

(The paper with a mission and a message)

Mission Messenger

Special Issue

Dealing with the introduction among the churches of Christ of
a clergy caste operating under the guise of "located evangelists."

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MISSION MESSENGER

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The Hireling Clergy System Must Go

Those congregations of disciples which desire to remain true to the New Testament must purge themselves of the one-man ministry system. There can be no compromise on this point. That system must be eliminated because it is not a part of the program of God's revelation as given to the primitive church. So long as it exists there can be no real or complete restoration. You cannot restore something to its original state and retain that which was not in that state. Restoration demands elimination of all things not in the original and adoption of all things that were a part of it. All unbiased students of early church history concede that the hireling pastor system as now practiced was no part of the apostolic pattern.

Borrowed from Sectarianism

Those of us who oppose *the system*, do so, not because we are opposed to the gospel or to gospel preachers, but because we are determined to do our bit in helping our brethren along the weary road back to Jerusalem, and to aid the further restoration of the primitive purity of the church of God. At the present time the special clergy system which has been adopted stands as a barrier athwart the road. Either it must be cut down or those congregations which retain it must forfeit their right to be recognized as New Testament churches, and abandon their plea to "speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where it is silent." The hireling clergy system has been borrowed from sectarianism. Those who condone it are defending a sectarian practice. Those who support it with their time, money and prayers are assisting in fastening upon the churches a sectarian product. Make no mistake about it, before we can reproduce upon this earth the church for which our Lord died, the hireling system must go!

THE EXTRA HAND

In a certain art gallery there hung for years a picture by one of the old masters. Those visitors who gazed upon it in rapt

appreciation of the technique noticed nothing wrong. One day an expert who sat for an hour studying the Flemish portrait became disturbed by the fact that the pigment used in one of the hands of the subject did not seem to blend with the rest of the painting. He confided his views to others, and it was decided to submit the painting to a group of specialists in restoration work. Examination proved that the arm and hand had been painted in by a later, although skilful portrait artist, who had cleverly covered up the work of the master. By careful and painstaking labor the addition was removed and the original allowed to gleam forth in its real glory.

An addition has been made to the body of Christ. It was not placed there by the Master. Another hand—a hired hand—has been skilfully injected and obscures the original beauty of the Master's plan. It is superimposed upon and covers up that which He designed. It must be removed and its removal is the work of restorationists. It will be a slow, tedious and difficult task, but it must be done or else we shall be forced to surrender our plea.

A COLONIAL HOUSE

In a prominent city on the eastern coast there stood a house which dated back to colonial times. It had long been deserted and allowed to accumulate the dust and debris of decades. But a group of public spirited citizens concluded it might be made into a tourist attraction, so they subscribed a large sum for its purchase and restoration. The task of reviving it was allotted to a firm which specialized in that work, and they were told to spare no expense in getting an authentic reproduction. After they had cleared out the rubbish they started in on the walls of the parlor. Here they carefully removed layer after layer of paper until at last they arrived at the original pattern. Then they reproduced this in its exactitude, so that if one of the original owners had returned to earth he would immediately have felt at home.

The house of God was virtually deserted for the 1260 years of the Dark Ages, during which the trash inspired by apostasy piled up about the walls. We can thank God who in His providence raised up men mightier and better than ourselves — Luther, Zwingli, Wesley, Campbell, Stone, et al., who laboriously cleared away much of the rubbish of popery. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and other things have been recovered, but there lies before us today the herculean task of finishing the operation to which we have fallen heir. It must be an exhausting, fatiguing labor, for it will require strenuous research and energetic attention to detail.

Fighting Abuses

The hireling clergymen, seeking to find justification for *the system* of which they are the defenders, continually assert that they realize that many of their preachers abuse their privileges and rights, and that they oppose such abuses and seek to overcome them. They want the rest of us to limit our fight to such abuses. Our reply is that the whole system is one vast abuse. It is a cancer upon the body of God's Son. Shall we allow the cancer to remain and merely bandage each eruption when it comes to the surface? Do these clergymen fight the "abuses" of instrumental music in the public worship? Do they merely oppose the "abuses" of infant sprinkling? Do they attack the "abuses" of the worship of the Virgin Mary? The hireling pastor system

came from the same source as these things, and should be uprooted even as they ought to be. There is no scriptural way of carrying on an unscriptural practice. The whole philosophy of hiring out to a church with elders to be recognized as the minister of that church is repugnant to the spirit of the Christian religion. It is an abuse of God's plan in a score of ways, and can never be sanctified by pious platitudes, or justified by taking occasional potshots at a gross offender.

"Joe Must Go!"

When a group of Wisconsin voters became alarmed at the implications of McCarthyism in our national life and concluded that their junior senator was employing the tactics of Communism in an attempt to dig out Communists, they adopted as their slogan, "Joe must go!" They realized that as long as McCarthy remained he would be a symbol of a practice which they believed to be inimical to their welfare.

So long as the hireling ministry system prevails it will be a threat to our spiritual progress. It has no foundation in God's word, it is a usurper of the rights and prerogatives of humble saints, it is a disgrace to a freedom loving citizenry composing a priesthood of all believers. God's people no more need this system than they need another mediator between themselves and heaven. *The system* is a loathsome accretion and a foul blot upon the kingdom of heaven. The hireling one-man ministry must go!

The Eternal Triangle

No one appears quite so ridiculous as a man who seeks to justify his unscriptural practice by the holy scriptures. Such a person will alter, twist, wrest and contort whatever the Holy Spirit said in an attempt to grasp a straw and keep from sinking beneath the waves of logical opposition. He will ignore every argument he has previously made on other topics and scrap every position of prior date.

This is the case with those who now seek to defend the one-man ministry system. That system is no part of God's arrangement. It crept in as a result of man's false notion that he could better arrange the edification of the church of God than could God himself. It is perpetuated by sectarian pride and the apparent necessity occasioned by the general spiritual debility it has wrought in the body.

However, its devotees could not make such a fatal admission, and they are forced to give some semblance of scriptural authority. After intensive research they have dug up three cases, which, by a little "doctoring" can be made to look plausible to those minds prejudiced in behalf of the clerical caste. Since the "top level" men have agreed to defend these three cases as equivalent to what they are doing, the rest of the lesser fry lend their voices in unison and like spiritual cicadas chant the same song with monotonous repetition. It has been discovered that Paul was "the located minister" at Ephesus, and also at Corinth, and that Timothy was his successor at Ephesus. Upon these three the clerical brethren take their stand to do or die. It behoves us to examine these and see if Paul was a hired pastor or advised Timothy to become one. We are of the opinion that our brethren in their anxiety for scriptural respectability read between the lines and engaged in a considerable amount of wishful thinking which they have tried to transmute into tangible proof. We doubt that anyone will locate the place where the elders of a congregation ever bargained with Paul or Timothy to become the local minister at so much per week.

I. PAUL AT EPHESUS

It is true that Paul remained at Ephesus for three years. But he did not go there as the hireling minister. There was no congregation in Ephesus when Paul went there. He was a missionary in the true sense of the word. He began preaching in the synagogue and a great deal of opposition arose, so after approximately three months he took the disciples he had made to the lecture hall of Tyrannus. Here he continued for about two years with such force that all Asia heard the word. He taught publicly and from house to house, and testified to both Jews and Greeks, and for three years trained the disciples night and day, doing so tearfully. During this time he did not desire any man's gold, silver or clothing. Instead he labored with his own hands and paid all of his own expenses and sup-

ported those who were with him. He continually held forth the lesson of Christ that "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Before he left men had been developed for and ordained to the eldership. To them the apostle transferred the trust of overseeing the flock, solemnly charging them to feed (or pastor) it. Having done this, he commended the elders unto God and to the word of his grace, which he declared was able to build them up. He did not recommend a preacher to them, nor recommend that they secure one. He implied that all that was necessary to spiritual edification was a faithful flock, faithful shepherds and faithful adherence to the word of God.

Some Striking Differences

Even the most casual reader can now see that the case of Paul at Ephesus is not comparable to the modern hireling system. When Paul went to Ephesus there was no congregation; modern ministers advertise for positions with established churches. Paul trained the church night and day until it could stand on its own feet. He worked himself out of the local church; ministers today work themselves into it. Paul wrote to the congregation that "the *whole body* fitly joined together and compacted by that which *every joint* supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of *every part* maketh increase of the body unto the *edifying of itself* in love" (Eph. 4:16). Every member was told how to speak "to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). The whole congregation was to put on the whole armor of God. All were to take the Spirit's sword which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:13-17). It never occurred to Paul that the congregation might hire someone to do their fighting. All were trained in the use of the divine weapon. This is not the advice doled out by modern clerics. They labor to convince congregations that the body cannot edify itself. When they find a congregation without a hired hand they immediately begin to put in a plug for one,

and to paint a discouraging picture for the church if it does not import a member from elsewhere to do the fighting. No twentieth century hireling would write a letter like the Ephesian epistle.

Paul did not receive a salary during the three years he was at Ephesus. He did not instruct the brethren to draw up "a budget" in which the greatest expense was feathering the nest of the local preacher. He did not ask the brethren there to labor to support him; instead he labored while there to support the brethren who were with him. He distinctly told the elders that he had by personal example demonstrated how that by so laboring they ought to support the weak. In a recent debate, a man who gets six hundred dollars per month and a house furnished, sought refuge for his practice in Paul's stay at Ephesus. To what depths will the clergy stoop to pad their purses and protect their pocketbooks? What will such men say when they stand beside the great apostle to the Gentiles in the final judgment? It would be better for such men if they had never been born.

Elders at Ephesus

When Paul left Ephesus the work of feeding the flock was turned over to the elders. They were told to do it; they were not told to hire someone to do it. It was a personal responsibility, not a proxy performance. Nowhere did Paul write about his successor. The religious journals today are full of reports of hired hands who resign as "local evangelists" and who go on to state, "The elders have not yet selected my successor. Brethren who desire a transfer of location should write and arrange for trial sermons." Imagine such a chapter in Paul's life. The fact that those who claim to be the New Testament congregation tolerate such ideas is but proof that we have too long suckled the paps of the Mother of harlots with her clerical hierachy.

Paul did not recommend that the elders at Ephesus hire a new minister. He commended them to the word of God. Since they were all ministers, with that word they could accomplish all that God

wanted the church as such to do at Ephesus with regard to its worship. Instead of the elders at Ephesus calling Paul unto them and turning their work over to him, Paul called the elders of Ephesus unto him and turned the work over to them. This is surely not the case our special clergymen need to support their position. It is the exact opposite of that position. Again we remark, that after three years, Paul left a trained church, the whole body fitly joined, every joint supplying its part; every part working effectually. He left a qualified eldership to feed and oversee, and he left the word of God which was able to build them up! Does someone say he also left Timothy as his successor and as the "local evangelist"? Let us see if the modern system can find comfort in

II. TIMOTHY AT EPHESUS

There are some brethren so naive as to believe that they have a perfect case worked out for "ministerial succession" in the fact that Paul was at Ephesus three years (Acts 20:31), and upon his departure besought Timothy to abide there (1 Tim. 1:4) and then sent Tychichus to replace him (2 Tim. 4:12). They put these three in sequence and reason that this is a perfect example of what is practiced by present day "located ministers." Unfortunately, thousands of lazy, indifferent members who never study the Bible for themselves accept this as factual and repeat it like caged parrots.

