

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

For

PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS

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1899

**WALTER CASH, PUBLISHER,
MAECELINE, MO.
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PREFACE

In presenting this work to the household of faith my desire I that it may be compared with God's word and that only such parts of it as are in harmony with Divine Authority may be received.

But I would ask for it a careful reading and that it may be judged impartially. I have written it with a deep desire to benefit the churches by me to be scriptural, and which, if they are, ought not to be neglected, and cannot be neglected by God's people with His approbation.

My first intention was to treat only of the deacon and his work, but at the request of brethren the work has been extended to embrace suggestions upon practice generally, and I hope that it may be helpful to the household of faith.

There is no authority in the New Testament for but two classes of church officers—Elders and Deacons.

It is admitted by all scholars that the term "Bishop" and "Presbyter," or "Elder" and "Pastor" are one and interchangeable and refer to but one class of church officers and all of equal rank.

The Apostles, it is true, rank above bishops or elders, but they have no successors in office. The Lord Jesus called them in person, and one of the qualifications of an apostle was to have actually seen Jesus in the body after the resurrection. They were inspired to write and teach with infallibility, and so long as their writings are received, all who claim to succeed them must be accounted liars (Rev. 2:2).

The apostles are called "Elders," (1 Pet. 5:1; 2 John 1:1), and the term is not used either with the same signification as in the Old Testament references to "Elders" or rulers, for the organized body, of whatever character, above the church. The apostles did not make laws, but taught what Christ commanded (Matt. 28:20). Each gospel church is the highest ecclesiastical authority on earth, but has no power to make laws.

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The elders, bishops, or pastors, are to take the oversight of the flock, (1 Pet. 5:2), not, however, "as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Pet. 5:3).

Deacons are to have charge of the funds of the church, (Acts 4:34, 35; 6:2,3), looking after the poor and any who may need help, and to act as "servants" of the church in any matter where they can act efficiently. That the Deaconship is a fixed office is indicated by 1 Tim. 3:13.

The apostles as establishing officers of the church embodied within themselves all offices, and at first took the labors of both elders and deacons. This they had the right to do as a part of the work committed to them to set in order.

Soon, however, a division of work was made, (Acts 6), and the work as then classed (Acts 6:3,4) should now be observed in our churches. An elder should not attempt to take himself the right of an apostle and do the work of the deacon in connection with his own work, but should take up the work assigned him in the church by the apostles of our Lord, and insist, as it becomes his duty to do, and then instruct both the church and the deacons in the work required at their hands.

As it becomes his duty to deliver the whole counsel of God, he should firmly maintain all things as given in the New Testament pattern. He cannot do this and let the church do away with the office of deacon.

The Roman Catholic church teaches the intolerable heresy that the church, as represented by the Pope, is infallible and can make changes of any kind, such as to substitute sprinkling for immersion in baptism, etc. but it will never do for Primitive Baptist to assume such power, or fall into such practices. If we are to live up to our claim of being the church of Christ, the practices as well as the doctrines of the Bible must be lived up to. *We should have pastors and deacons in fact as well as form.* It may be said of too many churches that they have a pastor in name and deacons in name, but they have neither pastoral services nor the work of the deaconship among them.

Can we expect God's blessing while we neglect His word and have only a crippled and deformed organization instead of our body designed by the Great Head of the church?

I think not. God's word teaches that He will not approve of our course when we neglect or change His statutes.

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But the pastor may say that he is doing the best he can under the circumstances; that he must provide for himself and family if the brethren do not do so, and that he cannot give as much time to the ministry as the field demands. Here is exactly the difficulty to a great degree. *A church that ignores the deaconship cannot have proper pastoral service.* Lack in either services works against the other and between the shortcomings of the two the poor church barely lives, and that at a dying rate.

It is not that the pastor can save the church, nor that a good deacon can make a church a live one; but it is this: *The Lord will not bless the church that is indifferent to His word, and either adds to it or takes therefrom.*

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."—Rev. 22:18,19.

Primitive Baptist, in view of all this, let me appeal to you to consider this matter prayerfully, searching God's word to learn what is the duty of a pastor of a church, the duty of a deacon, and God's plan for providing for the pastor, and for the poor of the church, and for the watchcare over all the members.

THE MINISTRY

As before stated, the terms "Bishop" and "Presbyter," or "Elder" and "Pastor," designate but one class of officers in the church, and no one term indicates a pre-eminence over the other as to rank or degree.

An "Elder" is one whom the church judges to have received a special gift which enables him to preach the word to the edification of the church, and who, being approved in walk and conversation, is set apart to the gospel ministry by the solemn form of imposition of hands and prayer by a presbytery, which is called ordination. He may or may not have special charge of particular churches.

A "Presbyter" is an elder who, by virtue of his office, participates in the ordination of an elder or deacon, or work of like nature.

The term "Bishop" is not in much use among Primitive Baptist, probably because of the almost universal misuse of it by most religious denominations, but in meaning would about equal the term "pastor" in common usage, which is an elder who has active oversight of a church. He is not more or less an elder, but his relations to the church are changed.

In the church various gifts are recognized. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."—Eph. 4:11,12.

The ends for which any gift is bestowed are here set forth and churches and presbyteries should not lose sight of these things. One may claim to have a "call" to preach, but if his exercise does not tend to "perfecting" the saints, and is not edifying, to ordain him an elder would be a mistake that might plague the church for many years. For when one holds the position of elder, if the honor that attaches to the office is withheld, trouble is provoked.

Many have gifts to benefit the church and would be profitable to it if not put into the ministry. Some can offer prayer in public service; some relate in an edifying manner the Lord's dealings with them; others can give timely and profitable exhortations, and each and all who can be so drawn out ought to be encouraged that the church may have the benefit of all the gifts that have been given

to it. "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a

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tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."—1 Cor. 14:26.

But before a brother comes under the imposition of hands let the brethren be persuaded that he has, indeed, been called of God to the work of the ministry, for God send ministers (Matt. 9:38). The laying on of the hands does not confer any gift or power now, as the apostolic power ceased with the apostles, and it is now only a solemn recognition of God's gift, and conferring authority to do certain things in the name of the church (Tit. 1:5).

After ordination a brother is recognized in all the churches as having authority to baptize persons who may have been received by the church, to administer the Lord's Supper, and he may be called to pastoral care of churches.

It is practical business to preach the Word. When the work of the apostles' was divided and a portion assigned the deacons (Acts 6:3), the part left for the elders was to give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4; 1 Tim. 4:15). That they should give themselves continually to prayer indicates with what weight they should feel the responsibility resting upon them, and that their faith in God to still lead and care for His people should be in lively exercise.

The ministry of the Word requires work in and out of the pulpit. Speaking to the multitude upon the grand theme of redeeming love is the ministry of the Word, but no more so than comforting the poor, trembling, inquiring child of God by speaking to him privately of the work of the Spirit in his soul.

Paul wrote to Timothy that he was to "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." 1 Tim. 4:15. He who is to serve the churches must follow this injunction. His service cannot be what it should be if his mind and efforts are concentrated on worldly work and time objects. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.-- 2 Tim. 2:4. If the churches are to be life to be benefited to any great degree, the minister must devote his life to preaching the gospel.

One of the reasons for this fact is that if he is obliged to give his attention to other things his mind will

not be fruitful in spiritual things, but will be burdened and cold, and his sermons and conversation cannot be as

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helpful to the church as through he gave himself to the contemplation of divine things. Another reason for giving wholly to the work is that he may inform himself in what has been written for our learning.

Paul said to Timothy that he must "give attendance to reading." No minister can tell what is in God's word without having read or heard of its contents.

Some ministers learn a few things and then seem to stop reading; at any rate, when you have heard them preach a few times you have heard all that they have to say, and they use the same arguments and illustrations again and again. If they could take time, and would use it, to study God's word, they would have an inexhaustible fountain of thought and expressions from which to draw. "to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—2 Tim. 2:15.

No man can preach acceptably and profitably to the hearers without study. It is not to be understood that he must go to college and study theology, as men teach it, but he must study God's word that he may know the will of God concerning His people, and that he may conduct himself properly in the house of God.

One of the ablest preachers in Missouri, a few years ago, was a brother who learned to read after he was married. He made the sacred word a study, however, and that without helps, and became a strong defender of the doctrine of grace and was held in high regard by all of the churches as an able minister of the New Testament. While it will widen the mind to read extensively with discrimination, no writings should supplant the Holy Scriptures—these must be read by the minister who desires to benefit his hearers and glorify God by his service. It is refreshing to listen to the minister whose heart is full of the Spirit and whose mind is stored with information got from the Bible.

The things contained in the scriptures are useful and necessary to the welfare and happiness of the children of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Tim. 2:16.

It should not trouble his mind whether he will be approved of men--God's approbation is what is to be desired.

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Early in my ministry this thought was impressed upon my mind. An old, gray haired brother wanted me to abandon a position that I had taken as to the practice of the church. He said that he was doing just like his father before him had done, and I did not doubt his word. I was young, and knowing that any change in the church practice is generally regarded as a movement to leave the old paths, I knew with this old brother and others I was likely to be looked upon as bringing in new things, and this would make trouble. I could get their favor by doing according to their ideas of right.

Which do I do? Would I obey God or man?

It was my first hard struggle of this kind, and for that reason made such an impression that it can never be forgotten.

I decided to obey God, and have been thankful ever since that an approving conscience in that case given me courage to be in a great degree unmoved by the opinions of those who have abandoned the apostolic practice.

Brethren in the ministry, we must give an account to God of our stewardship, and not to men. So what good reason can we give for not always contending for those doctrines and practices which have the mark of apostolic authority?

Many a minister has allowed his churches to practice, and he himself has practiced, things that he was persuaded in his own mind were wrong, and could not be called apostolic. Yet he could not bring himself to bear the disapproval of men by turning to the right. It would be a shame for him to confess it, and yet it was true that in his actions he cared more for the approval of men than for the approval of God.

It is often the case when brethren want to oppose a practice advocated by a minister they report that he is unsound in doctrine. Brethren have tried this course toward me, and I feel it is possible this will be one of the weapons used against this work -- my humble effort to call the attention of brethren to apostolic practice. If so, I hope brethren will be as fair toward me as I feel toward them, and will state my error plainly and try to recover me from it.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."--2 Tim. 3:14. One of the trials of my early ministry was the fact that the churches having had services of a worthy and able minister in doctrine, were well

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established. I did not feel that I could instruct them in this direction, for I realized they had the advantage of me in years. But I saw where in practice there were many things lacking. I soon found, however, that they did not like to hear these things, as their tastes had been educated rather to relish the sweets of the covenant of redemption than to enjoy hearing all things *commanded them to do*. But I knew the Savior's instruction, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." - - Matt. 28:20.

A very humble and good brother said to me in regard to my manner of preaching, "Brother Cash, you can see by the effect your preaching has what is best to preach. When you preach about what the *Saviour did for sinners*, the brethren all have their heads up and are full of rejoicing. But when you get to talking about what we ought to do, they sit with their heads down and the meeting is a cold one."

I had weighted this brother's argument many times, for I had observed the effects as stated, and the inclination was strong to preach what was best received.

What preacher does not have a strong inclination to preach to please his hearers, especially his brethren? But it is a dangerous and delusive influence and always leads away from the truth and the right.

It was not a pleasant thing to tell David of his sin; but it was right to do it. When the Spirit testified by John to the churches, how nice it would have been if they might all have been commended. But when there is imperfection, there should be reproof.

I said to the brother, who was endeavoring to show me the better way, "My brother, do you believe I have preached anything that God's word does not teach?"

"O no, Brother Cash," he said, "but I was only indicating to you what kind of preaching the brethren liked best, and which seemed to me to do the most good."

"But," said I, "if I preach the truth, and the brethren do not receive it gladly, who is to blame? Does it not rather indicate that there is something wrong with them? And if so, would I not be doing wrong to encourage them in

their course by passing it by in silence, as though they were following Christ?"

I think it is a dangerous thing for a preacher to pass anything in silence, simply because brethren do not want to hear reproof. It does not please our ears to hear wherein

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we are wrong. But to this end the minister's labors should be directed, to supply the things that are lacking, and set in order the things of the Lord's house. (Tit. 1:5).

But it is a common thing for ministers, when discussing church affairs, to admit that there are many things not as they should be. Yet when they get up to preach they utter no word of reproof or rebuke to the church, but direct their whole discourse to proving that the Arminian theory is false, which every Primitive Baptist present knew before a ward was spoken. Now, if we are the Lord's ministers, it is traitorous to the cause we represent to say to the church by our actions that it is immaterial whether the Lord's commands are obeyed or not. We do not have to say, "brethren, I myself, would like to see you do this or that," but we should say, "These are the things commanded by our Lord, and He has sent me to Cry aloud and spare not" (Isa. 58:1).

Why should a minister assume the responsibility of letting things go wrong inside the house of the Lord when He has given special charge that we should show Israel her sins? It seems evident to my mind that we spend too much of our time on Arminians as compared with the time given to putting the house of the Lord in order.

If a shepherd should get so interested in keeping the wolves away from the flock as to forget to feed them and let them starve, he might be accounted a very valiant shepherd, but certainly not a very wise one.

To be prudent he would provide plenty of food, and administer promptly to the sick lest disease spread. If hunger and disease devastate the flock what good will defense do?

May it not be the case that lack of a spiritual ministry, and that errors and sinful practices being unchecked, have been the cause of the dispersion of many of our flocks?

If a church is wrong in practices, the pastor is to blame for it, for it is his duty to lead the flock. I do not mean to say that the pastor is altogether to blame for the conduct of the members as individuals, but here have

reference to the wrong practices of the church as a body. If the pastor does his duty he will not only instruct the church in apostolic practices, but he will insist that these practices must be followed.

Many ministers shrink from pressing such matters on a

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church, fearing they will seem to be assuming too much authority and lording it over God's heritage. But a little reflection will make it plain that it is the business of the servant to do his Master's will, and that so long as he confines himself to the commandments of His Master he assumes no responsibility whatever.

But if he sees the will of his Master neglected and spurned, and does not resent such action, and cry against it, he himself, has in fact, rebelled against his Master and is no longer entitled to claim that he is faithful to God who called him.

The last words of the Master to those who were to go forth to preach the gospel were, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:20).

Now no one should feel at liberty to teach that this means, teaching them to "believe" all things, and then that believers may stop short of doing the things commanded, for "faith without works is dead, being alone." Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15).

Jesus likens the man who hears his words, but does not do them, to a foolish man who builds his house on the sand; but he said, "whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." (Matt. 7:24). "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21).

These, and many other scriptures, put much stress upon actual obedience to the commands of our Lord. Can any minister remain silent while the church is indifferent to the practical duties which the inspired word lays upon the church and its members?

Not only should he preach to the church practical godliness, but the congregation that attend the services should know what we believe in regard to the requirements of churches and members. This would, in a great measure, be an answer to the criticisms of the world against our churches.

Several years ago my attention was called to this by a brother asking me why it was that all our ministers preached doctrinal discourses on Sunday, and if they spoke on practical things at all they did so on Saturdays?

Said he, "The world does not know that we think there is anything to be considered at all but doctrine."

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I felt the reproof of his words and on that Sunday preached before a mixed congregation the commandments with greater weight of responsibility than I had felt before, for I realized that there might be some in the congregation whose hearts had been opened to hear the truth, but whose minds might have been prejudiced against us by designing persons who represent all who believe in grace alone for salvation as being careless of gospel obligations, if not actually immoral.

Then there are many members in the churches who hear so much more doctrine than exhortation that they do not at all take kindly to reproof and rebuke, though very careless of their walk and conversation, and their obligations as members of the church of Christ.

If they heard the word of God rightly divided they would get a greater proportion of instruction in righteousness. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"--Tim. 3:16,17.

The scriptures are all profitable for doctrine. Certainly no minister can pretend to preach the gospel without preaching doctrine. Our churches would not tolerate such a preacher. The Arminians would endeavor to bring all professors together by refusing, as they say, to preach doctrine, which divides people, and simply preach Christ. But Primitive Baptist know that Christ can not be preached without preaching the doctrines of the Bible, for doctrines are simply the facts. One might hear an Arminian preach without being able to decide to which denomination he belonged. But no one who knew the doctrine of grace ever heard a Old Line Baptist without recognizing the glorious doctrine of salvation by grace, be it told ever so humbly.

None of our preachers would preach for a church which denied or would not receive the doctrines of predestination, election, etc. It is a safe principle to lay down that if one is to do anything right, and for a

proper purpose, the doctrine of the Bible must be accepted. In this particular our people stand apart from all the world.

But because we give doctrine its proper importance, can we be excused from finding in the same scriptures which teach with reproof, correction and instruction in

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righteousness with which they so abound? Surely not! The church must suffer the word of exhortation. In apostolic times there was a need that they exhort one another **daily,** and certainly there is no less need of exhortation now. Those who neglect to exhort to every good work, and to faithfulness in the house of God, cannot claim to declare the whole counsel of God, though what they preach may be the truth, and they may be very bold in defense of the doctrine of grace.

I stood by the bedside of a loved and honored soldier of the cross in his last sickness, and when he was in view of the end of his life. He said to me, "what I have preached I believe to be the truth. If my life was to live over again I would preach the same doctrine, for in it is the only salvation for a sinner. But some things I have neglected. I have never told the churches their duty to the ministry, and this I regret." He said he realized that had he done this it would be easier for the younger men in the ministry.

What he said caused me to consider my own course. How would I finish up my life? This dear old brother was dying in triumph, and during the greater part of his ministry had borne all the burden of his work himself. His had been a life of self-sacrifice and he stood firm, a powerful advocate of his Master's cause. It may be thought that he had a right to do this, and that all the more honor was his because of his self-sacrifice. Paul said, "forgive me this wrong." The wrong that he had been guilty of was not asking the Corinthians to minister to his necessities, for instead of doing so he had taken help of others to do this church service (2 Cor. 12:13).

So while I considered the matter I concluded that it would be better to teach the members of the church of Christ to "Observe all things."

