

## STUDY VI

# ORDER AND DISCIPLINE IN THE NEW CREATION

Meaning of Ordination--Only the Twelve Ministers Plenipotentiary--  
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Own Mind"--Funeral Services--Tithes, Collections, Charities.

IN CONSIDERING this subject it is well that we keep  
clearly before our minds the oneness of the Church, and  
that while the entire Church throughout the world is one,  
yet in another sense of the word each separate gathering, or  
company, of believers is a representation of the whole. Each  
separate *Ecclesia*, therefore, is to consider the Lord as *its*  
Head, and to consider the twelve apostles as the twelve  
stars, bright ones, teachers, whom the Lord specially held in  
his hand and controlled--using them as his mouthpieces for  
the instruction of his Church in every place, in every gathering,  
throughout the entire age.

Each congregation or *Ecclesia*--even if composed of only  
two or three--is to seek to recognize the will of the Head in  
respect to all of its affairs. It is to feel a oneness with all the  
dear *ecclesias* of "like precious faith" in the dear Redeemer's  
sacrifice and in the promises of God--everywhere. It is to be  
glad to hear of their welfare, and to recognize the fact that

the Lord, as the overseer of his work, may today, as in every  
period, use some special instruments for the service of the

*Church as a whole*, as well as use certain members of each little local company. Looking thus to the Lord and recognizing the character of the servants he would use--humble, zealous, well reported of, clear in the Truth, giving evidence of having the anointing and the unction of the Spirit--they would be prepared to *expect* such general ministries to the needs of the whole Church, and to *seek* a share in the general blessing and dispensation of the "meat in due season" promised us by the Master. They will specially remember, too, how he promised special blessings in the end of this age, and that he would provide things new as well as old to the household of faith through appropriate channels of his own choosing. ***Matt. 24:45-47***

The means, the channels of these blessings, the Lord himself will oversee and direct. All the members of the body united to the Head are to have confidence and to look for the fulfilment of his promises; but, nevertheless, are to "try the spirits"--to test the doctrines from whomsoever they emanate. The proving does not imply a lack of confidence in those recognized as divinely directed channels of the Truth; but it does imply a faithfulness to the Lord and to the Truth as superior to all human teachers and their utterances; it implies also that they are not listening for the voice of man, but for the voice of the Chief Shepherd; that they feast upon his words and love them--love to masticate them and to digest them. Such members of the body grow stronger and more rapidly in the Lord and in the power of his might than do others, because more attentive to the Lord's leading and instruction.

This general unity of the body, this general sympathy, this general teaching through a general channel which the Lord has provided for the gathering together of his jewels to himself at his second presence (***Mal. 3:17; Matt. 24:31***), does not interfere, however, with a proper recognition of order in each of the little companies, or *ecclesias*. However small the company, there should be order in it. By this word

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"order" we do not, however, mean stiffness or formalism. The order which works best and most satisfactorily is that which works noiselessly, and of which the machinery is quite out of sight. If the meeting be so small as three or five or ten, it should, nevertheless, look to the Lord to ascertain his guidance as to which of the number should be recognized as elders, seniors, or most advanced ones in the Truth, possessing the various qualifications of an Elder as we have

already seen these outlined in the inspired Word--clearness in the Truth, aptness for teaching it, blamelessness of life as respects moral character, and ability to preserve order without unnecessary friction, as might be exemplified in his family, etc.

If the little company thus have the Word and Spirit of the Lord before them and actuating them, the result of their united judgments, as expressed in an election of servants, should be accepted as the mind of the Lord on the subject--the persons chosen as elders would, in all probability, be the best and most suitable in the number. However, care needs to be observed that such selections are not made without due consideration and prayer; hence, it is advisable that due announcement be made in advance, and that it be recognized that only those who claim to be members of the New Creation (male and female) shall attempt to express the mind of the Lord on the subject--in the vote. These should be such as have passed the point of *repentance* for sin and *restitution* to the extent of their ability and *acceptance* of the Lord Jesus' sacrifice as the basis of their harmony with God, and who then have made a full *consecration* of themselves to the Lord, and thus have come under the anointing and all the privileges of the "house of sons." These alone are competent to appreciate and to express the mind, the will, of the Head of the body. These alone constitute the Church, the body of Christ, though others, who have not yet taken the step of consecration, but who are trusting in the precious blood, may be counted as members of "the household of faith" whose progress is to be hoped for, and whose welfare is to be considered.

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### **Ordaining Elders in Every Ecclesia**

*"And when they had ordained them elders in every church [Ecclesia], and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord." Acts 14:23*

The form of this statement, with other frequent references to elders in connection with all churches, justifies the inference that this was the *invariable* custom in the early Church. The term "elders," as seen in the text, includes evangelists, pastors, teachers, and prophets (or public exponents); hence, it is important that we learn what is meant by this word "*ordained*." At the present time this word is generally used in reference to a ceremony of installation; but this is not the significance of the Greek word *kirotoneo* used in

this text. It means, "*to elect by stretching out the hand,*" still the usual form of voting. This definition is given in Prof. Young's Analytical Bible Concordance. As that may be considered a Presbyterian authority, we will give also the definition set forth in "Strong's Exhaustive Concordance," which may be considered a Methodist authority. The latter defines the root of the word--"A hand-reacher, or voter (by raising the hand)."

A totally different Greek word is used when our Lord declared of the apostles, "I have chosen you and *ordained* you." (*John 15:16*) This is the same word, *tithemi*, used by the Apostle when, speaking of his ordination, he says: "I am *ordained* a preacher and an apostle." (*1 Tim. 2:7*) But this ordination, the Apostle distinctly declares, was "not of men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." (*Gal. 1:1*) All of the members of the Anointed Body, united with the Head and partakers of his Spirit, are thereby similarly ordained, not indeed to apostleship like Paul, but to be ministers (servants) of the Truth, each to the extent of his talents and opportunities (*Isa. 61:1*)--the twelve only were *ordained* to be apostles, or special representatives--ministers plenipotentiary.

Recurring to the ordination or recognition of elders by the vote of the congregation (*Ecclesia*) of the New Creation, by "stretching forth the hand," as seen above, we note that

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this was the customary mode; for the Apostle uses the same Greek word in telling how Titus became his helper. He says, "*who was also chosen* of the churches to travel with us." The words italicized are from the Greek word *kirotoneo* which, as above shown, signifies "to elect by stretching out the hand." And, further, the word "also" here implies that the Apostle himself was chosen by a similar vote. Not chosen or elected to be an apostle, but to be a missionary--a representative of the churches on this occasion, and, doubtless, at their expense.

Evidently, however, some of the Apostle's subsequent tours were without the vote or support of the Antioch Church. (*2 Tim. 1:15*) Primitive Church regulations left all free to exercise their talents and stewardship according to their own consciences. The *ecclesias* (congregations) could accept or decline the services of apostles, even, as their special representatives; and the apostles could accept or reject such engagements--each exercising his own liberty of conscience.

But, is there no ordination of elders, etc., mentioned in the New Testament other than this--an election? Is there nothing signifying *to give authority* or permission to preach, as the English word *ordain* is now generally used in all denominations in connection with licensing and ordaining elders, preachers, etc.? We will examine into these questions.

The word *ordain*, in respect to elders, is used in one other place, only, and it is the translation of a different Greek word, viz., *kathestemi*, which signifies--"To place, or set down"--*Young*. "To place down"--*Strong*. This word occurs in **Titus 1:5**: "Set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain* elders in every city, as I had appointed thee"--i.e., as I arranged. *Revised Version*, "as I gave thee charge." On the face of it this text seems to imply that Titus was empowered to appoint these elders, regardless of the wishes of the congregations (churches, *ecclesias*); and it is on this view that the Episcopal theory of church order rests. Catholics, Episcopalians and Methodist-Episcopals all claim for their

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bishops an apostolic authority to set, to place or appoint, elders for the congregations--without the stretching forth of the hand, or vote of the Church.

This text is the bulwark of this idea; but it appears to be rather a weak support when we notice the last clause--"As I gave thee charge"--and reflect that the Apostle would surely not give Titus "charge" or instruction to do differently from what he (the Apostle) did in this matter. The account of the Apostle's own procedure, rightly translated, is very explicit: "And when they had elected them elders by a show of hands in every *Ecclesia*, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord." **Acts 14:23**

No doubt the Apostle's advice and the advice of Titus, whom he specially commended to the brethren as a faithful minister of the Truth, would not only be desired, but sought by the brethren, and very generally followed; nevertheless, the Apostle and all who followed in his steps sought to place the responsibility where God placed it--on the *Ecclesia*, whose concern it should be to "Try the spirits [teachings and teachers] whether they be of God." (**1 John 4:1**) "If any speak not according to this Word it is because there is no light in them"; and "from such turn away," the Apostle advises; they are not to vote for such, nor in any manner to accept them as teachers, elders, etc.

In any event the concurrence of the *Ecclesia* would be necessary

--whether expressed by vote, as stated, or not; for suppose that Titus had appointed elders not congenial to the brethren, how long would peace have prevailed?--how much pastoral or other service would such an Elder, obnoxious to the sentiments of the Church, accomplish? Practically none.

Priest-craft, and not the teachings of our Lord and his twelve apostles, is responsible for the division of the saints into two classes, called "clergy" and "laity." It is the spirit of priest-craft and antichrist that still seeks to lord it over God's heritage in every way possible--proportionately to the density of the ignorance prevailing in any congregation.

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The Lord and the Apostle recognize not the elders, but the Church (*Ecclesia*) as the body of Christ; and whatever dignity or honor attaches to faithful elders, as servants of the Lord and the Church, is not merely their recognition of themselves nor their recognition by other elders. The congregation choosing must know them, must recognize their Christian graces and abilities in the light of God's Word, else they can grant them no such standing or honor. No Elder, therefore, has any authority by self-appointment. Indeed, the disposition to ignore the Church, the body of Christ, and to make himself and his judgment superior to the whole, is first-class evidence that such a brother is not in the proper attitude to be recognized as an Elder--humility, and a recognition of the oneness of the *Ecclesia* as the Lord's body, being prime essentials for such a service.

Nor should any brother assume public duties in the Church as leader, representative, etc., without an election--even though assured that there is no question respecting his acceptability. The Scriptural method of ordaining elders in all the churches is by congregational election--by stretching forth the hand in a vote. To insist on such an election before serving is to follow Scriptural order; it fortifies the Elder, and, additionally, reminds the *Ecclesia* of its duties and responsibilities as appointees of the elders in the Lord's name and spirit--as expressing God's choice, God's will. Additionally, this Scriptural arrangement interests the members of the *Ecclesia* in all the words and deeds of the elders, as their servants and representatives. It opposes the too prevalent idea that the elders own and rule the congregation and puts an end to their thinking of them and speaking of them as "my people"--rather than as "the Lord's people whom I serve."

Why are not these matters, so clearly Scriptural, more generally understood and set forth? Because human nature is pleased to have honor and preferment, and falls readily into wrong conditions favorable to these; because they have been popular for seventeen centuries; because the people

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yield to these conditions and prefer them to the liberties wherewith Christ makes free. Then, too, many have felt so confident that the customs of Babylon must be right that they have never studied the Word of the Lord on this subject.

### **The Period of Eldership**

Nothing is said by inspiration respecting the period for which an Elder should be chosen: we are, therefore, at liberty to exercise reason and judgment on the question. Many persons may be esteemed elders, or developed brethren in the Church, and may be useful and highly appreciated, and yet not be of the chosen elders set forth by the *Ecclesia* as its representatives--evangelists, teachers, pastors. The "elder women"\* are thus several times referred to honorably by the apostles, without the least suggestion that any of them were ever chosen as representative elders or teachers in the congregation (*Ecclesia*). Some chosen as suitable to the *Ecclesia's* service might cease to possess the stipulated qualifications; or others might, under divine providence, advance to greater efficiency for the service of the Church. A year, or its divisions--a half or a quarter year--would seem appropriate periods for such services--the latter if the persons were less tried, the former if well tried and favorably known. In the absence of law, or even of advice or suggestion, it would be for each congregation to determine as best they can the Lord's will in each case.

### **The Number of Elders**

The number of elders is not limited in the Scriptures; but, reasonably, much would depend on the size of the *Ecclesia*, as well as upon the number available--competent, etc. (None should be *assumed* to be a believer and to be fully consecrated; both by word and act he should have given unmistakable evidences of both his faith and consecration long before being chosen an Elder.) We favor having as

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\*Woman's place in the Church is treated in Chap. v.

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many as are possessed of the outlined qualifications, and the dividing of the services amongst them. If the proper zeal actuates them, some kind of missionary or evangelistic work will soon claim some of them, or portions of the time of many. Each *Ecclesia* should thus be a theological seminary from which efficient teachers would continually be going forth to wider fields of service. The Elder who would manifest jealousy of others and a desire to hinder them from ministering should be considered unworthy of continuance; yet, no one either incompetent or a novice should be chosen--to satisfy his vanity. The Church, as members of the body of Christ, must vote as they believe the Head would have them vote.

A caution should perhaps be given against electing an Elder where none is found competent for the service, under the qualifications set forth by the apostles--far better have no elders than incompetent ones. In the interim, until a brother shall be found competent for the service, let the meetings be of an informal kind, with the Bible as the textbook and with Brother Russell representatively present as teacher in the *Scripture Studies*--your chosen Elder, if you so prefer.

### Who May Elect Elders and How?

Only the *Ecclesia* (the body--male and female), the New Creatures, are electors or voters. The general "household of faith," *believers who have not consecrated*, have nothing to do with such an election; because it is the Lord's choice, through his "body," possessing his Spirit, that is sought. All of the consecrated body should vote, and any of them may make nominations at a general meeting called for the purpose--preferably a week in advance of the voting, so as to afford time for consideration.

Some have urged that the voting should be by ballot, so that all might be the more free to express their real choice. We answer that whatever advantage there is in this is offset by a disadvantage: namely, in the loss of the discipline and character-building accomplished by the apostolic mode of

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"stretching forth the hand." Each should learn to be candid

and straightforward, yet, at the same time, loving and gentle. The vote, be it remembered, is the Lord's choice--expressed by members of his body to the extent of their ability to discern it. No one is at liberty to shirk this duty, nor to favor one above another except as he believes he has, and expresses, the mind of the Lord.

