It is well to be able to repeat the order of the Books of the Old and New Testament, so that when you open at Hosea you may know which way to turn to find Joel; or if you open at Colossians, you may know which way Timothy is. It is a good lesson to give out to the Sunday-school, or even to the Prayer-meeting, as a variation in the exercises; but be sure you can repeat them yourself.

*Judging ourselves.* "If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged." This applies to the ministry with peculiar force, for if we, as well as others, would criticize and scrutinize our own thoughts, purposes and conduct, we would so far correct our faults that others would see very little in us to criticise, judge and condemn. It is only when we fail to "examine ourselves" that our faults become so palpable that others see them and condemn us. We need to be judged by some one, and when we are judged, whether by ourselves or others, we are thereby "chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with



the world." When God's children will not judge and chasten themselves, the Lord lets loose their enemies to point out their faults, that by all means, they may escape being condemned with the world. Do not complain, therefore, when sinners judge the ministry; for it only shows that they may not have been chastening themselves.

*"Come to Church."* This is the universal exhortation by members, elders and some preachers to habitual absentees, but it is very inadequate, because the root of the trouble lies deeper than they suspect. He has not been at church for three months, but perhaps he has neglected his private devotions for the last six months. Spiritual life is dying out, and what the poor brother needs is an exhortation to more communion with God, more liberal giving, and greater activity in the Lord's work that may be laid upon him, and his coming to church will be the natural result. Avoid all shallow prescriptions to reach a deep-seated disease.

*Female Society.* See 1 Tim. 5: 1, 2. The ministry can seldom be laid under obligation to be a gallant to or from church, or anywhere else. The young preacher is to regard "the older men as fathers, the older women as mothers, the younger men as brothers and the younger women as sisters, with all purity." He can, if wise, make his arrangements for married life without attracting

general attention, without frivolity, or anything unministerial. He should never select a wife who is lacking in physical health, in mental culture, in domestic habits, or in a pure religious life. Select her from a good religious family. If you want a good sheaf, go to a good shock. Better consult your judgment before consulting your affections—if you can.

*Exclusions.* Many exclusions from a church generally means much neglect of pastoral labor, and little, if any, “lifting up of the hands that hang down.” In looking over a certain church register, a few years ago, I found *fifty-six* had been excluded in one year. It was no credit to the ministry, though the elders thought it a proof of their faithfulness. It showed either a great and criminal neglect of the church for years past, or that a sudden paroxysm for discipline had seized the officary; or that some wild evangelist had come along, whose advice the elders had universally followed. By far the greater part of discipline comes before exclusion and is intended to prevent it. An instance of the right kind of discipline may be found in 1 Thess. 2: 1-12, which see. For another example of the discipline that prevents exclusion, see Jude 20-25.

*A Few Paying All.* This is a great evil in many congregations. One such in Indiana had one hundred and fifty members, twelve of whom paid

every dollar for all purposes—salary, fuel, lights, sexton, protracted meetings, and every other demand—leaving one hundred and thirty-eight that paid nothing; and yet they wondered why they had not a lively, prosperous church. I told them “I wondered that they had any church at all, the way they were abusing one hundred and thirty-eight of their members. You twelve are monopolizing all the good there is in giving, and starving out all the rest. If it is more blessed to give than to receive, you should have them all pay into the church treasury for the blessing there is in it, as well as for the increased amount you will have to do good with.”

*Reorganizing.* To show the necessity of sending Tituses around to help disordered churches to their feet again, the writer has in more than one instance found churches utterly and almost irreclaimably disrupted by their well meant, but awkward attempts to reorganize when there was no need of it. A congregation had been worshipping in an old log house on a creek for years, but decided to put up a new frame building on the ridge about a half mile distant. This removal from one house to another, the officers concluded, required a reorganization of the church and a new church register. So they announced that all who were willing to go into the new organization must come forward and put down their names upon the