Not only should the duty of members to the ministry be taught, but the walk and conversation that becomes all who have named the name of Christ should be clearly pointed out, not once only, but continually, and every

transgression should be reproved, and if need be sharply. Not always should this be done from the pulpit, for the pastor of the church should labor personally and privately with the members of his charge to forsake every evil way and to be found diligently inquiring the way and the walking in it (see Jer. 6:16).

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While the influence of a good minister in the pulpit is great, it can be greatly increased by personal contact with the members of the church. To wield the greatest influence he must visit the members at their homes and learn their surroundings. In the hardships of their lives they should have his kindly affection, and be made to feel that they can confide any and all troubles to him and find sympathy. He should be worthy of such esteem from all the members of his churches as to be an intimate friend with whom there are no reservations regarding the affairs of the church, and the fullest confidence is enjoyed. By such association and directing the lives of those under his charge. The tactful pastor will find many opportunities to condemn the wrong and point out the right, and good use should be made of all of them.

It is his business to raise he lives of the members of his pastorate above reproach by every method within his power. He must see that they are not only sound in the faith, but that their walk and conversation are such as become Christians; and in no way can he do this more effectually than by being with them in their homes and conversing with them on spiritual matters.

Then there are in the congregation of most churches persons who are born again, but who find it difficult to make profession before men by going before the church. These should be encouraged, and perhaps no means has an much influence as to have the pastor of the church talk to them about their hope and their duty to the Lord. Of course all members of the church should feel it a duty and a privilege to talk to inquiring persons, and the pastor should continually encourage them from the pulpit to do so; but he can most effectually lead them by those who are inquiring to know their duty.

The children of (Primitive) Baptist parents are no doubt often led astray and join Arminian organizations because the members of these organizations manifest so much interest in the children just at a time when they are troubled in mind and want some one to lead and instruct

them, at least to manifest a kindly interest in their welfare, while the members of the church of Christ fail to do their duty, saying nothing to them on religious subjects, offering no sympathy or fellowship, and do not exhort them to go home to their friends. They do not pursue this course from real indifference. The members may often

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be heard to speak to each other of certain persons giving indications of serious thought, and conversations closing with the remark, perhaps, "I would be glad to see them come to the church;" but the neglect is the result of habit, a habit formed because the pastor does not remonstrate against it, and perhaps does not show the interest he feels in the children of members of the church.

Certainly it would be right for him to manifest an interest in the children of parents who are not members of the church, but it is presumed that all (Primitive) Baptist parents desire that their children will become members of the true church when the Lord quickens them into life, and would gladly have the pastor's influence in that direction.

A pastor of a church is expected to comfort by his presence and words the bereaved when death claims a victim in the families of his pastorate. Here the close relationship of the pastor and the members will find expression in the deep sympathy of one and the loving confidence of the other, and such occasions may serve to bind the whole church together in closer ties. For as we have fellowship for Christ in His sufferings, so are our hearts drawn out to each other in the hour of affliction.

I will remark here that I was never favorable to a custom that used to prevail to a greater extent than now, of having funerals preached at some time after the burial of the dead. There may be instances of the deceased of old, or influential members of the church, when circumstances prevent a general attendance at the time of the interment, when the labors and faith of the dead might be remembered in a service later with good results to the church and to the community, for funeral and all other services, should be held with the view to benefiting the living. But, commonly, funeral services should be conducted, if at all, at the time of the interment, and they should be short and of a character as to impress upon those present the dire result of sin and the consolations of the gospel, avoiding

all recitals that would excite the grief of the bereaved, and any undue eulogy of the dead—simply preach Christ.

The pastor should visit the sick. When racked with pain and burned with fever, the sufferer yearns for sympathy, and when it is received it will long be remembered. It is the pastor's opportunity to show his interest and to do a good deed. His demeanor should be cheerful, his words full of

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kindness, love and sunshine, full of hope, buoyancy and gospel joy that would help the sick to meet what sufferings must be borne. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (Jam. 1:27).

Never under any circumstances must the minister of the gospel engage in unbecoming levity, or let his conversation be otherwise than is becoming to his calling. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." - Eph. 4:29. The habit into which brethren sometimes fall, of indulging in vulgar jokes and stories is very reprehensible and should be discouraged by all. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." - Col. 4:6. Anger must not move him to speak rashly, for this would be to forget that he is a minister of Christ. But he must be cheerful, full of thankfulness for all of the Lord's blessings, rejoicing in spirit, hopeful and patient, and his conversation should bear out that character.

He should encourage the practice of devotional exercises at the homes of the members, especially when he visits them. It will have a beneficial effect, if when the family are assembled before retiring, he will read a chapter and comment upon it, and then bow humbly before God and pray His blessing on the household. I have no doubt this is well pleasing in the sight of God. The pastor must not forget that he is to minister in spiritual things at any and all times when opportunity offers.

It will be to the advantage of the church for the pastor to preach at different points in the neighborhood of the church. By so doing he will often find persons who receive the truth gladly and will be easily induced to attend the regular services at the church. This will extend the limits of the congregation and add to the influence of the church correspondingly.

It is often beneficial to hold a meeting of several days at the church. Sometimes no good might come of it, so far as could be observed, but other times the members seem to desire to meet and hear the Word preached, and the whole congregation is observed to take more than ordinary interest. I have observed that at meetings continued under

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conditions named, sometimes persons who have long neglected their duty to join the church are given courage to go forward and yield obedience to the Master.

The demand on the time of the pastors of churches is constant and pressing. The Lord makes it his duty to serve the church and it becomes his duty to answer its calls in every need. He is not the servant of the church in the sense that its demands are authority for his actions, for God only is he accountable, and the Lord is his Master. When the church demands that for which the Lord has not given authority, the minister is not bound to respond, except in reproof for the departure. *The Lord's commands must be to him the supreme command.*

He is to dispense from the pulpit the pure word of God, its doctrines, its exhortations, its reproofs, its promises, its instructions in every direction, and give each part of it when and where needed, "rightly dividing the word of truth." -2 Tim. 2:15.

Are there persons who are longing for the sincere milk of the word, he must try to unfold its essentials for their benefit; are the members growing careless in their lives and failing to maintain godliness in walk and conversation, he must not let a man-fearing nor a man-pleasing spirit stand in the way of reproofing them as the word of God directs. Sometimes general reproof, that is, the mentioning in a general way, of certain courses that members should not follow, without indicating by word or manner that anyone present is guilty, will have the desired effect, and will cause those who are dropping into the error to forsake the wrong and pursue the right. In such cases the pastor must be tactful, remembering what humanity is, and taking every advantage possible of it (2 Cor. 12:16) to subdue it that the flesh may not rule the church. Some members require petting, while others cannot endure such treatment. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." - 1 Cor. 9:22.

This treatment of members according to their different dispositions must not be allowed to foster their weaknesses, but the strengthening of their characters must be kept constantly in mind. A pastor who has the cause of Christ at heart, must study his members to find their weaknesses that he may strengthen them, and he must learn in what direction lies their greatest strength that he may

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use them for the best interest of the church. When he understands the members of the church he must not hesitate to assign them work suited to each character. It should be a grave error to assign work to the hand that could only be done by the eye; but there is a work for the hand. Often much confusion gets into the church by poor judgement being exercised in assigning work to the members, or else permitting members to follow their own impulses. If the hand attempts to do the work of the eye, the matter is made worse instead of being properly done. And brethren ought to be guided to a great degree by the pastor, if he is known to give his attention to ascertaining what is best for the church, for he has better opportunities for knowing what is best. But if a pastor is known to be deficient in judgement, then one of the deacons should be encouraged to take the direction of matters, as, indeed, the deacons should be forward to do at all times. The pastor should always be consulted with the deacon about the affairs of the church for his benefit and their encouragement.

The pastor should make special efforts to bring out the gifts that are in the church. Some have the gift of prayer; some have the gift of exhortation; and others will be found who are able to strengthen the church if their gifts are put into exercise. To this end the pastor must not preach his church to death, using all the time himself. However able the pastor may be, the church needs all the gifts the Lord has placed in it, and their lights ought not to be under a bushel, they should be placed where they will give light to all that are in the house (church).

I have found it a great help to the church, and to the development of members, to call on several members at each service to take a part. One brother can select a scripture to read, and comment on it as much as he desires; another may make choice of a hymn that expresses his feelings, and if he so desires may call attention to the spiritual truth of the words; then let some brother offer prayer. Preachers often pray too long and include too many

things, seeming to exhibit their ability to pray for everything needed by mankind. But if some humble brother kneels before God he will feel a proper degree of solemnity and will pour his soul in prayer without making it an elocutionary effort. His words may be few, but they will be sincere; they may be awkward, but they will be spoken in

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the fear of God; he may feel that he has made a very poor effort, but most likely will have given expression to a petition in which all can join.

Let the hymns sung be chosen, not by the leader, but give the brethren and sisters an opportunity to select the hymns and all will feel a renewed interest in the words because they will no longer be the words of the poet only, but they will now express the trials, the hopes, the fears and the faith of a brother or sister present.

When the pastor calls on members to take part in the services he must not allow them to excuse themselves. As pastor of the church it is his duty to direct such matters, and his judgement must be followed, for the Holy Ghost has made him "overseer" (Acts 20:28). If one member is excused, others may be, and finally it will fall back to the bad practice of the pastor doing everything, which no minister who regards the welfare of the church will do. One of the deacons may be called upon to take charge of the meeting and then when the pastor is not present he will not feel embarrassed to do so.

A church trained to let the pastor do everything is helpless unless he is present. If the pastor or other minister is not present at the meeting time, the members disperse without any service—without song, prayer or scripture reading.

My dear brother, let me implore you in the name of our dear Redeemer, who will accept the praise of the lowest of the flock, do not bind the church with such a fetter as the unscriptural practice of doing everything yourself. It is harmful every way and blighting in its effect. "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."—1 Cor. 14:31.

Then, every few months let all the members who can be induced to do so, take part by telling the dealings of the Lord with them. These are feasts for the pastor and also for the members. There are but few who will not in time talk to the church.

I remember at one of these meetings, after a brother had told his experience, an old sister arose from her seat, went across the room and gave her hand, saying, "I can't tell it like you can, but I can feel and realize the same things." Thus did she publicly bear testimony to the dealings of the Lord with her. Such a course as this will draw out all the gifts and those who are calculated to

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edify the church can be put into their proper positions. The talks of the older members will do the younger members more good than sermons by the pastor, for these talks are in fact notes taken along the actual walks of life.

I remember at a meeting at my own house one night, a young sister, who had just united with the church, related in a very connected manner some of her experiences. After she had closed, an aged sister told of her past trials and present feelings. When she had finished, the young sister asked if she might speak again to tell how much she had been encouraged and strengthened by the talk of the old sister. It was to her like passing over life's experiences and seeing the close of her own life if she should live to be old.

A minister may so preach as to get the fellowship of the brethren, but if the brethren have a warm fellowship for each other they must talk with one another.

I shall never forget what an old deacon of my home church said once. He was very willing to do his part as far as he could. When we met he would read a chapter, or have a chapter selected for some one else to read, or suggest a hymn that expressed his sentiments, but he was not in the habit of offering public prayer or speaking before the church. He arose at one of our meetings, however, and said, "before I die I want to tell those who are members of this church now my reasons for entertaining a hope."

Said he, "I have seen most of you come to the church and have heard you relate the dealings of the Lord with you, and in this respect have the advantage of you, as you have never heard me speak of my trials." He than spoke of his life from boyhood up, and we who were young got great encouragement from his talk. His life had seemed so far above us, and judging that his experience of mind and heart had been as much removed from ours as his life seemed to be, fears and trials that we had experienced, and learn that, like the rest of us, had to live by faith.

Young members as they come into the church should be induced to talk before the church, and not be allowed to form a habit of remaining silent. Older members who have not been in the habit of speaking in public should take some part in the meeting. If that they may set a good example for the young members, that they may grow up active and useful.

The Lord's work in the heart of a poor sinner is more

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important than anything in the world, and the pastor of a church should not get so intellectual as to let the Lord's children forget His work, "His strange work."- -Isa. 28:21. They should speak of it often and tell it to the generations following them.

These "heart-talks" should be encouraged at the homes of the members, and, in fact, everywhere. Many a troubled soul would be glad to hear some one's "experience" that it might learn if, indeed, there is hope for the vilest and weakest of all. But such are often discouraged by hearing professed Christians join in unbecoming conversation, and hearing them talk with great interest upon everything else but God's love and the wonderful gift of grace.

Primitive Baptists contend that there must be a work of the Spirit in the hearts of men that they may have a good hope in Christ, and we should not drift with the world to disregard it; but, instead, we should make the first thing of importance to the sinner, and the more he is brought to contemplate it and talk about it the better for him.

A pastor who has a family owes the same to them as any husband and father. He must protect and care for the woman who has forsaken all others to depend upon him. His children must be cared for, and should have his personal training and watchcare. Of course he cannot be with them as much as though he was not in the ministry, for he will need to visit among the members of the church, and to fill his appointments. But he need not go away from home and leave those depending on him in need to serve churches that are able to help him and his family. He should not neglect his duty as a minister to make his family independent in this world, he must in a measure trust their welfare and his own in the hands of the Master. But he must not forget his obligation to them and give his service to churches that are able to bear the burden of what pastoral work they have. It is a very nice point for a man to decide just how much he must do for his family, and

it ought to be considered with prayerful heart. One thing is certain, when the Lord calls a man to the ministry He does not absolve him from his responsibility of caring for his family. But he must not attempt to provide wholly for them if he is a poor man.

If the minister is unmarried as was Paul, and an industrious and tireless a worker for the cause, he can do much good, for it will take little for his necessities and

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need cost him but little thought. But if he has a family his labor is very much increased. His wife and children must look to him for support, for in the economy of God's government of the world, the family tie is the most sacred, and its obligations the most binding of any upon man. A man who is indifferent to his obligations as the head of a family is not worthy to put into the ministry. One of the qualifications of a Bishop is that he must rule his own house well and have his children under subjection. How is he to do this if he does not exercise all of the obligations of the head of the family?

His family should not be proud and extravagant, but should live in an humble way, all learning to be industrious, and to do some work, for there is no room in God's government of the world or the church, for those who are lazy and inclined to do nothing.

He must not be afraid to soil his hands by labor, but must make an earnest effort to provide all necessaries for those depending upon him. Laziness, and a disposition to live off the labors of others, will soon bring a minister into disrepute among Primitive Baptist.

Jesus was reputed to be the son of a carpenter, and no doubt labored with His (step) father (Joseph) until He began His public ministry. Paul, though entitled to support from the churches, (1 Cor. 9:6), labored with his own hands (Acts 20:34) that he might minister, not only to his own wants, but to others as well. An active life will conduce to health, if judgement is exercised, and a certain amount of bodily exercise will help the mind to meditate on spiritual things.

Then, if a pastor knows something of labors and privations of life, if he has profited by his own experience, he will get into the affections of the people all the deeper.

The servant should not be above his Lord, and as our Saviour trod the lowly walks of life, His ministers will

have more fellowship for His sufferings if they bear some of life's heaviness.

A minister should never preach for a stipulated consideration, but for Christ's sake. It is his business to preach whether men will withhold or whether they will contribute. Of course he cannot spare so much of his time caring for his family if he is not helped, but he can preach all the time he can spare.

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He has been bought with the precious blood of Christ, and has hope of eternal deliverance because of God's grace and mercy. So his life belongs to the Master and he has no right to set a price upon his labors. If he preaches the pure gospel of Christ there will always be a place for him to preach and his opportunities should be improved.

The system of fixing salaries for ministers is corrupting in its influence. Instead of trying to please Christ, men endeavor to get their salaries raised; instead of being devoted to their flocks, they are always looking for better paying position. Raising money for the salary of a preacher, with Arminian denominations, gets to be a grinding weight on their shoulders, as is evidenced by their trying to shift it on to others and resorting to all kinds of schemes, gambling included, to get money.

The Primitive Baptist can never resort to paying salaries to get pastors, nor should our ministers ever stoop to sell the word of God at so much a sermon or by the year.

When he obeys his Master and preaches the word, and men do not communicate, it is beneath the dignity of his calling to say he will refuse to preach the glorious doctrine of grace because others fail to appreciate God's mercy in administering spiritual comforts to them; but he may turn to others where his labors are better appreciated. *He should not leave a church until he has told the members plainly of their duty to the ministry.* But when they have shown such a covetous disposition that they will not bear a fair share of the expense of pastoral work, though able to do so, then he will be justified in turning from them to preach elsewhere. It would be wrong for a pastor to take his time from his family and give it to a people so covetous that they would not minister to him of their carnal things (1 Cor. 9:11). But a minister should not covet riches, nor should he attempt to gain them by neglecting the work to which God has called him. He should

be satisfied to live as brethren live, and they should not ask him to bear greater hardships than they themselves have to bear.

Some ministers make a practice of traveling from one church to another and depend upon the churches to support them, having no work by which to earn anything. This is living off the labors of others and taking what justly belongs to the pastors of churches. It is no doubt beneficial for able and faithful ministers to visit

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churches, but for a minister to aim to live off churches which have pastors they should assist, is certainly an unwarranted practice, and should be discouraged.

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QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

To perform all the varied duties enumerated a minister must have special qualifications for the work. The qualification which stands pre-eminently above all is, *he must be called of God*. A man may be ever so wise and learned, but if God has not called him to the work he will not be able to edify the churches. And a man's call may be best judged by his being able or qualified to edify. What he may claim as his "call" is not to be taken as deciding the matter, *the proof is in the effect that his preaching has*.

But even after it has been decided that a brother has a gift to edify, there are certain character qualifications given in the scriptures. Paul in his first letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 3:1-7) states the qualifications of a Bishop, and when writing to Titus (Tit. 1:5-7), his son in the ministry, gives the same qualifications for elders, and uses the term bishop as being interchangeable with elder. It may not be possible for any man to measure up to the highest degree in the several traits mentioned, but he ought to have them in view and be molding his character in that direction.

And the church should not allow too great a deviation from the qualifications given, for it would ruin the usefulness of a minister to have a character plainly at variance with the scriptural standard. Church and minister shall maintain such a character as will help instead of injuring the cause. If the minister feels this, he will not

resent a correction from the members, for he will feel that as the interest of the church is involved the members ought to be concerned about his life. Then if the members realize that the minister's life may seriously interfere with the prosperity of the church, they may feel under greater responsibility to speak to him about any unbecoming conduct or neglect of his duty.