We believe careful scrutiny of the historical background will not support the above chart. It is quite consistent with facts to believe that he came to Ephesus in the autumn of 54 A.D., and remained there until the summer of 57 A.D., whereupon he departed for Macedonia. He was apparently acquitted after his first Roman imprisonment in the spring of 63, and again made a visit to the churches. Authorities generally believe he visited Asia Minor in the summer of 66 A.D., and left Timothy at Ephesus, while he journeyed on to Macedonia in 67 A.D., from which he wrote 1 Timothy, returning in the autumn to Ephesus from which place he wrote to Titus. After wintering at

Nicopolis he was again imprisoned at Rome and executed.

This being the case, it was some ten years from the time Paul commended the elders of Ephesus unto the word of God (Acts 20:32) which was able to edify, and the time he left Timothy there to charge some that they teach no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3). That would be quite an interval for a congregation in these days to subsist with just the elders feeding the flock as Paul told them to do. Yet it was during this very interval in which he wrote the Ephesian congregation (A.D. 62) and endorsed the principle of mutual edification by which the church built up itself (Eph. 4:16).

Did Timothy Succeed Paul?

But is it possible that Paul had reference to his original departure from Ephesus when he wrote Timothy that he besought him to remain there? In other words, could Timothy have succeeded Paul at the end of the latter's three year period of gospel service in Asia? While Paul was at Ephesus he determined to visit Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 19:21). Accordingly he sent Timothy and Erastus ahead to Macedonia, while he remained in Ephesus (Acts 19:22). It was his expectation that Timothy would go as far as Corinth, and he wrote them to that effect from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:10). Later, Paul departed to go into Macedonia (Acts 20:1) and en route the Lord opened up a door for him to preach the gospel at Troas (2 Cor. 2:12), but because he was disappointed in not finding Titus there to give him a report from Corinth, he pressed on without delay to Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:13). When he arrived in Macedonia, he was joined by Titus, so he wrote the Corinthians his second letter from Macedonia at once, mentioning the persecutions suffered in Asia while at Ephesus (2 Cor. 1:8, 9). But when this letter was written so soon after his leaving Ephesus, Timothy was *with him in Macedonia* and actually joined in writing the letter! Was Timothy's term as *located minister* of less than a month's duration? If he succeeded Paul at Ephesus it could

not have been much longer. Contracts in those days must have been on a shorter term basis than in these latter days.

But when Paul wrote 1 Timothy he hoped to come unto Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 3:15) and the letter was written to give instructions as to what was to be done "till I come" (1 Tim. 4:13). Nothing is said about Timothy coming to Paul. The fact is that Timothy did not remain in Ephesus at the end of the three years Paul spent there. He did not act as Paul's successor for Paul sent him away to Macedonia before he ever left Ephesus, and Timothy was joined with Paul in Macedonia and traveled with him (Acts 20:4). He was with him at Miletus when he called the elders of Ephesus and gave them their charge (Acts 20:13-16). It is therefore evident that Timothy was left at Ephesus on another and much later occasion not mentioned in the book of Acts.

Why Did Timothy Remain?

What was the reason for Paul leaving Timothy at Ephesus? A consideration of a chain of circumstances will help us to understand the purpose. When Paul took his farewell of the elders of Ephesus he predicted that some from among them would arise to speak perverse things and draw away disciples after them. Years later he wrote the Ephesian letter but made no reference to any schism or factionalism introduced by the elders. Yet when 1 Timothy was written Paul states he besought the evangelist to remain at Ephesus. The purpose of this is clearly stated, to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine." It is apparent that troublesome questions had been introduced which discouraged godly edification (1 Tim. 1:4). Some who desired to be teachers, but who understood not what they said or what they affirmed, had been turned aside unto vain jangling (1 Tim. 1:6, 7). Timothy did not remain in Ephesus as the "located minister" but to correct certain teachers who were introducing false doctrines and leading disciples astray. His was a work of emergency. But the very purpose of his

being there indicates there was a *freedom allowed in teaching*, and that this was not the work of one man or two.

Paul told the elders that of themselves some would arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. One of these perverse things is mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:18, the doctrine that the resurrection was already past; the men who taught it are identified as Hymenaeus and Philetus; the fact that they drew men away is evidenced by the statement that they "overthrew the faith of some." It was said their word would spread like gangrene in the body (2 Tim. 2:16-18). Such men must have their mouths stopped, else they will turn aside whole families. This work of stopping the mouths of false teachers is ordinarily that of elders (Titus 1:9-11). It is not the prerogative of an evangelist to come into a congregation with godly elders and start to use disciplinary measures on the flock.

But what about a congregation of humble disciples where the bishops begin to advocate heresy? Is the congregation helpless? Indeed not! The same authority which installed a man in office when qualified, may act as agent of the congregation in administering discipline when he is disqualified. No congregation ever ordained its own officers. The officers were selected by the congregation, but ordained by apostles or evangelists. When elders go astray, charges against them are to be received by an evangelist upon the testimony of two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19). Those who sin are to be publicly rebuked that others may learn to fear. The evangelist is solemnly charged to do this without preferential treatment or partiality (5:20, 21). A careful investigation is often required because while some men's sins are openly committed and are common knowledge before trial, others are ascertained only after intense scrutiny of the testimony (1 Tim. 5:24).

He who infers from the above that an evangelist may hire out to a congregation as a permanent fixture thereof, and to do the feeding where the elders are qualified, capable and blameless men undeserving

of censure, holding fast the faithful word as they have been taught and thus are able to exhort the brethren and to convict gainsayers, is surely stretching the tabernacle of God's word to shelter something which the Father never intended. Let it be remembered that Timothy's prime purpose in Ephesus was to *correct teachers* who were abusing their privileges and teaching other doctrines.

He was not hired by the elders, but was left there by apostolic authority, which transcended that of any elders, for the apostles acted by divine fiat as the ambassadors of the Great King. When the apostolic authority of Paul was challenged in the congregation at Corinth, he affirmed it was given him by the Lord for building up and not for destroying them (2 Cor. 10:8) and said, "I write this while I am away from you, in order that when I come I may not be severe in the use of authority which the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down (2 Cor. 13:10). Even so Paul said he did not lord it over their faith, but worked with them for their joy (2 Cor. 1:23). He sent Timothy to Corinth to remind them of his ways in Christ as he taught them everywhere in every church (1 Cor. 4:17).

Corinth did not hire Timothy and could not fire him. *Paul sent him!* In the same sense Ephesus did not hire Timothy and could not fire him. *Paul left him!* The elders at Ephesus had nothing to do with the arrangement. They did not arrange his work—an apostle did that! They did not tell him what was needed in their congregation—an apostle did! They did not employ him, they could not discharge him! Only the authority that sent him or left him, could remove him. For that reason he did not await word from the elders as to when to leave, he waited for word from the apostle. Those who point to this case as authority for elders to hire a man to come in and feed the flock where the overseers and teachers are not dispensing false doctrines spin a web of deceit and weave a pattern out of a tissue of falsehoods. Let us beware of such men.

III. PAUL AT CORINTH

The clergymen using a fine tooth comb and a drag net, seeking to find some validity for their office pounce with joy upon Acts 18: 11, where speaking of Paul at Corinth, the record says, "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." A glorious shout goes up. Eureka! We have found it! Paul was the local minister at Corinth for 18 months. Of all the silly twaddle read into God's Book, this is the most ridiculous. Since Silas and Timothy were with Paul in his labors at Corinth (Acts 18: 5) and since Paul affirmed that all three of them preached among them (2 Cor. 1: 19) we now ask which of these three was the minister, and which one got the check each Friday night? Will someone tell us which *one* was "the minister" and which *two* were the "assistant ministers"? On what scale did they divide the financial take? Does someone cite the statement of Paul, "Though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel"? There is no comfort in this for the "one-man pastor" for this very passage shows that after a congregation is planted in Christ there should be a freedom of the platform for multiple teachers. It would be foolish for Paul to say you may have *ten thousand* instructors in a congregation, and then set up a system by which all would be forbidden to teach the whole congregation, and would have to import only *one* to do it. And it was for this reason he wrote to this same congregation, "When you come together *every one of you . . . hath a teaching*" (1 Cor. 14: 26). Let us question Paul's work at Corinth to see if it harmonizes with the modern one-man ministry system. We will just let the Holy Spirit supply the answers.

1. Was there a large congregation capable of supporting Paul when he came to Corinth? "As a wise masterbuilder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon" (1 Cor. 3: 10). "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy,

for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 2). "We were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 14 RSV).

2. How did Paul pay his expenses while at Corinth? He "found a certain Jew named Aquilla . . . with his wife Priscilla . . . and because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought, for by their occupation they were tentmakers" (Acts 18: 2, 3).

3. Could the apostle fully support himself by these labors? "When I was with you *and was in want*, I did not burden any one" (2 Cor. 11: 9).

4. Did he accept any funds from Corinth? "I preached God's gospel without cost to you" (2 Cor. 11: 7).

5. Were there not many who made a trade or profession out of the gospel? "We are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word" (2 Cor. 2: 17 RSV).

6. Did not Paul advocate support of gospel preachers? "The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 14).

7. When did the Lord make this arrangement regarding support of proclaimers? "Remain in the same house, eating and drinking *such things as they provide*, for the laborer deserves his wages" (Luke 10: 7).

8. Did Paul receive financial assistance from other churches while at Corinth? "I robbed other churches by accepting support from them to serve you" (2 Cor. 11: 8).

9. On what basis did Paul accept such support? "*My needs were supplied* by the brethren who came from Macedonia" (2 Cor. 11: 9).

10. Did Paul have a guaranteed income? "I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want" (Phil. 4: 12).

11. Did Paul teach the congregation to budget and lay up for him? "I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours, but you; for children ought not to lay

up for their parents, but parents for their children" (2 Cor. 12: 14).

12. Did Paul consider the congregation at Corinth able to carry on without outside help? "In every way you were enriched in him with all speech and knowledge . . . so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift" (1 Cor. 1: 5, 7).

13. Did he recommend to all of the brethren that they desire any special gift? "Make love your aim and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (1 Cor. 14: 1). "So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy" (1 Cor. 14: 39).

14. What use was to be made of this gift? "He who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation" (1 Cor. 14: 3).

15. What resulted from the proper use of the gift? "He who prophesies edifies the church" (1 Cor. 14: 4).

16. Was this edification to be by one man? "For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be comforted" (1 Cor. 14: 31).

17. But who would convict the outsiders? "If all prophesy, and an unbeliever enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all" (1 Cor. 14: 24).

18. Could this not be regulation for private teaching? "The whole church assembles" (1 Cor. 14: 23). "When you come together each one has a hymn, a lesson, etc." (1 Cor. 14: 26).

19. Was this system of edification binding upon the congregations? "If any

one thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. If any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized" (1 Cor. 14: 37).

20. Did Paul teach the same thing in every congregation? "I sent to you Timothy . . . to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4: 17). "This is my rule in all the churches" (1 Cor. 7: 17).