new register, and that those who refused to do so would no longer be members anywhere. Some saw the impropriety of the movement and declared they did not intend to be turned out of the church by any such unauthorized process. Others were not at church that day, and knew nothing of the proceedings. In all, twenty-six members, as good as any of the rest, were thus standing out and feeling very much abused, and a bad state of feeling in the community followed for more than a year. The officers thought they had done right, and the case was brought before the evangelist for advice. Its consideration was postponed till we could have a full board meeting the next day. Wishing to save any humiliation on account of a well meant mistake, he said—"I see, brethren, you did your best to have everything pass off quietly, and you seem to have made only one small mistake. You, as officers, had a right to get a new church register, when the old one was full or worn out, and to transfer all the names into it without consulting any one. This you have a right to do every year, if necessary, and could do without disturbing the organization in the least. And as to coming from the old house into the new, so near by, I can't see, as it required no new election of officers, that it required any joining of a new church by the members; and my opinion is, it was a mistake on your part." After due reflec-

tion, it was all amicably adjusted by announcing that the officers thought they had made a mistake, and took occasion to rescind their former action and declare the twenty-six to be members just as they were before, and that their names had already been entered upon the book with the rest. The meeting closed with forty additions. Such details as these are given because generalities are unsatisfactory, and fail to show the many-sidedness of the work, and the importance of getting men to retrace wrong steps without offending them. How unreasonable to expect brethren, who have been elected to office in the church without any experience in such matters, to conduct them aright simply because they are men of character and piety! And how unreasonable, and how unscriptural, to withhold the Tituses from the work God has assigned them! We cannot improve upon divine wisdom. The Bible never misses the mark. It always hits the nail on the head.

*Bad Management.* We have said elsewhere that the official board of the church ought to attend to all church *business in their private sessions* and bring before the public only such things as should be considered by the church. All matters of discipline should be looked into privately, and settled privately, unless public rebuke or exclusion is necessary.

Another matter heretofore alluded to is, that

when the church wishes to secure the services of a pastor, the officary should always ascertain, by correspondence or otherwise, the man whom they wish to recommend to the congregation. They should never go before the church and ask them to nominate. The impropriety of this is too patent to be dwelt upon as a mistake; at this point it is apt to produce division in the church. Nor is it safe to call for nominations for elders or deacons in a company of a dozen, for some one present, wholly unfit for the place, may be named, and you are compelled to object or accept. A few who know most about such things had better confer with the proper ones more privately, unless there is a very general understanding beforehand as to the suitable men. Bad management at such a time is often disastrous. Where there is no officary, the evangelist must ascertain whom to nominate.

*Raising Money for a Man.* Never raise money for any given minister, but for the church treasury. He may die, or be called upon to leave before the year is out, in which case some will refuse to let their subscriptions stand for any other preacher that may be called. Whatever is pledged should be paid into the church treasury, for whatever purpose the church sees fit to use it. Then if the minister is obliged, for any reason, to retire before his time is out, the church can use

the remaining funds for any purpose they think best. And let there be but the one treasury upon which checks may be drawn for any demand the church has agreed to respond to. Let the treasurer, we repeat, pay out no money for any purpose without a written order of the board, signed by the secretary.

*Familiarity—Smut.* While a teacher should be social with his pupils, there ought to be, undeniably, a proper distance between him and them. "Familiarity breeds contempt," is as true to-day as ever, and is especially applicable to ministers. While he may enjoy a witticism with the young men, he may not run a foot race with them; while he may be genial in people's parlors, he should keep out of their kitchens; and while he may enjoy and tell a pure, clean anecdote, be it ever so amusing, he may never either tell or laugh at one that is in the slightest degree smutty. No decent man will tell a dirty joke. A man that will tell, or can enjoy a story tinged with obscenity, should be expelled from the pulpit. To listen to obscenity is bad enough; to laugh at it is worse; to give utterance to it is worst. There may be one preacher in ten thousand that would be guilty of such things, but the church don't need him. We need men whose words will rather "minister grace to the hearers." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good

for the use of edifying." These directions are given to ordinary Christians, and how much more to those who are to be "ensamples to the believers." The Lord commended the Ephesian church (Eph. 2: 3) because they could not "bear them that do evil," and those who can put up with obscenity are not like him who "hated iniquity." Jesus was the champion hater of the world. "Thou hast loved righteousness and *hated* iniquity." He never hated the iniquitous, but hated iniquity. He distinguished between the sin and the sinner, as we often do not; but he never listened to, nor laughed at, a dirty tale, an indecent anecdote, nor any language that would not pass examination in heaven. A large church in Kentucky, a few years ago, rejected a minister because of such a reputation.