### **Majorities Not Sufficient**

In worldly matters the voice of a bare majority decides; but evidently it should not be so in the Lord's *Ecclesia*, or body. Rather, so far as practicable, the jury-rule should prevail and a unanimous verdict or decision be sought. The brother receiving a bare majority in the vote could scarcely feel comfortable to accept that as "the Lord's choice," any more than could the congregation. Another candidate able to draw the support of all, or nearly all, should be sought for, by vote after vote, week after week, until found or the matter abandoned; or let all agree on the two or three or more who could serve in turn and thus meet the ideas of all. But if fervent love for the Lord and the Truth prevail, with prayer for guidance and the disposition to prefer one another in honor, where talents are on an equality, it will generally be found easy to unite in judgment respecting the divine will on the subject. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory." "Preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." *Phil. 2:3; Eph. 4:3*

The same order should prevail in respect to the choice of helpers called deacons and deaconesses, whose good repute should also be noted as a qualification. (See *1 Tim. 3:8-13*.) These may be for any service required--and they should have as many of the qualifications of eldership as possible, including aptness in teaching, and graces of the Spirit.

### **Variety of Ministries**

As already seen, elders may have special qualifications in one or another particular--some excelling in exhorting,

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some in teaching, some in prophesying or oratory, some as evangelists, in interesting unbelievers, and some as pastors taking a general oversight of the flock in its various interests, local or general. The Apostle Paul's address to the Elders of the *Ecclesia* at Ephesus gives us the general scope

of the ministry to which each individual must adapt and fit his talents as a steward. His words are well worthy of careful and prayerful consideration by all accepting the service of an Elder in any department of the work. He said: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the holy Spirit hath made you *overseers* [the word elsewhere misrendered bishops] to feed the Church [*Ecclesia*] of God." (**Acts 20:28**) Ah, yes! the elders need first of all to watch *themselves*, lest the little honor of their position make them proud and lordly, and lest they assume to themselves authority and honors belonging to the Head--the Chief Shepherd. To feed the flock is the Lord's province; as it is written, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." (**Isa. 40:11**) When, therefore, one is chosen an Elder it is that he may represent the Chief Shepherd--that he may be the instrument or channel through whom the great Shepherd of the flock may send to his own "meat in due season," "things new and old."

"Woe be unto the pastors [shepherds] that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors [shepherds] that feed my people: Ye have scattered my flock and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord....I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more nor be dismayed." **Jer. 23:1,2,4**

### **Laying On of Hands of the Presbytery**

(1) "Neglect not the gift [endowment] that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy [prediction], with the *laying on of the hands of the presbytery* [assembled elders]." **1 Tim. 4:14**

(2) "Whom [the seven deacons chosen by the Church] they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they *laid their hands upon them*." **Acts 6:6**

(3) "In the Church [*Ecclesia*] that was at Antioch,...the holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto

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I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and *laid their hands on them*, they sent them away." **Acts 13:1-3**

(4) "*Lay hands* hastily on no man, and be not partaker of other men's sins." **1 Tim. 5:22**

(5) "And when Paul had *laid his hands upon them*, the holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied [preached]." **Acts 19:6**

(6) Then *laid they* [the apostles] *their hands* on them, and they

received the holy Spirit." *Acts 8:17-19*

(7) "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee, by the *laying on of my hands.*" *2 Tim. 1:6*

We thus aggregate the inspired testimony respecting laying on of hands in the *Eccllesia* of the New Creation. In the last three (5,6,7) the reference to the imparting of the "gifts" common in the early Church is evident. Apostolic hands were thus laid on all consecrated believers and some one or more gifts followed--"tongues," etc. "A measure of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."\* The first four texts (1,2,3,4) may be grouped together as of one general teaching; namely, as a mark of approval or indorsement--but not as a sign of permission or authorization.

(1) Timothy, Paul's adopted "son" in the ministry, had already been baptized and had already received a gift of the holy Spirit at the hands of the Apostle Paul (see 7) when he went with Paul to Jerusalem. (*Acts 21:15-19*) Doubtless, there and then "James and all the elders," apostolic-elders, recognizing Timothy's devotion and close affiliation with Paul, unitedly blessed him, laying their hands upon him by way of indorsement; and the account implies that they did this, not according to a usual custom nor to all of Paul's companions, but "by prophecy"--indicating that they were led to do it by some prediction by, or instruction from, the Lord.

(2) These deacons were not commissioned, or authorized to preach, by the apostles' laying hands on them, for they were not elected to be preachers, but to serve tables; and, anyway, they already, by virtue of their anointing of the

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\*See Volume V, Chap. viii.

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holy Spirit, had full authority to preach to the extent of their talents and opportunity. And without any mention of license, or permission, or other ordination from anybody, we find Stephen, one of these deacons, preaching so zealously that he was the first after the Master to seal his testimony with his blood. This laying on of hands evidently signified merely the apostolic approval and blessing.

(3) The laying on of hands on Paul and Barnabas could not have been a permission to preach; for they were already recognized as elders and had been teaching in the Antioch Church for over a year. Besides, they had both been preaching elsewhere, previously. (Compare *Acts 9:20-29; 11:26.*)

This laying on of hands could only mean the *indorsement of the missionary work* about to be undertaken by Paul and Barnabas--that the Antioch *Ecclesia* joined in the mission with them and probably defrayed their expenses.

(4) Here the Apostle intimates that a laying on of Timothy's hands upon a fellow-laborer in the vineyard would signify his approval, or indorsement: so that if the man turned out poorly in any respect, Timothy would share in his demerit. He must, so far as possible, make sure that he did not give his influence to introduce one who would do injury to the Lord's sheep, either morally or doctrinally.

No risk should be run; caution should be exercised either in giving a letter of recommendation or a public indorsement in the form of a public God-speed. The same advice is still appropriate to all of the Lord's people in proportion to the degree of their influence. Nothing in this, however, implied that any were dependent upon Timothy's indorsement before they would have the right to preach: that right according to ability being granted by the Lord to all who receive the holy Spirit of anointing.

### **A Paid Ministry?**

The custom of a paid ministry, now so general and considered by many unavoidable and indispensable, was not the usage of the early Church. Our Lord and his chosen twelve were, so far as we are able to judge from the inspired

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records, poor--except, perhaps, James and John and Matthew. Accustomed to voluntary giving to the Levites, the Jews evidently extended this usage to everything religious that appealed to them as being of God. The disciples had a general treasurer, Judas (*John 12:6; 13:29*), and evidently never lacked; though it is equally evident that they never *solicited alms*. Not a hint of the kind is even suggested in the record of our Lord's words. He trusted to the Father's provision, and certain honorable women ministered unto him (and his) of their abundance. See *Matt. 27:55,56; Luke 8:2,3*.

Had our Lord's sermons and parables been interlarded with appeals for money, it would have sapped their life. Nothing appeals to us more than does the evident unselfishness of the Master and all his specially chosen ones, Judas being the only exception, and his avarice cost him his fall. (*John 12:5,6*) The love of money and show and the begging

system of Babylon today is much against its powerful influence; and the absence of this spirit amongst the Lord's faithful now, as at the first advent, tells much in their favor with those who study them as living epistles, not fully appreciating their teachings. In a most remarkable manner the Lord has provided thus far for his "harvest" work without one solitary appeal being made for money; and we trust it will never be otherwise, believing that this is the Lord's mind.

Let those ambitious for this world's luxuries and wealth seek them in the fields of trade or in the lucrative professions; but let none become ministers of the Gospel of Christ from any other motive than love for God and for his Truth and for his brethren: a love that will rejoice in sacrificing ease and wealth and honor of men--not grudgingly, but heartily. But alas! nominal Christianity has grown great and worldly, and her servants are honored with the titles Reverend, Very Reverend, Most Reverend and Doctor of Divinity; and with these honors and titles go salaries--not according to the minister's needs, but on the commercial basis of his ability to attract large congregations and

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wealthy people. The natural result has followed--"The priests thereof teach for hire and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord and say, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us." "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all D----- D-----s, they cannot bark; dreaming or talking in their sleep; lazy, loving slumber [ease]. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way [welfare], every one for his gain from his own quarter [denomination]." "They shall gather to themselves teachers having ears itching [for praise of men]; and they shall turn their ears from the Truth and shall be turned unto fables." *Isa. 56:10,11; Micah 3:11; Phil. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:3,4*

Some may reason that both extremes ought to be avoided--large salaries and no salaries--and may call to mind the Lord's words, "The laborer is worthy of his hire;" and the Apostle's words, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?" Yet we must remember that even these strongest statements of Scripture refer not to princely salaries, but to bare necessities. This the Apostle illustrates by the quotation, "Thou

shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." The ox was to be free to provide for his necessities, but no more. The Apostle has given us the keynote of his own successful ministry, saying: "I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you....And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." **2 Cor. 12:14,15**

Following in the footsteps of Jesus will not lead us in the direction of salaries: neither will the footsteps of his chief apostle, Paul. The latter, after showing that to ask earthly remuneration for spiritual services would in no sense violate justice, tells us of his own course in the matter in these words:

*"I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. Yea, yourselves know that these [my] hands have ministered unto my necessities, and*

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*to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."* **Acts 20:33-35**

*"We have not used this right [over you to require temporal things in exchange for spiritual]: but we bear all things that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ." (1 Cor. 9:12) "When I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia [voluntarily] supplied." 2 Cor. 11:9*

Our liberties are just the same as were those of the apostles in these respects; and fidelity to the cause should lead us to follow their steps in this as in all matters. The Lord, the apostles, and their associates, who traveled and gave their entire time to the ministry of the truth, did accept voluntary contributions from the brethren to meet their expenses; and, as already intimated, the laying on of the hands of the Antioch Church upon Paul and Barnabas, when they were about to start on their first missionary tour, seems to have implied that the Church became responsible for their expenses, and correspondingly participated in their work.

There is no intimation, direct or indirect, that the elders serving the Church at home received either salary or expense money; and we believe that it will generally be found advantageous to each local Church to use the voluntary services of its own members--few or many, great or insignificant.

This Scriptural method is spiritually healthful: it tends to draw out all the various members in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, and leads all to look more to the Lord as the real Shepherd, than does the hiring method. As the number of qualified teachers increases, let the example of the Antioch Church be imitated--let some be sent forth as missionaries, colporteurs, pilgrims, etc.

Nevertheless, if any congregation considers that its field of usefulness is a large one and that a brother could advantageously give his entire time to ministering to it and to

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mission work, and if they *voluntarily* tender him money sufficient for his expenses, we know of no scripture that would forbid its acceptance. But both the serving Elder and the supporting *Ecclesia* should see to it that the amount provided is not more than *reasonable living expenses* for the servant and those properly dependent on him. And both should see also that *all* the members of the *Ecclesia* be exercised, and particularly such as possess qualifications for eldership; otherwise the spirit of Babylon, churchianity, will be sure to develop.

### **Discipline in the Ecclesia** **--Matt. 18:15-18--**

The administration of discipline is not the function of the elders only, but of the entire Church. If one appears to be in error or in sin, his supposed wrong should be pointed out to the erring one only by the one he has injured, or by the member first discovering the wrong. If the reprovved one fails to clear himself, and *continues* in the error or sin, then two or three brethren without previous prejudice should be asked to hear the matter and advise the disputants. (Elders they may or may not be, but their eldership would add no force or authority in the case except as their judgment might be the riper and their influence the more potent.) If this committee decide unanimously with either party, the other should acquiesce and the matter be wholly at an end--correction, or restitution, so far as possible, being promptly made. If either of the original disputants still persists in the wrong course, the one who made the original charge or one of those called in committee or, preferably, all of these together, *may* then (but not sooner) exercise their privilege of bringing the matter before the *Ecclesia*, the body, the Church. Thus it is evident that the Elders were

in no sense to be judges of the members--hearing and judgment were left to the local body, or Church.

The two preliminary steps (above mentioned) having been taken, the facts being certified to the elders, it would

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be their duty to call a general meeting of the *Ecclesia*, or consecrated body, as a *court*--to hear the case in all of its particulars, and in the name and reverence of its Head to render a decision. And the matter should be so clear, and the condemned should have such generous treatment, that the decision would be a unanimous one, or nearly so. Thus the peace and oneness of the body (the *Ecclesia*) would be preserved. Repentance even up to the moment of the Church's condemnation is possible. Nay, to secure repentance and reform is the very object of every step of these proceedings--to reclaim the transgressor; his *punishment* not at all the object. Punishment is not ours but God's: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." (**Rom. 12:19**) Should the wrongdoer repent at any step in this proceeding, it should be a cause of thanksgiving and rejoicing to all who possess the Lord's Spirit, and no others are members of his body.

### **Rom. 8:9**

Indeed, even if the transgressor refuse to hear (obey) the decision of the entire Church, no punishment is to be inflicted or even attempted. What then? Merely the Church is to withdraw from him its fellowship and any and all signs or manifestations of brotherhood. Thenceforth the offender is to be treated "as a heathen man and a publican."

### **Matt. 18:17**

At no time in these proceedings are the faults or failings of the offender to be made public property--scandalizing him and the Church, and the Lord, the Head of the Church. Nor is he to be harshly spoken of even after the separation; just as we are not to berate, or rail against, heathen men and publicans, but are to "speak evil of no man" and to "do good unto all men." (**Titus 3:2; Gal. 6:10**) Love is the quality which insists on the strictest obedience to these last two requirements to "all men": how much more will love insist that a "brother," a fellow-member in the *Ecclesia*, the body of Christ, shall not only not be injured by false or garbled statements, but that additionally, his weaknesses or blunders or sins be carefully covered, not from the unsympathetic world only, but also from "the household of

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faith" and from even the Church--until the final step of "telling it to the Church" should be found absolutely necessary. At every step the spirit of love will hope that the wrongdoer is laboring under some misapprehensions, and will be praying for wisdom and grace to turn a sinner from the error of his way and thus (possibly) to save a soul from death. **James 5:20**

Oh, that the holy Spirit, the spirit of love, might dwell in every member of the Ecclesia so richly that it would give pain to hear a defamatory tale about any one, and especially about a fellow-member! This would at once eliminate one-half the friction, or more. Nor would the following of the above procedure, outlined by our Lord, lead to *frequent* church trials: rather, while removing the ground for animosities, it would inculcate a respect for the judgment of the Church as being the judgment of the Lord, and the voice of the Church would be heard and obeyed accordingly. Furthermore, with order and love thus prevailing we may be sure that each would seek as far as possible to "mind his own business" and not attempt to reprove his brother or correct him, or bring the matter before a committee or the Church, unless the matter were one of some importance as concerned himself or the Church or the Truth.