Conclusion

If Paul practiced one man ministry at Corinth when the whole congregation assembled, he violated the Spirit's program as given through himself. How ridiculous it would be for him to encourage every one to qualify to speak publicly to the whole assembly for their edification, and then saddle the church with a system which would rob them of this very right he encouraged them so earnestly to desire. There could be no hiring one-man ministry at Corinth on the basis of the First Corinthian letter. Since Paul would not teach one thing and practice another, we are forced to conclude that regardless of how long he abode at Corinth, he was not a Sunday parson, a Sunday sermonizer, a gospel peddler or "the local minister." The triad of cases upon which the parsons in the congregations of Christ rely to uphold their positions fade into oblivion when examined in the searchlight of divine revelation.—*The Editor.*

Objections to One Man Ministry

The present practice of hiring at a stipulated sum a preacher to be the minister of a congregation of the saints of God, and to be the recognized dispenser of truth in their behalf, and the authorized director of their public praise service to God, we deem to be nefarious and inimical to the welfare of the social structure of the congregation. It is not a question of how we can dress up such a sys-

tem and retain it, but how we can reveal it in its true light and reject it. It is not the abuse of the system by occasional unscrupulous practitioners which we oppose, but the system itself, constituting as it does one vast abuse of God's program. While time and space do not permit the filing of many scriptural and valid objections we submit the following which we esteem worthy of your analysis.

1. It Opposes God's Purpose in Christianity

Religion, like the sabbath, was made for man, and not man for religion. It belongs to sinful man, to man who, having become separated from the Creator; requires some bond by which he can be drawn into communion with Him who is the source of all spiritual power, energy and strength. Within each man dwells a spirit, the grandeur of which cannot be measured by finite thought. It is the image of God, distorted, cramped and hidden perhaps, but nonetheless striving to be freed from its vault of sin, to unfold in its beauty, and to go on unto perfection. Like a plant hidden in a dungeon, yet sending forth frail tendrils toward a crack of light filtering in, so the spirit imprisoned in the blackness of a life steeped in evil, still watered by conscience, "reaches blindly above it for light."

Christianity is the product of Him who is a spirit, devised by a divine intelligence, communicated to men of finite powers, and destined to free their own spirits, and to perfect them for eternal existence in a purified fellowship. Since man is a rational being as distinguished from dumb brutes, any system which provides for soul culture must be one adapted to man's needs in his present condition and which commends itself to his intellectual powers. That Christianity is neither adapted to angels or demons we could easily prove, and that it is adapted to man in his present state is clearly demonstrable. It is designed to enable one who has the power of acting on, determining and forming himself, to cultivate a nature suitable to residence in heaven.

To cultivate a thing is to make it grow. Nothing admits of culture except that which has in it a principle of life or vigor, and is capable of being expanded. Christianity is the practice of soul culture, by which one unfolds his divinely provided powers and capabilities to become a vigorous, well-proportioned, happy being, whose relation to this earth is that of a stranger and pilgrim, and who there-

fore continually seeks for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It is peculiarly adapted to its purpose. It provides an atonement or expiation for sin and thus removes any thought of guilt complex; it holds out a perfect exemplar in a person who was tempted in all points as ourselves, yet was without sin; it stimulates to a career of philanthropy, benevolence and grace, thus crushing out the weeds of envy, prejudice, hate and selfishness, which all cramp the soul; it offers a future reward for striving, a goal of such tremendous value as to dwarf all we have envisioned in comparison.

The very purpose and nature of Christianity compels it to place emphasis upon the individual. Previous to its advent the masses of men were looked upon merely as chattels. Huge armies moved like dread automatons across gory battlefields. Men belonged to the state. Those who were born in certain stations in life were doomed there to remain. There was no dignity in human personality. "The quarry slave scourged to his dungeon" was less appreciated than the stolid ox. The Roman social set gathered in the Colosseum and watched as gladiators hacked each other to pieces for their entertainment. Even in religion, fettered by superstition, ignorance and tradition, men in general were the pawns of a clever and diabolical priestcraft.

Obviously the first task was to restore the sense of value of the soul. Man had little desire to cultivate soil so little esteemed. But the cross of Christ changed all of that, for upon it the Son of God died for every man. It was thus seen the tremendous estimate which heaven placed upon the individual soul. The message of Christianity was addressed "to every creature." Responsibility was again charged to "every soul of man" (Rom. 2:6-11). And it was based upon the potent fact that "there is no respect of persons with God."

The soul was freed from the necessity of spiritual subservience to an earthly priesthood in which a mere man through fear or superstition dominated the spirits

of others. Every Christian composed "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). All are equally expected to minister to God and each other within the limitations of the revealed oracles. God will judge "without respect of persons according to every man's work" (1 Peter 1:17). Freed from the hampering restraints imposed by men, every soul may grow outward and upward toward perfection.

Man is a social being. He was not so constructed to live, grow or advance alone. Society is as essential to his development as food or atmosphere. Accordingly heaven has ordained a fellowship of kindred minds, and a communion of the saints. The congregation is the environment in which the soul receives renewed vigor. But the soul can never achieve its proper sphere merely by being acted upon by others. The minds and spirits composing the *ekklesia* of saints are not masses of passive material, fashioned to receive impressions unresistingly from abroad. They possess native forces which act upon impressions conveyed to them, and through rational processes discover new truths or new approaches to truth, and which they must be allowed to express, not only for the benefit of others, but for their own continued growth.

It was for this reason that in the primitive church, the Holy Spirit did not make one man the mouthpiece. There must be an intercourse of minds, a mutuality or exchange of thought. When the early disciples met in one place, all who were gifted with the power of edifying, exhorting and comforting were given the privilege of doing so, that all might learn and all be comforted (1 Cor. 14:31). Man was not made to shut his mind up in a cloistered cell, but to give it voice and to exchange it for other minds. Speech is one of our greatest distinctions from the brute. It is an instrument of soul culture. We understand ourselves better, our conceptions grow clearer to ourselves as we seek to make them clearer to others. Christianity provides freedom in the as-

sembly for all men of faith and ability to share the fruits of their meditations, and thus to grow in grace and knowledge.

Any system which places the edification solely in the hands of one man, which makes it the exclusive task of a polished specialist, defeats the eternal purpose of God, minimizes the value and dignity of the individual soul, thwarts the personal growth and expansion so essential to preparation for heaven, places a dam across the stream of intellect, and usurps the freedom of those who are humble and helpless to resist. Such a system which exalts talent and external polish above virtue and piety is a curse to the congregation and a despotic tyranny over thought. The one man ministry system is the greatest barrier the devil has erected in this century against the unbridled circulation of that truth which "makes men free."

2. It Opposes the True Basis of Ministry

While our Lord was upon earth there seemed to be a constant *misunderstanding* upon the part of the disciples as to the nature of the kingdom of heaven. Constantly misconstruing His language, or interpreting it in the light of their own plans and fancies, they assumed that the kingdom would be earthly in its outworkings, and one in which there would be *gradations of rank and authority* to be exercised arbitrarily. The disputes arising out of this false view were many, loud and long. They continued almost to the time of His decease. The mother of James and John personally approached Jesus entreating for favored spots for her sons in the forthcoming realm of heaven. *The indignation of the other apostles provided an opportunity for a great lesson by our Lord as recorded in Matthew 20:20-28.*

The apostles were reminded that the leaders of the Gentiles exercised dominion over them, while those who were great or powerful exercised authority over them. He declared it should not be thus among the disciples, but whosoever would be great must be their minister, and who-

soever would be chief must be their servant. Our Lord closed his teaching with the poignant statement, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This philosophy cuts directly across the thinking of the multitude of saints today. Hundreds and thousands exist merely to be ministered unto religiously. They pay for such ministrations as they buy life and accident insurance, and they expect its benefits.

It is not uncommon for people in the congregation to express disapproval of their hireling because he did not visit them while they were ill at home or in the hospital. They do not criticize the rest of the congregation for such neglect, for showing mercy today is the professional task of a hired hand. If a person is reported as ill, the minister is notified and expected to go see and pray for the sick one. It never occurs to most people that this is the responsibility of every Christian.

Does someone move into the community who might be led to attend services? The minister is given the address and makes a professional call. After all it is his church, those who attend are his people, the speaker's platform is his pulpit. He is introduced as "our minister" and "his sermons" are advertised as the chief drawing card to the worship service. He maintains a file of the membership, he checks on the non-attendants, he goes out and rounds up the strays, he binds up the broken-hearted. In short, he is the service representative of the congregation, the spiritual trouble-shooter, the general manager.

But the essence of Christianity is service to others, and not service rendered for pay or for the wages of a hireling, but service rendered for the love of God and because of the divine philanthropy which is a natural result of it. Does the congregation require edification? Then every disciple should work effectively to produce it (Eph. 4: 16). Are there some who need comfort? All should comfort each other with the word of God (1 Thess. 4: 18). Are there fatherless and widows

who are afflicted? Every Christian should visit them (James 1: 27). Are there outsiders to be convicted? They should be convicted of all (1 Cor. 14: 25). Is a brother overtaken in a fault? All who are spiritual should seek to restore him (Gal. 6: 1). Do some require exhortation and encouragement? This is a daily mutual task (Heb. 3: 13). Should an invitation be issued to come to Christ? "Let him that heareth say, Come" (Rev. 22: 17).

Christianity is a manifestation of the Christ-principle. Our motto should be "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister." God's vineyard is not a place where men may sit in the shade and hire others to wait upon them. God's soldiers are not "gold bricks" who lead pampered, sheltered lives, while a few captains do periodic fighting. God's people are not to be helpless, immature spiritual infants relying upon someone to spoon-feed them with strained baby foods, but full-grown men and women who can stand upon their own feet. The hireling system operates upon the basis that the majority of the members deserve to be served, and should be served according to their ability to pay, or commensurate with what they can afford. It creates an impression that you may come to Christ, not to minister, but to be ministered unto. In this it denies the principles of our Lord, and debases His entire fabric designed for our spiritual existence.

3. It Reduces the Church to a Helpless Weakling

It is a common thing to hear boastful remarks by the clerical attachés, who point with pride to their huge cathedral-like structures, their immense congregations, their enormous sums of money, their massive programs. These are looked upon as indicative of spiritual power and strength, which is considered to be a sign of righteousness in accomplishment. A little rational sense will show that fabulous wealth, great numbers of adherents, and gigantic material structures, do not denote spirituality, for then the righteousness of the Roman Catholics, Mo-

ammedans, Greek Orthodox, and many others, would far excel ours. Moreover, it is questionable how many in such "churches of Christ" as indulge in such boasting are really converted to Christ, and what proportion are attracted by the big preachers, big displays and big buildings! Let the preacher be turned out into the field, and let the congregation do its own feeding, and see how many continue to come to "the trough." Some men are converted to a system, not to our Lord Jesus Christ!

The whole truth is that most congregations with the hireling system are so weakened and enfeebled they cannot stand alone. The talents of the multitude are so undeveloped, the sense of dependency upon a man so acute, that the church gets the "weak trembles" and gives every sign of nervous collapse if the minister threatens to leave them "holding the sack." Size is no indication of strength. The largest man in the world had to be helped to stand and waddled helplessly when he tried to walk. Blubber is not muscle. Excess fat may actually kill a body.