*Ministerial Behavior.* "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God" (1 Tim. 3: 14). This refers not only to the proper management of the church, but also to the proper ministerial deportment before the people, as is evident from 1 Tim. 4: 12: "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conduct, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." With such conduct, there can be no despising of a preacher, even if young. But



if the people see he has not a Christian "spirit," and does not know how to "behave" himself, he will be despised, and ought to be. An habitual giddiness, beauishness, cachinnation just after dismissal, hat on in the church, soliciting compliments, and general oblivion of having just been in the pulpit, will, and ought to, beget a desire in the church for a change of preachers. Over-eating, with its attendant dullness and stupidity, talking at random about everybody and everything, with a disposition to magnify one's self, are sure signs of a quack in theology, and a bore in society. It is well for the church that only one such in a thousand afflicts the world, and he generally finds the way "to his own place" before very long.

*Conferring with the Officiary.* If you have any suggestions to make to the elders or deacons, be sure to make them privately, either individually or in official meetings. The public need not know where they get their information, and whatever credit may attach to them for the use of such information, they have a right to. It has been too common to criticise the elders, especially in the public prints, for their inefficiency and general lack of qualifications; but this is altogether unjust. If they lack a knowledge of their duties and obligations, it is the preacher's duty to teach them. (See Acts 20 : 17-34; Eph. 1 : 1.) More fre-

quently are the deacons turned off without satisfactory information as to their duties, even when they ask for it, and for this reason we have been the more careful to details, as well as the circumference of their work under the proper headings. When every preacher becomes a teacher of the officaries, the old complaint of inefficiency will soon die out.

“*With the Bishops and Deacons*” (Eph. 1 : 1). Some very good Bible students not only believe that the deaconate as now held in the church had no existence in the apostolic churches, and cite the fact that had there been such officers in the Ephesian church, Paul would have called them with the elders to meet him at Miletus, but the above quotation shows that there were deacons in the church of Ephesus, and that they were either all called under the general name of elders, or that the elders proper were the ones that had more special charge of the spiritual wants of the church, to “feed the church of God.” If the latter view be correct, which is probable, it shows again that there is a divine order in the ministry—first, apostles, secondarily, prophets, *et cetera*, and that since the death of these, there remain in the church evangelists, overseers and deacons.

*Repentance and Faith.* Many a sharp controversy has transpired as to the precedence of repentance and faith, when neither party under-

stood the whole truth in the case. That a sinner can repent toward God before he believes in God, is not true; that he can repent toward God before he believes in Christ, is true. David, and myriads of others repented sorely of their transgressions long before Jesus Christ came to the world, but they believed in God before they repented toward God. They had violated God's law, and from that day till this, it is God who, "commands all men everywhere to repent"—not the Jew only, but the Gentile, also, for it is "all men everywhere." Jesus came not as a lawgiver so much as a Savior from "the curse of the law," already broken. Jesus issued no laws except those constituting the conditions of salvation, and those who had never heard these and had never rejected them, had nothing to repent of toward him. The great duty of the sinner was, and still is, to have "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." And although he may believe what the Bible says about Christ—believe it intellectually, he will never "believe with all the heart;" will never "believe unto the salvation of the soul" until he "repent toward God." An impenitent heart *can never come to Christ*. So, then, we may both believe in God and repent toward God, and afterwards believe in Christ.

*Higher Criticism.* No preacher who is trying to inform himself on this subject can afford to be

ignorant of Bissell's great work. "The Pentateuch, its Origin and Structure." It is often said that the phenomenal power of Daniel Webster, in his congressional debates, was chiefly due to his most thorough preparation, but it is not easy to conceive of a more complete equipment for the struggle in Higher Criticism than that of the Professor of Hartford Theological Seminary. We have room for but a single quotation concerning the disagreements, contradictions and confusions in which the great critics have fallen, while trying to prove that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch—"And here it may not be amiss to consider some important conclusions that seem to flow out of the several sporadic views we have been considering. They are important out of all proportion to their number. They are not the views of laymen, but of eminent Biblical scholars, who believe in criticism, and to a greater or less extent, in the principles of Pentateuch analysis. These scholars notoriously disagree, not only in some points from one another, but especially from the great body of critics with whom they are often indiscriminately classed. If it were simply a difference of view respecting the time when the several documents appeared, though the difference were a thousand years, as in some cases it is, it would be, from the *point of view of the criticism*, serious without being strictly essential. But when