I will notice briefly some of the requirements of elders and of bishops. The qualifications are such as relate to his duties as a husband and parent as the head of the family, his moral standing, and his fitness for his position as being apt to teach and benefit the church.

"If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." - 1 Tim. 3:1. Some men *desire he honor* of the office, but have *no longing for the work*. It should seem to

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be the meaning of this text that if a man desires to yield himself a servant of all, to preach, administer to ordinances of the gospel, look after the disciples of the church (of Christ), take the responsibility of having oversight of it, his desire is to a work of much importance, and is in fact a good work, though it is a heavy work. Some men take great delight in doing others good and in giving much service to God. One of such disposition would have some qualification at least for the office of bishop or pastor of a church; but a man who had no willingness for the work, nor a disposition to make the sacrifices necessary, would hardly do much good in the office.

Before men and the church he must not be chargeable with immorality. It cannot mean that he is without sin, but blameless, as Paul was in compliance to the law, for he said he was blameless (Phil. 3:6). It is ruinous to the church with dishonestly, falsifying or other discreditable or immoral conduct. His life should be above blame.

In Titus 1:7 it is said that the bishop must be "blameless as a steward of God." This would require that he should discharge the duties of his office in such a manner that he could not be charged with neglect. Certain it is, in the light of both these passages, the life and work of a minister would need be very circumspect and he would have to be very faithful in the discharge of his duty.

That he is to be the "husband of one wife" is understood to mean that he must not have two wives living. It is

thought that this was written because polygamy was practiced up to the time of the apostles. He may be unmarried as was Paul.

A slothful, indifferent pastor will neglect many things about the churches that should receive his notice. He will not give attention to matters that require immediate action. Small things which will ultimately grow into important matters are unnoticed. Lack of good discipline marks the church that is under the charge of a pastor that is not vigilant. The vigilant pastor will be on the watch to guard the interest of the church and his congregation. He will be alert to stop such things as will disturb the peace of the church and promptly check hurtful tendencies, whatever they may be.

He must be "sober" or prudent, not given to reckless

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talk or actions. His ways and conversation should indicate serious and careful consideration of his surroundings. He must not try to be wise above what is written, or think more of himself than he ought to think. It is reproach to a minister if his talk is light and trifling. He must not forget his office.

He is to be of "good behavior" so he will not give needless offense by his manner. Some men seem to take delight in being coarse and ill behaved, but it is certainly very unbecoming. He should be a pattern in being considerate, kindly actions that we may have the respect of people, which is so necessary that he may edify and instruct them.

One of the traits of a true follower of Christ is hospitality. Mary and Martha showed delight at having the Saviour and His disciples at their house, and this is characteristic to this day of Primitive Baptist, who never seem to have too many of their brethren at their homes.

Now it is but reasonable that the minister should not be lacking in this in particular. To be otherwise would betray a selfish, grasping disposition, entirely incompatible with the spirit he ought to bear. It would have a tendency to exist between him and the members of the church, and will hinder his influence for good in the community.

Unless he is "apt to teach" he cannot be useful. He may be well informed, but if he cannot communicate his knowledge to others he cannot benefit them. It is not enough that a man can make a good discourse that is appreciated by his hearers, he should be able to lead to

the understanding and think more about the scriptures, and matters pertaining to the church, so they may become well established in doctrine and practice.

It is very hurtful for any member of the church to be "given to wine," and especially so for a minister. He at once becomes a reproach to the cause, and a burden to the church, and prompt measures should be taken to have the practice discontinued. A minister should be in a position to rebuke this evil, but if he himself be given to it himself his reproof will have no effect. The scriptures have very many passages condemning the over-indulgence of strong drink, and the safest way is to let it entirely alone. If it is used for medicine let it be under a physician's prescription, as many formed a taste for it by

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thinking they needed it for their health. The safest rule is to let it alone, and a minister should watch carefully that none of his flock are overcome by it, for it is a great shame for a member of the church of Christ to be seen under the influence of strong drink.

A minister should not be quarrelsome. He should be "no striker." He should not be vindictive, desiring to injure those who oppose him, but his methods should be characterized by charity and forbearance for all. "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach." - 2 Tim. 2:24. It is very unbecoming in a minister to try to carry his point by force or harsh measures. He should use gentleness, love and persuasion. He must not be a "brawler."

Covetousness is strongly condemned in the New Testament, and if a minister has an immoderate love for money it will certainly destroy his usefulness. If his love of gain keeps him from the ministry it will hurt him by claiming his time and absorbing his mind until his services will amount to but little. If his covetousness leads him to try to make gain of his office, he will not be a faithful steward; for, instead of laboring for the good of those whom he ought to serve, he will be turning everything to serve self and make a gain of the churches. The example of a covetous minister would encourage the evil among the members and it is very hurtful to the cause. A pastor of churches should be very generous and liberal, ready to bestow his labor according to his ability, for in this manner the members of his pastorate may be lead to be more liberal with their means which will result in better care

for the poor and the sick, and the loosening of the pastor's hands that he may give himself to the cause of Christ.

Some ministers, who have doubtless it would be better for them to take is offered, and then be more liberal their contributions to worthy objects, as their opportunities for knowing of needy persons and worthy efforts are greater than that of the members.

As the head of the family he is to rule his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. It is not presumed that the pastor's children will be of better dispositions than other children, and their evil natures will likely be manifested. But he who is to have the care of churches, which have in them people of so many different

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dispositions, should show by the government of his own family that he has the judgement and faculty to manage others. If his family is immoral and vicious, and he has shown no disposition to check and train them right, it will weaken his ministry by standing in the way of his exhorting others to right living. If a man shows no tact for managing his own affairs, it is not likely that he will succeed in taking the oversight of the church. He might get along smoothly with such churches as have no unruly spirits in them, and where the members are disposed to go in the right way, but in most churches there are times and cases that try a pastor and if he is not equal to the occasion it is bad for the church.

Some ministers' wives make trouble for them and interfere seriously with their work. A man who is called to preach cannot expect to do very good service and follow the dictation of some one who is not called to preach, especially if that person is his wife and she is inclined to be selfish. She will want to claim his time as belonging to her, and will likely find much fault if he does not receive a handsome recompense for his labor. She will not be willing to leave it to his judgement as to what he had best do, but will want to dictate to him. A man who does not rule his own house, but who does the bidding of a wife who is opposed to his preaching, will have a hard time serving churches, and it may be will not be able to give them good pastoral service. A wife should be in subjection to her husband, instead of ruling him, is the kind of wife the pastor of a church needs. Not only should she be of a disposition to further him in his pastoral work, but to

uphold his rule in the household, teaching the children to be in subjection to their father, not for his sake alone, but for the sake of the cause of Christ, that the ministry be not hindered.

Churches sometimes make mistakes by putting men into the ministry who have not been members of the church long enough to be well established, and they make shipwreck of faith and cause the church much distress. Those who are put into the ministry should be well-established in doctrine and have stability of character that the church may not be shamed.

It is suggested in the text that he should not be a novice "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." - 1 Tim. 3:6. Being newly come

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into the faith, his elevation to an office of such distinction might cause him to be lifted up with pride, and he be destroyed by it. It is but a matter of time when a man will fall who is puffed up with pride and is exalted in himself.

The tendencies of these times is to have young men in the pulpits. A novice might not be a young man, but it is well to try young men well, and know that they are established. It will do them no hurt and may save the church much trouble. Churches sometimes get into trouble for not exercising due care, and putting men into the ministry who have not been tried by experience and afflictions until they have learned humility. When one has learned how weak he is, and that he does not know all things, he has learned some things that are very essential to a successful ministry. To be proud and haughty, disdainful brethren of low estate, and spiritual things, are some of the marks of a novice. As the peace and prosperity of the church depends so much on the soundness, prudence and stability of the ministry, no one who could be called a novice should be put into this important office.

In Paul's letter to Titus (Tit. 1:8) he says that elders should be lovers of good men (the margin reads good things). This is a mark by which a man's character may be known. A man's character is to be judged from the company he keeps. If he loves the company of the boisterous and the rude, he will not have the influence that he ought to have, because the company he seeks gives a true index to his disposition. If he seems to enjoy best the companionship of the purest and most active members of the church, the

indications are good; he will seek to lead all to love what is best in the church. But if he finds the company of the tatter and busybody congenial he will probably be found taking sides in the church in difficulties among the members.

His preference for good men should be so marked that it should be well known that whosoever comes into association with him is being lifted up and made better in mind and character.

If the text be taken to mean "good things" it is all the broader, and will apply to the whole life of the minister. In his every-day affairs his preference for the good must be manifested and his rejection of evil so pronounced as to

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be apparent to all. Such a man will not be accused of being a hypocrite, for it will be seen that he is not simply trying to appear good, but that he loves the good.

A minister, more than others, will be judged by what he loves. He must not love worldly things too much. Its amusements, riches, fame, honor, etc., must not be held in too high esteem. He should love the Lord supremely and love everything that emanates from Him. He must love His law, His church, His service and His saints, and this will make his life pure, strong, cheerful and of much benefit to the church on earth. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." - - Matt. 5:8. The "pure in heart" love pure things. The minister's preference for good and faithful men should be such that the members of the church will feel that to be in harmony with him their walk and conversation must be such as become the followers of Christ, and if he has the influence with the members that a pastor should have, it will lead them to higher and better lives.

It will not do for the church nor its pastor to be indifferent to the reputation of the pastor outside the membership of the church. "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." - - 1 Tim. 3:7.

If the pastor has not a good reputation as a man it will hurt the church in many ways. He will be a constant reproach to the church, which is very discouraging to the members. It is very mortifying to members of a church to hear slighting remarks about the pastor, especially if it is known that there are grounds for the remarks. This has a tendency to break the pastor's influence with the members

of his pastorate, and it is bad, indeed, for a pastor to lose the love and respect of the brethren whom he is trying to serve. They lose their interest in his preaching and grow indifferent to the privileges and duties of the church.

A pastor who has the respect of all who know him is himself, in his own life, a strong argument in favor of the cause he represents and will strengthen the church. If such a pastor be not a brilliant speaker, it will always be said in his favor, "but he is a good man;" and this will outweigh many short-comings in delivery, speech and wisdom, and will be worth more if it might be said, "But he is crooked in his life."

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Some preachers claim that they do not want to stand well with the world, quoting "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets." But they ignore the fact that we are only blessed when men shall cast out our names for evil *for the Son of Man's sake*. There shall no commendation for those who are criticized because of their own taunts of men because of following Christ that they are exhorted to bear it without murmuring. Being "cast out" for one's own misconduct is a very different thing.

Some ministers get a bad report "without" because they have no charity in their discourse for those who differ from them, but use sarcasm and harsh epithets when referring to people of other denominations. This does no good and only makes a bad reputation among those who are without. Preaching ought always to be in love and one does not make enemies when speaking in love. It is very unfortunate for a church when the pastor, or any minister who may preach for it, does it in such a manner as to drive the congregation away. Once I heard a minister say, in referring to the belief of a certain denomination, that he would not want his dog to have such religion. There was no argument in such an assertion, and it was very unkind to use it. The result was that some present said they would never come back again. It was not the gospel of Christ that drove these people away, it was unkind criticism of their belief, which could serve no good purpose.

Many preachers become unpopular with the people in this manner and then attribute it to the doctrine they preach, when, perhaps, it is rather the way they preach than what they preach. It is a very unreasonable course, because

people cannot be instructed without being interested, and cannot be interested if offended, for no one who feels to be offended stops to reason. If a minister to have a good reputation he must be just and liberal in his dealings with all men, careful in his conversation, and he must shun the very "appearance of evil"- - (1 Th. 5:22). He must preach faithfully the word of God our Saviour, preach it in love without compromise in any point, and yet seek to draw men to listen to the truth instead of driving them away.

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AN APPEAL TO THE MINISTRY

Having briefly noticed some things pertaining to pastoral work and the preaching of the gospel, I will make this appeal to my brethren in the ministry. I trust that I feel the responsibility of the work, and think I know something of its weight and the sacrifice it requires.

There is no such thing as retiring a minister because of his age- - he must wear out in the harness. He ought to live that when he comes to the close of life it could be said of him that he had fought a good fight, that he had kept the faith. The memory and influence of this kind of a life should be esteemed a richer legacy than a fortune in this world's goods. To have faithfully devoted a life to serving the Lord's people is to have spent it well. It would be better to be remembered among the humble poor of the flock as a loving, firm and helpful pastor than to have one's name enrolled among the great of this earth.

Preaching the gospel, and the pastor's ministrations, are like giving cold water to the thirsty, and the Master has said to give one cup of water in His name shall be rewarded.

The minister of the gospel is not promised wealth nor ease, and none of us certainly could have entered upon the work with these things in view. Then if wealth and ease fail to be our lot we should not feel disappointed. The Lord called all His disciples to follow Him and we ought not to complain when the Lord Himself has gone before us.

Self-servers have no business in the ministry. The minister of Christ must serve his Lord and his brethren, and sacrifice himself (2 Cor. 12:15). Personal interest must not be allowed to dictate to him what he shall do. He should ask with a prayerful heart what the Lord will have him to do, and when this has been decided there should be no appeal from it, either to serve self or to please men.

This will not mean that one must be harsh with those who differ from him, or that he shall try to force them to the right way, for he must be "patient," willing to contend earnestly for the truth in love, bearing the weaknesses of the brethren for Christ's sake, not being overcome of their evil or wrong way, but overcoming evil with good.—Rom. 12:21.

This is not a pleasant prospect to one who knows what

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human nature is, yet a minister should take this course. He should do so, feeling that the Lord can strengthen him and enable him to endure all things.

Brethren, what a great responsibility there is in leading the flock. In ancient times the leaders of the people caused the to err; and are they not as liable to do so now? One can but think of Israel when they were afflicted for David's sin, and apply the same words to the churches which are led astray by their pastors: "What have these sheep done?"

It is not infrequently the case where pastors' blame churches that they themselves are the cause of the disorder in the church. It may be the pastor's example that has led them astray; or it may be he has not preached to them the whole counsel of God and has left them uninstructed on many things; and on some things that they knew to do, they have not been stirred up to diligence, and have fallen into fault; or that seeing they were in a wrong practice he did not reprove them, or having reproved them once he became passive and did not insist that they should follow after the right. This course, though not generally considered as actually wrong, is perhaps as blameworthy as to go wrong and suffer others to follow, for it is the duty of the pastor to reprove and rebuke when necessary. If he shall fail to do this the Master will not hold him blameless. - - Ezek. 33:1-7.

It is, perhaps, too often the case that pastors do not feel proper responsibility for the churches and members. It would awaken pastors to a greater diligence if they felt they were accountable in a great measure for disorder and declension in the churches. When John was directed to write to the seven churches he addressed the reproofs, admonitions, etc., to the "angel" or the minister of each church. Can a minister feel that he will not be held to account for his stewardship, when the Holy Ghost has given him oversight of a church to feed it and to care for it?

Brother minister, as you look about you, do you not see many things in the churches that ought to be corrected? And not only in the churches but also in the lives of the members. All these you should strive to correct, but especially in the church you should see to it that it is following after the Divine Pattern. It is not merely a difference of opinion between you and the brethren, in which they are as likely to be right as you are, for then

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it would not be right to consider the matter as being very serious. But what the Bible teaches you are not at liberty to surrender because some do not have the right view of the matter, for if you were, a preacher would not have to study what God's word teaches, but he would need to ascertain the mind of these to whom he was preaching and then either preach to suit them, or upon points where they were at variance with the word of God, if his conscience would not permit him to go with them, simply keep silent upon those things. *Would such a course be characteristic of a true servant of God?*

Oh, no, he must never, never, never give up the right! He must ever have it in view and be striving, not only to go toward it himself, but to bring others to it as well. It should strengthen him in this struggle to know, and have full confidence in the fact, that God will be on the side of the right to bless and strengthen it. But you will "have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." - - Heb. 10:36. We should not expect to receive the promise while still in disobedience.

The church of our blessed Redeemer gave us should be preserved in form, and doctrine, and practice. How will you do this? By preaching on doctrine when you know that practice ought to be preached? No, but when you go to a church you should ask the Lord, "What does this church need?"

If a servant went out to care for sheep and there was plenty of corn in the troughs, but no water, and some were sick and needed attention, yet he poured in more corn and went away, would his course be approved?

The shepherd would say, "You should have given the thirsty (poor souls needing encouragement) water (spiritual instruction), and the diseased (erring ones) should have had medicine (correction.)"

Will you deliberately withhold from the erring what they need because you think it will not be well received? When you know that no member of the church of the church is infected with Arminian ideas, but that covetousness is keeping members away from the church meetings, and forcing the pastor to carry on the welfare at his own charges, and keeping him from receiving of the fruit of the vineyard, or eating of the milk of the flock (see 1 Cor. 9:7), will you then preach a sermon against Arminianism or against

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covetousness, which?

If you preach against Arminianism under such circumstances why do you do it? Do you do it to please God or men? Is this considering the matter as it should be? Or would it not be best to remember that to his own master a man standeth or he falleth, and then remember tell the church what you think they ought to know, and insist on their returning to such scriptural practices as you know they have departed from?

I sometimes hear a minister say, "I know that is right, but you would not dare to preach it at my church." Is it possible that a church can get so far away from the right that it will not do to preach to it the right way without giving serious offense? That is the spirit that our Lord put our Lord to death, and should it to be fostered in our churches? Any of us ought to be ashamed that would educate a church in that direction.

My dear brother, let us be honest with ourselves and obedient to God, for if "God be for us," why need we to care who is against us? But God will be against us if we are not faithful in our ministry, and the more friends we make by perverting the gospel, or keeping back part of it, will only add that much more to our shame and confusion when we are brought to realize our standing before Him.

As ministers of Christ we all ought to be working toward one end, the advancement of the church, and all should be walking together in harmony. True, men of different temperaments may not be able to go together as companions, but they need not try to destroy each other because they are not congenial in dispositions. We ought to realize that there are places where one minister can do no good, when another might work successfully and accomplish much good.