For years the pagan Chinese bound the feet of their female babies soon after birth. It was fashionable to do this and the nation was thus composed of a great group of cripples, made such by a lack of proper exercise. It has now become the fad to bind and restrict the members of the body of God's Son until it cannot stand alone, and congregations forty years old have not yet learned to take nourishment without someone imported for a price to dip the spoon in the Bible. One of the saddest mental cases I know is that of a young man, thirty years of age, possessed of a strong frame and excellent physique, but whose mind has never developed. His very size and weight make the problem of his care more difficult. Is it a fact that some congregations which are so large are so stunted in mental and spiritual growth?

The apostle condemned the Corinthian church as being "babes in Christ." There is nothing wrong about being a baby at the proper time, but there is something

wrong in remaining in that state. There is a difference in being a baby and "a big baby!" The church at Corinth was censured because it had to be on a milk diet instead of being able to take solid food. One wonders what the apostle would have said if Corinth not only was on a diet but had to have someone else prepare the formula and hold the bottle. It can safely be said of Corinth that even as babies they were not given a preacher to act as "wet nurse."

The very trend of the one-man system is toward a state of dependency upon the part of the church—not dependence upon Christ, but upon man. The idea is set forth that the church cannot exist without this system. The powers and abilities of humble saints are deprecated or derided. The only hope is to import a man at a fixed fee. Thus the church becomes weaker all of the time. The one man system is not the source of spiritual strength. God, who in His wisdom and strength, made us and gave us life, has not destined the great majority of His children to wear out their daily lives in unremitting toil and unimproving drudgery to benefit the few who constitute the clergy with a life of ease. Surely He did not intend for most of His children to be spiritual dwarfs. In the physical body are no organs created to shrivel by disuse; how absurd to conclude that the powers of the soul should be locked up in a state of lethargy.

4. It Enslaves Free Men

One of the great paradoxes of God's plan is that every child of God is both a slave and a free man (1 Cor. 7:22). Our slavery is the effect of voluntary submission unto Him, our freedom is submitted unto us voluntarily by Christ. Having been made free we are acknowledged as "fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God." As a slave no man has any rights. A slave is one who belongs to another for whom he is bound to live and labor, and whose instrument he must be. The will of the master must be his law, regardless of how counter it may run to the former thinking

of the slave. Another owns him, and thus has a right to his time and labor, and to the fruit of his labor, and to state the very bounds of his life. In our relationship as slaves we have no rights, we cannot legislate, we cannot decide what we will do or not do.

But as adopted sons and as citizens in the great religio-social structure of the kingdom, we have certain natural and inalienable rights. Citizenship imposes certain responsibilities, but it also confers certain rights. Those who make up the church are still individuals, but individuals who have been "washed, sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." Their souls have been purified in obeying the truth. Now every pure one who is a citizen possesses certain rights because he is created of God. These rights are conferred by God. They are gifts from Him and not from the church; they are not surrendered upon induction into the church, and must not be abrogated under the spurious plea that it is best for the common good. Citizenship without rights is the doctrine of tyrannical despots.

Our rights belong to us as moral beings. So soon as one becomes conscious of duty to God, a related consciousness is kindled which reasons that he has a right to perform that which duty demands, and that no man or coalition of men can restrain him from fulfilling that duty without committing a crime against him. The sense of duty toward God and our fellows is the sacred fountain of all rights. The same inward principle which affirms the one also asserts the other. And that principal is universal and reciprocal. A man cannot claim the right to exercise his talent and deny that right to his brother. It is plain that if one can arbitrarily be denied his rights as a citizen, all citizens by the same token may be denied such rights, provided that some-one powerful and clever enough arises to lay claim to all of them.

At this juncture it is inevitable that we shall be challenged to show what rights accrue to every citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and to define them concretely

and concisely. We may be forced to admit that the rights of each individual, like his duties, may not be susceptible of such clear definitions as will not be attacked by quibblers and sophists. It is extremely difficult to measure spiritual mountains by material yardsticks. And while whole books might be written on such a topic, it is essential to our cause that we present the matter in such small compass as to enunciate an underlying principle. For that reason we affirm that the whole matter of rights is briefly comprehended in this, that every individual fundamentally has the right to exercise *his powers for his own happiness, well-being and edification, and for that of others unto whom he is bound by the ties of brotherhood!*

It is for this very thing we have been created, for this we have been designed and given life. We are obligated to improve ourselves, to seek perfection, and to encourage and help all others to do the same. The ability to do this, in whatever degree it is bestowed, is a sacred trust from God. Perhaps it is the most outstanding of all trusts, for God will hold us accountable for that ability, as to whether we have used it, squandered it, allowed it to be dormant, to be hidden in a napkin, or stolen from us, even by brethren. All gifts for edification in every age of the congregation have been bestowed upon each "for the common good" (1 Cor. 12: 7).

Consequently, he suffers a grave injury who is stripped of this right bestowed by a beneficent Creator. It little matters whether the right is abrogated by force or threat, or whether it is captured by stealth or false teaching. A citizen may as effectively be robbed of his exercise of the right of franchise if taught by those in authority that he has no such right, as by a group of thugs who waylay and beat him up en route to the ballot box. The substitution of a system which effectively forbids the exercise of the right to speak "for the common good," which takes the rights of all and confers them upon one man or a small clique, is upon the same basis in the church as a small group of

politicians marking all of the ballots and dropping them in at the polls. As every man is bound by his relationship to God, and under God's law, to utilize all of his powers and abilities for the common good, there is a corresponding obligation on the part of each to leave others free for the accomplishment of this end. And whoever exercises his own rights as a free citizen without abridging the same rights belonging equally to others deserves to be unassailed and unimpeded. But anyone who arrogates to himself the rights belonging to all, or who insists upon the exercise of his rights to the interference or cancellation of the rights of others, must be exposed as a usurper of the prerogatives of God's humble servants.

Nothing is clearer from the sacred teachings of the New Covenant than that one of the solemn obligations of citizenship in God's kingdom is to exercise all gifts and abilities for the purpose of growing in grace and knowledge personally, and to edify and build up others. *Heaven confers a definite responsibility to edify*, and not merely to be edified. The responsibility or duty to do a thing must include the right to do it. When Paul instructed the brethren at Corinth "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. 14: 12) the obligation to do it implied the right to do it. How absurd and ridiculous it would have been for the apostle to urge all to seek to excel

in this grace, and then create a system making it impossible for them to exercise themselves in it at all.

This is the crux of the opposition to the one-man ministry system. Here is the place where it runs head on into God's system, and here it must be thrown back and repulsed or truth will suffer defeat. God's church is God's clergy, God's clergy is God's laity, and vice versa. Any system which arrogates into the hands of the few the rights of the many obstructs the purpose of God on earth and postpones the day of complete restoration. What scripture provides for the edification of the assembly to become the peculiar service of a special caste among God's regal priests? Was not the freedom of the speaker's platform an established principle in the primitive church? Was that freedom annulled by the cessation of spiritual gifts? Was "the more excellent way" one of enslavement of God's citizenry by a special caste?

We contend that the system of one-man hireling ministry current among the congregations of the saints acts as a subordinating and subjugating force and renders the free-born sons of God mere paying puppets to a preacher class. That system must be dispensed with, or the church can never recapture her former glory and power. Unless it is jerked out by the roots and the roots themselves killed we are doomed.—*The Editor*.

Tricks of the Trade

BY L. E. KETCHERSIDE

How would you feel after working hard for four long years training for a highly lucrative position dangled before your eyes as an inducement to you to enter such training, and constantly held before you from the day you entered the training until the day you finished, then be rudely awakened to the fact that no such position was available for you? Where would you place the blame for failure—on those who lured you into training, on yourself for being gullible, or on the pros-

pective employers who refused to hire you? In asking these questions I have in mind a number of "ministerial graduates" whom I have met, who failed to land the "position" for which they had worked so hard. When such young men are awakened from their dreams, there is but one thing for them to do—turn to secular work.

When I asked one of these young men to engage with me in evangelistic work, he replied, "I have trained for something

better than that. If I cannot get the position for which I have trained I will just continue with the secular work." Another of the boys related to me that before he left school to try for the position he was confident would be awaiting him, one of his "experienced" instructors presented him with and lectured him on the following set of rules, which if adhered to strictly would assure him "a church."

1. Diligently prepare four to six trial sermons. Memorize them if possible and preach them to each congregation calling on you for a trial visit.

2. Sermons must not be controversial in nature. Dwell on first principles.

3. Strive to win the affections of the young folks and the aged. If you can win the affections of these two classes, they will likely compel the elders to give you favorable consideration.

4. If the general surroundings are inviting, urgently insist that you must have their immediate decision, as others are wanting your services.

5. Once your contract is signed, strive to entertain the young people and do not try to become a disciplinarian. Let others live their lives and you live yours before God.

6. As your experience and influence broadens, you may begin making demands for better things.

After reading these rules, I asked him how effective they were in helping him land the coveted position. He smilingly replied, "They are not too effective in helping ministerial graduates to get a church in these days as most elders have become wise to all the *tricks of the trade*. Most of them will no longer contract with you on five or six sermons. They insist on a meeting of a full week or more, and most of the boys do not have that many sermons, so they flop like I did."

Well, the cat is out of the bag. The professor and the student conspire to deceive and trick the elders into signing a contract, and the elders conspire to expose the "ministerial graduate" for what he is. What a shameful situation! Call-

ing a preacher for a trial sermon is just as sectarian and unscriptural as the doctrine of infant baptism. The purpose of "trial sermons" seems to be to find a preacher capable of doing the work of a lazy or incompetent eldership and to tickle the itching ears of a spiritually slothful people who prefer "spoon feeding" to normal growth and Christ-like service.

Show me an eldership that tolerates the "hireling" system, selecting their preachers on the basis of trial sermons, and I'll show you an eldership giving but little consideration, if any, to the irregular moral and spiritual conduct of their membership until such conduct endangers their craft. Where is such a congregation that diligently exercises scriptural discipline upon the drunkard, fornicator, railer or extortioner? I talked to a preacher recently who lives in a city with more than 35 congregations of the church of Christ. He told me he had never heard of a single case of discipline being exercised upon anyone for any offence committed. He questioned the scriptural authority of a congregation to withdraw fellowship from a drunkard at the Lord's Day morning service. He had overlooked 1 Corinthians 5:4.

Brethren, my understanding of 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 is that whosoever knowingly fellowships evildoers by willing association, becomes just as guilty before God as the evil ones. I have been taught, and have taught, that wilful disobedience to any of God's commands will destroy the soul. I believe the commands contained in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 to be just as imperative as the command to be baptized. Paul very plainly taught (Gal. 5:19-21) that such characters as he described to the Corinthians cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. If such characters cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, what will happen to the "Minister" and elders who knowingly and willingly fellowship such characters? Did not John call upon the congregations at Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira to separate evil persons from their midst or suffer the same fate the evil ones were to suffer?

“Church Splitters”

When God gave Jeremiah his commission to go to his people, he asked him what he saw and Jeremiah said he saw “a boiling pot” (Jer. 1:13). When a preacher goes out on a real mission for God things get to seething quickly. The Lord told Jeremiah, “I have this day set thee 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” (1: 10). When the prophet sent a journal to the king condemning the sins of God’s people, the king slashed the pages to pieces with his penknife and threw them in the fire. The leaders wanted to kill Jeremiah, for they claimed he caused trouble among the people, and sought not the welfare of the people but their hurt. So they cast him into a dungeon filled with muck and mire. He was accused of being what is called today “a church splitter.” But burning his books and throwing him into a dungeon did not keep his words from coming true.