Unquestionably, the majority of the Church troubles (and society and family troubles as well) spring not from a desire to wrong, nor even from a wrong unintentionally committed, but from misunderstandings and, at least, partial misinterpretations of intentions or motives. The tongue is the general mischief-maker; and it is part of the spirit of a sound mind, therefore, to set a guard upon the lips as well as upon the heart, from which proceed the ungenerous sentiments which, the lips expressing, set fire to evil passions and often injure many. The New Creation--the Church--has strict instructions from their Lord and Head on this important subject. His spirit of love is to fill them as they go *alone*, privately, to the injuring person without previous conference or talking with anyone. They go not to make him (or her) *ashamed of his conduct*, nor to berate him or otherwise

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punish, but to secure a cessation of the wrong and, if possible, some recompense for injury already received. Telling others of the wrong, first or afterward, is unkind, unloving --contrary to the Word and Spirit of our Head. Not even to ask *advice* should the matter be told: we have the Lord's

*advice* and should follow it. If the case be a peculiar one, the wisest of the elders should be asked for advice along the lines of a hypothetical case, so as not to disclose the real trouble and wrongdoer.

Unless the trouble is serious, the matter ought to stop with the personal appeal to the erring one, whether he hears or forebears to hear--to yield. But if the second step be deemed necessary, no explanation of the trouble should be made to those asked to confer until they gather in the presence of the accuser and the accused. Thus slanderous "talk" will be avoided and the committee of brethren will come to the case unbiased and be the better able to counsel both parties wisely; for the trouble may be on both sides, or, possibly, wholly on the side of the accuser. At all events, the accused will be favorably impressed by such fair treatment and will be much more likely to yield to such counselors if his course seems to them also to be wrong. But whether the one deemed by the committee to be in error shall yield or not, the whole matter is still strictly private, and not a mention of it should be made to anyone until, if thought sufficiently important, it is brought before the Church, and passed upon finally. Then for the first time it is common property to the saints only, and in proportion as they are *saints* they will desire to say no more than necessary to anyone respecting the weaknesses or sins of anybody.\*

In carrying out the findings of the Church court, the matter rests with each individual; hence, each must discern the justice of the decision for himself. The penalty of withdrawal of fellowship is designed to be a correction in righteousness, and is of the Lord's prescribing. It is to serve as a protection to the Church, to separate those who walk disorderly,

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\*Additionally see Chap. ix--"If thy brother trespass against thee."

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not after the spirit of love. It is not to be esteemed a perpetual separation, but merely until the reprov'd one shall recognize and acknowledge his wrong and to the extent of his ability make amends.

## Accusations Against Elders

*"Against an Elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses." 1 Tim. 5:19, R.V.*

The Apostle in this statement recognizes two principles.

(1) That an Elder has already been recognized by the congregation as possessing a good and noble character, and as being specially earnest for the Truth, and devoted to God.

(2) That such persons, by reason of their prominence in the Church, would be marked by the Adversary as special objects for his attacks--objects of envy, malice, hatred and strife on the part of some, even as our Lord forewarned--"Marvel not if the world hate you"; "ye know that it hated me before it hated you"; "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household!" (*Matt. 10:25; 1 Jno. 3:13; Jno. 15:18*) The more faithful and capable the brother, the more nearly a copy of his Master, the more proper his choice as an Elder; and the more faithful the Elder, the more sure he will be to have as enemies--not Satan and his messengers only, but as many also as Satan can delude and mislead.

These reasons should guarantee an Elder against condemnation on the word of any one person, if otherwise his life appeared consistent. As for hearsay or rumor, they were not to be considered at all; because no true yokefellow, cognizant of the Lord's rule (*Matt. 18:15*), would circulate rumors or have confidence in the word of those who would thus disregard the Master's directions. To be heard at all, the accusers must profess to have been *witnesses*. And even if two or more witnesses made charges there would be no other way of hearing the case than that already defined. Any one person charging wrong against the Elder, should, after personal conference failing, have taken with him two or three others who would thus become *witnesses* to the contumacy.

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Then the matter, still unamended, might be brought by Timothy or anyone before the Church, etc.

Indeed, this accusation before two or three witnesses, being the requirement as respects all of the members, leaves room for the supposition that the Apostle was merely claiming that an Elder should have every right and privilege guaranteed to any of the brethren. It may be that some were inclined to hold that since an Elder must be "well reported," not only in the Church, but out of it, an Elder

should be arraigned upon the slightest charges, because of his influential position. But the Apostle's words settle it that an Elder's opportunities must equal those of others.

This matter of *witnesses* needs to be deeply engraved on the mind of every New Creature. What others claim to know and what they slanderously tell is not even to be heeded--not to be received. If two or three, following the Lord's directions, bring charges against anyone--not back-bitingly and slanderously but as instructed--before the Church, they are not even then to be believed; but then will be the proper time for the Church to *hear* the matter--hear both sides, in each other's presence; and then give a godly decision and admonition, so phrased as to help the wrongdoer back to righteousness and not to push him off into outer darkness.

### **Mistaken Calls to Preach**

A considerable number of people declare that they received of the Lord a *call* to preach the Gospel; perhaps they add in the next breath that they never knew why, or that they are aware that they have no special qualifications for the service, or that circumstances have always seemed to hinder them from responding to the call. Questioning them respecting the nature of the "call," develops the fact that it was merely an imagination or conjecture. One felt *impressed* at some time in his experience (perhaps before becoming a Christian at all) that he ought to devote himself to God and his service, and his highest ideal of God's service was drawn

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from his nominal church experiences, represented in the preacher whose services his family attended. Another felt his organ of approbateness impressed, and said to himself --How I would like to be able to wear the cloth and receive the respect and titles and salary of a preacher--even a second or third-rate one. If possessed of large self-esteem, too, he probably felt still further impressed that as the chosen apostles were "untalented and ignorant men," so, possibly, God had him specially in mind because of his lack of talent and education. God has favored many such, and his cause as well, in not opening the way to their ambitions, misconstrued to be his call to preach.

As already pointed out, every member of the New Creation is *called to preach*; not by his ambitions or imaginations, but by the Word, which calls upon all who receive the grace

of God not in vain to "*show forth the praises* of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." (*1 Pet. 2:9*) This call includes, therefore, all begotten of the spirit of the Truth--male and female, bond and free, rich and poor, educated and uneducated--black, brown, red, yellow and white. What further commission is needed than this--"He hath put a new song into my mouth," even "the loving kindness of Jehovah"? *Psa. 40:3; 107:43*

True, the Lord did *specialy choose* and specially call the twelve apostles for a special work; true also he has proposed that in so far as his people will hearken to his words he will "*set* the various members in the body" as pleases him--some to one service and some to another, "to every man according to his several ability." (*Matt. 25:15*) But he clearly shows us that many will seek to "*set*" themselves as teachers; that it is the duty of the Church to look continually to him as their true Head and Leader, and not to favor the self-seeking ambitious brethren; that neglect of this duty will mean neglect of his words; deficiency, therefore, of love and obedience; and will surely be to the spiritual disadvantage of such an *Ecclesia*, as well as to the disadvantage of the self-set teacher.

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The Lord's rule on this subject is clearly set forth to be-- "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted; and he that exalteth himself shall be abased." (*Luke 14:11*) The Church is to follow this rule, this mind of the Spirit, in all matters in which she shall seek to know and obey her Lord. The Lord's method is to advance only him whose zeal and faithfulness and perseverance in well-doing have shown themselves in little things. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." (*Luke 16:10*) "Thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things." (*Matt. 25:21,23*) There is always plenty of room at the bottom of the ladder of honor. Whosoever wills, need not for long be without opportunities for serving the Lord, the Truth and the brethren in humble ways which the proud-spirited will disdain and neglect, looking for service more honorable in the sight of men. The faithful will rejoice in any service, and to them the Lord will open wider and yet wider doors of opportunity. Thus his will, exemplifying the wisdom from above, is to be carefully followed by every member of the New Creation--especially in his vote, in his stretching forth of his hand as a member of the body of Christ to express the will of the Head.

A self-seeking brother should be passed by, however capable; and a less capable, but humble, brother should be chosen for Elder. So gentle a reproof should be beneficial to all--even though not one word be uttered respecting the reasons governing. And in the case of a capable Elder giving evidence of a dictatorial spirit, or inclining to regard himself as above the Church and of a separate class, or implying a divine right to teach not coming through the *Ecclesia* (Church), it would be a kindness as well as a duty to such an one to drop him to some less prominent part of the service or from all special services for a time, until he shall take this gentle reproof and recover himself from the snare of the Adversary.

All are to remember that, like other faculties, *ambition* is necessary in the Church as well as in the world; but that in

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the New Creation it must not be a selfish ambition to be something great and prominent, but a loving ambition to serve the Lord and his people, even the very humblest. We all know how ambition led to Satan's fall--from the favor and service of God to the position of an enemy of his Creator and an opponent of all his righteous regulations. Similarly, all who adopt his course, saying, "I will ascend above the stars of God [I will *set* myself above others of the sons of God], I will be as the Most High--[a ruler amongst them, a usurper of divine authority without divine appointment, and contrary to the divine regulation]," are sure to suffer divine disapprobation, and proportionate alienation from the Lord. And the influence of such, like Satan's, is sure to be injurious. As Satan would be an unsafe teacher, so are all who have his disposition sure to lead into darkness for light; because they are not in the proper attitude to receive the light and be used as messengers of it to others.

Whenever, therefore, any brother feels sure that he is called to preach in some public capacity when no door of service has been opened to him in the appointed manner--if he is inclined to force himself upon the Church, without its almost unanimous request--or if having been chosen to the position of a leader or Elder he seeks to hold the position and consider it his by right, without regular votes of the Church from time to time requesting his service continued, we may set it down either that the brother has not noted the proprieties of the case, or that he has the wrong, self-seeking spirit unsuitable to any service in the *Ecclesia*. In either event it will be the proper course to make a *change* at the first

proper occasion for holding an election: and, as already suggested, the first Sunday of a year or in a quarter would be an appropriate time easily remembered.

### **"Warn Them That Are Unruly"**

*"We exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men." 1 Thess. 5:14,15*

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This exhortation is not to elders, but to the entire Church, including the elders. It takes cognizance of the fact that although the entire Church, as God's New Creation, has a perfect standing before him as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, nevertheless each and all of them have their imperfections according to the flesh. It shows, further, what we all recognize; viz., that there are differences in the degrees and in the kinds of our fleshly imperfections; so that, as in children of an earthly family different dispositions require different treatment by the parents, much more in the family of God there are such wide differences of disposition as to require special consideration one for the other. To take notice of each other's imperfections, from the standpoint of criticism, would be to do ourselves much injury, cultivating in our hearts a faultfinding disposition, keenly awake to the weaknesses and imperfections of others, and proportionately, perhaps, inclined to be blind to our own defects. Such criticism is entirely foreign to the spirit and intention of the Apostle's exhortation.

Those are addressed who have been begotten of the spirit of the truth, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of humility, the spirit of love. Such as are thus growing in the graces of the Spirit, will fear and criticize chiefly their own defects; while their love for others will lead them to make as many mental excuses and allowances for them as possible. But while this spirit of love is properly condoning the offenses and weaknesses of the brethren, it is to be on the alert, nevertheless, to do them good--not by bickering, strife, contention, chiding, faultfinding and slandering one another, but in a manner such as the Golden Rule, would approve. With gentleness, meekness, long-suffering and patience, it will seek to make allowance for each other's weaknesses, and at the same time to help each other out of them, each remembering his own

weaknesses of some kind.

The *unruly* are not to be comforted and supported and encouraged in their wrong way; but in kindness, in love, they are to be admonished that God is a God of order; and that

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in proportion as we would grow in his likeness and favor we must observe rules of order. They should be admonished that nothing is further from the divine arrangement than anarchy; and that as even worldly people recognize the principle that the worst form of government imaginable is preferable to anarchy, so much the more should God's people, who have received the spirit of a sound mind, the holy Spirit, recognize this same principle in the Church; and the Apostle exhorts us to submit ourselves one to the other, for the sake of the general interests of the Lord's cause. If we were all perfect, and our judgment of the Lord's will perfect, we would all think exactly the same--there would be no particular necessity for submitting one to another; but since our judgments differ, it is necessary that each consider the other and the other's standpoint of observation and judgment, and that each seek to yield something in the interest of general peace--yea, to yield everything so as to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace in the body of Christ, except where principle would be infringed by such a course.

The unruly or disorderly are not entirely to blame for their condition, perhaps. Many people are born disorderly and inclined to be so in their dress and in all their affairs in life. Disorderliness, therefore, is a part of their weakness, which should be thought of sympathetically, kindly, but, nevertheless, should not be permitted to do injury to the Church of God, to hinder its usefulness, to prevent its cooperation in the study and service of the Truth. It is not the will of God that his people should have that meekness which would amount to weakness in dealing with disorderly persons. Kindly, lovingly, but firmly, they should be shown that, as order is heaven's first law, so it must be highly esteemed amongst those who are heavenly-minded; and that it would be sinful for the congregation to permit one or two or more of its members to do violence to the divine regulations, as expressed in the Word of God and as generally understood by the congregation with which he is associated.

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## Admonishing Not a General Order

It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that the Apostle, in using this general language to the Church, meant that every individual of the Church was to do such admonishing. To admonish wisely, helpfully, is a very delicate matter indeed, and remarkably few have a talent for it. The election of elders on the part of congregations is understood to signify the election of those of the number possessed of the largest measure of spiritual development, combined with natural qualifications to constitute them the representatives of the congregation, not only in respect to the leading of meetings, etc., but also in respect to keeping order in the meetings and admonishing unruly ones wisely, kindly, firmly. That this is the Apostle's thought is clearly shown in the two preceding verses, in which he says:

*"We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake. And be at peace amongst yourselves."*

**1 Thess. 5:12,13**

If divine wisdom has been properly sought and properly exercised in the choosing of elders of a congregation, it follows that those thus chosen were very highly esteemed; and since novices are not to be chosen, it follows that these were appreciated and selected for their works' sake, because it was discerned by the brethren that they had a considerable measure of the holy spirit of love and wisdom and meekness, besides certain natural gifts and qualifications for this service. To "be at peace amongst yourselves," as the Apostle exhorts, would mean that, having chosen these elders to be the representatives of the congregation, the body in general would *look to them to perform the service to which they were chosen*, and would not attempt to take it each upon himself to be a reprover, or admonisher, etc. Indeed, as we have already seen, the Lord's people are not to judge one another personally; and only the congregation as a whole may exclude one of the number from the fellowship and privileges of the meeting. And this, we have seen, can come only after the various steps of a more private kind have been taken--after

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all efforts to bring about reform have proved unavailing, and the interests of the Church in general are seriously threatened by the wrong course of the offender. But in the

text before us the Apostle exhorts that the congregation shall "know"--that is, recognize, look to--those whom they have chosen as their representatives, and expect them to keep guard over the interests of the Church, and to do the admonishing of the unruly, up to the point where matters would be serious enough to bring them before the Church as a court.