one calls the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20 22 : 18. 19) with all its striking characteristics, Elohistic, while others call it Jehovistic, it touches the vital question of the analysis at a vital point. It is, in fact, "an axe laid at the root of the tree." This work of so-called Higher Criticism was begun in a way, one or two hundred years after the apostles, and was participated in by the Gnostics. It was then dropped almost entirely, till about two hundred years ago, and is now represented chiefly in the works of Graf and Wellhausen; but the critics have fallen into inextricable confusion, some holding that Moses was substantially the author of the Pentateuch, others, that it was mostly patched up in the days of Josiah, and others, after the Babylonian exile, while others put its origin "after the prophets." Thus, they have been trying, for sixteen hundred years, to upset Moses, but as one has said, "Moses is like a cubical block, for no matter how often you upset him, he is just as big as he was before." But as Bissell says, when the most eminent critics cannot agree as to whether the *Book of the Covenants* is Elohistic or Jehovistic, "it touches a vital point," and "*a fatal distrust of critical opinions is necessarily awakened.*"

*How the children treat you.* Few wrongs in the church manifest more unwisdom than for parents who may acquire some bad feeling toward their preacher, whether justly or unjustly, to speak dis-

paragingly of him before their children. It not only can do no good, but is sure to do harm by destroying whatever good influence he might have had over them, and also by thus weakening their confidence in the ministry generally. How the parents speak of their minister in the family is sure to show itself in the side looks and demureness of the children when in his presence. Let parents be wise, and ministers forbearing.

*Opening the Meeting.* It is very common, and very proper, too, for one minister who is about to preach to ask another to open the services of the day by reading and prayer. Although, occasionally, this results from a feeling of unpreparedness to pray himself as he ought, it is often the result of "preferring one another." In any event, it is always necessary so to prepare the heart in previous private devotion as that we will always feel ready with true hearts to come to "the throne of grace," and our own prayer will the more prepare us for preaching. Beecher was once asked by a minister to open the services for him, to whom he replied, "No, it will be better for you to whet your own sword."

*Post Exilian.* Julius Wellhausen stands now at the head of German critics, who are struggling to prove that the Pentateuch, or, including Joshua, the Hexateuch, was the product of the age of Ezra, after the Babylonish exile. They guess that

there were scraps and pieces of the Pentateuch long before this, which they call the First Elohist document, and the second Elohist document, as well as a Jehovist document, to which documents numberless additions had been made before the days of Ezra. While some have discovered that the whole work took its origin after all the prophets, others are kind enough to allow that the Pentateuch was gotten up in the days of Josiah, one hundred years before the exile, and among them all, the fragments have been so scattered all along over at least a thousand years, that it was necessary to have a Redactor finally, whose business was to gather up the pieces, to scissor, sew, stitch and patch them all together, and make a Pentateuch out of them, and then try to make the world believe that Moses wrote it, eight hundred years before. The Lord never "said unto Moses" anything, or very little, for Moses had little or nothing to do with "the five Books of Moses." The "Priest Code," as in Leviticus and Numbers, never saw the light till after the exile, and even the first Elohist document containing the Decalogue, according to Graf, had no earlier origin. Ministers that have the mental training to read W. Robertson Smith as a critic, and then Green and Bissell, especially the latter, will know as much as need to be known on this subject. It must be remembered, Smith, and many of his grade of critics, claim to

be friends of the Bible, and really intend to be, whatever their reasonings lead to, but however one may deceive himself in that way, it must be admitted that no book gotten up as they say the Pentateuch was, can lay any honest claim to being historical. If Josiah, Ezra, Ezekiel, or any other man in the days of either of them, patched up such a book as the Pentateuch out of the assumed material on hand, but chiefly out of their own imaginations, and then tried hard to create the impression that it was from the hand of Moses, such an author is an impostor, and his book an imposition and fraud.