Sent to Rebels

When God gave Ezekiel his commission, he said, “I send you to a nation of rebels . . . the people also are impudent and stubborn . . . and whether they hear or refuse to hear they will know there has been a prophet among them” (2: 3-5). Accordingly, the prophet was charged, “Be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit upon scorpions; be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.” It appeared that if Ezekiel did his duty he would be a troublemaker among God’s people.

Meeting Broken Up

One time Jesus went back to the town of his boyhood days and as his custom was, he went to meeting. He stood up to read and they handed him the Bible, so he turned over to the right place and read a few verses and made the folks a little talk. It didn’t set well with them, and the longer he talked the angrier they

became. Finally they jumped up, grabbed him, and rushed him out to a high cliff on which the city was built, and undertook to throw him over it. They could not refute his teaching so they decided to kill the teacher. I imagine that this event detailed in Luke 4: 16-30 was the subject of animated conversation around the market square in Nazareth for several weeks and I can almost hear someone say, “Just think of his coming back to the old church where he used to worship with his father and mother, and delivering a talk that made everyone raging mad. He ought at least to have respected the place where he once attended. He is a regular church splitter!”

Such accusations did not bother Jesus a great deal. He just pleaded guilty and went on about his business. He said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I am not come to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Matt. 10: 34-36). Jesus knew the truth would split people asunder on religious matters, but that did not deter him. He just hewed to the line and let the chips fall where they would.

Stoned to Death

Stephen got into a big argument with some very religious folks up in Jerusalem and he was getting the best of them for they “could not withstand the wisdom and Spirit with which he spoke” (Acts 6: 10). They stirred up every one and set up false witnesses to lie about what he taught and finally he was summoned to appear before the congregation of judges. He poured it on them so that he soon had them grinding their teeth in rage, and finally they poked their fingers in their ears and rushed at him. Grabbing him, they pulled and dragged him out of the city and beat him into a pulp with rocks. But the fire they kindled that day swept the whole Roman empire be-

fore it was quenched. Stephen broke up a religious gathering. He was killed for being a trouble maker.

A Real Troubler

But for causing trouble, no one could equal Paul. Almost everywhere he went things broke up in a riot. Paul was always right in the middle of trouble. He was either arousing trouble, or fleeing from some he had started, to get to the next place to start some more. He hadn't been in the congregation of Christ too long until he had aroused so much opposition that a bunch plotted to kill him, and he had to escape in a basket lowered over the wall. When he got to the next place he spoke and disputed with the Hellenists, and they sought to kill him. A group of brethren got him to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus (Acts 9: 23-30).

At Antioch in Pisidia he spoke to those who were filled with jealousy and contradicted and reviled him (Acts 13: 45). It ended with Paul and Barnabas being driven out of the district. They went down to Iconium and preached "but the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren" (14: 2). They spoke boldly and created a division. "But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and others with the apostles" (14: 4). When an attempt was made to molest and stone them they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe. It did not seem to bother them that they were run out of town. Their persecutors followed them and persuaded the people to stone Paul. The early disciples constituted a disturbing element in society. They were looked upon as rabble rousers. The people and civic authorities were disturbed about their work (Acts 17: 8). Paul was accused before the Roman tribunal of being a pestilent fellow, an agitator and the ringleader of a faction (Acts 24: 5).

The Cause of Trouble

What was the source of all this trouble? It was the declaration of truth in uncompromising terms, its proclamation regardless of consequences. Truth is designed

to cause division. It is to begin on earth the task which Christ will complete at the judgment—the separation of the good from the evil. It is God's winnowing shovel, his threshing machine, the very purpose of which is to divide the chaff from the grain. Gospel preachers are "the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (2 Cor. 2: 15, 16).

The charge is often made by the clergymen that certain brethren are pestilent, agitators and leaders of a faction. If such clergymen can just go before their congregations and brand a man as a divider of churches, they deem that this statement alone should forever settle the minds of every one not to hear him. If they can cite no division he has caused, they can invent fictitious tales which will do just as well with congregational stooges who pay another to do their thinking for them.

But there is more to the question than that. Let it be admitted that a congregation divides as the result of a man's work in that vicinity. How do men divide such congregations? Surely they do not accomplish it with a literal broad axe or a meat cleaver, but by an appeal to the intellect through teaching. This teaching must be either true or false. If false it should be pointed out and the gainsayer convicted by the truth; if it is the truth it should be admitted by all and such alterations made as to bring the whole congregation into conformity with it. Failure to do this will create division, for when some accept the truth and others reject it, division in sentiment must and will logically result. But it was not the man who declared the truth who was to blame, if blame is to be assessed, but the great Author of truth who designed it to accomplish this very thing.

Disturbing Churches

Do I hear someone say that it is right to disturb the world, but not right to disturb churches? This premise may be proven false because it assumes too much.

The churches must be taught. No one will deny that! Surely all will likewise agree that they should be taught the truth. If there is sin in the church, truth will disturb that congregation exactly as it does the world and for the same reason. To say that no one should ever disturb a congregation is to affirm that mere membership in the congregation assures a perfect and complete knowledge of the truth immediately upon introduction, and guarantees that no congregation can depart therefrom. If it be admitted that mere membership does not assure a perfection of knowledge, then that knowledge must be conveyed by teaching, and when it is conveyed, if any great segment of the membership is inclined to reject it, disturbance will result. To deny that congregations can depart from their first love is to deny the plain teaching of the Book and comes dangerously near to affirming the erroneous and fallacious doctrine of "perseverance of the saints." History attests that the New Testament church can depart, and the apostate Roman church exists as a living testimonial of how far such departures may go.

Attitude Toward Truth

The communication of moral and spiritual truth is the greatest trust committed to finite man. Our blessed Master came into this world not to accept a legislative position among the parliaments of men, not to conscript and lead forth a great army of conquest, not to be coronated on earth and accept here a throne of universal dominion, but to bring truth to mankind as one of the greatest boons bestowed by a beneficent Creator. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He who searches for truth as a priceless pearl, and who shares his every crumb of it with others, out of a pure heart, is a collaborer with Christ in the divine task of the ages.

No man can be true to God who does not reverence truth, for truth is of God. Nor can one reverence truth who is not true to himself. A man must preach what commends itself unto his own heart as being true; he must never teach any-

thing merely because others teach it. He must never, under any circumstance, declare that about which he holds a personal doubt, merely because he is expected to do so, or because he will arouse the suspicions of any group, clique or faction, if he abstains from doing so. He must never distort truth for effect, or dilute it for gain, either in popular acclaim or financially. The sword of the Spirit cannot be made a better or more potent weapon by any admixture of human alloy. If a man is not ready to die for the truth he preaches, he is not ready to live for it, let alone to proclaim it.

A sword cleaves or divides. Jesus said he came to bring a sword, and that it would even divide intimate family relationships, setting a man at variance against his father and vice versa. When the sword of truth is wielded against sectarian tendencies in the congregations, people will be set at variance, unless all love the truth enough to adopt it. We have no right to expect that to be the case, for the Holy Spirit has testified otherwise. What then? Shall we cease to teach the truth for the sake of peace? No! Let us inculcate truth in the hearts of all our brethren. The result must be with them and with God. Let the truth be known, and if truth splits a church, it needs to be split. There is something much worse than splitting a church—a denial of the truth to keep from it!

A Spiritual War

We hold no brief for those who are dogmatic and opinionated, self-willed and arrogant. The truth is to be spoken in love. Men may have the truth and be lost because of their methods or motives. But when a humble, consecrated, fearless, bold proclaimer of heaven's truth wields the sword of the Spirit, someone is going to get cut, and the gash will be a deep one. Swords are not used to slice beef-steak or to spank babies, but for warfare. If war against sin must be continued inside the walls of Jerusalem and in the streets of the holy city, then let it come, and let it continue until every invader of the sacred precincts is driven out through

the gates and Zion again stands serene and pure in God's sight. If the enslavement of God's holy priesthood by a hungry group of professionals can only be atoned for in the clash of spiritual arms,

then let it start and let it continue until freedom and liberty once more are secure. "Is peace so sweet or liberty so dear as to be purchased with chains and bondage?"—*The Editor*.

Our Major Task in Restoration

BY ROY LONEY

Much is being said about the necessity of a complete restoration of apostolic teaching and practice. No one acquainted with church history will deny that in the centuries following the apostolic age, a great apostasy all but overwhelmed the church of our Lord, leaving but a pitiable remnant true to Christ. Twelve centuries the church was in the wilderness, and it required the martyrdom of thousands and the work of many years to bring again even a semblance of the original faith.

Remarkable progress was made in the days of the Campbells, Scott, Stone and others of valiant courage and faith to restore the "ancient landmarks." These men deserve much credit for the tremendous work they accomplished. No group since the first century ever did so much for the cause of the Lord, but we must remember that these men were reared in Babylon and unconsciously imbibed some of her errors. This was to be expected and the tireless, constant work in which they were engaged did not give them time for a full study of all points of church government, work and worship. Considering these circumstances it is astonishing they made as much progress as they did, but to state that they completed the work of restoration is to speak unadvisedly. The Bible which was given "line upon line, here a little and there a little" must be learned the same way. The great library of God is not fully assimilated in a few lessons.

The primary lessons (first principles) have been learned and thousands accurately taught how to become Christians. To digest the "milk of the word" is far easier than to assimilate the strong meat (Heb. 5: 12). Peter spoke of Paul's

writings as containing some things "hard to be understood" (2 Pet. 3: 16) and he emphasized the danger of the unlearned "wresting the scriptures" to their own condemnation. All this points up the fact that much study is still of vital importance. There are numerous old manuscripts discovered since Campbell's day which throw new light on the meaning of many passages. Deeper knowledge of the original in which the New Testament was written reveals that many past interpretations of certain passages were incorrect and did not convey the thought of the divine writers. The command to "grow in grace and knowledge" is just as important now as when first given. The command to "be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" will not permit us to be satisfied with present attainments. This is as much true of the church in general as of the individual. In building up the church we have a divine and perfect pattern, and until perfection is reached, our efforts to make "a glorious church without spot or wrinkle" must not cease.

I would feel depressed if I thought the church of tomorrow would be no better than the church of today. The song-prayer "Lord plant my feet on higher ground" should be the prayer of the church as a whole. The study of what the early church was and what the church today should be, must be unending. But in our efforts to recapture the glory and perfection of the early church our efforts must not be wholly doctrinal. We must not forget the spiritual life! Too often "orthodoxy" becomes a hard shell of an outward religion that fails to reach the heart and is utterly devoid of the spiri-

tuality of true Christianity. A church might become absolutely correct in all of its outward observances of worship, practice and doctrine and yet be as devoid of real Christianity as the husk of a coconut is of nourishing food.

No church can be true to Christ unless filled with the warm, glowing radiance of the sin-forgiving One. What will it avail us to cross every "t" and dot every "i" in doctrinal perfection and forms of worship if the Spirit is absent from our hearts? There may be too much tendency to tithe "mint, anise and cummin" to the neglect of weightier matters of the law. In the song service certain ones become so concerned with having the words so legalistically perfect that no melody of praise and gratitude can enter the hard shell of their orthodox hearts. Others are so meticulous in the observance of the Lord's Supper according to the "Jerusalem standard" that they forget the terrible sufferings of Calvary, and give no thought to the death of the Saviour which they are supposed to remember.