So, instead of standing in the way of others, let us help them all in our power and make it manifest that we

pray the Lord's blessing on their labors. See Mark 9:38-42.

Nothing so ill becomes a minister of Christ as jealousy. He would make his own efforts a limit for efficient and acceptable labor for the Lord, and object to any having grace to surpass him. How little and contemptible such a spirit! Brethren, if you find such a disposition growing in your heart, strangle it; allow it not to live another day. It will dwarf your life and make you miserable to see anyone receive blessing and approbation. He is happiest who

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rejoices most in the uplifting and enjoyment of others.

I have in mind a once able minister of the gospel who is today separated from brethren and cut off from the church because he could not bear to see a growing affection among his churches for other ministers for their work's sake.

Paul feared lest he might become a "cast away" (1 Cor. 9:27), and a jealous disposition is as likely to bring about this condition as anything else, for "jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. - - Song. 8:6. Let us be brethren not only in faith, but in deed and in truth, all working lovingly together for the good of the cause that ought to be so precious to us all.

I appeal to you, my brethren, not to leave to those who shall follow in your field of ministerial labor, churches in all manner of disorders and ignorant of duties imposed by the scriptures on the members. It will only work hardship on those who follow after you, it will cripple the churches and be disregarding your obligations as ministers of Christ.

Study to know the New Testament pattern and then let all the efforts of your life be directed to shaping the churches after the pattern. This do persistently.

Sometimes you will grow discouraged and you will feel inclined to give up the struggle and drift with the course of such which things take if not prevented. But think what drifting means, my brother. It means to be getting farther and farther away from the right. Do not make spasmodic efforts to stop the "drifting" and then fall into more harm than good. It is the steady, determined efforts that accomplish something. Keep on preaching, and talking, and working for goodness in the lives of the members, and to set in order all things connected with the church, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of

the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body

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unto the edifying of itself in love." - - Eph. 4:13-16.

O, my brethren, let us contend earnestly for all that is taught in God's word. I give these "suggestions," not as embodying all that is written, nor speaking as one who has attained to all things. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." - - Phil. 3:13,14. I feel that I would like to see - -

"The church our blessed Redeemer saved,
With His own precious blood."

- - shake off the traditions which bind her people and rise to the high privileges promised to the obedient and humble followers of the Lamb. "it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.- - Rom. 13:11,12. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

- - Eph. 5:14-17.

I would not presume that I know more of the "will of the Lord" than those to whom I write, but I am moved to bring these things to your minds, and appeal to you to move forward as one man, crying as did the prophet, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as

brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." - - Isa. 62:1.

I know hundreds of you feel as I do about these matters. Should we not "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." - - Isa. 58:1. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room

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enough to receive it." - - Mal. 3:10.

We believe all these things. Shall we not act as God directs and as His Spirit prompts? Those who have not investigated the subjects of practical duties have the scriptures, and they can and should do so.

But as I have before said, ministers may know the Lord's will and not insist on its observance in the churches. "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." - - Luke 12:47. If a minister accepts the pastoral care of a church it is equivalent to covenanting with the church that he will deal honestly with it and give all that is needed for instruction. He cannot keep this agreement and remain silent while the church is neglecting any important matter. And it will be better for himself and the church to resign rather than to keep silent where God speaks, permitting the church to ignore God's rule and way.

I will repeat that I do not ask anyone to accept these "suggestions" unless they be found to agree with God's word; but if they are in harmony with the truth, what reason can a pastor give for not following out the spirit of them? I hope, Brother Ministers, that you will determine whether they are right in advocating the practices in harmony with the New Testament teachings.

Particularly do I ask that you take a stand in regard to the office of the deaconship in the churches and enter a life-long protest against doing away with the office, for the discontinuance of that work has seriously crippled the ministry until the churches are deprived of the service they ought to have. I invite your careful and prayerful attention to the positions taken in the following article on the "Deaconship."

THE DEACONSHIP

No authority questions it being apostolic to have an officer in the church known as a deacon. But in no one particular have the Primitive Baptists, and all religious organizations, come so near disregarding the apostolic mark as in the use of this office.

As to being apostolic, Catholics and Protestants can make no showing doctrinally, as compared with the Primitive Baptist; but when it comes to this one office of the church, although Arminian bodies have generally disregarded the power and degree of the office, and the Primitive Baptist in this particular make an office we find our people have fallen far short, and in many places have practically abolished the office, except in a form.

Primitive Baptist churches, claiming to be the churches of Jesus Christ, should have a better record than this. We should not only be apostolic in doctrine, but in practice as well. When there is apostolic authority for but two offices of church officers, then for us to abolish one of them in practice, is departing too far for those who love the doctrine of grace, and who would prove that they love the Master by keeping His commandments.

Some may question that these statements are not warranted, but ministers who are acquainted with the practice of the churches, and who have given the matter proper study, know that the facts sustain them.

These pages have been written to call attention to practices undoubtedly authorized and commanded by the scriptures. To this end I wish to examine the office of the deaconship in light of the sacred word and try to point out the best of my ability an approved practice.

First, I would like to engage the attention of the reader with the importance of the subject. Suppose some person should assert that sprinkling is just as good as immersion for baptism. What answer would a Primitive Baptist make? No doubt he would say, "our Lord commanded believers to be baptized. Christ's own example shows that He understood baptism to be immersion in water, for He was baptized in the river Jordan and came up and out of the water. Every allusion and example, as far as given, show that the apostles and believers of their day understood baptism to be immersion. Since the apostles' time there has been no power authorized to change any doctrine or practice

delivered to the church. So one who is not immersed cannot have a Christian baptism, and if we were to receive anything else for baptism we would at once lose our right to claim that we are churches of Jesus Christ, because we would not have a baptism that was apostolic."

So with the doctrines of the church. We contend that if a church departs from the doctrines of the Bible and persists in such error, she loses her identity with the Church of Christ.

Now if some Arminian should turn these arguments against us and ask, "What was the work of the New Testament deacons?" And then ask if Primitive Baptists did like work, what would we say? Then if it should be urged that because of this lack or error, we did not have a right to call ourselves churches of Christ, what defense could we make, except we could truthfully say we still believe in the duties prescribed for deacons just as taught in the scriptures, and this difference in practice of our deacons and the New Testament deacons was only a temporary falling off or deviation and not because we had rejected the New Testament teaching?

If the difference in practice arose because we had actually usurped the authority to change the duties of the office, as some have done, then the reason we assign for not recognizing the various organizations as churches of Jesus Christ, would fall with dreadful weight upon us and deny our claims, too.

But if we can be said to still hold the theory of the office as it was in the days of the apostles, and it is only the indifference of our members that causes us to fail in our practice, *how can we expect the blessings of the Lord when we say, but do not do, the things He has left on record for us to follow?* Are not these considerations of sufficient weight to prompt us to an immediate investigation of God's word to see how our practices agree with it.

I hope no one who reads these pages will feel that it makes no difference! In the eyes of Him who taught that we are to follow Him, every obedience and disobedience is important. We may look ancient Israel and see this principle clearly taught, and no doubt their experiences are recorded that we may learn from them the real issues of life to the child of God.

As we now view their journeying we see what ingratitude

it showed to God to depart from His laws, and bring in observances which He had positively forbidden. They no doubt felt at first when they went astray that it was of little consequence, and that God would not take any notice of what they did to hold them to account for every violation. Sometimes, no doubt, they believed if their practices were according to the traditions of the elders, it would be all the justification needed. But when Christ came we see how severe His denunciation was of those who thought traditions made void the word of God!

Beware, brethren, lest we take a course similar to that disobedient and stiff-necked people. We should remember our God is a jealous God and His glory He will not give to another. - - Isa. 42:8. He will not allow His people to follow the traditions or heresies of men and pour His blessings upon their course. To do this would be to make His laws of no effect. If we may do them or not do them, and the result will be the same, then His laws are of no consequence. But Primitive Baptist can never admit such a theory as this. "He is our lawgiver." "There be gods many, and lords many, but to us there is but one God. - - 1 Cor. 8:5,6.

If we have deacons we want *New Testament deacons in practice*. As our deacons fill an office recognized by God's word, they should do it in a manner approved by that authority. If our churches have gone astray upon this subject, they will have to repent - - leave off the present practices - - and return to that warranted by the word of God.

We may expect to find opposition. Our people may follow tradition, and when they do so, they are loath to give up such things as others; in fact, they seem in some cases to hold to them with greater tenacity, for they get to thinking of their practice as being approved of God, and generally, what an Old Baptist esteems as coming from God he does not readily give up, for we are taught to view His teachings with greater reverence than other people do.

So we cannot expect to see a change in a few months, or even years; it will require patience and continued effort for the truth, but no true soldier will falter on this account. It is our duty, and our high privilege, to contend for the Lord's way and word and leave the result entirely in His hand. By reading the history of ancient Israel we may see that wrong practices often found their way in among

them, and when they had to suffer for it, then they would be inclined to put the evil away from them. May we not hope the Israel of our God will arise now and put every evil way behind her, and trusting in the God of Abraham, take His law as the only rule of faith and practice? She should not be satisfied to merely believe the doctrine of grace, she should obey her Lord.

I come now to consider the office of the deaconship. The Greek word that is translated "deacon" in the New Testament means, *servant, attendant, waiter*. This word in its verbal and noun form occurs one hundred and one times in the New Testament, but it is only rendered "deacon" five times. It is rendered "minister" sixty-four times. In its general meaning of ministering, it is applied to pious women (Matt. 27:55), to brethren (Matt. 25:44), to preachers (Eph. 6:21), to apostles (Acts 20:28).

But it is used in a special sense to indicate an officer of the New Testament church and should be used by us in the same way to denote the same thing today.

That there is another office beside that of elder indicates that there is other work to be done besides ministering the word. To judge from the practice of some churches only one officer is needed (a preacher), and he is shorn of all power, to look after the interest of the flock, except at communion time a deacon is needed to pass the bread and wine to the brethren.

I will here state that I have never read a text of scripture, nor have I ever heard anyone make any reference to one, indicating that the deacon rather than any other person, should pass the bread and wine. Some refer to Acts 6:2, where it is said by the apostle that "is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." Is taken to be the tables spread at the Lord's supper, but it has no reference to such at all. The "tables" the apostle did not have time to serve, was daily ministering to the Grecian widows, who were being neglected because the disciples were multiplied.

How much time is saved to the minister by the deacon passing the bread and wine? What does the minister do at that time that he could not do as well as pass the emblems himself? So far as I know this is the only passage referred to, and it is evident upon consideration that this had no reference whatever to the communion table.

But as there is nothing stated just who may, or who may

not, assist at communion seasons, our *custom* of having the deacons to do so is not in violation of God's word. But instead of this being their principle duty it is only one of the many things that may be laid upon them as being in harmony with the character of the work to be expected of deacons.

It would be more in keeping with the exact wording of our Lord when any brother has been served, for him to pass the bread or wine to another brother, so long as all are conveniently situated, and only call for the deacon's assistance then brethren were not convenient to each other. As to providing the emblems, and the articles necessary for communion, it is evident from the nature of the deacon's work that they should do this.

I will here remark that the objection of some deacons to passing the bread and wine at churches where they may visiting are not acquainted with all members, seems to be well taken, for they are liable to miss some, and to offer them to others who should not partake of them. I have known persons to take of the communion under such circumstances who were not members of the Old Baptist church at all. They had no scruples themselves, and took license from the fact that the emblems were passed to them. It is presumed that a deacon would know who was entitled to eat at his own church.

Coming to the occasion for the appointment of deacons in the apostolic church, it will be found that there was work for them to do, and such character that it was necessary to select men especially fitted to do it. This is one peculiarity of the church of Christ; work is to be done by persons peculiarly fitted for it. The work of deacons was principally to handle and distribute money, or its equivalent.

The militant (or visible) church of Christ is made up of men and women who, though born of God, are subject to life's ills and needs, and he who has wisdom to build the earth and sky, and all things therein, did not set up His church and overlook this important fact. Christ affirms, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," and everything proves that He does, and that He who hears the ravens when they cry, and sees the sparrows when they fall, cares for us in all life's sufferings. - - 1 Pet. 5:7.

I have heard unthinking brethren affirm that their

church had no money system in it. While I feared that they were telling the truth, I knew if it was true, their church, in that respect at least, was not apostolic. He who set up the church keeps all the worlds in motion by a law that will never fail until His purpose has been worked out and He Himself shall bid it stop. Would He, who always went about doing good, healing the sick and relieving the distresses of the poor, forget that there would be poor in the church in the ages then to come? O, no, for He said "The poor ye have with you always." - - Mark 14:7.

Is the theory of men correct that Jesus made no arrangements for caring for the poor and distressed and keeping up the ministry, and that now it is necessary to organize societies and helps for that purpose, the church not being adapted for such work?

No, a thousand times no! The church as set up by our Master is all complete and nothing lacking. And just as there is a law which He gave having the sun which shall keep on shining as long as He designs, without having to be renewed, so the system he devised for equalizing the burdens among the members of the church of Christ will never need revision, nor need anything to be added to it. We do not need ministerial boards nor aid societies that our ministers may give themselves to him who has called them. The church in herself has every needed arrangement, and it will be found perfectly adequate to every emergency when our people thrust in God and obey His word. We need never trouble ourselves to devise a plan for anything connected with the church of Christ, everything is already devised and laid down in God's word, and we may be sure if the plan we are following is not laid down there it will not be successful in the accomplishment of a Bible end.

Deacons were chosen to take charge of the funds of the church as a part of their work. It is questioned by some that the seven (Acts 6:3) were deacons. But from the fact that there were deacons in the churches later on, and no authority for the office is given except this in Acts 6, and that the duty as set forth in that chapter and elsewhere is in harmony with the meaning of the word, I conclude that the seven were in fact deacons.

That the church had a fund will appear from the fact that as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and laid the price at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:14,35). From the common fund so formed the apostles made

distribution to all as they had need. But the number of the disciples increased until the apostles were unable to see to the needs of all, and some of the Grecian widows were neglected. The apostles also had to preach, and there was not time to attend to both matters (Acts 6:1). As the work of caring for these widows was the express purpose for conclusion that the church fund passed into they're hands.

Even prior to the crucifixion of our Lord a common fund was provided as will be seen from the fact that when they sat at meat before Judas had betrayed our Lord, Judas was in charge of what money was needed for Jesus and the twelve. Some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, "Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or that He *give something to the poor.*" - - John 13:29.

From this we learn that Jesus had been training the disciples in the course they afterwards recommended to the church. Christ and His disciples had a common fund and they used it to supply their needs and to help the poor. If it had not been the practice to give to the poor out of that fund the disciples would not have thought that Judas had been told to do anything of the kind.

Who supplied that fund we are not told, but as the disciples were all poor, and there in no record that they stopped to work, except when the disciples went fishing, we may believe, without drawing very hard on our imagination that there were friends of the cause of Christ who were in a position to help and had liberal hearts.

The fact that Judas had the purse, and was a devil, has nothing to do with its being right or wrong. Up to this time he had been a follower of Christ, and there is no proof that he did not do as the other disciples did. Judas followed Christ, but that did not make it to be a follower of Christ.

Now if a church has no fund, and will not maintain one, it has no use for deacons. Any member may use his own funds for the relief of the needy, but *it is the business of a deacon to use the funds of the church* for that purpose. I have known churches to ordain deacons when it was not the intention of the members of the church to put anything into their hands, at any rate they did not. This is to trifle with solemn obligations and make much ado over form and deny the plain teaching of God's word. If the elders of the churches who form presbyteries would be true to their

conviction, they would say to the churches when called on in such cases, we will not use our authority to put a brother in an office and then have you withhold that from him which is necessary to the performance of his duty. To ordain a deacon in a church that will not keep any funds in his hands is to lay upon him a solemn responsibility and then have the church tie his hands and force him to non-compliance with the obligations of his office.

A brother chosen in a church to be a deacon knowing it had not been the practice of the church to keep any funds, and had reason to believe that unless they viewed the matter different to the general impression among the members there would be nothing put into his hands, might well refuse to submit to ordination until there was a more scriptural understanding on the subject. These questions should be answered, not only by the brother chosen, but by the members of the church as well:

1. Is there a necessity for deacons in the church?
2. What is the duty of the church to the deacon?
3. What is the duty of the deacon?
4. What are the qualifications of a deacon?

I. Necessity for Deacons

With the view that there is no duty for the deacon but to assist at communion, it cannot be made out that there is any necessity at all. As before stated, there is no passage of scripture indicating that any member of the church might not properly do the work of the deacon usually does at communion.

If the view be taken that he is only to look after the spiritual interest of the members, then his place is more eminently filled by the ministry, and if there is necessity for more careful oversight, spiritually, then there should be more elders, or the pastor should give himself more wholly to the work. From this standpoint there is no necessity whatever of choosing deacons.

The necessity, as it is stated in view of the New Testament, is to take charge of financial matters and after the needs of the members of the church, being supplied with the means to do this by voluntary contributions of the members.

I repeat, if a church does not intend to keep funds in the hands of her deacons, she does not need deacons.

It may be said in reply to this that it would be the duty of the deacons to look about and see if there were any poor, or need expenses, or if the pastor needed help, and report it to the church and get instructions what to do and receive supplies from the church.

I would say, in the first place, to admit this view a member who had but little judgement would make about as good a deacon as expected to exercise his judgement in any case, but must always wait until he has been directed just what to do. While the qualifications given indicates that he is to act on his own judgement.

Then, in some cases of immediate need, if the church met only once a month, as most of our churches do now (in 1899), the needy brother or sister might pass in great suffering and distress beyond the need of anything ministered by human hands.

But the objector to the fund suggests that in such a case it would be the duty of the deacon to either contribute of his own means, or see the brethren and collect something.

This is purely an innovation on God's design, as He has set forth in the Acts of the Apostles, and the example of the Primitive (original) church. Paul gives instruction that there be weekly collections, that when the time for the use of the funds arrived, that there would need to be no collection taken (1 Cor. 16:1,2). The deacon might be poor himself and need not have enough to supply the needs of others, and it very often happens that very poor brethren are very prompt to do their duty, and would make just as good deacons as any.