### **Public Rebukes Rare**

This admonishing, under some circumstances, might need to be done publicly before the congregation, as the Apostle suggests to Timothy: "Them that sin [publicly] rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (*1 Tim. 5:20*) Such a public rebuke necessarily implies a *public sin of a grievous nature*. For any comparatively slight deviation from rules of order the elders, under the law of love, and the Golden Rule, should surely "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works," and so considering they would know that a word in private would probably be much more helpful to the individual than a public rebuke, which might cut or wound or injure a sensitive nature where such wounding was entirely unnecessary, and where love would have prompted a different course. But even though an Elder should rebuke a grievous sin publicly, it should be done, nevertheless, lovingly, and with a desire that the reprovved one might be corrected and helped back, and not with a desire to make him odious and to cast him forth. Nor, indeed, does it come within the Elder's province to rebuke any to the extent of debarring them from the privileges of the congregation. Rebuke to this extent, as we have just seen, can proceed only from the Church as a whole, and that after a full hearing of the case, in which the accused one has full opportunity for either defending himself or amending his ways and being forgiven. The Church, the *Ecclesia*, the consecrated of the Lord, are, as a whole, his

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representatives, and the Elder is merely the Church's representative --the Church's best conception of the Lord's choice. The Church, therefore, and not the elders, constitute the court of last resort in all such matters; hence, an elder's course is always subject to review or correction by the Church, according to the united judgment of the Lord's will.

While considering this phase of the subject, we might

pause a moment to inquire the extent to which the Church, directly or indirectly, or through its elders, is to exercise this duty of admonishing the disorderly, and of eventually excluding them from the assembly. It is not within the power of the Church to exclude permanently. The brother who, having offended either a brother member or the whole Church body, returns again and says, "I repent of my wrong course, and promise my best endeavors to do right in the future," or the equivalent of this, is to be forgiven--fully, freely--as heartily as we hope the Lord will forgive the trespasses of all. No one but the Lord has the power or authority to cut off any individual everlastingly--the power to sever a branch from the Vine. We are informed that there is a sin unto death, for which it is useless to pray (*1 John 5:16*); and we are to expect that such a wilful sin as would thus bring the penalty of the Second Death would be so open, so flagrant, as to be readily discerned by those who are in fellowship with the Lord. We are not to judge of any by what is in their hearts, for we cannot read their hearts; but if they commit wilful sin unto death it will surely become manifest outwardly--by their lips, if they are doctrinal transgressions, denying the precious blood of atonement; or by their immoralities, if they have turned to walk after the flesh, "like the sow that is washed, to her wallowing in the mire." It is respecting such as these, referred to in *Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-31*, that the Apostle warns us to have no dealings whatever--not to eat with them, not to receive them into our houses, and not to bid them Godspeed (*2 John 9-11*); because those who would affiliate with them or bid them Godspeed would be accounted as taking

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their places as enemies of God, and as partaking of the evil deeds or evil doctrines, as the case might be.

But in respect to others, who "walk disorderly," the regulation is very different. Such an excluded brother or sister should not be treated as an enemy, nor thought of as such; but as an erring brother, as the Apostle says further on in this same epistle, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle [if he be disorderly, unwilling to submit himself to sound reasoning and loving, generous rules of order] note that man, and have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (*2 Thess. 3:14,15*) Such a case as this would imply some open, public opposition on the

part of the brother to the rules of order laid down by the Apostle, as the Lord's mouthpiece; and such a public opposition to right principles should be rebuked by the congregation, should they decide that the brother is so out of order that he needs admonishing; and if he does not consent to the form of sound words, sent us by our Lord through the Apostle, he should be considered as so out of accord as to make it no longer proper that he should have the fellowship of the brethren until he would consent to these reasonable requirements. He should not be passed by on the street unnoticed by the brethren, but be treated courteously. The exclusion should be merely from the privileges of the assembly and from any special brotherly associations, etc., peculiar to the faithful. This is implied also in our Lord's words, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Our Lord did not mean that we should do injury to a heathen man or a publican, nor treat either in any manner unkindly; but merely that we should not fellowship such as *brethren*, nor seek their confidences, nor as New Creatures give them ours. The household of faith is to be cemented and bound together with mutual love and sympathy, and expressions of these in various ways. It is from the lack of these privileges and blessings that the excluded brother is caused to suffer, until he feels that he must reform his ways and return to the family gathering. There is a suggestion

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in this respect to warmth, to cordiality, to true brotherliness, that should prevail amongst those who are members of the Lord's body.

### **"Comfort the Feeble-Minded"**

Continuing our examination of the Apostle's words in our text, we note that the Church is to comfort the feeble-minded. We thus have notice that the reception of the holy Spirit does not transform our mortal bodies so as to entirely overcome their weaknesses. There are some with feeble minds, as there are others with feeble bodies, and each needs sympathy along the line of his own weakness. The feeble minds were not to be miraculously cured; nor should we expect that because the minds of some are feeble and unable to grasp all the lengths, and breadths, and heights, and depths of the divine plan that, therefore, they are not of the body. On the contrary, as the Lord is not seeking for his Church merely those who are of fine physical development,

strong and robust, so likewise he is not seeking merely those who are strong and robust in mind, and able to reason and analyze thoroughly, completely, every feature of the divine plan. There will be in the body some who will be thus qualified, but others are feeble-minded, and do not come up even to the average standard of knowledge. What comfort should we give to these? We answer that the elders, in their presentations of the Truth, and all of the Church in their relationship one with the other, should comfort these, not necessarily in pointing out their feebleness and condoning the same, but rather along general lines--not expecting the same degree of proficiency and intellectual discernment in the members of the family of God. None should claim that those who have such disabilities are, therefore, not of the body.

The lesson is much the same if we accept the revised reading, "Comfort the fainthearted." Some naturally lack courage and combativeness, and with ever so good will and ever so loyal hearts cannot, to the same degree as others of the body, "be strong in the Lord," nor "fight the good fight

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of faith" in the open. The Lord, however, must see their will, their intention, to be courageous and loyal, and so should the brethren--if they are to attain the rank of overcomers.

All should recognize that the Lord's judgment of his people is according to their hearts, and that if these feeble-minded or fainthearted ones have had a sufficiency of mind and will to grasp the fundamentals of the divine plan of redemption through Christ Jesus, and their own justification in God's sight through faith in the Redeemer, and if on this basis they are striving to live a life of consecration to the Lord, they are to be treated in every way so as to permit them to feel that they are fully and thoroughly members of the body of Christ; and that the fact that they cannot expound or cannot perhaps with clearness discern every feature of the divine plan intellectually, and defend the same as courageously as others, is not to be esteemed as impugning their acceptance with the Lord. They should be encouraged to press along the line of self-sacrifice in the divine service, doing such things as their hands find to do, to the glory of the Lord and to the blessing of his people--comforted with the thought that in due time all who abide in Christ and cultivate the fruits of his Spirit and walk in his steps of sacrifice will have new bodies with perfect capacity,

in which all the members shall be able to know as they are known--and that meantime the Lord assures us that his strength is shown the more fully in our weakness.

### **"Support the Weak"**

This implies that there are some in the Church weaker than others; not merely physically weaker, but weaker spiritually --in the sense of having human organisms depraved in such a manner that they as New Creatures, find greater difficulty in growth and spiritual development. Such are not to be rejected from the body, but, on the contrary, we are to understand that if the Lord counted them worthy of a knowledge of his grace, it means that he is able to bring them off conquerors through him who loved us and bought

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us with his precious blood. They are to be supported with such promises as the Scriptures afford--to the effect that when we are weak in ourselves we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, by casting all our care upon him, and by faith laying hold upon his grace; that in the hour of weakness and temptation they will find fulfilled the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." The entire congregation can assist in this comforting and supporting, though, of course, the elders have a special charge and responsibility toward these, because they are the chosen representatives of the Church, and, hence, of the Lord. The Apostle, speaking of the various members of the body, after telling of pastors and teachers, speaks of "helps." (*1 Cor. 12:28*) Evidently the Lord's good pleasure would be that each member of the Church should seek to occupy such a place of helpfulness, not only helping the elders chosen as the representatives of the Church, but also helping one another, doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith.

### **"Patient Toward All"**

In obeying this exhortation to exercise patience toward each other under all circumstances, the New Creatures will find that they are not only exercising the proper attitude toward each other, but that they are cultivating in themselves one of the grandest graces of the holy Spirit--patience. Patience is a grace of the Spirit which will find abundant opportunity

for exercise in all of life's affairs, toward those outside the Church as well as toward those within it, and it is well that we remember that the whole world has a *claim* upon our patience. We discern this only as we get clear views of the groaning creation's condition, revealed to us through the Scriptures. Therein we see the story of the fall, and how all have been injured by it. Therein we see God's patience toward sinners and his wonderful love in their redemption, and in the provisions he has made, not only for

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the blessing and uplifting of his Church out of the miry clay and out of the horrible pit of sin and death, but glorious provisions also for the whole world of mankind. In it, too, we see that the great difficulty with the world is that they are under the delusions of our Adversary, "the god of this world," who now blinds and deceives them. **2 Cor. 4:4**

Surely this knowledge should give us patience! And if we have patience with the world, much more should we have patience with those who are no longer of the world, but who have by God's grace come under the conditions of his forgiveness in Christ Jesus, have been adopted into his family, and are now seeking to walk in his steps. What loving and long-suffering patience we *should* have toward these fellow-disciples, members of the Lord's body! Surely we *could* have nothing else than patience toward these; and surely our Lord and Master would specially disapprove and in some manner rebuke impatience toward any of them. Furthermore, we have great need of patience even in dealing with ourselves under present distress and weaknesses and battles with the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Learning to appreciate these facts will help to make us more patient toward all.

### **"See That None Render Evil for Evil"**

This is more than an individual *advice*: it is an injunction, addressed to the Church as a whole, and is applicable to each congregation of the Lord's people. It implies that if some of the household of faith are disposed to take vengeance, to retaliate, to render evil for evil, either upon brother members or upon those outside, that the Church will not be acting the part of a busybody in taking notice of such a course. It is the duty of the Church to *see* to this. "See that no man render evil for evil," means, give attention to it that this proper spirit is observed in your midst amongst the

brethren. If, therefore, the elders should learn of such occasions as would be covered by this injunction, it would be their duty kindly to admonish the brothers or the sisters respecting

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the Word of the Lord; and, if they will not hear, it would be the duty of the former to bring the matter before the congregation, etc., etc. And here is the Church's commission to take cognizance of such an improper course on the part of any. Not only are we thus to see one another, and to look out for each other with kindly interest, to note that backward steps are not taken, but we are to see to it that, on the contrary, all follow after that which is good. We should rejoice in and commend every evidence of progress in a right way, giving it our support as individuals and as congregations of the Lord's people. By thus doing, as the Apostle suggests, we may rejoice evermore, and with good cause; for so helping one another the body of Christ will make increase of itself in love, growing more and more in the likeness of the Head, and becoming more and more fit for joint-heirship with him in the Kingdom.

**"Let Us Consider One Another to Provoke  
Unto Love and to Good Works"  
--Heb. 10:24--**

What a loving and beautiful thought is here expressed! While others consider their fellows to fault-find or discourage, or selfishly to take advantage of their weaknesses, the New Creation is to do the reverse--to study carefully each other's dispositions with a view to avoiding the saying or doing of things which would unnecessarily wound, stir up anger, etc., but with a view to provoking them to love and good conduct.

And why not? Is not the whole attitude of the world, the flesh and the devil provocative of envy, selfishness, jealousy, and full of evil enticement to sin, of thought, word and deed? Why, then, should not the New Creatures of the Christ body not only abstain from such provocations toward themselves and others, but engage in provoking or inciting in the reverse direction--toward love and good works? Surely this, like every admonition and exhortation of God's Word, is reasonable as well as profitable.

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## "The Assembling of Ourselves"

*"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day drawing on." Heb. 10:25*

The Lord's injunction, through the Apostle, respecting the assembling of his people, is in full accord with his own words, "Where two or three of you are met in my name, there am I in the midst." (*Matt. 18:20*) The object of these gatherings is clearly indicated; they are for mutual advancement in spiritual things--opportunities for provoking or inciting each other unto more and more love for the Lord and for each other, and to increased good works of every kind that would glorify our Father, that would bless the brotherhood, and that would do good unto all men as we have opportunity. If he who says, I love God, yet hateth his brother, knows not what he says, and deceives himself (*1 John 4:20*), similarly mistaken, we believe, are those who say, I long to be with the Lord and to enjoy his blessing and fellowship, if they meantime neglect opportunities to meet with the brethren, and do not enjoy their company and fellowship.

It is in the nature of things that each human being must seek some companionship; and experience attests the truthfulness of the proverb, that "Birds of a feather flock together." If, therefore, the fellowship of the spiritually minded is not appreciated, longed for and sought after, if we do not improve opportunities to enjoy it, we may be sure these are unhealthy indications as respects our spiritual condition. The natural man loves and enjoys natural fellowship and companionship, and plans and arranges with his associates in respect to business matters and pleasures, even though their common worldly hopes and plans are very limited indeed as compared with the exceeding great and precious hopes of the New Creation. As our minds become transformed by the renewing of the holy Spirit, our appetite for fellowship is not destroyed, but merely turned into new channels, where we find a wonderful field for fellowship,

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investigation, discussion and enjoyment--the history of sin and the groaning creation, past and present--God's record of the redemption and the coming deliverance of the groaning creation--our high calling to joint-heirship

with the Lord--the evidences that our deliverance is drawing nigh, etc. What an abundant field for thought, for study, for fellowship and communion!

No wonder we say that the one who is unappreciative of the privilege of meeting with others for the discussion of these subjects is spiritually sick, in some respects, whether he is able to diagnose his own ailment or not. It may be that he is diseased with a kind of spiritual pride and self-sufficiency, which leads him to say to himself, I need not go to the common school of Christ, to be taught with his other followers; I will take private lessons from the Lord at home, and he will teach me separately, and deeper and more spiritual lessons. Quite a few seem to be afflicted with this spiritual egotism--to imagine themselves better than others of the Lord's brethren, and that he would depart from his usual custom and from the lines marked out in his Word, to serve them in a peculiar manner, just because they think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, and because they request it. Such brethren should remember that they have not one solitary promise of the Lord of a blessing so long as they are in this attitude of heart and conduct. On the contrary, "the Lord resisteth the proud and showeth his favors to the humble." The Lord blesses those who hear and obey his instructions, saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." To those who are in a right attitude of heart it is quite sufficient that the Lord has enjoined that we come together in his name; and that he has promised special blessings to so few as even two or three obeying him, and that the Church is representatively his body, and is to be prospered by "that which every joint supplieth," and to edify itself and to "build one another up," as members in all the graces and fruits of the Spirit. Sometimes the difficulty is not purely a spiritual egotism, but partially a neglect of the Word of God and a leaning to human understanding,

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supposing that the promise, "they shall be all taught of God," implies an individual teaching, separate the one from the other. The customs of the apostles and their teachings, and the experience of the Lord's people, are all contrary to such a thought.