Hair-splitting quibbles over correct procedure do not qualify the worshiper to approach the throne of grace. In a word, if we are ever to get back to Jerusalem in the truest sense, we must first of all get back to Christ in spirituality. Christ must "dwell in our hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:17). We must have a consciousness of Christ's presence in our daily lives. Once a sister who had much talent as an artist showed me a picture she had painted of the supposed likeness of Christ. It was an almost perfect reproduction of the original painting of a famous master artist except for the eyes. The sister almost wept in despair because she had failed to put warmth and love into those eyes. They appeared as cold as ice and as lifeless as glass.

A church perfect in all outward forms, yet lacking in spirituality, is as unaccept-

able to the Lord, as one which has corrupted the doctrines of faith. For example, take the church at Ephesus which could not bear those who were evil, and had put to the test the pretended apostles, finding them liars. Measured from the standpoint of pure doctrine and outward observance of the commands, they fulfilled the divine standard, yet fell far short of the Lord's approval (Rev. 2:1-6). They had lost the radiance and joy of a life that is hid with Christ in God.

To effect a complete restoration, we must begin at the right place, and that is in the individual hearts where we must plant a deep appreciation of God's infinite mercies. Remember the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength. The second command is to love your neighbor as yourself. Dare we forget that Paul said, "The greatest of these is love" and "Love is the fulfillment of the law."

We can never get back to God until He owns our hearts. "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments." "If ye love me, keep my commandments." All acceptable obedience to God must be a natural outgrowth of our affection for and our consecration to Christ. We must convert people to Christ, not to baptism and doctrinal purity. A converted soul is a joyous, happy soul whose Savior is "all in all." A dozen immersions performed upon one individual will not bring that soul to Christ unless the love for Christ is the motivating power that causes that soul to accept that holy ordinance. We must create a heart-hunger for a spiritual fellowship with the divine and holy One. We must stimulate the desire for union with Christ.

Tell me the story of Jesus, write on my heart every word;

Tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was heard.

In our February issue, under the heading "Proving All Things," Roy Loney will review the position of Guy N. Woods on the subject of located preachers as published in *Gospel Advocate*. Be sure and read this timely presentation.

Word Studies in the Bible

BY E. M. ZERR

FEED

This word is from the Greek *POIMAINO*, which Thayer defines as follows: "To feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep; to rule, govern; to furnish pasturage or food; to nourish." Strong defines it, "To tend as a shepherd (or figuratively supervisor)." The Englishmen's Greek New Testament renders the word, "To shepherd." Young defines it, "To tend as a shepherd." I have given these various definitions from several authorities that the reader might have an over-all view of the term that plays so important a part in the apostolic teaching concerning church government. One of the outstanding passages in which the word is used is Acts 20: 28 where Paul is talking to the elders of the church at Ephesus; it reads as follows: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to *feed* the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." It should be noted that the very men who are told to feed the church are ones who had been made "overseers," which is another scripture name for the elders of the church. Hence in a single verse we are told that the men who are the overseers or elders are also the ones who are to feed the flock (a figurative name for the church).

Another passage that uses our word is I Peter 5: 1, 2 which is as follows: "The elders which are among you I exhort who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." A significant word in this passage is "among" which is used twice; once for the relationship of the elders to the flock, and once for that of the flock to the elders. This word is from the Greek *EN*, which requires that the persons or things about which it is used are in the same vicinity

and in possible contact with each other. An elder does not have any jurisdiction over those not in his locality, and neither does a member of the flock have the right to be out of reach of the elder, who is to furnish him his spiritual food. It would be impossible for a shepherd to feed his flock if the members thereof were not associated with him in the same community. By this same token no elder can be a feeder of any sheep that are not members of his own flock.

We observed that one word in the definition of the original for our heading word is "rule." That is consistent, for a shepherd could not properly attend to the feeding of a flock over which he did not have some control. Thus we have Paul commanding disciples to obey them who have the "rule" over them (Hebrews 13: 17), showing that the rulers or elders who are to be obeyed, are also the ones to do the feeding of the flock. The only scriptural exception to this arrangement is the temporary government under an evangelist. In Titus 1:5 we read, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." This sets forth the only circumstance where any man but an elder may take over the work of feeding a group of the Lord's sheep. But this is not a case where the evangelist does the work of an elder, for there are no elders in the place where the evangelist is in charge. His work is to teach and develop the members of the flock, and do whatever is necessary to get men ready for the eldership. When that point has been reached the evangelist should ordain (or appoint) the elders who are to take over the work of feeding the flock, and the evangelist is to go to other fields of labor. We see no place in this divine system for the practice of elders who hire some "minister" to settle among them to do their work of feeding the flock. That

practice is one of the fruits of the Bible Colleges, whose principal business is to make preachers. This crop of preachers would naturally want jobs, and they ob-

tain them by persuading the elders that they are not capable of feeding the flock, and therefore they should hire a "minister" to do their work for them.

Tactics of the Clergy

It has been very difficult for many to reach the realization that the clergymen in the churches of Christ are exactly like the clergy of all ages and that they will employ the same sectarian tactics. Hundreds have assumed that the mere fact that a man was a member of the church was a guarantee of his intellectual integrity and freedom from chicanery. Events have proven the fallacy of this assumption and it is being repeatedly demonstrated that "our located evangelists" are in many instances as sectarian as the product from any other theological seminaries. The sooner we realize that we are dealing with the cunning "kingdom of the clergy" in our midst, the sooner will we be able to throw off the yoke of serfdom to this caste so foreign to the New Testament. We propose to prove that we are being subjected to the same age-old tactics the clergy has always employed.

1. The Smear Technique

When a man's logic cannot be answered nor his affirmations offset by the Scriptures, the clergy in every sectarian group on earth has had recourse to smearing their opposers. Many times this takes the form of attaching a label which, while disallowed by those who are branded with it, nonetheless is vigorously applied in order to create prejudice. All are familiar with the term "Campbellite" as used to designate simple Christians who seek to restore the New Testament church. Who has not seen the sneer on the face of a cornered sectarian preacher whose last resort is to hurl the invective, "You're just a Campbellite!"

Now the clergymen in the congregations of Christ have borrowed a leaf from the notebooks of their fellows of the

cloth. When humble disciples plead for the New Testament pattern of edification, they are stigmatized as "Garrett-ites" or "Ketcherside-ites." It is easier to say than to produce scriptural authority for a practice foreign to the Book. And an arrogant clergy always feels that any pronouncement, anathema or bull, hurled by themselves just has to be true because they said it. This no doubt stems from the relationship of the system to the greatest clergyman of all who wears a three-tiered crown and sits in the Vatican. And little unthinking stooges who know nothing about the issues and care nothing about them, echo like parrots the catchwords and slogans of those who pose as their professional peers. The church of today is suffering from spiritual psittacosis—"parrot fever." But here is a question. If branding a man a Garrett-ite makes him such, then have we really been Campbellites all these years since our enemies have so branded us?

2. The Personal Attacks

It is amazing the depths to which supposedly respectable men in the churches will stoop to overthrow those who challenge their unscriptural practices. It has been revealed now that G. K. Wallace, lauded as a representative of the Christian (?) Colleges, and supposedly without peer as a logician representing the pastor system, was selected to meet the writer in debate in Arkansas, not to defend the propositions he signed, but only to kill the influence of his opponent. The propositions were just a blind, and he was under orders to "get rid of Ketcherside." Instead of investigating the Bible to determine the scripturality of his practice, he shadowed my work like a Scotland yard detective. He made trips to

various cities where I had worked and pumped every factionist I had opposed. Knowing that such men were prejudiced against me because I opposed their departures, he offered himself as a henchman to murder my influence if they would furnish what they could. The cat is now out of the bag and I have certified testimony from some of the very ones he contacted, showing the nefarious scheme concocted by J. A. McNutt and the elders at Paragould, for this noble "defender of the faith" to act as their "trigger man" and remove from the scene one whom they could not buy, bluff or bulldoze.

Sometimes a position is enhanced by the attitude of the opposers. Is it not true that if G. K. Wallace could have proven beyond question the scripturality of his two institutions—the college and clergy—he would have done so without recourse to the long journeys and hours of time trying to get something on his opponent? And is it not a fact that his method demonstrates that he knew his position was indefensible? It would be interesting to know if the church at Paragould picked up the tab and paid this erstwhile Sherlock Holmes for his "private eye" work. Detective work comes high, and we doubt that this Christian (?) college sleuth interviewed spiritual stool pigeons at his own expense!

Hitler employed what came to be known as the "big lie." He was an exponent of the theory that if you tell a lie, and tell it big enough, and repeat it often enough, someone is bound to be simple enough to swallow it. He held that the more gigantic the "whopper" the more people would be taken in by it. Some of our clergymen saw how well that worked and adopted the principle. As an example, they circulated the canard that I owned a \$35,000 home in Saint Louis, plus a ten thousand dollar library. I found young preachers all over the southland who testified to these "facts" before I arrived with as much assurance as if they had sold me the house and let a contract for the library. When confronted with the proof that our house cost exactly \$6500, and that we paid it

out at \$50.41 per month, on a loan from Community Federal Savings and Loan Association, and that I actually had less than a hundred dollars tied up in my books, these same little college-hatched seminarians became tongue-tied. I shall not soon forget one of them in Georgia, a product of Florida Christian College, who made the mistake of believing implicitly what some of the instructors in the seminary told him. It is very humiliating when a man steps up on your front porch and you have to take back things which were told with such bravado—before he arrived in town!

In Arkansas, where the preachers hold regular meetings, in some of which they discuss what to do with the church and to me, a man who was a leader glibly related how I had five dogs tied in my backyard, which I regularly fed and maintained, while being so heartless as to allow orphan children to starve to death in the street in front of my house. This because of my opposition to the orphan home graft that is used to exploit the churches. When cited to produce proof of his assertion he named a prominent preacher. I never owned a canine in my life, and do not intend to, not that I have anything especially against dogs, but some of them are like preachers—they will bark at men they are afraid to tackle!

Akin to these forgeries trumped up by spiritual Baron Munchausens is one I found in circulation to the effect that I was rich, and owned two cars and a private plane, one of the cars being a Cadillac. I wouldn't know how to start a Cadillac, and I have about all I can do to buy gas for one fairly weathered Dodge. It is quite apparent that a lot of preachers will land smack in the lake of fire because they love and make lies. This but indicates the depths to which the moral status of the congregation has been led by an avaricious clergy. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the people love to have it so." When preachers roll every toothsome deception around over their tongues, and repeat falsehoods freely and fluently, it is no wonder that you find

every kind of evil tolerated in the flocks over which they are the pastors. The tactics of the clergy are always the same. They are always sectarian. If you cannot meet a man's arguments, slaughter the man. When a craft is in danger, the craftsmen grow crafty!