Moreover, as few of the critics place the Levitical code earlier than Ezra, and none of them earlier than Josiah, it is unthinkable that any sane man would undertake to invent said Code, before unheard of, and try to make the Jewish nation believe that it had been in existence since the days of Moses on the Mount. Then, on the supposition of its really late origin, it is most remarkable that the people were so thoroughly imposed upon by the adventure as to accept it without question—an adventure that so controlled the Jewish mind that even Jesus, in sixteen different passages, including parallels, refers to Moses in a way connecting him inseparably with the Pentateuch throughout.

*Well Managed Churches.* No church was ever



well managed without official meetings in which the state of the register, and all business affairs, were carefully looked into. The "Order of Business" presented below, if followed, will both bring a church into good order and keep it so; but if any disordered church ever brought itself into good order without a Titus, it must be an exception, for it has never yet come to our knowledge. But once in good condition, if it does not remain so, it is generally the fault of the preacher, elders and deacons in the neglect of their official duties.

The following *Order of Business* for official meetings will be found useful, as it will always suggest what items of business should be called up by the chairman, and the order in which they should be considered. It is assumed that the preacher will, besides his pulpit labors, have been around the church somewhat, and will have matters of consideration to present to the Board. It is also assumed that the elders also will have made a few visits, or in some way will know something about the church, either good or bad, to report, and that the deacons and the treasurer will have reports to make on financial matters, after which miscellaneous business may come up.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS.

1. Open with a brief prayer by one of the officers.

2. Reading of minutes of the last meeting.
3. Report of special committees.
4. Report of the preacher as to his labors and the results.
5. Report of the elders on condition of the members.
6. Report of the deacons as to finances, the poor, etc.
7. Report of the treasurer, receipts and expenditures.
8. Miscellaneous Business.—Letters asked for, repairs, missions, wants of the Sunday-school, the prayer-meetings, securing a preacher, nomination of new officers, delinquent members, and such like matters.
9. Adjourn.

*Supplying the Churches with a Ministry.*—This is the problem of problems set for the solution of nearly all Protestants. As it is now, so it has always been—"The harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few;" when a church has but half as many available preachers as churches, it would require every one of them to supply the churches with preaching half the time. Then, remembering that a considerable per cent. of the churches must and do have ministers all the time, it leaves some of the rest with preaching less than half the time; and then remembering that a

large per cent. of the preachers outside of the cities are not available, either on account of age, inefficiency, or of their business relations, it leaves some of the churches with preachers half of the time, more with preaching one-fourth of the time; or only occasionally. This is not having "a care of all the churches." This lack of a regular and systematic supply of all the churches is manifest chiefly in the Baptist church and in the Christian church. The Presbyterians, after all their system and centuries of experience, report in the minutes of their General Assembly for 1887, one fifth, or twenty per cent of all their congregations in the United States as "vacant," and the disproportion between the number of churches and ministers as still increasing. This became so alarming, six years ago, that the General assembly, after intense thought and earnest discussion of the encroaching evil, decided to establish a committee in each Presbytery or district whose business should be to bring together the unemployed preachers and the unsupplied churches, and by earnest labor in this direction they have done much to fill up the chasm. Notwithstanding all this, the following extract from said minutes of 1887, will show how others should be studying the problem, whose organizations are strictly congregational and independent:

*The present Supplies for the Ministry.* Out of the whole number of churches enrolled in the minutes of the year 1886, amounting in all to 6,289, there were 1,226 marked "vacant." This is 29 more than were so marked for the year preceding. And the number of this class is steadily increasing, as also is the number of the churches dissolved, which has gone up from 56 in 1881, to 76 in '86. "Of these congregations, it may be said . . . fully 300 are capable of sustaining a pastor, or ought to have one. How many of the rest might, by care, be developed into self-supporting, cannot be said. . . . The net increase of our churches last year was 188. The net increase of ministers after filling 101 vacancies made by death, and the 29 made by dismissals to other bodies, was 72, that is 116 less than the new churches. But of this net increase, 69 are reported as having been received from other sources. This leaves but three of this net increase to our credit. Or, if it is claimed that since we have furnished 29 to other bodies, we ought to have the credit for these also, as having been given in exchange, we may raise the net increase of ministers to 32 over against the 188 churches which lengthen our list. . . . The number of students graduated from our six largest theological seminaries is 192, which is an advance of 37 over the number reported last year. Of course not all of these can be counted on as

belonging to our body, or as intending immediate service. Making a possible reduction of 14 on these scores, there will remain 177 graduates, not enough to supply even the strong vacant churches that are searching for pastors, to say nothing of the new churches that were organized this year, and the mission fields that lie beyond."