However, on the other hand, we are not to crave merely numbers and show and popularity, but are to remember that the Lord's promised blessing is to "two or three *of you*"; and, again, through the Apostle, the exhortation is to "the assembling of *ourselves* together." It is not a sectarian spirit

that the Lord and the Apostle inculcate here, when they intimate that the assemblies are not to be worldly assemblies, in which the Lord's people are to mingle, but Christian assemblies --assemblies of those who know of God's grace and who have accepted of the same by a full consecration of themselves to him and his service. The worldly are not to be urged to come to these meetings. They are not of *you*, even as "Ye are not of the world"; and if they were attracted, either by music or other features, the spirit of the injunction would be lost, for where worldliness would abound, and a desire to please and to attract the worldly, very speedily the proper object of the meeting would be lost sight of. That proper object is explained to be "the building up of *yourselves* in the most holy faith," "edifying *one another*," "inciting *one another* to love and to good works." **Jude 20; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24**

Let the *evilly disposed* flock together, if they will; let the *morally disposed* flock together with their kind; and let the Spirit-begotten ones *assemble themselves* and proceed along the lines laid down in the Lord's Word for their edification. But if they neglect this, let the blame for unfavorable consequences not be attached to the Head of the Church nor to the faithful apostles, who clearly emphasized the proper course and exemplified it in their own conduct.

This does not mean that outsiders are to be forbidden entrance to the meetings of the Church, if they are interested enough to desire to come in and "behold your order," and be blessed by your holy conversation, exhortations to good

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works, and love, and exposition of the divine Word of promise, etc. The Apostle intimates this very clearly in **1 Cor. 14:24**. The point we are making is that "assembling ourselves" is not an assemblage of unbelievers, where endeavors are made constantly to break the hearts of sinners.

The sinner should be free to attend, but should be let alone to see the order and love prevailing amongst the Lord's consecrated ones, that thus even though he comprehend only in part, he may be reprov'd of his sins by discerning the spirit of holiness and purity in the Church, and may be convinced respecting his errors of doctrine by beholding the order and symmetry of the truth which prevails amongst the Lord's people. Compare **1 Cor. 14:23-26**.

This brings us to a consideration of the general

## Character of the Meetings

of the Lord's people. We remark, first of all, that on this subject, as on others, the Lord's people are left without cast-iron laws and regulations--left free to adapt themselves to the changing conditions of time and country, left free in the exercise of the spirit of a sound mind, left free to seek the wisdom that cometh from above, and to manifest the degree of their attainment of the Lord's character-likeness under the discipline of the Law of Love. That Law of Love will be sure to urge modesty as respects all innovations or changes from the customs of the early Church; it will be sure to hesitate to make radical changes except as it shall discern their necessity, and even then will seek to keep close within the spirit of every admonition and instruction and practice of the early Church.

In the early Church we have the example of the apostles as special teachers. We have the example of the elders, doing pastoral work, evangelistic work, and prophesying or public speaking; and from one illustration, given with particularity in *1 Cor. 14*, we may judge that each member of the Church was encouraged by the apostles to stir up whatever talent and gift he might possess, to glorify the Lord and to serve the brethren--thus to exercise himself and to

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grow strong in the Lord and in the Truth, helping others and being helped in turn by others. This account of an ordinary Church meeting in the Apostle's day could not be followed fully and in detail today, because of the peculiar "gifts of the Spirit" temporarily bestowed upon the early Church for the convincing of outsiders, as well as for personal encouragement at a time when, without these gifts, it would have been impossible for any of the number to be edified or profited to any extent. Nevertheless, we can draw from this early custom, approved by the Apostle, certain valuable and helpful lessons, which can be appropriated by the little companies of the Lord's people everywhere, according to circumstances.

The chief lesson is that of mutual helpfulness, "building one another up in the most holy faith." It was not the custom for one or even several of the elders to preach regularly, nor to do or attempt to do all the edifying or building up. It was the custom for each member to do his part, the parts of the elders being more important according to their abilities

and gifts; and we can see that this would be a very helpful arrangement and bring a blessing not only to those who heard, but also to all participating. And who does not know that even the poorest speaker or the most illiterate person may, if his heart be full of love for the Lord and devotion to him, communicate thoughts which will be precious to all who may hear. The class of meetings here described by the Apostle evidently was a sample of the majority of meetings held by the Church. The account shows that it was a mixed meeting, at which, adapting the account to present times, one might exhort, another might expound, another might offer prayer, another propose a hymn, another read a poem which seemed to fit his sentiments and experiences, in harmony with the topic of the meeting; another might quote some scriptures bearing on the topic under discussion, and thus the Lord might use each and all of these members of the Church in mutual edification, mutual upbuilding.

It is not our thought that there never was preaching in the early Church. On the contrary, we find that wherever

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the apostles went they were considered specially able expounders of the Word of God, who would be present probably but a short time, and during the period of their presence, it is likely, they did nearly all of the public speaking, though we doubt not that other social meetings, open to all, were held as well. This same practice respecting apostolic preaching was no doubt followed by others who were not apostles; as, for instance, Barnabas, Timothy, Apollos, Titus, etc., and the same liberties were enjoyed also by some who misused them and exercised quite an influence for evil--Hymenaeus and Philetus and others.

Where the Lord has laid down no positive law it would be inappropriate for us or for others to fix a law. We offer, however, some suggestions, viz., that there are certain spiritual needs of the Church which require ministering to:

(1) *Instruction* is necessary--in the more purely prophetic matters and also in the moral doctrines, and in respect to the development of the Christian graces.

(2) Because of more or less differing methods in the use of language, and because of more or less obtuseness of mind and varying degrees of spiritual perception, as between those who are babes in Christ and those who are more mature in knowledge and in grace, it is advisable that opportunities be afforded at which each will be encouraged to express his understanding of the things which he has

learned, either through reading or hearing, to the intent that if his understanding of these things be defective it may be corrected by the statements of others on the subject.

(3) There should be frequent regular meetings at which reasonably full opportunities would be given to anyone to present what he might believe to be a different view of truth from that perhaps generally held and approved by the *Ecclesia*.

(4) There should be not only devotional services connected with all meetings of the Lord's people, but experience shows the profitableness of *each one*, in the hearing of his brethren, *confessing with his mouth*, either in testimony or in prayer, his devotion to the Lord.

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### **Doctrine Still Necessary**

Respecting the first proposition: We are living in a time when doctrines in general are being sneered at, and when quite a good many claim that doctrine and faith are of no value in comparison to works and morals. We cannot agree with this, because we find it entirely out of accord with the divine Word, in which faith is placed first and works second. It is our faith that is accepted of the Lord, and according to our faith he will reward us, though he will properly expect that a good faith will bring forth as many good works as the weaknesses of the earthen vessel will permit. This is the rule of faith everywhere laid down in the Scriptures. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (**Heb. 11:6; 1 John 5:4**) No man can properly be an overcomer, therefore, unless he exercise faith in God and in his promises; and in order to exercise faith in the promises of God he must understand them; and this opportunity and ability to grow strong in faith will be in proportion to his understanding of the divine plan of the ages, and the exceeding great and precious promises connected therewith. Hence, doctrine--instruction--is important, not merely for the knowledge which God's people are to have and to enjoy above and beyond the knowledge of the world in things pertaining to God, but especially because of the influence which this knowledge will exercise upon all hopes and aims and conduct. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself" (**1 John 3:3**) is a Scriptural expression which fully coincides with the foregoing statements. He who would endeavor to purify himself, to cleanse his conduct, must, to

be successful, begin as the Scriptures begin, with the heart, and must progress, using, for a cleansing, the inspired promises. And this means a knowledge of the doctrines of Christ.

It is appropriate, however, that we clearly distinguish and differentiate between the doctrines of Christ and the doctrines of men. The doctrines of Christ are those which he himself and his inspired apostles have set before us in the

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New Testament. The doctrines of men are represented in the creeds of men, many of which are grossly and seriously at variance with the doctrines of the Lord, and all of them in disagreement with each other. Moreover, it is not sufficient that we be indoctrinated once; for, as the Apostle intimates, we receive the treasures of God's grace into poor earthen vessels which are very leaky; and hence, if we cease to receive we will cease to have; for which cause it is necessary that we have "line upon line, precept upon precept," and that we continually renew and review our study of the divine plan of the ages, using whatever helps and assistances divine providence supplies, seeking so far as possible to obey the Apostle's injunction to be--"not forgetful hearers, but doers of the work," and thus "doers of the Word."

#### ***James 1:22-25***

Our second proposition is one that may not at once be so fully appreciated as the first. It is apt to be the thought of many, if not of all, that those who can express the truth most clearly, most fluently, most accurately, should be the only ones to express it, and that the others should keep silence and hear and learn. This thought is right in many respects. It is not our suggestion that any should be put to teach or be looked up to as teachers, or their words received as instruction, who are incapable of giving instruction, and who do not clearly apprehend the divine plan. But there is a great difference between setting such to teach--as in the case of elders--and having a meeting at which all members of the New Creation would have an opportunity of *briefly expressing themselves or asking questions*, with the understanding that their questions or doubts or expressions are not upheld by the Church as being the sentiments of the company. At such meetings, wrong ideas may possibly be set forth in the form of questions--not with an intention of teaching these opinions, nor with the purpose of enforcing them, but with a view to having them criticized. But beware of violating conscience by any attempt to defend error. Such procedure

should be sanctioned only in the presence of someone advanced

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in the Truth and able to give a Scriptural reason for his faith, and to show the way of the Lord more perfectly. Is it asked, What advantage could come from such a course? We reply that we have frequently seen the advantages demonstrated. It is often difficult--sometimes impossible--to state matters in the simplest and most direct manner; and it is equally impossible for all minds, however honest, to grasp a subject with an equal degree of clearness from the same illustration. Hence the value of questions, and of a variety of presentations of the same truth, as illustrated in our Lord's parables, which present subjects from various standpoints, affording a more complete and harmonious view of the whole. So, too, we have noticed that the blundering and somewhat bungling statement of a truth may, at times, effect an entrance into some minds where a more sound and more logical statement had failed--the incompetence of the speaker matching in some respects the lower plane of reason and judgment in the hearer. We are to rejoice if the Gospel is preached and finds a lodgment in hungry hearts, whatever the channel, as the Apostle explains--"some even preach Christ of contention and vainglory." We can only rejoice if some are brought to a proper knowledge of the Lord, even though we must greatly regret the improper motives of the presentation; or, as in the other case, the imperfection of the presentation. It is the Lord and the Truth and the brethren that we love and desire to serve; and, hence, we must rejoice in anything which brings the desired results, and should make our arrangements so as not to interfere with this, which we recognize to be a fact. This does not signify that the illogical and incompetent should be *set* to teach in the Church, nor that we should imagine that the illogical presentations would be the most successful in general. Quite the contrary. Nevertheless, we are not *wholly to ignore* that which we see is sometimes a channel of blessing to some minds and which has the backing of primitive Church usage.

In support of our third proposition: No matter how confident

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we are that we have the truth, it would certainly be unwise for us so to shut and lock the door of interrogation

and contrary expressions as thoroughly to exclude all that might be considered error by the leader of the meeting or by the entire congregation. One limitation alone should prevail to a thorough exclusion; viz., that the gatherings of the New Creatures are not for the consideration of secular subjects, worldly sciences and philosophies, but solely for the study of the divine revelation; and in the study of the divine revelation the congregation should first, last and always recognize the difference between the foundation principles of the doctrines of Christ (which no member may change or alter, nor consent to have questioned) and the discussion of advanced doctrines, which must be fully in accord with the foundation principles. The latter should at all times have full, free opportunities to be heard, and there should be meetings at which they can be heard. This, however, does not mean that they should be heard over and over, and that some individual should be permitted to confuse and distract every meeting and every topic with some particular hobby. Let his hobby have a fair hearing and a fair discussion at an appropriate time, in the presence of some well versed in the Truth, and if ruled out by the congregation as unscriptural, and the promoter of the thought be not convinced of its unscripturalness, let him at least refrain from intruding the subject upon the notice of the Church for a long time--perhaps a year--when he might without impropriety request another hearing, which might or might not be granted, as the congregation should think the matter worthy or unworthy of hearing and investigation.

What we urge is, that unless there be some such vent, two dangers may be encountered: One, the danger of falling into the condition we see prevailing now in the nominal churches of Christendom, in which it is impossible to find access to their ears through their regular Church meetings, every avenue of approach being carefully guarded. The other danger is, that the individual having a theory which

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appeals to his judgment as truth--no matter how false and irrational it might be--would never feel satisfied unless it should have a reasonable hearing, but would be continually obtruding the topic; whereas, after having been heard reasonably, even if not convinced of the error of his argument, he would be disarmed as respects the impropriety of intruding the matter upon those who have already heard and rejected his thought.

Our fourth proposition: Growth in knowledge is very liable to detract from devotion--strange as it may appear that it should be so. We find our capacities so small, and our time for religious things so limited, that if attention be energetically directed in one channel it is apt to lead to dwarfing in other directions. The Christian is not to be all head and no heart, nor all heart and no head. The "spirit of a sound mind" directs us to cultivate all the fruits and graces which go to round out and complete a perfect character. The tendency of our day in all matters is in the opposite direction --to specialize. One workman does this part, another workman that part; so that now very few workmen understand a trade in full as in former times. The New Creature must resist this tendency, and must "make straight paths for his feet" accordingly; lest while cultivating one element of grace he falls into danger through the lack of the proper exercise of another God-given faculty or privilege.