Further, if the deacon is just to make report to the church of cases of need, any brother (or sister) can do that, and there is no necessity for a special appointment. The fact is this; it is the duty of all the members to report to the deacon.

A church cannot do in a proper way, and most likely will not do it at all, the things done by apostolic churches without active deacons. "The Lord has nothing done except for a good reason. If the church can do as well without deacons as with them, then what reason can be given for their appointment, unless the office is to be considered merely ornamental rather than practical, simply dignitary without duty.

Certainly it will be conceded by all who revere the sacred word that there must have been, and as yet, a necessity for the deaconship in the church, not simply that the church may say she has a deacon, but that the work of the deacon may be done. So a church should consider it is not in complete working order until the work of the deacon is recognized and carried out. When churches are organized after they have secured a pastor, and sometimes before, they choose deacons, the inference being, even when the statement is made, that a church is not fully in working order without deacons. But it is clear in some cases that this is a mere recognition of the office, and not of the work of the office, for no attempt is made to make the deacon of any practical aid to the church and the cause. We should look deeper than mere form. The fact that there were deacons in the (primitive) apostolic church should be argument enough with Primitive Baptists that the office was necessary, and also if necessary then, it is necessary now, or else the apostolic church would not be a pattern for all ages to follow. This admission would let in all the innovation of the day, which no Primitive Baptist could agree to at all. As proof that there were deacons in the apostolic churches, see the following scriptures: Acts 6:3-6; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

So if we are to lay claim to apostolic form in our churches we MUST have deacons, and it is certainly of more importance to have the work of the office done than it is to have the officer.

II. Duty of the Church to the Deacon

As to the question, "what is the duty of the church to the deacon?" If the members of the church do not recognize that there is a binding duty, the office might as well remain vacant. It is not the duty of the man who is filling the office, *but the office work as a function of the church*. We do not care for the hand or the foot as having any dignity of themselves, but because they are a part of the body, and without them the body would be maimed.

So must the office of the deaconship be considered. Here is a function of the church to be performed through this office, and if she does not have this office, she either does not do the work, or does it not in a scriptural way.

The church should not choose a brother as a deacon to honor the man, but to use him as a servant to carry out the full work of the church.

A church cannot raise a brother to the work of the ministry, that is God's work. But she can put any brother into the deaconship who has the qualifications, though there may be other deaconship who has the qualification, though there may be other brethren who are just as well fitted for the place who are not needed. God appoints the minister to do a special work, and the church appoints the deacon to carry out the active work that falls to the church as a body.

A church has much right to do away with baptism as it has to do away with the work of church that is to be done through deacons. She may have deacons in form; yet do away with the work of the deacon. If a member of the church has never done anything through the deacon's hands, that member has done away with the work of the deacon so far as he is concerned, and has committed as much of an offense against the Great Head of the church as though he had attempted to make void anything else that belongs to the house of the Lord. Indeed, it is hard to say if there is anything else connected with the church, except it be the ministry of the word, but it could be struck down with less hurt than this.

To appoint deacons and then ignore them in administering the financial part of the church's business is gross contempt for God's law as head of the church. It would be as though an Israelite of old had said, "I will ignore the priest who is to minister the temple and do the work myself." Many brethren make this statement in substance when they say they will not have the deacon to fill his office, but what they have to give they will give it themselves.

If the apostolic church is to be taken as a pattern (and if it is not we have none), we must consider the deaconship as an office of God's own arranging and should not hesitate as much to change it or abolish it as we would to change the doctrines given in the scriptures, and should feel that as great a curse will fall on us for the one as for the other.

The deacon is the hand of the church she stretches out to all who are in need, and to keep her affairs working in decency and in order.

Some brethren try to step behind this passage, "but when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," and conclude that what they do they must do very privately, not letting anyone know what they do, not even the deacon.

This is plainly straining the passage to mean something it was never intended to mean at all. It is wrong to make a display among men, and these words of the Saviour were spoken in condemnation of such practice. In the same connection the Saviour tells His disciples that when they pray they are to enter into their closets and pray in secret and not before men (Matt. 6:5).

Is it wrong to pray in public? Most of our church rules say that our services ought to be opened by singing and prayer. According to this construction this would be wrong and no one ought to offer prayer in public. The absurdity of this construction at once appears.

It may be that brethren who have urged such a construction have done so, violating the true principle in their hearts. It may be they wanted the recipient to know just whose liberality he received, and they did not put it into the hands of the deacon because then it would never be known by the recipient who has made the contribution.

Sometimes when there are several preachers at a meeting a brother wants his favorite preacher to know that he is appreciated, and prefers to give out of his own hand; for if it was given to the deacon it would be divided up and those who were in greatest need would get the most, and his favorite would ever know just how he appreciated him. *This is the very spirit our Lord was condemning, and the plea is a mere pretext.* If one is willing that his liberality should not be advertised, let him put his gifts in with the common funds in the deacon's hands.

If the church is to feel as she ought toward the deaconship it must be viewed as God's way of attending to certain affairs, and must be sacredly guarded from those who would change or abolish it. If a brother be chosen by the church to be put into the deaconship it is his right to know that the church rightly understands her obligations to the office, and is disposed to recognize them, before assuming obligations himself that he cannot discharge unless the church will first do her duty.

A church should not consider the work of the deacon as being apart from her own acts, but every member should feel

that God has made it His duty to do certain things, and that these things are to be done through the deaconship.

The scriptures teach that we must be baptized and then leaves us no discretion as to manner or mode of baptism - - we must be dipped under the water.

Now it is the duty of members of the church to do certain things, and then it is specified that this is to be done through the deacon's hands. It is contempt for God and His word to say, "It can be done as well some other way."

The duty of the church to the deaconship is such that it is open rebellion to say to the deacon, "stand thou here, we can do all there is to do without having any need of thee." What right has any member or individual to ignore or make void an office that has the approval of the sacred word!

The duty of the church toward this office is such that they should hold all their possessions subject to the needs of the church, as did the saints in the time of the apostles. While it is not obligatory now, nor was it then, to sell one's property and put it into a common fund, yet the principle is that each brother and sister should be willing to support the cause with all that they have, and to that end should keep sufficient funds in the hands of the deacons to discharge the obligations of their office.

III. What is the Duty of the Deacon?

This is the next question to be considered by all the church in setting apart a deacon.

It would appear strange that a church should ever set apart a member to a work when very few of the members understood clearly what that work was. But such might be the case. Every member should be able to answer the plain question, in choosing a deacon, "what is he going to do?" The necessity for this will be apparent upon reflection. If the members of a church do not properly understand the duty of a deacon he will not be able to discharge his duty, if his performance in any ways depends upon them, for they will not cooperate with him. So a brother, when chosen by a church to this office, might very properly demand of them what they expect him to do.

If the members only expected him to assist the pastor at the communion, and bear unkind criticism, as every one put into any prominence must do, he might with good ground

refuse to accept the responsibility because the church was not scriptural as to the duty of deacons.

No pastor should permit a church of his care to go into the selection of a deacon without thoroughly instructing them as to the duty of the deacon. Here is where many of our pastors confess error, and failure to discharge their obligation. Too often the only things considered are the moral qualifications of the deacon without respect to what the deacon is to do.

How is it possible to decide on the qualifications of a person to an office without deciding what he is to do?

Here is where many mistakes have been made. Often, if a brother is exemplary in his walk and character as a man and a Christian, he is considered fit to be into the deacon's office.

Certainly no member of the church should consider himself competent to enter into the choice of deacon without first defining to his own satisfaction the work of the deacon, and then considering the peculiar fitness of the brother who is to be set apart.

The work of the deacon needs to be decided upon and understood by all, so that the brother chosen to the office may be impressed with the fact that certain things are expected of him, and knowing it is the mind of all that he is to do these things, he will feel a greater obligation to discharge his duty. For, if there be a diversity of opinion regarding his work, he can never act without the feeling that his course was disapproved by some, which is a very discouraging condition.

But, if all of the members are properly instructed, the deacon will feel encouraged to perform the duties of his office, knowing his work is known to all, and that a failure to do it will meet with criticism, while to act faithfully will endear him to all his brethren.

It is, indeed, very essential that all the members understand what the work of the deaconship is, and that they regard it not as being separate and completely apart from *their work*, but rather the channel through which individual members and the whole church, are to discharge certain obligations.

By reference to Acts, the sixth chapter, it will be very clearly seen that he is to make distribution of the church funds to all who have need. None will contend that the church ought to neglect or overburden any of her members,

but different brethren will propose different plans for equalizing the burdens and caring for all who should be ministered to. This ignoring God's plan, and certainly His plan must be the best plan.

Some would advocate that each brother or sister must act for himself or herself, and minister to all whom they find who have need. Now, certainly, there is nothing in God's word that would stand in the way of anyone taking this course. But the members of churches are weak human beings, and some who have plenty of means have little charity, and some who have great sympathy for the cause, and for the suffering, have but little means. So, if left to themselves, the burden will fall most unequally, for many, who are able to help, will evade any occasion for bearing the burden of others, leaving the few who are willing, whether able or not, to do whatever is done.

So it is evident that if the burdens of the church are to be equalized, and those who need help are to receive it, the New Testament, plan is the only one that will meet all the conditions to be provided for.

Here only will be found a stimulus for those who have been blessed with plenty, but who have a covetous disposition; here only will be found a check for those who are liberal beyond their means, and funds sufficient for the needs of all.

Besides this, the pastor should have an efficient helper, one who is full of Godly wisdom, leading an exemplary life before the members for them to follow after, and an officer of the church full of the Holy Ghost and faith.

It is a wise provision by the Great Head of the church for equalizing the burdens among members that the means contributed by each member to go into one common fund, of which the deacons have charge. The deacon will know whether a member is contributing according to his ability, but the deacon is not to say how much any member shall give, for the needs of the church are to be met by voluntary offerings, as were the necessary things for the tabernacle and its service; but he will know who is giving as the Lord has prospered them, and if they fail to do this in love for their poor and afflicted brethren, and after proper

instruction, and reproof if necessary, they should be reported to the church as being covetous, which is a grievous sin, and should be summarily dealt with.

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." - - Col. 3:5, 6.

Old Testament lessons teach us that an idolater is an abomination in the sight of God. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." - - 1 Cor. 5:11.

All of the members of any church know that it is wrong to tolerate a drunkard in the church. Well, *the sacred writ couples drunkards and covetous people together* as being of one class, a class on which the "wrath of God" cometh.

Now the deacons, knowing who are covetous and who are not, it would be their duty, because of their love for the brethren and cause of Christ, more than that of any other member, to labor with such and offender in this direction, and if need be report him to the church.

Ananias and Sapphira were accused by the Apostle Peter. His was before the institution of the deaconship, and the funds of the church were in the hands of the apostles.

Ananias and Sapphira professed before men that they were giving in all that they had to give. So long as there was no use for their goods they were under no obligation to part with them; *but their sin was in withholding through a covetous disposition*. Before the property was sold it was clear that it was their own, and after it was sold the proceeds were theirs (Acts 5:4). But they evidently felt it would be commendable to give in all they had, and yet they loved what they had more than they did the cause of Christ. The church could make no demand as to the amount to be given, so these two lied to God and not to men.

How many deacons have seen cases like this, brethren professing to give all they were able to give, and yet the deacons knew that a covetous disposition was causing them to hold back what they ought to bestow?

We should learn from this lesson in Acts that the

principle upon which the church was founded is, that the possessions of all members ought to be held by them subject to the needs of their brethren and the good of the cause. This fact should be recognized by the deacons who should

not be slow to call upon the members for funds to meet all needs. A brother who is one indeed, should be ready to divide his last crust, and if this spirit prevailed it would not be hard for the deacons to do their work.

For the deacons to know there is a need for distribution to the poor, or to the ministry, or to the sick, and yet have members who are well able to contribute to such purposes withhold their means, after an appeal from the deacon, is very discouraging, indeed; in fact, this is the greatest burden deacons have to bear, Finding that members fail and refuse to do their duty the deacons grow indifferent to their work and the office falls into disuse.

When the deacons have reported a covetous person to the church he should be dealt with the same as for any other offense. And that covetous person should be dealt with there can be no doubt whatever, if the scriptures are to be taken as a rule, As before remarked, if covetous persons were classed with the drunkards, idolaters, etc., and dealt with accordingly, it would be better for the church and all her members. Of course the deacon will have to take gospel steps to bring such matters before the church, and when this is done the church should not regard this sin as a peculiarity of character that cannot be reached, for it stands in the way of the prosperity of the church by withholding that which is needed perhaps in the upholding of the gospel ministry. Not that the pastor of a church should serve for a salary, or for the sake of money. But many of God's ministers are poor in this world's goods, and having families, it is impossible for them to give a very great portion of their time to the ministry.

The apostles ordained deacons and put the funds of the church into their hands in order that the ministers might be able to give themselves wholly to the work (Acts. 6:4). With this thought on his mind the deacon will not feel that it is simply a personal matter between him and his brethren. To neglect his duty, and let brethren withhold from the church what they are able to give, if it is needed to assist the pastor so that he may discharge his duty too, is to give assent to a weakened service, and a weakened for mere greed, too, and to actually become a party to breaking

down the apostolic plan for keeping up a church and sustaining the ministry in its work.

An important duty of deacons is to see that those who are able do not withhold their means because of covetousness.

Not only is it the business of the deacon to receive the funds contributed by the members, but that perfect confidence may be maintained, he should keep an accurate account of all he receives and all he sends out, and make his report to the church regularly. He need not report what each member gives, but the whole amount received. But he should list the items as being paid out. If the church desires it he may report items received.

This is necessary, because the members must have every evidence of integrity and honesty of the deacon. True, they might feel this at the time of his selection, but so that this feeling of trust may be maintained it will be found necessary that the members know what he does with the funds trusted in his hands. If it is known that he keeps no account they will feel that perhaps he himself does not know just in what condition the funds are in, whether he has church enough funds on hand, or whether he has paid out more than has been put into his hands.

I knew a case in which a good brother's word was called in question. He said he had not received enough money for a certain purpose. Another brother, equally good, said from his knowledge he felt sure that he had, but said, "He keeps no records of the account and forgets."

If the deacon keeps no record or poor records of the funds he receives, and of what use he puts them to, it soon results in a falling off of the receipts and this necessitates making a collection every time there is an occasion to use funds to meet needs.

Some churches follow this practice: the deacon calls on the brothers and sisters when he has need of funds for a need above what is commonly called for, such as to help the pastor or a visiting minister, or any funds, or to pay churches expenses, and he only collects so much as may be needed and pays it all out at once.

This practice is rather to be commended than for the members to ignore the deacon, but it falls short of meeting the necessities, and is not following the scriptural practice. One of the bad features is, there will often be need of money, and the members will not be present to collect from. The regular meeting time may be cold and,

stormy or perhaps heavy rains or sickness may keep the members at home, but the faithful pastor is still present. He meets two discouraging things the members are not present and his expenses are not met.

Then at the next meeting, if the members are present, they, only contribute as much as though they had been present to the meeting before, because there is no report whether the pastor's expenses are met or not, and he has it to bear.

Now if the deacon kept an account of the church funds, he could report at any time before it was exhausted, and it would be the duty of the members to replenish it. Then, whether the members were present at a meeting or not, if the pastor was present he could be helped on his way. Or if there was need to help any poor person, or incidental church expense, the deacon would be prepared to meet it.

Another reason for keeping an account is for the convenience of the members. Many of our members are farmers, and do not have ready money at all times of the year, in fact, it may be the case with anyone that he is not at all times prepared to make a contribution. But there will be some time during the year when he could then put in his share as the Lord prospered him toward keeping up the church's expenses. He could then hand it to the deacon and his entry of it would show that this brother had given his proportional part. The deacon would then know not to call on him again until the other members had born their part.

Here arises a very important question: what is each member's share? Or how much should he give? This is where most of the attempts to systematize the deacon's work seem to break down.

A member asks the deacon, "how much shall I contribute?" The deacon, feeling he has no right to set the amount for members to give, says, "o, I don't know, just give what you feel like giving."

The member, feeling, perhaps, that the deacon will at once, and for that occasion, give out that he receives, whether it is actually needed or not, gives but a little. The deacon can say nothing, though he knows if the other members do not do better, the amount needed will not be raised. In his heart the deacon knows what is needed and what each member ought to give, but because of a wrong system in attending to business, the church has not done her duty.

Now all this can be remedied if the deacon is allowed to, and will do his duty. Every deacon who is qualified for the office can estimate about what the yearly expenses of his church will be. He can tell how about how much fuel will cost; he knows if there are any poor to be looked after regularly; he can estimate needed repairs about the building and the grounds; he knows how much it will cost to have some one care for the house, and have it ready for services; he should know the circumstances of the pastor, and about how much such a church as his ought to contribute to him.

He should lay this before all of the members of the church, and let them each one say how much of it he is willing to give. These amounts he can entered on his book. If it is enough to meet the demands, well and good, and each one will know about what he is to do, and he can do it when it is convenient. Each person ought to give as the Lord has prospered them, "according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9:7.

But if the amounts volunteered at first do not cover probable expenses, the deacon can ask the members to pray and reconsider the matter, and perhaps raise their contributions; or knowing the circumstances of all the members, he will suggest to those who maybe have not been as liberal as their circumstances warrant, that they should give more and help to equalize the over all burden. When this matter has been arranged, the members can give the amounts they have agreed to give as soon as they have it, or as the deacon may need it. The deacons should not wait until the funds are extremely exhausted before calling upon the members to do their duty to the church, *nor should the members wait to be called on at all.* They should try to make the work of the deacon as light as possible, and should not put him to the trouble of calling on them individually.

Of course the members are privileged to make as many gifts outside of this church fund as they feel the Lord leads them.

Out of the funds in their hands the deacons should distribute to the poor. No widow, or orphan nor poor member should be allowed to suffer for the necessities of life, nor for any needed comfort that the church is able to provide. Never should a brother or sister, who can possibly

be cared for otherwise, be sent out to the poor house to be cared for by the general public. The church need not take upon herself the burden of caring for the poor outside of her own membership, because the members pay taxes to care for these poor. But her own poor and afflicted should be cared for by the church, and it is the special duty of the deacons to look after this work.