3. Charge of Meddling

John T. Lewis, who has started more churches in Birmingham, Alabama, to be turned over to the hiring pastors, than any other man, and who is personally pastoring for one himself, tries to justify his position by a charge that we are meddling with the elders' business when we oppose *the system*. His contention is that as an evangelist he is to plant churches, and when elders are appointed they can do what they please about hiring a preacher, and it is none of his concern—or ours either! That is the first time in our life we ever heard that you are to oppose wrong in everyone—but elders! Does Brother Lewis advocate the nefarious doctrine, "obey the elders right or wrong."

The whole problem resolves itself into a question of whether or not the modern hiring system is scriptural. If it isn't, it makes no difference who introduces it, we are obligated to oppose it. Is it not a fact that most of the innovations in the primitive congregation were introduced by the bishops? Did not Paul tell the elders that of their number men would arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them? Shall error be condoned when brought in by the bishops? Is it any less evil when introduced by elders than any one else? Apparently Brother Lewis does not hesitate to meddle in the affairs of other preachers, if that is a proper designation of opposing evil, as witness his side-swipes at Gus Nichols and Grover C. Brewer. On what basis are elders immunized from attack? The possibility is that it is not the elders, but the preachers and their jobs which he seeks to protect. Sometimes preachers hide their real motives!

If the elders of a congregation decided to hire a soloist to render all of the praise

service and to edify the church in song, should we oppose that, or just let them alone and not meddle in the affair? We know the answer! Then why should we not oppose them for hiring a "solo edifier" in the remainder of the worship service? No one in the church who introduces a false practice is so sacrosanct in office as to be beyond opposition. God placed no office in the church, which elevates its constituents to such a degree of prominence that they may lead the church astray without opposition from humble saints. We will oppose elders who are in error as quickly as we will any one else. It is not meddling in the affairs of elders to oppose the one-man ministry system. God no more authorized elders to corrupt the government of the church with a hired pastor than to corrupt its worship with an imported organ.

4. Are We Impugning Motives?

In a recent series of talks on the radio in Alabama, we dealt with the hiring system. Those who have espoused that system made the rather fatal error of attempting a reply. We were repeatedly charged with impugning the motives of faithful gospel preachers, and accused of attacking the church. Most clergymen think they are the church, and when you belabor the system, they conclude you are attacking the church. However, a surgeon who operates to remove a cancerous growth, should hardly be charged with attacking the body.

We doubt not that many honest and sincere men have been caught in this modern innovation and we feel genuinely sorry for them. Good fish get caught in a net sometimes, and have to suffer the consequences because they were in the wrong place at the right time. Our fight is not against men. We are not wrestling against flesh and blood. We are fighting a system and we propose to eliminate it lock, stock and barrel. Those who do not want to get hurt ought to get out. When a city is being bombed the visitors are in as much danger as the inhabitants.

When I was a youngster I spent my vacations on the farm of my grandfather.

One afternoon the dogs treed a groundhog in a small scrub oak. We laid the axe at the root of the tree, and when we brought the tree down, the groundhog hit with a thud because he was clinging to the branches. If he had not been lodged in the tree he would not have been hurt. We are resolved to swing the axe at the root of this hireling pastor system and when we do those who are in the tree may get hurt. We're not swinging the axe at them but at the tree. If they want to escape injury let them climb down and get out of the tree. If they want to

remain up the tree to pluck the fruit, they'll have to take the consequences when the tree comes tumbling down. They may plead the purest of motives in being there, and that is up to them, but they shall not deter us from swinging away, by shedding crocodile tears, weeping copiously on the shoulders of their partisans, or threatening us with purgatory—another invention of the clergy to scare people into supporting them with their hard won shekels. We are just not that easily scared! We are in this fight to the finish!—*The Editor.*

“One Thing Thou Lackest”

The located ministers who have not resigned to “do evangelistic work” have a lot of things in their favor in this present battle to the death between *the system* they espouse and that which is revealed in the pages of inspiration. As a matter of fact they have so much in their favor it would appear foolish to attack them in their well-entrenched positions, or to lay siege against their walls. It would seem that only a spiritual dare-devil or an insane person would buck up against such an array of armament. Let us not underestimate the strength of the enemy. Here are the things in which they may trust.

1. Money

We mention this first because it should occupy a front row in any consideration of the clergy system. And they have it at their command in almost unlimited sums. One young promoter went out and sold the church on a big radio hookup and took in \$600,000 to finance the scheme. Then they decided to extend it to include a television movie and asked for a mere \$1,400,000 per year to present it. We do not doubt that some Wall Street promoters look on such proceedings with envy. Many clergymen draw down \$500 per month, plus a house to live in, and car expenses. It is estimated that one teacher in David Lipscomb College, who is also a minister at a Nashville “Cathedral”

pockets about \$12,000 per year from his religious activities. His favorite hymn must surely be “It pays to serve Jesus, it pays every day!” One would be led to believe that Jesus died for the First National Bank, since it is there so many churches have their treasures laid up.

2. Manpower

The clergymen have a good supply of “doctors” and “masters” of theology on hand to defend them. Some of these are skilled in forensics. They are “Doctors of Debate” and “Masters of Evasion.” A few, like Dr. Brewer, having sampled the smoke of conflict, are now retired into the inner bunkers, and refuse to thrust their heads out except to skirmish with Catholics and Communists. But men like Guy N. Woods are still voluble in print in closed-door periodicals, where they are protected by buttressed walls of journalistic policy erected by eminent but frightened dignitaries like B. C. Goodpasture. The woods are full of lesser lights, some of whom seek to increase their honor by posing as debaters, while “understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.” Candor demands we admit that the clergy have us outnumbered greatly, but even so the promises of God have again been verified, for it has been demonstrated that “One shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.”

3. Factories

The clergy group receives constant re-placements from well-designed concerns which manufacture preachers on a production line basis with a few custom built jobs turned out for the more prominent centers of influence. "Our schools" a term used as the Methodists and Baptists use it—constitute religious seminaries, where pastoral theology is taught to budding professionals, who prefer *the ministry* to the legal or medical professions. Every year great stress is placed upon the number of "ministerial students" who graduate, and are ready to serve the Lord and the congregations—at so much per week. It is useless to deny any longer that the "Christian Colleges" occupy the same relationship to the church, that the Baptist and Methodist seminaries do to those religious bodies. Harding, David Lipscomb, Freed-Hardeman, Florida Christian—all of these are taking intellectual powers and grinding, shaping and polishing their possessors to exhibit to the churches and go to the highest bidder.

4. Papers

Powerful papers reaching into thousands of homes are at the beck and call of the clergy to be used as instruments to crush and destroy those who oppose them, but their editors slam the journalistic door in the face of anyone who would seek to counter the vicious propaganda and palpable falsehoods which partisans print. One of the largest and most influential of the one-way, dead-end trade publications is the *Gospel Advocate*, whose editor is the suave, stately, but prejudiced B. C. Goodpasture. His paper is fettered and shackled by its dependence upon subscribers who are intolerant and bigoted to such an extent they will withdraw their patronage if the editor publishes articles which clash with their party dictates or contradict their cherished opinions, hallowed by traditions.

Editors must be men of noble aspiration if they deliberately publish articles which they know will thin their subscription lists, and they must dare to love the church more than their papers. We admit

that while stones of condemnation are generally hurled at the editor's head, the root of the difficulty goes far deeper. It is really a reflection of the sectarian spirit of the brethren who refuse to read that which opposes what they have always done. Abraham Lincoln said, "Give the people all the facts, and the nation is safe." Bro. Goodpasture's motto seems to be, "Withhold the facts from all the people and the paper is safe!" Powerful preacher cliques operate behind the *paper curtain* to hold editors in line. They can boycott a journal by public announcement that those in the congregation should cancel their subscriptions. The subscription list hangs like the sword of Damocles over the head of every editor who makes his livelihood from the publication. So the clergymen dominate the religious press in most instances.

Cause for Boldness

Those who oppose the clergy system are "like ants not strong, and like the conies but a feeble folk" (Prov. 30: 25-27). We have no money to carry on the fight except as our brethren share with us, and most of them are poor in this world's goods. We do not have a reservoir of manpower from which to draw, and no institution except the church. Our papers are small sheets published only monthly and cannot compete with large weekly publications. On what grounds do we challenge the located minister system? Why do we dare fling down the gauntlet before theological giants in their full panoply? The answer lies in the simple fact that we are on the side of God's truth. We need not quail before any threat regardless of how formidable, because our God will fight for us, and his hand is not shortened that it cannot save. We can feely admit that our opposers in this conflict have a great deal, but one thing is lacking—the passage in the *New Testament* which hints at a church with qualified elders hiring at a stipulated fee a preacher as the minister of the congregation. As long as that passage is not found the present system exists without a shadow of scriptural basis. Men may argue, dis-

pute, debate and quibble, but when "the shouting and the tumult dies, the captains and the kings depart," the Sacred Book will read just like it did before, and

the clergy will be without a single verse as a foundation. It is the one thing lacking—and as long as it is lacking, we have nothing to fear!—*The Editor.*

RESTORATION THOUGHTS

We can never recapture the glory and triumphant power of primitive Christianity until we first revivify the spirit which characterized those who were its exponents. Conscious always of the fact that they had been the children of wrath, but had been redeemed by the precious blood of Him who was without spot, they consecrated themselves wholly unto Him without reservation. He was their joy, their song, their hope, their life. It was burned into the very fiber of their beings that "ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." In a day when slavery was a part of the social order, when men were bought and sold like cattle, when masters branded the foreheads of their human chattels to signify ownership, the saints rejoiced to have been made the spiritual slaves of a Sovereign who demanded their undivided loyalty and unmitigated service. They adored Him with an intensity that made them oblivious to earthly pain, and caused them to pray for the very ones who kindled the flames about their feet, the while they shouted for joy that they might thus soon meet Him "whom having not seen they loved."

Since they were one *with* Christ and one *in* Christ, they did not seek to carry out their own wills, ways or methods. They sought only to know what He desired of them, and having come to a knowledge of it, they humbly, sincerely and fervently set out to do it, confident that He whose will it was would make them effective instruments of His grace. Their motto was that of Israel's first national prophet, "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth." The early disciples did not devise programs, create machinery, inaugurate systems, originate institutions, nor set up organizations. Such was the farthest thing from their minds. To them Jesus was

a perfect Savior, the revelation of heaven a perfect guide, and the congregation of God a perfect institution. All they required in a Savior was to be found in Jesus, so they never dreamed of another Lord. All that God wanted them to do in His service was given in His revelation, so they did not consider doing anything which was not there required. All that the word required could be implemented through the congregation. It never entered their hearts to devise another organization. Anything which God wanted done could be done through the local congregation, anything which could not be done through it was something God did not want done.

It is a fact to which history amply attests that man in every age aspires to improve upon God's arrangements. Possessed of rational faculties which elevate him above the rest of *creation*, he seeks to climb to intellectual superiority over the *Creator*. It is from this underlying cause that all human organizations to do the work God has enjoined upon us, have sprung. This does not deny that the promulgators of such have been pious and respected. Every innovation has been introduced by those who had a sincere and fervent desire to serve and glorify the Maker. Many have been impelled to their action by a fear that God's system was too simple to meet the varied exigencies of a complex age; others have been motivated by a desire to see the church become a powerful and universal agent of divine favor to which they could point with becoming pride, and which would commend itself to the attention of their friends who had become high in the social and economic world.