The qualities of devotion are found in all mankind in a greater or less degree of development. These mental qualities are called veneration and spirituality, and they summon to their aid the organs of conscience, hope, tune, etc. If these be neglected, the result will be that interest in and love for the Truth will degenerate; so that instead of our hearts being led to the Lord with greater appreciation of his love, and with greater desire to please, honor and serve him, we will find the lower organs joining more in the controversy, taking the places of these higher ones, and the investigations will come to be more in the light of mental philosophies, into which will enter combativeness and destructiveness, ambition, strife and vainglory. The New

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Creation needs, therefore, not only to unite devotional services, prayer and praise, as a part of every meeting, but, we believe, needs in addition a special meeting of a devotional kind once a week, joined with which should be opportunities for testimony respecting Christian experiences--not according to the usual custom of going back from one to twenty years or more to tell about a first conversion, etc., but an up-to-date testimony, referring specifically to the condition of the heart at the moment, and during the week intervening since the last meeting of a similar kind. Such up-to-date testimonies prove helpful to those who hear; sometimes encouraging them by the rehearsal of favorable experiences, and sometimes comforting them by the narration of trials, difficulties, perplexities, etc., because they thus

discern that they are not alone in having trying experiences, and sometimes failures.

Thus all may learn more fully the meaning of the words of the Apostle, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (*1 Pet. 4:12*) They find that all who are the Lord's people have trials and difficulties, and each learns thus to sympathize with the other; and as the bond of sympathy grows the spirit of helpfulness grows, and the spirit of love--the holy Spirit. Such midweek meetings could advantageously have a topic suggested at the previous Sunday gathering; and this topic being before the minds of the class should inspire each to mark the passing experiences of life, and to make note of them, especially along the line of the particular topic for the week. Undoubtedly every Christian has an abundance of opportunities for noting the lessons and experiences of life along various lines every week; but the majority, not thinking, not noticing, permit these valuable lessons to flow past them unrecognized, and learn chiefly from the larger and more bitter experiences of life what they might better have learned by taking heed to the Lord's daily dealings with them through his providences.

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To illustrate: Suppose that the topic for the week had been, "The peace of God," from the text, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [guard in] your hearts." (*Phil. 4:7*) Each of the brotherhood should take notice during the week to what extent this scripture found fulfilment in his own case; and what things seemed to interrupt and prevent this ruling peace--bringing in disquiet, discontent. These experiences and the lessons drawn from them, told by those in the group more expert, and by those less expert (male and female) would not only bring to each other's attention their own experiences during the forepart of the week, but in the after part would add to their own experiences the lessons and experiences of others, thus broadening their sympathies and leading them more and more to discern the beauties of peace in contrast with strife--the blessing of the peace of God in the heart; and how it is possible to have this peace even when surrounded by turmoil and confusion or distressing conditions over which we have no control. The devotional feature of these meetings will add to their profit. He who realizes most keenly his own defects, and who is most earnestly striving to

grow in the graces of the Spirit, will be the most earnest in his devotions to the Lord and in his desires to please him and to partake more and more of his holy Spirit.\*

In these meetings, as in all others, it is apparent that the greatest good can be accomplished by preserving order--not to the extent of destroying the life and liberty of the meeting, but to the proper extent of best preserving its liberty, without anarchy or disorder, under wise, loving, gentle restraint. For instance: The character of the meeting should be understood in advance; and it would be the duty of the leader to hold it, with reasonable, loving laxity, to its specified and agreed-upon purpose. It should be understood that these are not general question-meetings, nor

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\*There are meetings of the character here described held in various localities, convenient to the little groups who constitute them.

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meetings for discussion, nor for preaching; that other meetings are provided, and that those who wish are welcome to attend them; but that these meetings have a limited scope. To keep the meeting thus properly in line, and to avoid private discussions or replies of one individual to another, the leader--being the one chosen to represent the whole--should be the only one to reply or to criticize others--and then only when *necessary*. It is his bounden duty to see that some testimonies are not so lengthy as to be tedious and hinder others from having opportunity, and that the meeting is not prolonged beyond its reasonable, agreed-upon, length. All these things devolving upon the leader, imply that he should be an Elder in the Church. A novice of insufficient experience would be apt, even with the best of intentions, to be either too lax or too rigid in applying principles to such an occasion; he might either spoil the meetings with too great leniency, or offend some worthy brother or sister by an unwisely expressed correction and application of proper rules. Moreover, the leader of such a meeting should be an Elder, or one competent to hold the position of an Elder in the Church, so that he might have a sufficiency of knowledge of the Word, and experience in grace and teaching ability to be able to give a word of encouragement or counsel or helpful advice *in response* to the various testimonies as presented. For "A word in due season, how good it is!"--how much more helpful, often, than a whole discourse under other conditions. ***Prov. 15:23***

Although in the foregoing we have indicated various interests

that should be provided for in the meetings, we have described particularly only the last--which, by the way, we consider one of the most important of all: the one meeting most helpful in spiritual growth. Let us now glance at what might be good arrangements respecting other meetings. These would differ according to the circumstances, conditions, and numbers constituting the gathering--the *Ecclesia*, the body. If the number were fifty or so, and if some of the number were particularly talented in public speaking and

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clear exposition of the Truth, we advise that one preaching service in the week might generally be advantageous--especially as the meeting to which friends, neighbors or others might be invited. But if in the Lord's providence none of the company are specially qualified for the presentation of a connected, logical, reasonable discourse on some Scriptural topic, we believe it would be better that this form of meeting be not attempted, or that the time be divided between several possessed of some ability to treat a Scriptural subject thus connectedly in public, the topic being the same and the brethren taking turns in leading off. Or such elders might alternate, one this Sunday, another next, and so on, or two this Sunday, two next, and so on. It would appear that the best interests of the whole Church are conserved by the bringing forward and granting opportunities to *all* the brethren *in proportion* to their ability--always estimating that humility and clearness in the Truth are absolutely the primary essentials--not flourish and oratory.

But the most important meeting in our judgment, the most helpful, next to the devotional meeting first described, is one in which the whole company of believers take part under sometimes one chairman, or leader, and sometimes another. For these meetings either a topic or a text of Scripture may be taken up for discussion, and the leader, looking over the subject in advance, should be intrusted with authority to divide it amongst leading brethren, if possible appointing them their parts a week in advance, that they may come to the meeting prepared to offer suggestions, each along the line of his own particular department of the topic. These principal participants in the examination of the subject (perhaps two, or perhaps a half dozen, or more, as the number of competent persons, the size of the congregation, and the weight of the topic might demand) will find the Berean Bibles with the references to *Studies* and *Reprints* and

the Topical Indexes, very helpful. Let them either present the matter in their own language, or find special extracts from *Studies, Reprints*, etc., right to the point, which

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they might read in connection with some appropriate remarks.

When the meeting has been opened by praise and prayer, the topics may be called for in their proper turn by the Chairman; and after each appointed speaker has presented his findings on his phase of the subject it should be open to the entire class for questions and expressions, either in harmony with, or in opposition to, what has already been presented by the leading speaker on the topic. If the class appear disinclined to discuss, and need drawing out, the Chairman should do this by skillful questions. The Chairman only should address the speakers or attempt to *answer* or harmonize their declarations; though, of course, he may call upon any speaker for a further explanation of his position or reasons. The speakers should all address their remarks to the Chairman and never to each other, and thus danger of personality and wrangling may be avoided. The Chairman should take no other part than as above in connection with the discussion, but should be able at the close to draw together the various findings, briefly summarizing the whole subject from his own standpoint, before closing the session with praise and thanksgiving.

Each point may be gone through with, and the entire subject be well ventilated and investigated, so that it will be clearly discerned by all. Or, in some of the more complex subjects, the Chairman might better sum up and give his views at the close of the examination of each topic. We know of no better kind of meeting than this for a thorough study of the divine Word. We consider it much more advantageous usually than regular preaching for the majority of gatherings of the Lord's people.

A meeting of this kind includes all the features covered by the suggestions numbered 1, 2 and 3, foregoing. As respects the first, those who are assigned the leading parts have full opportunity for the exercise of whatever abilities they possess. In regard to the second point, all have an opportunity

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of taking part, asking questions, offering suggestions,

etc., following each of the leading speakers on the several points. And as to the third point, it also is accommodated by such a meeting as this, because the topics for each week should preferably be decided on by the whole class, and not by the leader, and at least a week ahead of their discussion.

Any one in attendance at such a class should have the privilege of presenting his question or topic, and the spirit of love and sympathy and helpfulness and consideration pervading all should be such that all proper topics would be accorded a respectful hearing. And in the case of a special request for a topic supposed to be contrary to the general views of the congregation, yet fully within the lines of the foundation principles of the Gospel, the person desirous of having the subject discussed should be granted a reasonable time for the presentation, and should be the chief speaker for the occasion, his time possibly being limited, say, to thirty minutes or more or less, according to the importance of the topic and the interest of the class in it. Following his presentation the question should be open for discussion by the others of the class, the propounder of the question having a few minutes granted him subsequently for a brief answer to any objections brought forward by others, the Chairman having the final word in closing the meeting.

Another kind of meeting which has proven very advantageous in the study of the Word is known as a "Berean Circle for Bible study." These are not merely reading circles, but a systematic study of the divine plan in all its phases, taken up item by item. The several volumes of SCRIPTURE STUDIES, treating the subjects, as they do, in a connected and consecutive order, constitute (with the Bible) textbooks for these Bible studies; but in order to the profit of these classes it is necessary that the leader and the class should clearly differentiate between reading and studying. So far as the reading is concerned, all of the dear friends can

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as well, or perhaps better, do their reading by themselves at home. The object of these studies is to take up a certain portion of each topic as presented in one or more paragraphs, and to discuss it thoroughly between themselves, calling up collateral passages of Scripture, etc., and thoroughly ventilating the matter, and, if possible, getting each member of the class to give an expression of his thought respecting the particular matter under consideration, proceeding then to

the next topic. Some of these Berean Circles have taken a year or two for the study of a single volume of SCRIPTURE STUDIES--and that to great interest and profit.\*

**"Let Every Man Be Fully Persuaded in His Own Mind"**  
**--Rom. 14:5--**

All logical minds delight in reaching a *decision*, if possible, respecting every item of truth; and this the Apostle declares should be striven for by each member of the Church for himself--"in his own mind." It is a common mistake, however, to attempt to apply this personally good rule to a Church or to a class in Bible-study--to attempt to force all to *decide* on exactly the same conclusion respecting the meaning of the Lord's Word. It is proper that we should wish that all might "see eye to eye"; but it is not reasonable to expect it when we know that all are fallen from perfection, not only of body, but also of mind, and that these deflections are in various directions, as shown by the various shapes of head to be found in any gathering of people. Our various kinds and degrees of education are important factors also in assisting or hindering oneness of view.

But does not the Apostle intimate that we should all mind the same things?--and that we will be all taught of God so that we will all have the spirit of a sound mind?--and that we should expect to grow in grace and knowledge, building one another up in the most holy faith?

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\*There are meetings of this kind held in various localities, and on evenings most convenient for the friends attending each. They are led by various brethren-elders.

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Yes, all this is true; but it is not intimated that it will all be attained in one meeting. The Lord's people not only have differently developed heads, and differences in experience or education, but they are additionally of different ages as New Creatures--babes, youths, matured. It must not surprise us, therefore, if some are slower than others to comprehend and, hence, slower to be fully persuaded in their own minds respecting some of "the deep things of God." They must grasp the *fundamentals*--that all were sinners; that Christ Jesus, our Leader, *redeemed* us by his sacrifice finished at Calvary; that we are now in the School of Christ to be taught and fitted for the Kingdom and its service; and that none enter this School except upon full consecration

of their all to the Lord. These things all must see and fully and always assent to, else we could not recognize them as even baby brothers in the New Creation; but we have all need of patience with each other, and forbearance with each other's peculiarities--and behind these must be *love*, increasing every grace of the Spirit as we attain more and more nearly to its fulness.

This being so, all questions, all answers, all remarks--in meetings where several participate--should be *for* the entire company present (and not personal to any one or any number), and should, therefore, be *addressed to the Chairman*, who represents all--except when the Chairman may for convenience request the speaker to face and address the audience direct. Hence, too, after having expressed his own view, each is quietly to hear the views of others and not feel called to debate or restate his already stated position. Having used his opportunity, each is to trust to the Lord to guide and teach and show the truth, and should not insist that all must be *made to see* every item as he sees it, nor even as the majority view it. "On essentials, unity; on non-essentials, charity," is the proper rule to be followed.

We agree, however, that every item of truth is important, and that the smallest item of error is injurious, and that the Lord's people should pray and strive for unity in knowledge;

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but we must not hope to attain this by force. Unity of spirit on the first basic principles of truth is the important thing; and where this is maintained we may be confident that our Lord will *guide* all possessing it into all truth due and necessary to him. It is in this connection that the leaders of the Lord's flock need special wisdom and love and force of character and clearness in the Truth, so that at the conclusion of each meeting he who has led may be able to summarize the Scriptural findings and leave all minds under their blessed influence--expressing himself clearly, positively, lovingly--but never dogmatically, except upon the foundation principles.

### **Funeral Services**

On funeral occasions, when more or less of solemnity prevails amongst the friends in attendance, the cold and silent corpse, the wounded hearts and tearful eyes, the crape, etc., all help to impress the general lesson that death is not the

friend of mankind, but its enemy. Such occasions, therefore, are very favorable to the presentation of the Truth, and should be improved. Many now interested in Present Truth received their first clear impressions of it from a funeral discourse. Besides, many will attend and listen on such an occasion who would be too prejudiced, too fearful of opposing the wishes of their friends, to attend any of the regular ministries of the Truth. Accordingly, we advise that such opportunities be used as effectively as circumstances will permit. Where the deceased is a believer, and his family are in opposition, he should make a dying request that someone representing the Truth address the mourners on the occasion of his funeral. If the deceased be a child, and the parents are both in the Truth, there would be no question respecting the matter; but if only one of them were in sympathy and the other opposed, the responsibilities of the matter would rest with the father, though the wife would have a perfect right to present her view of the matter to her husband, and he should give her suggestions reasonable

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consideration--not, however, to the avoidance of his own responsibility to God as the head of the family.

In many of the little companies there are brethren quite qualified to make an interesting and profitable discourse suitable to such an occasion, without any suggestions from us or from any one; but in the majority of the little groups of consecrated ones special talent for such a discourse is lacking, and it is for this reason that we offer some suggestions respecting a profitable method of conducting such services. The brother conducting the service would preferably be one not close of kin to the deceased; and yet if no other than one of close kin were available, there could be no impropriety in a son or a husband or a father conducting the service. Unless quite conversant with public speaking, and familiar with the subject, his better plan might be to adapt to his particular use and the occasion the suggestions below given--writing them in manuscript form, from which he would read to the assembled friends. The writing should be in a very plain hand or by typewriter, and should be read over several times aloud before attempting to deliver it in public, so that the delivery might be as smooth and distinct and easily understood as possible. We would suggest further that if no brother be found competent for the occasion there would be no impropriety in such a reading by a sister--wearing some kind of a head covering.