The only body of Protestants that are said to practically supply every church with a preacher is the Methodist people. They claim that, by their itinerant system, they have a "care" over every Methodist church in the world—a statement which perhaps is not denied. If true, the *management* that effects it is certainly commendable, whether everything they teach is scriptural or not. They do not claim that their system is either without hardships or imperfections, but that by it their preachers miss but one appointment in the year, and that after losing one Sunday at their annual conferences, they go on to their respective fields of labor, and throb the world all round.

The Baptists are equal, if not superior, in numbers to the Methodists; but their loose independency, that causes both preachers and churches to lose so much time and labor—the former being unemployed and the latter unsupplied so much of the time, gives to the Methodists a great advantage as to straight-forward regularity and success in this work. The Baptists have thousands of

weak and fallen congregations, and should they give attention to this matter, they might make such arrangements to "lift up the hands that hang down," as would have all the efficiency of the Methodist itinerancy, and none of its hardships or objectionable features. One thing is confessedly and lamentably true with them as with the Christian church—that neither of them has that "care of all the churches" which the Scriptures teach (II. Cor. 11: 28). Another thing is true, also—that neither of these religious bodies seem to be concerned about this delinquency; and still more, they are neither penitent for the past neglect, nor bent on better arrangements for the future; nor can they be induced to even seriously consider the matter. Their notions of independency must be "cared for," whatever becomes of "the care of all the churches."

Nor would the Presbyterians change their methods. To a very intelligent Presbyterian minister, the writer recently said—"Twenty per cent. of your churches are vacant, and the ratio increasing every year, but I suppose your General Assembly could not be induced to change the present methods of supplying your churches for the prospect of a better one." He replied that it would be impossible, for, besides the difficulty of falling upon some method that would "care for all the churches," if their new plan should at all resemble

the Methodist plan; Presbyterians, to a man, would reject it.

No other suggestion is made here different from that already presented in this book—that of the State Convention composed of delegates from the churches with State Board, who shall appoint State and district evangelists, so as to cover all the ground, as Paul and his associates did, in such a manner as to care for all the churches. This will, in due time, do much to supply the churches with a ministry, but the future must be trusted to perfect that which is now only begun.

There never was a greater demand than now for efficient preachers—efficient out of the pulpit as well as in it—preachers that will help the local officers in the business details of church work, and make themselves each a necessity in community. There is now, and always will be, a support for any and all such men. The churches are not to be blamed for complaining of certain unstudious, unsocial and valueless men who seem to think that pastoral labor consists in going around the neighborhood to eat in people's houses. Let young ministers, especially, study and follow Paul's directions to Timothy (I. Tim. 4 : 12-16), and he will not fail of a support, nor be compelled to itinerate the country every year to find a place to work.

*God's Eolian.*—Every preacher of the “glorious gospel of the blessed God” should have his soul open both Godward and manward—Godward, to receive all the truth he has revealed for the salvation of the world; and manward, to lovingly pour out into their souls “the whole counsel of God.” After filling his mind with the Word of God, he should, by meditation and prayer, fill his soul with the Spirit of God, for “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us,” Rom. 5: 4. A heart and mind filled thus with the Word and Spirit is God's eolian, through which he can breathe all the sweet melodies of redeeming love. Such preaching will always do good, and even in rebuke, will generally be accepted, as the old adage goes, *love, and say what you will*. But an unconverted pulpiteer is a hoarse, untuned instrument, through which God cannot well sound the harmonies of heaven.

*How to wake People up.* A certain minister was generally a little late reaching his appointments, and on arriving, would sit down leisurely and thumb the hymn book for some time, and finally ask the brethren to “sing something.” After two “somethings” were sung, he would take the pulpit and begin his search for something to read, and for something else to sing, and after offering a prayerless prayer, and dragging through a spirit-



less speech, would dismiss a tired audience. Seeing that his audiences were fast diminishing, he put to a wide awake preacher the question—"What do you do when you want to wake people up?" "I first wake myself up," was the reply. The application was easy. "Take heed to thyself" first, by hard study and prayer, and then to "the ministry."

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"Whereby, when you read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."—EPH. 3: 4.

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