Man is possessed of inventive genius and organizational capacities. He has applied his skill in these fields to the better-

ment of the race materially. He has brought power and light to remote mountain cabins, he has transmitted thought in a flash through the aerial spaces of the heavens; he has reproduced images of kings and potentates from regions afar on screens in the living rooms of the poorest citizens. What wonder that he should seek new ways of increasing heaven's thoughts, or new organizations through which to reproduce the image of our absent King? Yet every such operation has proven disastrous to the very cause he seeks to perpetuate, and all such tampering has resulted in confusion and tragic disappointment. The very institutions created to free men for greater service have proven to be shackles to impede spiritual progress, and the congregation has ever been halted in its mission by the necessity to stop and divest itself of cumbersome apparatus invented by well-meaning but thoughtless men.

The primitive saints had no time to attend a meeting of a missionary society to discuss ways and means of preaching the gospel—they were too busy preaching it! They could not go on a long picnic journey to visit an orphan home in a distant state, for they had no one with whom to leave the orphans they were caring for locally. They did not spend their time in vain arguments as to how to support or contribute to another body created to mould Christian character. It was not a question with them as to whether such a body should be supported from "the treasury" or individually. In the first place, they considered that all they had in this world's goods, every bit of it, belonged to the King. They were mere slaves in His grace. All they had constituted, therefore, His treasury, from which could be drawn at any time whatever was needed to relieve needs, "neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own" (Acts 4: 32). Nor did it occur to them that with a congregation of saints in the community that one would have to travel to some distant province or country to develop Christian character, much less through a human body set up for such.

In this twentieth century those who sigh and weep for Jerusalem, realize we have gone far afieid from Zion's walls and bulwarks. We have come to trust in the human devices originated among us by glib promoters and successful business men. And we can never restore to this earth, the simple but powerful, humble but majestic, meek but mighty congregation built upon the rock, until we work a tremendous revolution in the hearts of our brethren. Restoration must be preceded by reformation. There must be a personal transformation sought and reached upon our knees, in the midst of sorrow, tears and remorse. We must bow at the throne and confess our sins in ever building anything, or trusting in anything to do the work of God, except the church of the living God! It must no longer be merely a pillar of truth, but it must become in our hearts what it was intended to be among men—the pillar and ground of the truth!

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. It is high time that we awake out of sleep! It is time to cease debating on how we can keep our cherished institutions and support them; it is time to forsake and abandon them. Suppose the bats inhabit the lofty towers of brick and stone, and the moping owl finds refuge in the ivy covered piles. Let it be so, and let us charge the millions that have been spent, to bitter experience with human experimentation, and firmly resolve that from this time forward we shall give our all to His work who died for us, and move in our congregational capacity alone. If men cannot, by virtue of the charters they have secured, divest their human organizations of every vestige of trespass upon the functions of the One Body, if such institutions cannot exist except to do the work of God, then let us allow them to remain empty and become forlorn monuments of our foolish error in thinking that men of wealth could build that which would accomplish in the shaping of human destiny what the congregations of believers could not do.

Let the congregations which have shipped their needy ones off to some re-

mote "brotherhood home" go and get them, and let the local saints minister to their requirements and visit them in their affliction, in person and not by proxy! Let the elders direct each congregation in caring for their own destitute; let the deacons see that the will of the congregation is carried out with dispatch as pertains to those who are unfortunate; let every brother and sister feel that the fatherless children are their own to help feed, clothe and shelter. Let us by returning to God in spirit, turn away from our cooperative societies, charitable organizations, and centralized boards and bureaucracies. If we cannot dispose of the physical plants otherwise by virtue of the legal web we have woven in our attempt to secure respectability for plants which the heavenly Father hath not planted, let us leave them where they are. And in later years when men pass by and see the sagging windows and weed grown yards, and enquire what has transpired, let us tell them that here they see the mute testimony of what happens to human institutions when a sincere people return to follow the Lord.

Brethren beloved, the children of God are halting this day in the valley of decision. Unless we turn back soon, it will be too late. We are fast approaching "the point of no return." The once great restoration movement is wallowing even now in the quicksands of sectarian thinking. Our time, our lives, our money, all are being spent in building up men's devices. Preachers of the gospel are leaving the Bible church to founder, while they are busy making appeals for a Bible building to glorify a human organization. The emphasis is upon big programs devised by big men to do big things in a big way. The congregation of our God must be adorned and decorated by human trappings if we are to attract the world. The simple way of God does not pamper the pride of men. We must choose and choose now! Before us lie enticing vistas. We can be lauded as one of the fastest growing, most popular denominations. Or we can be hated of all men, despised and ridiculed, misrepresented and maligned,

because we refuse to compromise with or conform to the world's standards, but prefer to walk with Him in simplicity and humility.

Gospel preacher, will you meet the challenge? Have you the faith, the courage, the moral stamina to do it? Can you turn your back on the parsonage that has been provided and the pastoral comfort which accrued to your position, and go out in summer's heat and winter's cold, to carry the glad tidings from door to door and from heart to heart, where you stand almost alone? Will you resist the enticement to become the "Minister" of a popular congregation, and choose to go where God opens the doors, and "sound out the word" rather than sound it in all of the time, trusting always in Him who said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Preacher's wife, can you meet the test? Can you plant a farewell kiss upon the lips of your husband and see him go out into the field while you spend lonely nights at home? Can you cheer and comfort him when he returns bruised and battered in spirit from the intense battle waged against the forces of the evil one? Can you remain at home, and rear your little ones in the love of Jesus, often making tremendous sacrifices and denying yourself those things which others have? Can you kneel alone by your bedside at night when the lightnings flash, and the thunders roll, and commit yourself wholly unto Him who notes the sparrow's fall, and still thank Him that you can give your beloved one to serve on some far flung battleground of the spirit?

Elders, can you face up to all of the responsibilities which will fall upon your shoulders in a full return to "the way"? Can you come home tired and worn from your daily task, and then cheerfully leave your cozy fire and go back out into the cold and sleet to visit and rescue one of the straying sheep from the fold that has been entrusted unto you? Can you search and study, pray and labor, to be able to provide the spiritual nourishment for those who are languishing for the edifying truth of heaven? Will you be able to

administer the discipline of God impartially, and still love the one who brought reproach upon himself and the congregation, even while you rebuke his sin and chasten him for his guilt? Will you weep o'er the erring one, pray for the fallen, and strengthen the feeble knees? Can you resist the pleadings of those who, weak in faith, seek the highly spiced servings of a professional dispenser instead of the plain and humble fare of the unadorned word, offered by those whose only interest is the welfare of the flock? Upon you as elders will rest much of the load as we struggle back toward Jerusalem. You will be burden bearers for the host which turns its face once more toward the distant hills.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, shall we be content to look upon Christianity as the performance of little rituals on the first day of the week? Shall our service to God consist of arraying ourselves in proud finery and exhibiting ourselves as fashion plates, while with daintily gloved fingers we break off a bit of bread, or lift a cup to our lips on the Lord's Day, the while our hearts are far from Him? Can you dare to think of a full restoration of *the way*? Will you be able to go into the home where squalor reigns, where dirt and filth have accumulated, and there while a pale sufferer lies in pain, scrub the floors, clean up the dirty dishes accumulated in the sink, and tidy the place, before you sit down and read a psalm of hope, and pray for the forlorn sufferer? Will you be willing to share the comforts of your cheery fireside with those children who are destitute? Will the sisters be willing to leave their housework to go at stated intervals and gather to sew garments for the poor? Will the brethren cease to think that the greatest things on earth can be bought with money, and take their Bibles and go out from door to door to reason with their neighbors

about the Lord and His Cause? Will the religion of the Master become such a passion with us that we can only think of it as moving our lives, tendering our emotions, taking full command of our hearts, driving us to serve Him day and night? It is either this, or else we shall become a full-fledged sectarian body, ministered unto instead of ministering!

The primitive church was composed of men and women who never doubted that theirs was a personal religion. They met to worship and scattered to preach. They did not arrange so many public meetings of the congregation that they kept all busy in a ceaseless treadmill of going to the assembly. They loved each other and they rejoiced together, but they knew the congregation of saints was on earth to reach the world with truth, and they worked as leaven works in the dough, by personal contact. They did not hold meetings and invite the world to come. They went where the world was, and they told them of Jesus. They had no fancy pulpits upon which to lean. The table of the housewife, the handles of the farmer's plow, the desk of the clerk, the bench of the cobbler—these were their speaker's platforms, and across them they talked to those whom they met. They were never too busy to stop and relate the good news, although they were sometimes too busy doing that to stop and eat.

We think too much of doing things as a group. The Christian religion in its final analysis is an individual affair. We are saved as individuals, we shall be judged on that basis. It is time to quit our foolish talk about what we can support as individuals or the church. The church is just a group of individuals—saved, sanctified and justified. Let us arise and restore the spirit of the early days and we shall see again a conquering and invincible army of believers in the Lord.

—The Editor.

There are several thousand additional copies of this issue available for distribution. We will send you 10 for \$1.00, or 100 for \$6.00 and we will pay all postage charges. Write to us for prices in greater quantities. We solicit your assistance in distributing such material among the brethren as will cause them to think seriously and soberly about the present condition of the congregation of God.

February Issue

Our next issue will contain a wealth of timely material. Roy Loney will reply to Guy N. Woods whose article on the pastor question appeared in *Gospel Advocate*; and will also deal with Jimmie Lovell under the heading, "Jimmie Rides the Gravy Train." There will also be a real inspiration in Bro. Loney's article, "David's Mighty Men." The editor will deal with a phase of the restoration movement about which you may never have heard—congregational response in the worship service. Robert Brumback will take us to Pompeii; E. M. Zerr will have an article on "Necessary Evils" in addition to his regular word study; L. C. Roberts will deal critically with the charge that the Revised Standard Version is modernistic, under the title "The Virgin Birth—Does the RSV Deny It?" Vernon Hurst will have another article handling some of our current traditions which many think to be a part of God's law; the editor will resume his analysis of the Philippian Letter. The paper will be chock-full of good reading. If you received this issue without having subscribed, a friend probably sent in your name. You can continue to receive the paper every month for the modest sum of \$1.00 for a full year's subscription. Send yours today. The page size will continue to be the same as this issue, to

facilitate binding in book form for library shelves.

Reduced Prices

To clear his shelves and secure some much needed cash for other work, Roy Loney is offering his remaining booklets and tracts at the following reduced prices: *The Work of An Evangelist*, 6 for \$1; *Christians Identified*, 5 for \$1; *Outlines for Study*, 10 for \$1. In addition to these booklets, the tracts, "The Only Safe Guide" and "You Have a Friend" may be secured for \$1 per 100. Mail all orders for these to Roy Loney, Wells-ville, Kansas.

The Clergy Question

We suggest the following debates for your library, because they deal with the live issues of the clerical system and institutionalism: Wallace - Ketcherside (Paragould, Arkansas); Wallace-Ketcherside (St. Louis, Mo.); Colley-Ketcherside (Dallas, Texas). The price of either of these singly is \$3. We will send you any two of them, and will include free of charge a copy of the book "Concerning Christian Colleges" written by W. Carl Ketcherside. Send your orders at once to MISSION MESSENGER, 7505 Trenton Avenue, St. Louis 14, Missouri.

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