We offer the following suggestions for the conduct of the service and for an address at the funeral of a brother in the Lord:

(1) Commence service by the singing of some appropriate hymn to a moderately slow tune--"Rock of Ages," "Nearer, my God, to Thee," "Lead, Kindly Light," "Many Sleep, but not Forever," or other.

(2) If any of the family be members of denominational churches, and desire their minister to be assigned some part in the service, this would be the most appropriate place to have him either read a few verses of Scripture on the resurrection,

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or offer a prayer, or both. If there be no such request, omit this (2), and pass from (1) to (3).

### (3) Suggestive Outline of Funeral Discourse

Dear Friends: We are met together to offer a tribute of respect to the memory of our friend and Brother, whose earthly remains we are about to commit to the tomb--dust to dust, ashes to ashes. Notwithstanding the fact that there is nothing more common in the world than dying, and its attendant processes of sickness and pain and sorrow, we, nevertheless, find it impossible, as intelligent beings, to get accustomed to such painful breakings of ties of friendship, of home, of love, of brotherhood. Salve the sore as we will it is still painful, even though, as the Apostle declares, we, as Christians, "sorrow not as others who have no hope." And what could be more appropriate here today than an examination of this good hope, set before us in the Gospel as the balm of Gilead, which is able to heal earth's sorrows as nothing else can do.

However, before considering the hopes set before us in the Gospel--the hope of a resurrection of the dead, the hope of a future life in a much more happy condition than the present one--we are not improperly met with the question, Why should we need such a hope? Why should we not rather be spared from death than be given a hope of resurrection from the dead? Why does God permit us to live but a few short days or years, and they full of trouble? and why are we then cut off, as the grass that withereth? and why are the heartstrings broken, and the home and family arrangements disordered by this great enemy of our race, death, which, during the past six thousand years has slain, it is estimated, over fifty thousand millions of our human race, our

brethren according to the flesh--children of Adam? To thoughtful minds there is no more interesting question than this conceivable.

Infidelity tells us that being merely the highest grade of animals we are born and live and die as does the brute

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beast, and that there is no future life provided for us. But while shuddering at such a thought, and unable to prove to the contrary by any experience of our own, we, as children of God have heard our Father's Word "speaking peace through Jesus Christ our Lord." The message of peace, which our dear Redeemer gives us as his followers, is not a denial of the facts of the case, not a declaration that there is no pain, no sorrow, and no death, but the reverse of this. He declares, "I am the resurrection and the life." He tells us again that "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth." Ah! this contradiction of the voice of infidelity is sweet to us! It brings hope, and hope brings peace in proportion as we learn to know and to trust the Father and also the Son, whose words we have heard, and who is carrying out the Father's gracious plans.

But if the Lord thus purposes a resurrection, and if the message of the resurrection brings peace and rest and hope, is it not still proper for us to inquire, Why should God first turn man to destruction and then later on, by a resurrection, say to mankind, in the language of the Psalmist (*Psa. 90:3*) "Return ye children of men"? Why not have kept them alive? Why not hinder sorrow, pain and death? We answer that the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, give us the explanation of present conditions: nothing else throws the slightest light upon the subject. Their testimony is that God originally created our race perfect, upright, in his own image and likeness, and that through disobedience our first parents fell from that noble estate--came under the penalty of sin, which is *death*--and that this penalty for sin which was pronounced against father Adam involves his entire race in a natural way. The momentum of sin increased with human generations, and sickness, pain and death were proportionately hastened.

We have all been mistaught that the wages of father Adam's sin, the curse, the penalty, was to be eternal torment; that we and all mankind inherited that indescribable penalty as the result of original sin; and that only such as

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become followers of Jesus, consecrated saints, would escape that eternal torment. But we find, dear friends, that God's Word supports no such unreasonable, unjust and unloving plan, and that the Scriptures quite clearly state, to the contrary, that the wages of sin is *death*, that eternal life is the *gift* of God, and that none can have this *gift* except those who become vitally united to God's dear Son. Hence, we see that since the wicked will not be granted eternal life they could not suffer eternal misery. The Scriptural declaration is very plain and very reasonable: "All the wicked will God *destroy*." ***Psa. 145:20***

Note how clearly this was stated to father Adam when he was put on trial, the very time and place above all others where we should look for a statement from our Heavenly Father respecting what would be the penalty of his righteous wrath. The statement is that the Lord made bountiful provision for our first parents in the various life-giving fruit-trees of Paradise, and merely tested them along the lines of obedience by prohibiting them from eating or even tasting or touching the fruit of one particular tree. It was this disobedience that brought exclusion from Paradise--exclusion from the trees (grove) of life, and, hence, gradually brought the dying conditions which still prevail, and that increasingly; for all are aware that the average of human life today is very much shorter than that of father Adam, who "*lived nine hundred and thirty years*."

The Lord's words as presented in Genesis are, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This "day," the Apostle Peter explains to us, was a day of the Lord, respecting which he says, "Be not ignorant, brethren, concerning this one thing, that *a day with the Lord is as a thousand years*"; and it was within this "day" that Adam died, and none of his posterity have ever lived out an entire thousand-year day. After Adam had transgressed, the Lord's words of condemnation show very clearly that he had no thought of tormenting his creatures, and that the curse extended no farther than to the destruction of the present life and the incidental tribulations connected with the dying condition.

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The Lord's expression of the curse to Adam was, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou art returned unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." ***Gen. 2:17; 3:19;***

## **2 Pet. 3:8**

It is certainly a great cause for rejoicing to realize that the terrible doctrine of eternal torment, with its infliction, not only upon our first parents, but upon all of their race, all of their children, is a false doctrine which came to us not from the Bible, but from the "Dark Ages." It is not in the Lord's declaration in any sense of the word. Hear the Apostle Paul's explanation of the matter, in full accord with the account in Genesis. He says (**Rom. 5:12**): "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by [as a result of] sin, and thus death passed upon all men, because all are sinners."

What could be more reasonable or sensible or more satisfactory than this divine explanation of death?--that it is the result of sin; that our father Adam, when on trial, lost all of his rights and privileges by disobedience and came under this curse of sickness and pain, sorrow and trouble and dying; and that we, without having any trial (it being useless to try us who have inherited sinful propensities and weaknesses) are sharers of this same divine sentence against sin; viz., *death*--and are as a race gradually going down in weakness, sickness, pain and trouble, into the tomb?

The explanation is satisfactory to our judgments, and it accounts for the fact that the infant of but an hour or a day or a week or a month shares in the pain and dying process as well as those who live a few years longer and participate personally in the transgression of the laws of righteousness. "I was born in sin, shapen in iniquity; in sin did my mother conceive me," is the Scriptural declaration on this point. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

But now, where is the hope? What help can there be for such a sad condition of things? What can be done for those who are now suffering, sorrowing and dying, the world over--and what can be done for the fifty thousand millions who have already gone down into the prison-house of

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death? We answer that they can certainly do nothing for themselves. Six thousand years of human endeavor to lift itself out of sickness, pain and death has proven, unquestionably, the utter baselessness of any hope of that kind.

Those who exercise hope must do so by looking unto the Lord, the God of our salvation. He has proposed a salvation, and the Bible is the revelation of the glorious plan of the ages which God is accomplishing step by step. The first step was that of redemption, the payment of the penalty that was against us--the death penalty. It was paid by our Lord

Jesus, who "died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." None of the condemned race could so much as redeem himself, and hence, surely--as the prophet pointed out--"None could give to God a ransom for his brother." But man's extremity became God's opportunity, and he sent Jesus, who gave for us his *unimpaired life*, his life that was "holy, harmless, separate from sinners," separate from the dying race. This life God accepts as the corresponding price and offset to the condemned life of father Adam; and thus it avails for all of us who are of Adam's children, because we were not condemned on *our own* account, but "by one man's disobedience"; hence, God can be just and can release us through the obedience and ransom of one--Jesus Christ, our Lord. Of him it is written that he "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." **1 Tim. 2:6**

Let us notice, dear friends, while passing, that our Lord Jesus did not redeem merely the Church; but, as the Scriptures clearly declare, "He is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins [the Church's sins], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (**1 John 2:2**) Here, thank God! we have the basis for the good hope which, as the Apostle suggests, enables us to sorrow not as others who have no hope, or who have but a flimsy hope, not based upon the positive declarations of God's Word.

But, says one, It is long since Jesus died. Why is it that sin and death are still permitted to reign and to swallow up the human family? We answer that God delayed the sending of

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the *sacrifice* for four thousand years, and still delays to send the blessing secured by it which must ultimately result--which blessing will be sure in God's "due time." The object in the delay, as explained by the Scriptures, is twofold:

First, to permit of the birth of a sufficient number of the human family properly to fill or populate the whole earth, when it shall be brought to the perfection of Eden, and as a whole be the Paradise of God restored on a larger and grander scale. These during the present time gain a certain amount of experience with sin and death, and learn a part of a very important lesson; viz., the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its undesirability. As soon as the Lord's time shall come, which we believe is not far distant, he will fulfil his promise and establish his Kingdom in the world, which will bind Satan, restrain all the powers and influences now working toward sin and death, and cause the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth. Thus Christ will bless the

human family and lift it up, step by step, toward the grand perfection in which it was created--in the image of God as represented in father Adam. This period of blessing is called the Millennial Kingdom, and it was for it that the Lord taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." It will require all of this thousand-year day of blessing and restitution to establish righteousness on a firm basis in the earth, and to test the world of mankind--to ascertain who of mankind, by obedience to Christ, may be accounted worthy of eternal life; and who under full knowledge, because of preference for sin, will be sentenced to the Second Death--"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." These blessings of the Millennial age apply, not only to the sixteen hundred millions now living on the earth, but also to the fifty thousand millions who have gone into the tomb, the great prison-house of death, from which our Lord Jesus will call them forth to those Kingdom opportunities; as he declares, "I have the keys of death and of the tomb." *Rev. 1:18*

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Secondly, dear friends, the Lord has delayed bringing in the general blessing and opportunities for the world, since our Lord redeemed us, in order that during this Gospel age he might gather out from amongst mankind, whom he has redeemed, a "little flock," an "elect" class, disciples, footstep followers, saints, holy ones. He is seeking thus "a peculiar people," "a Royal Priesthood," to be associated with himself in that Millennial Kingdom--not to have part with the world in restitution to earthly conditions, however perfect and grand and glorious, and to an Edenic home, however desirable, but to a still higher favor, to be like their Lord--spirit beings, partakers of the divine nature, far above angels, principalities and powers, and sharers of his glory. What a wonderful hope is this, and how inspiring to the hearts of everyone who has heard the invitation and who has become a disciple, a follower of Jesus, and is seeking to walk in his steps, as he has set us an example! What a blessing it will be to attain to such glory, honor and immortality as is offered to the Church in the First Resurrection! and what a grand privilege it will be to be associated with our Lord in dispensing the divine favors to the entire groaning creation, and bidding whosoever will, to Come to the water of life, and partake thereof freely! Yes; then, in the Kingdom, the Spirit and the Bride will say "Come" (for

there will be a Bride then, the marriage of the Lamb taking place in the end of this Gospel age), "and whosoever will, may take of the water of life freely." (*Rev. 22:17*) Are not these two good reasons why God delayed giving the blessing as soon as the redemption sacrifice at Calvary was finished? Surely we may rejoice in the delay, and in our consequent opportunity to be called and to make our calling and election sure.

Such, dear friends, is a brief statement of the glorious hopes which animated our dear brother whose memory we honor today. These hopes were as an anchor to his soul, which enabled him to stand firmly on the Lord's side and to cast in his lot with those who confess the Master, and who seek to take up their cross daily in following him. He had

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noble qualities, which doubtless many of you recognized; but we are not basing our hopes and joys on his account on the supposition that he was perfect; but on our knowledge that Christ Jesus was his perfect Redeemer, and that he trusted in him; and that whosoever trusts in him will never be put to shame, but will eventually be brought off conqueror. No doubt our dear brother had estimable qualities which we all might copy, but we do not need to take any earthly pattern. God himself has given us in his Son a glorious example, which we all, like our dear brother, are to endeavor to copy. We do well not to look at each other, but at the perfect copy, Jesus. We do well to overlook natural blemishes, which all mankind have through the fall, and to remember that all these are covered, for such as are the Lord's followers, by the robe of his righteousness, so that they are "accepted in the Beloved."

Finally, dear friends, let us learn a lesson of the brevity of present life; and that while God has great blessings in store for the world, we who have already heard of his grace and salvation in Jesus have special privileges, special opportunities, and correspondingly special responsibilities in connection with our knowledge. As the Apostle declares, "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." If we expect to be with the Lord and to share his glory and to be associates in his work in the future, we know that it will mean that our characters must be transformed, that our hearts must be renewed, that we must become not only pure in heart--that is, in intention, in will, in purpose, toward God, but, so far as possible, in word and in deed also--as nearly as the new mind may be able, under

various circumstances, to control these bodies, imperfect through the fall. We are to remember not only to abide in Jesus and under the robe of his merit, but also to cultivate in our hearts more and more the graces of his Spirit; and good resolutions are a great aid in this direction. Let us, therefore, resolve afresh under these solemn circumstances and with these solemn, yet joyful thoughts before our minds, that as for us we will henceforth endeavor to walk

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more closely in the Master's footsteps and to let the light of his truth and grace more and more shine out through our lives. Let us endeavor that the world shall be better and happier for each day that we live in it, and that so far as possible we will glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his. Amen.

(4) The discourse may be followed with prayer, which should be either by the speaker himself or by some competent brother in the Truth. An outside minister should never be called upon to pray *after* the discourse. He would be tolerably certain to pray to men and not to God, and to try to destroy in the minds of the audience whatever good effect had been produced by the discourse. In the prayer the Lord should be specially thanked for his grace in Christ Jesus, and his blessing should be asked upon all present, and particularly upon the bereaved ones in the family connection.

(5) The service may be appropriately closed with a verse or two of a suitable hymn, such as previously suggested.

(6) We advocate merely a few words of prayer at the grave-side after the lowering of the coffin.

### **Variations in the Discourse, to Suit Varying Circumstances**

The above discourse would, of course, be equally appropriate to a sister, by substituting the word "Sister" for "Brother"; but in the case of a worldly person or one not professing full consecration to the Lord, there would be need to make several amendments, such as will readily suggest themselves to any person competent to deliver such a discourse.