When one church is not able to care for her poor, other churches should help, as did the church at Corinth and the churches of Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1-3).

In the United States, outside of the cities, we have not many poor who are actually unable to care for themselves who have not any relatives to look after their needs, so this is not a heavy burden on the churches. In some cases members may be lazy and imprudent, so the deacons should carefully investigate each case of reported need and report it fully to the church that their course may be approved.

The deacons should defray the necessary expenses of the church, such as providing fuel, employing a janitor service and keeping up the repairs. The practice of some churches making such things a special order of the church is disregarding the deaconship, and results in neglect and often in dissatisfaction among the members. It is an old saying, that what is everybody's business is nobody's business, and it often proves to be true.

A pane of glass is broken in a window. The janitor sees it, but he did not break the glass, and is not obliged to put in a new one, as he probably will not get paid back his expense for caring for the house until the end of the year, and he has no money with which to buy the glass except what is his own. He knows the deacons have no church money, and that there will have to be a collection taken, and perhaps if the glass is put in before the collection is taken, it may not be made at all. So he waits for the church to "take the matter up" and take up a collection, before this small matter can be attended to.

Then the janitor, does not feel disposed to speak to the deacon about it, as he only is an individual, and as "individuals" do not want to be "too forward" in matters which concern others as well as themselves.

Now the deacons are to be held accountable for all these things, so that there would not be so much neglect. The church does not need a meeting (in order to decide), it needs a new pane of glass. And if there is neglect, then the church would need to have more new deacons to

meet the need. I will suggest to deacons, that they should see to it that the house needs to be kept in proper order to make the congregation comfortable. The house should be kept clean, the seats free from dust, warmed in the winter before the congregation assembles, and kept warm enough, but not too warm, proper ventilation being provided. He ought to look after these things and look to see if he can encourage other members to follow the example that he is setting. He should organize those members according to their strengths to aid him in his work in such a manner that every one will have a part. He is to make it the business of the church to care for herself, each member being a part of the body as a whole. "Be not slothful in business." - - Rom. 12:11. Keep the house and grounds in nice order, that it may be a pleasant and inviting place for all.

Some churches appoint an annual or a semi-annual "house cleaning" when the members all come in to spend the day together, and to thoroughly clean the house, cut the grass, repair the fences, etc., and this is commendable, especially as it affords the members an opportunity of spending a day together.

The deacons should minister out of the church funds to the necessities of the pastor, and they must to a great degree determine how much is done for him. The pastor's circumstances and opportunities should be understood. The deacons should remember that a church cannot be proper without pastoral service, and they must provide for as efficient service as possible.

If a church simply provides for a minister to come and preach for it two days or more in the month, and return at once to his home, if he lives at a distance, it is arranging for no pastoral service except the public ministry of the Word, which is but a part of the pastor's duty.

Deacons were first chosen that those who ministered the Word might give themselves wholly to that work, and the deaconship should still be used to loose the hands of the ministry that the church may have the benefit, not only of the preached word, but of pastoral service as well. The pastor should be able to visit the sick, the afflicted, the disobedient, the indifferent, those who fail to attend their meetings, those who have a hope but who are not members of the church, those who are in trouble on account

of their sins, and the scriptures teach that he is not to do this at his own expense. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charge? Or who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" - - 1 Cor. 9:7.

No unbiased person can read this and believe but that it has reference to a preacher of the gospel. Those who would try to make it mean anything else would certainly be wresting with the scriptures. It means very plainly that the pastor, minister or preacher, is not to go at his own charges, and then it is plainly told from whence his lack is to be made up.

He is to eat of the fruit of the vineyard, and he is to take of the milk of the flock. "For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" - - 1 Cor. 9:9-11.

I remember when we used oxen on the farm, and when gathering corn in the field, we let the oxen eat the corn off the stalks as they went along, and we did not have to feed them the corn at the stables when engaged in this work. This is on the same principle as the law of Moses in regard to treading out the corn, though the "corn" was a different grain in that case.

Now, Paul says, this law in regard to oxen treading out corn was written in special regard to the gospel ministry. "Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written." But that the matter may be settled he asks, "is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"

Now the law that God gave the church, according to Paul (1 Cor. 9:14), is "that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." As a parallel case with this he cites the fact that in the temple service, (which is the type of the church service,) "they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar." The priests, which evidently represent the gospel ministry in type, drew no land when the land of Canaan was divided, because they were to live of the things of the temple. If

the offerings of the temple were abundant, then their living was plenteous; but if the offerings fell off, then they might even be driven to seek a living at other employment. "Even so," says Paul to the church at Corinth, "hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live the gospel."

Some try to over spiritualize this passage, and make it mean something very different from what the apostle evidently intended. But it would be very strange, indeed, if Paul had taken no spiritual comfort from the gospel, as would be implied if we are to spiritualize this passage, for Paul says, "But I have used none of these things; neither have I written these things that it should be done unto me; for it were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void."

Paul did as any minister who is in the same position might do; he might not use his power in the gospel, and might support himself with his own hands. Not that Paul did this all the time, for even when he was preaching for the church at Corinth, and not asking them to supply his needs, he says he robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do service to the church at Corinth. When he was at Corinth the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied his wants. See 2 Cor. 11:8,9.

But to this church to which he was not "burdensome" he wrote, asking them to forgive him for not having them supply his needs, and so on an even footing with the other churches. "For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong." - - 2 Cor. 12:13.

If it was wrong then to train a church up in this way, and made it inferior to churches which supplied the minister, would it not be wrong now? And would not a church which neglected its pastor be inferior to one that did not?

But while Paul did not at first teach the Corinthians to minister to his support, in both his letters he deals with the subject very plainly. There seemed to be some condition peculiar to this church which caused him to deal with them thus. While upon this subject (2 Cor. 12:16) he says, "being crafty, I caught you with guile," that is to say that he felt like he deceived them in the matter.

But he asserts that he had power to forebear working (1 Cor. 9:6), but he had not used that power in this case. Any minister who is in like circumstances might follow a like course. But if he had a wife, as Paul described he had a

right to have, and a family, and he had to provide for them, he might have very little time to devote to the churches, and here is where the *deaconship* is so much value to the church. A wise and zealous deacon will see to it that means are provided that the church may have pastoral service. Of course the members of the church must be of like mind or the deacon would be powerless to do anything of himself. But if the church does not feel it is her duty to provide for pastoral service, the pastor will have to take from his own family to serve the church, or the church will have to do without this needed service.

As to how much service any church shall have must depend upon circumstances. First on its condition, and second, upon the disposition of the churches about it. If the church is weak in her members, and the members are poor in this world's goods, then if it cannot get a pastor who can afford to devote his time to them, they can have a limited service, unless the churches about it are strong and willing to give a pastor such aid that he can devote more time to the weak church than it is able of itself to have.

Now this is a subject that should be taken under consideration by strong churches. They should not feel that they have discharged their obligations when they simply provided for their own services if there are weak churches about them that need help. The apostolic practice was to gather up at one place to distribute in another (1 Cor. 16: 1-3; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1-5; 11:9). Ministers should impress this principle on the churches, for it is certainly taught in the New Testament that the strong should help the weak, and this should not be ignored.

No church should be satisfied while others are needing its help, and it is able to extend it, and this might be done very efficiently by enabling the pastor to give the weak church more his time. But the strong churches should go still further and help the weak churches to build houses of worship, for it should be considered that all belong to one family and should help each other accordingly.

It is the Lord's design that churches should have pastoral service and when they pursue such a course as to cut themselves off from this service it is not to be wondered at that the Lord shows His disapproval.

Now it is through the deaconship that this service is to be extended if it is properly recognized. If a church

should say to its pastor, we want one-half your time, or all your time, if the church was conducted on a scriptural

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basis the pastor would have no right to refuse, as under scriptural conditions he is to give himself wholly to the work. But the means of the members would have to be put into the deacon's hands in sufficient amount that he might supply the pastor's needs.

Now when a church keeps back that which should be given to extend pastoral work it is not defrauding the minister, but it is cutting off its spiritual service. The members are gaining in the wealth of this world at the expense of the church and the ministry.

They are not defrauding the minister if he has not actually given them his time, for if the churches do not want his time he can work with his hands and make his living and care for those dependent on him, too many try to think of this matter as simply being between themselves and the pastor, but it affects the pastor much less than it does the church. The pastor may not be able to do the work that needs to be done, and this may pain his heart, and he may make sacrifices endeavoring to do it, but he can provide for himself as others do, and he should not hesitate on his own account to do it.

No pastor who is worthy of the name will see the covetousness of the members standing as a barrier to the progress of the church without great pain at his heart, and without feeling a disposition to do for the cause, even if it must be at his own charges, knowing that it is after all the Lord who provides for him.

In my early ministry I attended a church several years, principally at my own expense. Finally when the needs of a growing family forced me to say that they would have to help in the expenses of my attending them, they said that I was not an Old Baptist, and I severed my connection with them. I was young then, and had never given these things much thought, and had never delivered a discourse to this church on the duty of the church to the ministry. I did, however, before leaving them show them the scriptural principle and practice. They would not consider it rightly, however, and the result is that they have had but little preaching for many years, and have no pastor. This is not because preachers in this section are "money-hunters," but because this church has asked its pastors to bear a heavier burden than the members were willing to take upon

themselves. They asked one man to do more than they altogether would do. Many churches have suffered on the same principle as this one, but in a lesser degree, though

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no doubt the extinction of many churches might be traced to this unwillingness of the members to aid with their means to the ministry of God's word.

Now the deacons and the whole church should understand that the deaconship is to be used in this direction. Before the office of deacon was instituted the church funds were in the hands of the apostles, and no doubt they lived out of this fund as they had need, for they gave themselves constantly to the work. But all this was turned over to the deacons, and it is but reason that the deacons then supplied the ministry with what they needed. As before indicated, the deacons need to understand the circumstances of the pastor and the church, and then try to provide for such services as will not too heavily burden either. Of course a pastor, on his part, may give as much service as he is able to give, or even more, without the church doing anything for him. But it is not right for the church to ask him to bear more burden than the members bear, and of this the deacon should be a competent judge. And if a deacon is to succeed he must have an opinion and be faithful to express it.

Some one must have an idea about how much the church needs to help the pastor and it is not the business of the pastor to set a price on his time and labor.

He who can be hired to preach can be hired to quit. But just because this is true is no reason that the pastor should bear more of the burden than other brethren. The pastor must have time to study the Word and store his mind with information needed so that he may instruct and be helpful to the flock over which he has charge. This is entirely different from writing sermons. In writing a sermon one might simply consult works upon the subject to be treated upon and soon have the work over. But where one is to be informed on what the scriptures teach on all subjects that he may speak extemporaneously on any given subject, there must be much more study, and the mind must be stored with knowledge for a pastor to try to instruct and properly serve a church without study, and study takes time. This is one of the things that a deacon must reckon as an expense, and either the pastor or the church must meet it. The church certainly has the right to expect the pastor

to study, and as it is for the benefit of the church, the church is properly chargeable with the time.

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The deacon must take under consideration the time and necessary expense of the pastor in serving the church. If he has a family, certainly the church cannot ask him to leave his family and serve it without lovingly giving restitution to the family. If the minister has no family, to ask for his time will not be to ask for as much, though certainly an appreciation of his labors toward them ought to be shown (Phil. 4:17).

A church could not very consistently say to a minister, "We know that your wife needs your support, that your children need food and raiment, nevertheless God has called you to preach, so we call you to serve our church; when you are not giving your time you can work to support your wife and children. Though it hardly seems possible that you can do a good part by them in that time, yet you can trust the Lord to take care of them."

This kind of treatment would hardly agree with the argument of the Apostle James. "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" - - James 2:15,16. Brethren with a thought of what they were doing surely could not ask a minister to leave his family and give his time to them. They may argue he is giving his time to the Lord. If it be so God requires so much at the hands of His ministers, and has required nothing at the hands of the members to correspond with it, then the burden is a most unequal one, indeed.

But there is no scripture to hold up such an argument, it is all the other way. We can know the mind of the Lord by going to His word and learning what He says.

Then, again, a man cannot do as well in his business, if he has one, and be gone several days out of each week. He will lose by his non-attendance to it, and the deacons should consider this.

His clothing will cost him more, be he ever so humble and careful. It is a reflection a church for the minister to be poorly clad when the condition of the church is such that it is not necessary. He should not wear costly apparel, but it should be such as is suitable to his station. It causes remarks which are hurtful to the cause

for a minister to be dressed too expensively. But the members should think too much of the cause to let their pastor go shabbily dressed.

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These and many other reasons will be admitted by the thoughtful deacon as good ground for a liberal contribution, according to the circumstances of the members of the church.

Before leaving this part of the subject I wish to call the attention of members again to a fact already stated, *when a church withholds from her minister it is defrauding itself*. It is wrong to consider this a matter simply as a duty from the members to the preacher as a man. The church must be considered as a whole, and the ministry is one important work in the body without which the church cannot prosper. Cut off and the church must fail. It is God's law that His word must be preached. The burden of preaching that has been laid upon the whole church, not just on His ministers. His ministers are to be humble and used as vessels, but it is not theirs to carry all of the weight of the service. Theirs is unspeakably the heaviest part to bear, since poor and stammering as they may be, they must proclaim before all people the greatness of God and the sinfulness of man. All their lives they may not call their time their own; they must do the bidding of others, and put fleshly desires behind them. They may not enter life as other men and compete for wealth and fame, they must preach the gospel; and there are a great number of things that a man cannot do and preach the gospel.

With every undertaking the minister must have this in his mind: "I cannot call my time my own to dispose of it as I will; I cannot have the enjoyment of my family in the same way as other men have, I must leave them to serve others; my children need my presence, but often I must leave them without it; whether sick or well, weary or in buoyant in my spirit, with darkened mind or joyful heart, I can never get away from this continuous round of duties: week after week, month after month and year after year it will always be the same with me.

"I cannot change off this work for something else. When the churches are in trouble, when the members are indifferent, where my labors are scarcely valued, when all the sacrifice must be mine, my sympathies open to the suffering and sorrowing so that my heart-strings are

bleeding, still I must hold my way as though all was bright and cheerful.

"I must never think that men can requite me, for my service is to God; I must never let the acts of men

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discourage me, for God requires that I shall be found faithful; if the church and the world shall take my services without thanks, still I must not abate my zeal, I must labor as seeing Him who is invisible.

"I cannot buy off from this work, not if I owned the whole world and would give it all; God requires the service of my heart and tongue and not my possessions or the labors of my hands. Woe is me if I preach not the gospel of the Son of God, and yet how unqualified am I for so great an undertaking."

This is the burden on one side. This but poorly expresses what the minister of Christ must bear.

How would you like to exchange, my brother, and take upon you the work of the ministry, this life-long service, instead of joining in with numbers of others to take a small part of your possessions (which are a gift of God to you), to uphold this poor minister while he goes where God has sent him?

Ah! How it would hurt you to have to leave off everything, your home, your business's and go here and there as though you had no home! How it might grind into your nature to see opportunity after opportunity to get on in the world slip by you, and you would dare not renounce your calling. Would you give up your present life to be a minister? Would you suffer ridicule for the church of Christ? Would you exchange places with him?

Oh, no, you would not like to exchange, if you knew what it really meant! You would beg to be excused from this service. You would plead your stammering tongue, your unworthiness and inability to perform the duties of the office well. You would say, "No not me, send this man."

Well, since you do not want the work for yourself, will you object if the Lord asks at your hands a mite to hold up this man while he does the work which you feel is too heavy for you? *Certainly since you recognize that the work is important, you will not ask that you shall bear no part of it at all?*

If you do, the Lord will not excuse you, any more than He will the man whom He calls to preach. Preaching is a service of the church which the whole church must bear. And

well it might, since it is important. Think of having to go day after day, week after week, month after month and year after year without hearing the glorious gospel promises proclaimed by the Lord's own anointed! How discouraging!

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The church could not live! There could be no glad meetings where praises go up from happy hearts to God, for when the shepherd does not call, the sheep scatter, and every one his own way.

Would you be willing to bear something to have all this changed, and to hear the good sound of the gospel regularly? To have the sheep fed and led by the Fountain of Living Waters where there is coolness and verdure, where they may lie down at noontide under the shade of the trees and realize the loving presence of the Good Shepherd?

Well, it will not cost you much. You should not want all these privileges at the expense of some one else. David said, neither will I offer unto to the Lord of that which doth cost me nothing." If you are willing to enjoy the preaching of the gospel at your church, and let some one else bear all of the expense, you are not of a disposition that David was. But you ought to be of the disposition of the poor widow woman who cast the mite into the treasury; she cast in all that she had. She did not do it to be seen of men, but because she loved the services of the Lord and felt that she was willing to help support it!

So are all the Lord's people who have aright mind about such matters. They do not want to have other people burdened and themselves eased. They feel that they owe all that they have to the goodness of the Lord and are glad to show in any manner that they can receive their appreciation for His blessings. Most of our people dearly love to hear the gospel proclaimed, but many of them have never been taught their responsibility in helping to forward this good work with their means.

In fact when the Missionaries split off from the church with the Arminian idea that money might be used to help the salvation to reach people by carrying to them the gospel, our people wanted to get as far away from such an idea as possible, and backed away from the scriptural practice of helping the ministry. Many of our ministers have also felt timidity in advocating a return to the right (practice of scriptural giving); for fear that they would be suspected of wanting to follow the Missionaries. And their fears were not at all groundless, for there are many who were blessed

with plenty, but who are so covetous that they cry down every attempt toward liberality in this direction, professedly for the love of the truth, but really for the love of keeping their own money to themselves.

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But, on the other hand, there are many good brethren who know it is not wrong to do the right thing, and who have liberal hearts and who are willing to do so, but they are discouraged by irregularities and unscriptural methods. This is the situation as many God-fearing ministers see it. But many seem to be perplexed and ask, "What can we do?" with doubting hearts as to whether anything can be done.

Why, let the ministry and members rise up as one man and restore the walls that have been broken down, and establish again the service of the Lord according to His statutes. We have been many years going away, and we should not be discouraged if we are not able to return in one day, but we should decide to at least to be going in that direction.