In the case of a child, whether of believing or unbelieving parentage, the discourse might be varied to suit; the deceased being referred to as "our young friend, cut down in

the bud of manhood or womanhood by the scythe of the grim reaper, death"; or, if a babe, the text might be taken, "Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears, for thy works shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they

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shall *come again from the land of the enemy.*" (*Jer. 31:15-17*) In such a case it would be appropriate to emphasize the fact, that none will dispute, that children of immature years could not commit sin unto death, and that thus the Scriptural declaration is verified, that it was by one man's disobedience, and not by universal disobedience, that sin entered into the world, with death as its result or penalty.

### **Tithes, Collections, Etc.**

So far as we are aware, none of the little companies of the Lord's people "of this way" (*Acts 22:4*) take up public collections. We have from the first advocated the avoidance of public collections, not because we believe that there would be anything sinful in the procedure, and not because there is anything in the Scriptures to condemn it, but because the money question has been made so prominent throughout Christendom by all denominations that, in our opinion, its total avoidance would be to the Lord's glory. People who all their lives have been dunned for money are rapidly coming to believe that a great deal of the preaching and teaching, etc., is done for revenue--if not for revenue only or chiefly, at least for revenue in a considerable measure.

Not only do the Scriptures intimate that the majority of the Lord's faithful will be of the poor of this world, but our experience attests the same--that there are not many rich, not many great, not many noble, but "chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith." Some of these, we are sure, coming into meetings where Present Truth is advocated, feel a sense of relief in the absence of the worldly, money-grabbing spirit; and in some instances, at least, this feature has commended the Truth to them. Those whose eyes become opened to the light of Present Truth become possessed of a zeal and an energy in the service of the Truth, and so great a desire to let their light shine to the glory of the Father and of the Son, that many lukewarm Christians are inclined to say, What is the motive? What is the object? How will it pay you, or what will it advantage you, that you should

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seek to interest me--that you should loan me books or spend your time in endeavoring to draw my attention to these Bible themes, as you see them? Coming to the meetings and finding that even the usual collections and money-duns are absent, these inquirers are the more thoroughly convinced that it has been *Love*, for the Lord and for his Truth and for his flock, that has inspired the efforts made to bring the Truth within their reach. Even though somewhat inclined to be prejudiced against the Truth, these evidences of sincerity and of a Godlike spirit of benevolence and generosity commend themselves as being the emanations of the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love.

But while advocating this principle, and commending it most heartily to all of the Lord's people everywhere, it is our duty, on the other hand, to call attention to the fact that however ignoble and selfish and miserly any might be at the time of his acceptance of the Lord and consecration to him, he could not remain identified with "the Church whose names are written in heaven," and with the Lord, the Head of that Church, without to a considerable degree gaining a victory over his selfish disposition. We well know that selfishness and stinginess are foreign to the Spirit of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus and must, therefore, be foreign to all who will be ultimately recognized as children of their Father--all of whom must have the family likeness, the chief characteristic of which is love--benevolence. If, by heredity or unfortunate environment and education, the spirit of meanness has become largely developed in the mortal flesh of any who have been accepted as probationary members of the New Creation, he will find a warfare shortly along this very line. As the Apostle intimates, the mind of the flesh will war against the mind of the spirit, the New Creature, and the mind of the New Creature must gain the victory if it would ultimately attain the coveted position amongst the overcomers. Selfishness and meanness are to be overcome; godliness and liberality and generosity, both of heart and deed, are to be diligently cultivated. Such may, even to their dying day, be obliged to

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struggle with the flesh, but there must be no question about the attitude of the mind, the new will; and those who know them best will surely perceive in their conduct evidences of the victory of the new mind over the fleshly and selfish

mind.

Our thought, therefore, in connection with the avoidance of collections and all financial questions in the assemblies of the Church is not to discourage giving. So far as our observation goes, those who give to the Lord most abundantly, most heartily, most cheerfully, are the most blessed of him in spiritual matters. It will be observed that we are not limiting this expression, "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," to monetary gifts; but are including in it all the gifts and sacrifices which the Lord's people are privileged to present on the altar of sacrifice, and which God informs us he is pleased to accept through the merit of our dear Redeemer. Indeed, wherever and whenever the question has been presented to us--Should I best pursue such a course of business, and thus be enabled to give largely of the product of my hands and brain for the spread of the truth? or should I better be content with less ability and service in this direction, by taking another course which would enable me to give more of my time and personality to the interests of the Truth and its promulgation amongst friends and neighbors, etc.?--our answer universally has been that we should consider that our time and influence given to the service of the Truth are still more appreciated in the Lord's sight than gifts of money.

Hence, if one found himself possessed of a talent for presenting the Truth, and also a talent for legitimate money-making, our advice would be that he should preferably exercise the money-getting talent to a limited degree only, so as to give as much time and attention and energy as possible to the exercise of his still higher talent of ministering the Truth. And this would apply in considerable degree also to the ministries of the Truth through the printed page, colporteur, etc.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive," is an axiom

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which all of the Lord's people who have reached any good degree of development in divine likeness can well appreciate. God is the great Giver--he is continually giving. The whole creation in its every department is the result of this benevolence on God's part. He gave his Only Begotten Son, with the life, the pleasures, the blessings of intimate association with him. He has given to the angelic sons of God innumerable blessings. He bestowed upon our race, in the person of father Adam, the blessing of life, and the teeming blessings of this world, which, even in their present fallen

and degraded condition, are wonderful. He not only provided us with our senses, by which we might notice pleasant odors, pleasant flavors, beautiful colors and combinations of them, etc., etc., but he has provided in nature wonderfully, bountifully, for the gratification of these tastes: in fruit and flower, gem and starry sky, he has been lavish in bestowing his bounties upon natural man.

And when we contemplate the blessings God has in reservation for the "little flock" of the New Creation, as revealed to us in his Word, we acknowledge that they are exceedingly abundant, more than we could have asked or thought. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Benevolence, therefore, or giving, assisting, blessing others, is a part of the Godlikeness. What wonder, then, that we should appreciate giving as being superior to receiving?

In proportion as we learn to appreciate the spiritual things, and in proportion as we have fellowship with the Lord, and become partakers of his Spirit, and in proportion as that spirit of love and bounty and generosity is shed abroad in our hearts--in the same proportion we find ourselves delighting to do good unto all men--especially to the household of faith. Love in us, as in our Heavenly Father, seeketh not merely her own interest and welfare, but is continually on the alert to notice how blessings may be conferred also upon others; how the lives of others may be

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brightened and cheered; how they may be comforted in their sorrows and assisted in their necessities. Indeed, it is in proportion as this new mind is shed abroad in us, in proportion as we become transformed by the renewing of our minds, and changed from glory to glory, that we come to appreciate the great work that God has mapped out for us in the future--the Godlike work of blessing all the families of the earth, of being his agents in the distribution of the heavenly bounties which he has provided for all who will come into accord with him. The New Creatures, therefore, find that in proportion as they grow in grace they come rather, while still appreciating the personal glories promised, to think more particularly of the privileges which will be theirs through joint-heirship with their Lord, of ministering restitution and all of its multitudinous blessings to

the poor groaning creation--lifting as many of them as will up to the human perfection from which all fell in Adam.

This spirit of love, this desire to give, this desire to assist others, as it grows in our hearts in the present time, leads us not only to generosity of thought respecting others, but also to generosity of conduct--to willingness to sacrifice our time and influence for the sake of others; so that they may be blessed with the light of Present Truth, as we have been blessed by it. And this same spirit leads us, if we have not the talent for teaching or expounding, to seek to use our talent of time and opportunity for distribution of tracts, etc., accompanied by a word in season, however brief. And it leads us further, if we have also the money talent, to use it in the Lord's service, for the promulgation of the Gospel. Indeed, we believe that the Lord appreciates today, as much as ever he did, the spirit which was in the poor widow who cast two mites into the Lord's treasury, and whose self-denial, as exhibited in this small offering, our Lord declared placed her, in his estimation, and, therefore, in the estimation of the Father, as a giver on the very highest plane--after his own heart: "She of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." (*Luke 21:4*) In her way, therefore, she was doing for the general cause much along the same line

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that our Lord himself was doing. He was giving, not merely a living, but laying down life itself, daily, hourly, in the service of others; and finally at Calvary, in the fullest and completest sense, he finished the work.

We have been inclined to wonder why our Lord did not in some degree caution the poor widow that she had done more than her duty; that if she had only two mites she should have kept them both, or at least one of them, for her own necessities. Had it been anyone else than the Lord or one of the apostles who noted this transaction and commended it, without expressing a word of caution in connection with it, we would have felt perfectly free to have added that word of caution. But, on the whole, we presume that very few require caution along the line of self-preservation. Very few require to be cautioned against giving all of their living. There may be some; but we are sure it would be true with those few, as with the poor widow, that the Lord would make up to them in some manner for what we would be inclined to consider their over-generosity. We are quite confident that it is better they should err on that side of the question than that they should err on the opposite side.

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth [if the increase come not in natural things it surely will come in spiritual matters], and there is that withholdeth more than is meet [those that are overcareful, overcautious, penurious, overly conservative], but it tendeth to poverty [sometimes to financial poverty, but always, surely, to spiritual poverty]."

**Prov. 11:24**

Since the Lord has placed no law upon his people in respect to their benevolences, but has left the matter open to those who have consecrated *their all* to him, it is evident that he intends that their consecration shall be measured by their subsequent conduct--their sacrifices, their self-denials. The question, then, properly comes before each of us individually, To what extent should I give of my time, of my influence, of my money, to the Lord? We answer that if the inquiry comes from one who has made a *full* consecration of

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himself, and has become a New Creature, there can be but one answer; viz., that he has nothing *to give*--he has already *given* all that he has to the Lord. If he kept anything back then he did not make a full consecration, and he may be sure that he has not been fully accepted of the Lord.

But, admitting that we have given all to the Lord, how shall we determine the divine will respecting our carrying out of this gift? We answer that each one is to consider himself as appointed by the Lord the *steward* of his own time, influence, money, etc., and each is to seek to use these talents to the best of his ability, to the Master's glory. And since he is granted the privilege of the throne of grace, this would mean that if he is in doubt respecting the use of these talents, he may ask of God who giveth his wisdom liberally to him that asketh, and upbraideth not. Guided by this wisdom from above, in proportion as his love and zeal for the Lord grow day by day through a knowledge of the Truth and the attainment of its spirit, he will find himself giving more and more of time, more and more of his influence, and more and more of such means as are at his command, for the service of the Truth--and planning, additionally, how he may curtail the various personal and family obligations so as to be able to increase his offerings and sacrifices.

As is well known, God instituted with the Jews a tithing system, under which the one-tenth of all the increase of wealth, whether of grain or vegetables or herds or flocks or money, was set apart for sacred uses as the Lord's, to be used only for sacred purposes. But this was an arrangement

only for "the house of *servants*." The Lord has left "the house of *sons*" without any such law or regulation. Does this imply that he expects less from the sons than from the servants? Nay, verily; the son who would be less interested in the father's business than the servant would be unworthy his place as a son, and would certainly lose it; another would be found possessed of more of the true spirit of sonship. In the case of the house of sons, not merely *one-tenth* but *everything* is consecrated, sacrificed, and *all* is to be used

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as opportunity indicates to us as possible services to the Lord and to his cause. Thus we are to proceed continually, laying down our lives, our all, in the service of the Truth.\*

The Apostle draws this lesson to our attention in his letter to the *Philippians (4:17)*: assuring them that their voluntary gifts were both useful and appreciated, he adds--"Not because I desired a gift; but I desired fruit that might abound to your account." He knew that so surely as they had been begotten of the holy Spirit it would begin to bring forth a fruitage of good works and benevolences; and that the more these benevolences were in evidence, the more he had demonstration of their spiritual growth, which was the thing he really desired. And so it is today. The Lord informs us that all the gold and silver are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. He really needs none of our efforts, none of our money; but because it will be to our advantage, and assist in our development, he permits his work to be in such a condition that it will have need of all the efforts of those who are truly his, and of all the means which they will be prompted to use in their efforts to glorify him.

How gracious is this arrangement! What blessings these privileges have already brought to the Lord's dear people! We doubt not that they will continue with us to the end of our racecourse--to the intent that we may all have the blessed privilege of rendering our talents, whatever they may be in the Lord's service. So then we urge that, after the example of the poor widow and her two mites, there are none so poor that they cannot show the Lord their desire of heart. Our Lord's estimate seems to be, as expressed in one place, that he that is faithful in a few things will be faithful in larger and greater opportunities; and to such it is that he will be inclined to give, not only the larger opportunities of the future, but the larger opportunities also of the present time.

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\*The obligations of the consecrated to their families, and how this has to do with the devotion of their *all* to the Lord, is considered in Chap. xiii.

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Our advice is that the money question be left, so far as possible (and that we believe is *altogether*), out of consideration in the general meetings of the Church. We advise that the Spirit of the Lord be cultivated, and that as it richly dwells within, each will be anxious to do his share toward meeting, not only the current expenses of the Church--rent, perhaps, or other expenses--but he will be anxious also to do what he can in respect to the extending of the light which is blessing his own soul, to others who yet sit in darkness. We advise along this same line that money be not solicited from outsiders, though we know of no reason why money tendered by outsiders should ever be refused. It would, at least, be an indication of their sympathy, and no doubt would bring them eventually, either in the present or in the coming life, some recognition and reward from him who declared that even a cup of cold water given to one of his disciples in his name would by no means fail of its reward. *Matt. 10:42; Mark 9:41*

\* \* \*

"E'en through harsh noises of our day,  
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;  
Through clouds of doubts and creeds of fear,  
A light is breaking calm and clear.

"They needs must grope who cannot see,  
The blade before the ear must be;  
As ye are feeling I have felt,  
And where ye dwell I too have dwelt."

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If I Could Know

"If I could only surely know  
That all these things that tire me so  
Were noticed by my Lord--  
The pang that cuts me like a knife,  
The noise, the weariness, the strife,

And all the nameless ills of life--  
What peace it would afford!

"I wonder if he really shares  
In all these little human cares,  
This mighty King of kings!  
If he who guides through boundless space  
Each radiant planet in its place,  
Can have the condescending grace  
To mind these petty things.

"It seems to me, if sure of this,  
Blent with each ill would come such bliss  
That I might covet pain,  
And deem whatever brought to me  
The blessed thought of Deity  
And sense of Christ's sweet sympathy  
Not loss, but richest gain.

"Dear Lord, my heart shall no more doubt  
That thou dost compass me about  
With sympathy divine.  
The Love for me once crucified  
Is not the love to leave my side,  
But waiteth ever to divide  
Each smallest care of mine."