Certain it is, that the deacons in the church should return to their duties as in apostolic times and all of our people should be instructed as to their duty in maintaining the office of the deaconship.

As before remarked, it cannot be done by spasmodic efforts, it must be done by patient, determined labor.

According to the qualifications given for the deacons their duties extend farther than simply to administering the financial affairs of the church. *They are considered as being helpers to the ministry. They are to uphold and help to lessen his burdens of the effort.* The Apostle Paul, when writing to timothy, states the qualifications of elders and deacons in the same connection as though the two were of great importance to the church.

One address is to the "bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1), as though both were responsible for the oversight of the church regarding the things treated.

In fact, in practice, a good, scriptural deacon fills a place in the church that the pastor can hardly make up in his absence. The pastor's duty is principally the preaching of the gospel and directing the affairs of the church. The deacon's work is necessary to stir up the members to an observance of the preached word, and to actively *lead in carrying out the pastor's suggestions.*

The pastor's instructions often fall with no result because there is no one to lead in doing the things being taught. This work, it seems, falls to the deacons.

A church that has no one to lead in this manner is not a live church, at least as far as not being active in this direction at all, and some other member of the church takes the lead in everything. This brother is then doing the work of the deacon and his qualifications for the office and

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should be recognized in the church by his appointment to it. Other duties of the deacons will be taken up in the discussion of the next question.

IV. What are the Qualifications of Deacons?

The fact that the qualifications of the deacons are given, indicates that not every one can do the work that belongs to the office, so churches should be very careful in their selection of men for this place. A brother may have many excellent traits, but if he does not have the particular characteristics mentioned he will not fill the office to the advancement of the church. He must be of the right disposition to do that which falls to the office.

One who would accomplish in the deaconship should maintain the dignity of the office and not be given to frivolity. As he must be a man of experience, his demeanor should indicate that life's lessons have not been lost on him. So also should he feel his responsibility, and this, if properly appreciated, will keep him from being light and chaffy (wasteful).

He who is to minister in the house of God should behave himself with proper decorum or he cannot have the respect of the membership, and will bring the office to nothing, for the members will not give ear to what he has to advise, nor put their affairs into his hands. If he appears giddy and thoughtless they will feel that he will not give things of importance sufficient thought and due consideration, and he will need to have the confidence of all of the brethren in this direction.

His manners should be such that those in need and distress will feel that he is their friend, and can be trusted in all their troubles, or he cannot get close enough to render the help that he ought to give. The weak will need to lean on him for sympathy and help, and if he is not "grave" he will not invite confidence that direction.

He is to be the helper of the pastor and will need such a character that he can effectively reprove and will

correct the erring, and none but a "grave" person could do this well.

He will need to be helpful to the sick, for it is in the distress of the sick room that he will find a field of his labor. None appreciate the help of the church more than those who, added to their want, have the weight of sickness.

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And if sick persons are not in want of a visit from the deacons will make sufferers feel that the church is not neglecting them, for the deacon in his ministrations represents the church.

It should be a grave accusation against a deacon for a sick brother or sister to say, "the deacons have never been around to see me." He should not only go himself, but also to stir up the members of the church to care for the sick.

The fraternal (Gr. fellowship of brethren) orders of the day profess to do more for the sick and suffering than do for their own in the churches, and when it is true in the case of any church it is said to the shame of that church.

The church should be like a family in this respect, that the welfare of every member should be carefully looked after. If a member of a household falls sick, all the others drop whatever else they may have in hand that the sufferer may have all proper care and every comfort that loving hands can minister, and day after day, night after night give themselves to assiduous watching until health is restored or death comes.

So it should it be in the church. It should be the business of someone to know what is needed and to take the lead in a work which otherwise is liable to be neglected, and that one is to be the deacon. It should occur to him as soon as he learns of the illness of a member. "I am a deacon, and here is the work to which I was solemnly ordained, and God will not hold me guiltless if I neglect it."

Then he should put by anything that would hinder him and go at once, as the hand of the church, to minister to the sick. If need be, supplies should be furnished out of the funds in his hands. But if only watchers are needed, he should notify members of the church that their help is needed, and they should respond at once.

If they belonged to a fraternal society of the world they would have to go or send someone in their places; but should not the love of brethren in the church, and in

gratitude to God for all of His grace and goodness, move one more quickly than any oath to man?

The deacon need not go to the members of the church and simply tell them of the sickness of a brother, but as an officer of the church, using his best judgement as to whom he should call on, should notify them that help is needed, and those so notified should not feel at liberty to refuse, but should cheerfully render all the assistance to these

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as is possible.

And where assistance is not needed, sympathy and brotherly love ought to be manifested, and the deacon should keep brethren in the remembrance of this which is their duty, the flesh and the devil are at all times working to get brethren to neglect each other and so drift apart for lack of expression of the feeling that should fill the hearts of God's people.

As a kindred duty the deacons will remember the widows and orphans. How heartless it is for the church to neglect those who are thrown on the mercy of others. The church, when working according to the principle shown in the New Testament, is better than any man-made institution for caring for her sick and widows in their afflictions, and I trust the day may soon come when the churches will not be remiss in this very important matter.

But it will not come until we get scriptural deacons in the churches, deacons who know their duty and who are zealous enough to do it, sacrificing personal their interest for the cause of Christ.

Then there are those who are old and infirm, and who cannot attend the church meetings, and these should not be neglected. A deacon may give them much encouragement and comforts, not only by visiting them himself, but also by seeing to it that the members of the church do not neglect them. It is so sad, indeed, for aged persons who may have been faithful attendants as long as they were able, to become neglected when age or infirmities confine them to their homes. I heard a sister say, "My old mother often sheds a tear because the church members do not visit her." Dear brother deacon, and members the church, let appeal to you not to neglect the aged soldiers of the cross who can no longer mingle in your assemblies.

It is the work that needs to be done that will decide the number of deacons, which a church is to have. One deacon might be sufficient to hold the funds of a large

church, but he may not be conveniently located to look after the needs of all the members. A church in choosing her deacons should have an eye to properly distributing them among the membership to serve all as efficiently as is possible. Usually as many as two are chosen, and as many more may be ordained as the needs of the church may determine.

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Deacons who follow after the Lord are blessed in their work and will be successful in influencing the lives of the members for the good must be "grave." A church could hardly have such efficient pastoral service that the deacons would not need to watch over the lives of each of the members to check the imprudent things with them before mischief results. Does a brother go wrong in such a manner that it can be called a personal offence? While it is the duty of any one who knows of it to try to recover the erring brother, it is imperative that the deacon shall act as soon as it come to his knowledge. It will not seem to the offender that the deacon is doing it for personal spite, for as an officer of the church it is his duty to take the matter up. Often disorderly actions of some member may become known to nearly all of the other members and it seems not to be the duty of one more than another to try to get them to the right, and when it is not understood to be the duty of the deacon, no one will take up the matter. But if it were understood to be his duty, not only would he have a sense of obligation in that direction, but the members would be pressing him forward which would strengthen him to act. It would make him feel that he, himself, was responsible for a disorderly condition of affairs and so increase the likelihood of getting rid of evils. It would also have the good effect on members if they felt, "If I go wrong the deacons will be around to visit me."

There will be a need that someone take the lead in encouraging those about the church that have their hope in Christ. Perhaps the pastor might do this more effectively than any one else, but he cannot reach every case and be present at every opportunity for doing good in this direction. As taking a part of the labors of the pastor, the deacons should be alert to mark all who have the work of grace in their hearts, and give them all the encouragement in their power. He who has the qualifications

for all of the work of a deacon should be able to go do much work of this character.

It should be a disgrace to the church and a hindrance to the cause for a deacon to be otherwise than perfectly reliable in his statements. It is a great shame for any member of the church to talk in such a manner that any one will doubt his word. But it effectually disqualifies a member for the deaconship, for the duties of this office require such intimate relations with the members as could

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not exist if the deacons were "double-tongued." He would lose his esteem with the members until he could no longer influence them to action in any direction for good. A man who does not strictly adhere to the truth will be shunned by good men.

The duties of the deacon make it absolutely necessary that all the brethren shall have confidence in his sincerity and the truthfulness of his statements. Members of the church will need to act on his judgement and statements in many cases. When he reports a case of need, if the members have to make an investigation themselves before feeling willing to act, his work is lost, and the duties of the office should be turned over to some one else.

The brethren will not feel like putting funds into the hands of a "double-tongued" man, for they will not feel sure that his reports are correct. He cannot be successful in making peace among brethren, but will be more likely to cause trouble. His record for veracity (honesty and trustworthiness) should be such that his statement will be an end to controversy. This will lead to referring matters to him for adjustment and will enable him to bring about reconciliation between brethren, for a deacon should be a "peacemaker" and be constantly on the watch to keep down indifferences between brethren.

What is true in regard to elders as being given to wine is true as applied to deacons. (See earlier discussion.) The deacon will have better opportunities for knowing whether members of the church are indulging too much in strong drink (or being a drunkard) than the pastor, and should use his influence to prevent such habits. But if he, himself, be given to the very same habit, he will be powerless to do anything at all. No brother who himself indulges in strong drink should be retained in the office.

A church can command no respect in a community if it be known that her deacons are "given to much wine."

To put a miserly or covetous man into the deaconship is worse than to have no deacon at all. A covetous person, if not put into prominence, might have but only a little influence on the real lives of others for their good; but if he be put into the deacon's office his influence at once begins to affect others and the purpose of the office will be defeated. If he will have a disposition to get others to do their duty his action would betray his own greedy nature and render his efforts as being fruitless. In fact, the

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more he tries to get others to bestow their means the more will his motives be suspected and criticized. But in fact this nature of being "greedy" will cause him to not endeavor to get others to be liberal, for it would not require him to be so, too.

To be "greedy of filthy lucre" (wealth, power and/or money) is to destroy spiritual mindedness and no person who lacks this can be a deacon indeed and in truth.

The care of the church and her saints must be upon his mind more than the accumulation of mere wealth. A deacon who will stay away from his meetings, and neglect the work of his office only to make money, should be reprov'd; and if he will not change his course should be put out of the office. He should be an example of liberality and faithfulness which no one can be who is grasping for only the things of this world.

Deacons are to hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (1 Tim. 3:9). They are not to be half-hearted in their endorsement of it, for in no other way can it be held in a "pure conscience." If they have but a superficial (shallow, partial or only skin-deep) knowledge of it, they cannot console the poor and the needy with their conversation and presence, nor will they be able to encourage those who have a hope in Christ who ought to come into the church. The fact that they are not in hearty accord with the principles upon which the church was founded will render their work unsatisfactory to the church. He must not be in doubt about the doctrines of the church nor the duties of the office, and should follow the prompting of a "pure conscience."

He may be conscious of his own weakness, and feel that he cannot fill the office as he would like to do, yet he should not draw back nor remiss in his known duties. He

should have a consuming desire to perform the duties of the office without fault.

As with an elder he should not be a "novice," so should those put into the office of deacon be "proved." Old deacons should be training up the younger members to their places, for it is a work that requires experience. If a brother has never been active in such service, how can the church choose him to be their deacon, not knowing whether he will develop these qualifications or not? Too often it is but an experiment in putting a brother into the office. If he has not the qualifications in some degree it may be that they cannot be developed, and, if not, the brother

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can never be acceptable as a deacon. His business ability, his temperament, his devotion to the cause, and fitness in general for the office should be "proved" before he is solemnly put into the charge of it.

Here is where so many mistakes occur. If a church needs a deacon, and has not seen the qualifications in any brother, it would be better to lay the duties on some member for a time to see if he has the necessary traits. If need be, try several brethren until one is found who can "use" the office, for to choose one who has no the ability in this direction is a grave mistake which may end only in hindering the cause very much.

It is not enough to say he is a good brother, for there are many "good" brethren who are worth nothing when they are place in the office of deacon. When a church has made the mistake of choosing a good brother and not a capable one for deacon, the only consistent course is to acknowledge the mistake by putting another brother into the office who is not only good, but one who can, and will perform the duties of the office. It is wrong for a church when it has made such a mistake to drag along until the brother dies to get the opportunity of choosing another deacon. Cases have been known where the church died first, and that certainly should never be the case. The good of the cause is at stake and it should not be ruined rather than for the church to acknowledge her wrong.

It may not be the fault of the brother put into the office, since he did not elect himself, and perhaps protested against being put into the place. So it should not be considered disgracing him to give the office to another.

But the church owes it to her interests, and to the cause in general, and is duty bound by the Great Head of the church, to rectify every wrong in her power, *and this is one wrong that can be righted.*

Owing to the nature of the deacon's work, his duty, his wife, if he has one, can be of much service to him if she is of the right disposition; but if she is not, she can very seriously interfere with his work. This is of so much importance that the qualifications of a deacon's wife are laid down.

Some churches insist that the deacon shall be married when chosen to the office, and that his wife shall be a member of the church and of the character prescribed, but

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he is not disqualified by her death. But if he marries again, to retain his office, his wife must be a suitable one for him. Other churches make no difference as to whether he has a wife or not.

It seems plain to my mind that whether it is imperative that he be married or not, it is advisable. If, as in giving the qualifications of the elders, the requirement that he shall be the "husband of one wife" is simply declaring against polygamy, then he might be unmarried. But as the qualifications of the wife are given (1 Tim. 3:11), it would seem that there is work for her also, in connection with that of her husband.

Some claim that the passage giving the qualifications of deacons' wives was meant simply for "woman" who held positions corresponding to that of the deacons (such as a deaconess). But there is no record of the establishment of such an office by the apostles, as the "seven" chosen were *men*.

It is certainly advisable when possible, to find a man of proper qualifications who has a wife who is of the right character to help him in his work. I would not be in favor of ordaining a deacon to the work who was married, and whose wife had not the qualifications to aid him.

It is clear, upon reflection, that if a deacon's wife is to be of help to him in the administration of his office, she should also be "grave," not a foolish woman who loves amusement and society better than the service of the Lord. If she is worldly minded she will take no interest in assisting her husband in his labor of love for others. She will not want to visit the sick of her own sex, and do for

them what belongs to the deacon's work, but which can hardly be done as well by the deacons.

To be a common gossip or a "slanderer," would prevent all possibility of doing good. It is a bad mark in any (brother or) sister of the church to indulge in this kind talk, and often results in serious trouble in the church. But in a deacon's wife it interferes with his work and stands in her way of doing that which is her duty to do.

She is to be "faithful in all things." That is, she is to do what godly woman should be found doing. She will imitate the deeds of Dorcas (Acts 9:39) who busied herself in doing good to others. Her adorning will not be in her will be the manifestation (or showing openly) of the "hidden man of the heart" (1 Pet. 3:3,4). She will

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receive the saints into her house, as did Mary and Martha, so that it may be said that she does what she can. She can help to care for the widows (Acts 6:39) and orphans, and while her husband is providing for the minister she can ascertain what his wife and children have need of and how they live.

As the deacons are to be examples to the brethren of the church in godly living, so is she to be to the woman.

More attention should be given to these requirements of deacon's wives, and they should be encouraged to take a more active part in the church work. They might go into many homes with good cheer and helpfulness. And this is not alone for the sake of the work that they, themselves, would do, but for the sisters of the churches should have efficient leaders in the work which they must do or which will probably remain undone. To their faithfulness and sacrifice the church now owes a great part of its activity, and it would be greatly heightened if they were properly encouraged and led on. They should be true "daughters of Sarah" (1 Pet. 3:6) and with their abundance of love and sympathy render all the service possible to the master's cause.

The same reasons exist for the deacons "ruling their children and their houses well" as in the case of the elders. The home life of brethren affects their efficiency as members of the church of Christ, and especially is this true of the officers of the church. Immoral and vicious actions of the members of the deacon's family, if traceable to his training or neglect, injures not only him in his work, but it also injures the whole church, so they cannot

be too careful in this direction, as the good of the cause is at stake.

"For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 3:13). How much in the church depends upon using this office well! The care of her sick, the relief of her poor, the help of the ministry, and the active work of the church in every direction, are connected with this office. Take away its efficiency and all efforts in these directions are crippled and weakened, if not entirely cut off, and the church becomes a motionless body, simply drinking in comfort from the declaration of God's grace to sinners, but manifesting no gratitude for such a wonderful gift, nor endeavoring to

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show love for the blessed Saviour who said, "If ye love Me keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Without the work of the deaconship (the deacon's work is often done by brethren who are not known as deacons) no pity for the suffering, nor help extended to the needy; the pastor is not helped on in his ministry and has no efficient aid in keeping up the practical work of the church.

But with it, how this changes! The members realize that there are duties to fulfill, and wake up to active service, knowing that we serve our God and His people. The service of God is no longer in word only, no but is in deed as well! A strong hand takes hold of the active labor of the church and the ministry is permitted to declare with all freedom the glorious gospel of grace, knowing that the church will, and is doing Her duty. This takes a burden off the ministry, and pastors of churches are content to give their work the time needed, having assurance that their needs will be supplied.

The members, of a church which has an active deacon, feeling that they have a leader who can be trusted, work together in harmony, with little division as to the way things are to be done. But without such a leader among them they are liable to, each one, to go after his own opinion, and there being little concert of action, but little or nothing is accomplished along practical lines.

In a church where the deacons do not use the office "well," when the members meet, and the deacons are present, there is no inquiry about them more than there would be for other absent members, for not having been active in church matters, the members have not been accustomed to thinking

of them as having any special duties, nor to depend upon them for guidance.

But I call to mind a few men who were deacons, indeed, and their presence have assurance that everything would be conducted in order. When the time came for the service they said, "Come brethren, let us sing." If the pastor was present he was assisted in the opening services and encouraged in his work. If no pastor was present (for whatever reason) the church was called into order just as promptly, and services were held in which all the brethren, who could be induced to do so, joined. Perhaps reading a passages from the Holy Scriptures. If any of the members were absent, inquiry was made to ascertain whether any one present knew the reason of their absence, and the following

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week, or as soon as possible, those who were not present received a visit from the deacon if he could not otherwise learn the cause of their absence. Brethren who were remiss in their duty were kindly and yet firmly rebuked and exhorted to greater faithfulness.

These brethren were held in high esteem, not feared, but loved, and purchased to themselves a "good degree" in the affections of their brothers and sisters. When the Lord called them home, and the church no longer had the stimulus of their presence, brethren could be heard to remark, "It was this way in Brother A's lifetime." In one of these churches the old deacon, when age had made it impossible for him to do all of the work he was accustomed to doing, took one of the younger brethren and put his work on him, instructing him in a fatherly manner how to act and what to do. When the old deacon died the church had a man who could take up the work of the deaconship acceptably, and he was put into the office, having first been "proved."

To use the office of the deaconship well can but raise a brother in the estimation of all. It brings him a "good degree." His watchfulness and activity in the cause, he having nothing but the glory of God and the peace of his church in view, endears him to pastor and church alike.

By using his office well a deacon will grow to great "boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." He will have to meet opposition of every kind, from outside of the church and from within. One who can meet all the opposition that a deacon must meet without getting discouraged and relaxing his efforts will have great boldness in the faith as the result of his experience.

It is hard for a deacon to represent the church in her practical work in the face of the criticism of the world. The world will want him to join some benevolent society, and have all the members do the same, and let the society take care of the poor among them. The world will frown on him when he takes some erring brother by the arm, and calling him brother, leads him back to the path of rectitude. The world would try to make him feel that it was too much condescension (lowering of oneself, becoming inferior) for him to try to life up the poor and needy by his labors and that to reform the erring with prayers and tears. Then it will take some of his time, too, and will require too much self-sacrificing of his life all the way through.

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Inside the church will be found those who are opposed to Bible practice and they will try to stand in the way of his carrying out the work of the office. They will want to bestow gifts in person (to be seen of men) or they will give nothing at all.

Covetous persons will argue against expense, they will oppose assisting the poor and helping the ministry. The members will be slack in their duty in various directions, and sometimes inclined to make trouble instead of laboring for the peace of God's people.

All of these things will try his patience and his faith in God, but if he will persevere, he will grow into a humble boldness that will bear all things and endure without flinching even under the severest opposition.

I implore the deacons of the churches to take out the time to consider these things. Ask yourselves, "Do I love the Zion of my God? Do I love the peace and prosperity of His churches? Do I feel that my life should be consecrated to the service of God?"

If you feel in your heart that these things appeal to you dear brothers, then take God's word and, studying it carefully, resolve that by the blessing of the Holy Ghost who will help you follow what He teaches. I do not except that doing your duty will be to you like "flowery beds of ease," but a conscience blessed with the appeal of God will be more of a recompense to you for to sacrifices that you surely must make.

If you have not been in the habit of doing your duty in this manner, when you think of what you ought to do, it may be that you will become conscience of much indecision in

regard to your future course. *You know what ought to be done, but perhaps you do not feel equal to the task of bringing it about.* And perhaps you cannot do it by yourself alone, for if the duties of your office are attended to there must be a right understanding by the pastor as well as the other members.

But you pray dear brother to God for strength and faith, and, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord," you can and will "persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11).

Talk to your pastor first and encourage him to preach and talk on practical things, and especially to call attention to the work of the deacons.

Then talk to the members, being careful to refer to what God's word has to say about these things. Do not think that

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when you have done this once that you have done all your duty- - spend your life in this direction. If you do not see the fruits yourself, others will, and the cause that you so love will have been served.

ORDAINATIONS

Churches which have brethren to be set apart by ordination may call upon other churches to send their ordained ministers (and deacons) to form a presbytery for that purpose; or they may call upon elders who may be convenient without notifying the churches of their membership. One elder might ordain. The church might also invite the members of other churches, especially the deacons, to sit in her council to advise her as to the prudence of the proposed ordination.

When the elders (and deacons) are assembled with the church the presbytery may organize by choosing an elder as the moderator, and either appointing a clerk (using either an elder or deacon) or having the ordaining church clerk act as such.

The candidate should then be delivered into the hands of the presbytery which should satisfy itself that the church has acted with all due prudence in the matter, for churches have sometimes made mistakes. While the decision of the church must be final, yet the presbytery might advise the church, and no member of the presbytery ought to act against his judgement, especially if the ordination be that of an elder, for then the interests of other churches and the cause in general is affected. Pastors of churches are

sometimes very neglect of their duty and do not properly in regard to such matters. Though this lack cannot be made up the presbytery, yet, as brethren, if not in their official characters, they should endeavor to check anything that judgement would be hurtful to the cause. A personal knowledge of the facts in the case by the presbytery would be the best safeguard, and to that end it would be best to have presbyteries formed as nearly as possible by brethren who are acquainted with the church and the candidate, for then they can act with full knowledge and everything is more likely to be satisfactory.

If the candidate be for the ordination to the office of the deaconship, the presbytery should enquire as to the practice of the church with regard to that office. If it is

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the practice of the church simply to keep the office in form, without keeping a church fund, or leaving the management of her financial affairs to the deacons, then the presbytery might very properly refuse to ordain the candidate because of the church being unscriptural in her practice.

As to the qualifications of the candidate, if the church believes in scriptural practice, it is likely to judge correctly as to the qualification of the person chosen. Yet it would be perfectly proper for the presbytery to satisfy the minds of its members, as every precaution should be taken to guard against mistakes. The cause is too precious to be careless in such matters!

If the candidate be proposed for ordination as an elder, the presbytery should be most careful, indeed. To ordain a brother who has no gift to edify, may prove a great detriment of the church, and can be of no benefit to him.

The presbytery, if not personally acquainted with the character and gift of the brother, may ask the church to appoint one of her members act as the church spokesman to speak for her, and then this brother may be interrogated as to the character and gift of the candidate, who may be asked to step aside during this time. It should be shown by the church that the character of the brother is such as will not interfere with his work in the ministry, taking the scriptural requirements as the standard. Also the church should be satisfied that the brother has a gift that will enable him to edify the same. This is a matter that should be determined before ordination. A brother should not be ordained when a church is undecided. He should have

exercised his gift long enough so there will be no question.

Then if the brother's labors are not needed as pastor, there may be no use to ordain him, as he can preach without being ordained. But if his services are required to administer the ordinances, or some other church desires him to act as their pastor, then there would seem to be a call for his ordination.

Some churches have ordained brethren whose services were not acceptable to themselves. This is evidently wrong, and if a presbytery has reason to believe that this is the case, they should refuse to ordain. If the presbytery is satisfied with the report of the church, as to the character and gift of the brother, then he should be called

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before the presbytery to answer for himself as to his hope in Christ and his doctrinal and practical views.

One of the members of the presbytery may be appointed to conduct the examination, of course any of the members have the privilege of asking or suggesting questions. This examination will serve a good purpose in bringing our doctrines and practices before the members of the church and the congregation.

After the examination, if it seems to be necessary, the presbytery may step aside to decide its action, and if favorable to proceeding, to appoint one of its members to offer the ordination prayer, and another to deliver the charge.

The arrangements being completed, the candidate is caused to kneel, the members of the presbytery kneeling around him, and placing their hands upon him, while the brother appointed to do so, offers an appropriate prayer. After the prayer the members of the presbytery may extend to the brother their hands, expressing their fellowship in his new field of work, and encouraging him to a faithful performance of his duties in the office. Generally all the members of the church, and the brethren present, extend their hands of fellowship to the brother who has been ordained.

The usual form is to deliver the charge after the ordination. It may be dispensed with, though it seems to me to be proper and right. The presbytery should choose one of her members who is best calculated to set forth the duties of the office to which the brother has been ordained. His discourse should be very plain, and he should faithfully

set forth the purpose of the office and the duties of the one who fills it. He should also set forth clearly the duty of the members of the church to the office, and what should be their treatment of the one who fills it, showing them all that if the church is to reach the purpose of Him who organized it, all must do their duty and be faithful in the house of God.

I have sometimes known "charges" that have had very few practical suggestions in them. If the duties of the person ordained, and the duty of the church to him, is not to be discussed, the discourse should not be called a charge. But if the purpose of the office is to be faithfully set forth it will serve to impress all concerned that the Lord has called them to special services for the good of the cause of Christ, and that in the ordination they enter into a

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covenant agreeing to work together to keep all things in order.

It has been the practice of our churches in many parts of the United States to admit deacons to the presbyteries; in some places for the ordination of elders and deacons, in others for the ordination of deacons only, while in some sections deacons are not ordained at all.

If it is to be taken as shown that the seven first ordained were deacons, then deacons should be ordained if scriptural practices are to be followed. But there is nothing to indicate that deacons should sit in presbyteries. The scriptures are silent on this matter.

The question has been raised as to whether a church could annul an ordination, seeing that the ordination was by a presbytery. This question would imply that the presbytery might be superior in authority to the church. This idea is not to be entertained, however, for then ministers would not be amenable in their official character, to the church, but to the presbytery, which has no existence except for the time of the ordination, and acts then only by the authority of the church.

The church undoubtedly has the authority to depose a minister, and to exclude him from her fellowship if necessary. One could retain membership in a church might not be fit character for the office of elder, and the church should guard the office zealously.

It may be that the brother ordained had no gift for the edification of the church. Then it would be the duty of the church to acknowledge the error in setting him forward for

ordination, for it was after all her fault. A brother might want ordination, but he may not get it without an order of the church. If the church errs in making the order, it is of no advantage to the brother to continue in error, and it works to the injury of the cause.

The practice of giving 'license' or recommendation before ordination has no doubt been much abused. Brethren who could be of more service to the church to speak occasionally are 'licensed,' to be henceforth looked upon as being preachers, and treated as being preachers, and must be invited to speak when perhaps their gift does not make it prudent to do so.

The fact is, all the members should be considered as having license or liberty to speak when they have anything to say, and when it is a proper time to speak. A preacher

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who is not needed as an ordained minister might have letters of 'recommendation' when going where he is not known, but where he is known he should not need anything of the kind as his gift will "recommend" itself.

It is customary to furnish a certificate of ordination to elders. The following form is recommended:

Certificate of Ordination

To all whom it may concern: Be it known that at the request of _____ Primitive Baptist Church (post office, county, and state), to examine the gifts and qualifications of Brother _____ to the full work of the Gospel Ministry, met with said church on (date).

A presbytery was organized and chose Elder _____ as moderator and Elder/Brother _____ as Clerk. The Presbytery then chose Elder _____ to interrogate the candidate, Elder _____ to pray the Ordination prayer, and Elder _____ to deliver the charge.

Brother _____, church spokesman, presented Brother (candidate) before the Presbytery for examination.

The church, the presbytery and the members of _____ Primitive Baptist Church have found him to be sound in the doctrines and practices of the Old Line Primitive Baptist Church, to wit; Unconditional Election, Effectual Calling (Regeneration), Justification

by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the Resurrection of the Children of God to Eternal Life. Further we find him to be orderly in his conversation and walk.

We proceeded by prayer and the laying on of hands, to set him apart to the full work of the Gospel Ministry. Should he swerve from the doctrines contained above, or be observed to depart from an orderly walk known among established Old Line Primitive Baptists, then these credentials shall become null and void, and the same as if they had never been granted.

SIGNED

(Give the names of elders and deacons with the name of the church to which they belong.)

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Done this _____ day of _____, _____.

Moderator.

Clerk.

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PARLIAMENTARY RULES

It is not the intention to give here more than the briefest suggestions as to parliamentary rules. No effort is made to cover points that may come up, merely those rules which are liable to be needed in any church meeting being mentioned. Some churches adopt rules to cover most cases that will arise, and when this is the case, the rules so adopted supercede all others. But in the absence of any special rules commonly accepted by organized bodies may be resorted to, and hence these suggestions.

All brethren should inform themselves as to the common form of making motions, amending them, etc., so that no confusion will arise in our meetings. All the brethren should know how to preside over a meeting as well as to preserve order, and I hope these few suggestions will be of some benefit. But I would advise all of our ministers to read some standard "manual." (See foot note: a).

The presiding officer of our meetings is called the "moderator," and should be addressed as "Brother Moderator." The pastor of a church is usually by special rule made the moderator of its meetings when he is present, but the church may choose one of its members to preside at

all meetings if they so desire. The 'Rules of Decorum' of the church should state how the moderator's chair is to be filled. It is a good practice for the church to give all of her male members some experience in the moderator's chair, then when an emergency calls for them to preside they will not be at a loss as how to proceed.

When the hour for business arrives the moderator may say, "Brethren the hour for business or conference has come, and we will now come to order," or if it be the close of the divine services he may announce, "We will now proceed with the business or conference meeting."

At the call to order, brethren should all take their seats and all conversation should cease at once. "let all things be done decently and in order." - - 1 Cor. 14:40. It is very unbecoming, indeed, in brethren to make confusion during a meeting.

When order prevails, if there is a set order of business, as most of our churches have, the moderator will at once announce the first order of business. When that has been disposed of he will announce the next, etc. but where there is no regular order of business, the moderator may

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say, "What is the will of the brethren?" when it will be in order for some brother to introduce a subject for consideration, by motion or otherwise. If the meeting has been called for a certain purpose, the moderator should announce the purpose of the meeting.

Brethren who wish to speak, or bring any matter before the meeting, should arise from their seats and say, "Brother Moderator," and then wait before proceeding until the moderator "recognizes" them, which he should do by calling them by name, or if he does not know the name, he may say, "Speak on, brother or sister." This point should be strictly enforced so as to prevent confusion. The brother who rises first is entitled to recognition if he has not spoken beyond the limit of the rules. When two persons rise at the same time, if one of them does not sit down, the moderator must decide which one of them may speak. When brethren do not keep to the subject before the meeting, or speak in a wrong tone or spirit, the moderator should at once call them to order.

In making a motion, a brother should arise and address the moderator, and when recognized, should say, "Brother Moderator, I move that," etc. If the motion is in order the moderator will call for a second, and after receiving a

second, the question is then before the meeting, and may at that time be debated. The moderator should state the question in the language of the mover, or suggest modifications to the mover before it is stated. A motion which involves serious matters should be presented in writing and fully understood before a vote is taken. When a motion is once before the meeting it cannot be withdrawn if there is any objection. A principle motion must give way to everything except another principle motion.

Principle motions may be amended. Motion and second motions must be made for that purpose and the amendment must be acted upon before a vote is taken on the principle motion. An amendment cannot be laid on the table or postponed without carrying the principle motion with it. Amendments may be amended, but amendments to amendments cannot be amended. Amendments, to be in order, must have a bearing on the subject, and may negative the principle motion or entirely change the meaning of the motion. After the amendment is disposed of, then the principle motion will be considered.

Note: a) "The Star book for Ministers," by Edward T. Hiscox.

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A motion may be "laid on the table," which removes the subject until taken up again from the table. A motion to "lay on the table" is not debatable, nor is anyone to take it from the table. A motion to take from the table is in order after intervening business.

A motion to "refer" or "postpone" to a given time is debatable and may be amended only to change the time. At expiration of the time the subject comes under the head of "reference or old or unfinished business," and is taken up without a motion and must be disposed of. A matter referred to a given time may be taken up before the time by a two-thirds vote.

It is customary in some of our churches to "refer" subjects without date, that is, indefinitely, and such references are taken up again by a motion and a second. This is not according to parliamentary usage, but if made a custom it amounts to a rule. A motion to "lay on the table" would be proper.

Motions, which have been passed upon, may be reconsidered. The motion to reconsider must be made by some one who voted on the prevailing side, and should be made at the same or next succeeding meeting. Motion to reconsider is debatable if the motion to be considered was debatable,

otherwise, not. If a motion to reconsider carries, the subject comes up before the meeting as through no vote had been taken upon it. A secret ballot cannot be reconsidered, but may be thrown out if shown to be irregular. An affirmative vote to "lay on the table" or "take from the table," to adjourn or to suspend the rules, cannot be reconsidered. A majority vote is sufficient to reconsider.

To call for the previous question, if seconded and adopted, stops debate on the motion pending and brings it to a vote at once. A requirement of a two-thirds vote, can be applied to all debatable questions, and is not debatable. A call for the previous question may be laid on the table, but cannot be postponed or reconsidered. If adopted it precludes all further amendments. When a motion is made the mover may move the previous question at the same time and so preclude any debate.

To suspend a rule requires a two-thirds vote, and a motion is not debatable. Neither can it be laid on the table, referred, reconsidered, or amended. The rules of some churches cannot be suspended as the only provisions for changing them are contained in the rules themselves.

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Committees, unless otherwise ordered, are appointed by the moderator. The first person named is chairman of the committee, and the committee has no power, except to follow instructions. Report should be made to the meeting in writing, which is received by general consent without a motion. After it is read, a motion may be made to adopt, reject or lay on the table is in order. If there is a majority and a minority report from the committee, both reports must be read. Then the majority report is taken up first, and there may be a motion to amend by substituting the minority report. There is no need to make a motion to discharge a committee after it has reported in full. If the matter is to be taken out of the hands of the committee then it may be discharged.

If members are not pleased with the ruling of the moderator they may appeal to the meeting, and this appeal is not debatable unless the moderator invites discussion. He may give his reasons for his decision. The matter comes up in the following form: the member who objects to the ruling of the moderator says, "I appeal from the decision of the moderator." If the appeal is seconded, the moderator immediately states the question as follows: "shall the

decision of the moderator stand as the judgement of the meeting?" If there is a tie vote the decision of the moderator is sustained, and will remain. When appeal is debated no member can speak but once.

If a member notices a breach of a rule it is his duty to insist in an orderly manner, upon its enforcement. He should rise from his seat and say, "Brother Moderator, I rise to a point of order." If any member is speaking he should at once take his seat, and the moderator should ask the brother to state his point of order, and the moderator will pass on the matter of a point of order at once. If there is no appeal the brother who is speaking will resume his speech.

Do not say, "I motion, or I move you." But instead say, "Brother Moderator, I move that," etc.

Do not say, "support" when you mean "second."

Do not say, "adjourn" when you mean to close the meeting.

Do not say "accept" or "receive" if you mean "adopt" or "concur."

Do not combine "indefinitely" with "lay on the table," and do not confuse "lay on the table" with "postpone."

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Do not think that calls of "question" compel the moderator to take a vote.

Do not forget that local law, however unwise, supercedes parliamentary rules, but the absence of such law, established customs to govern. Do not permit thoughtless advocates of loose methods to ridicule you out of a demand that the business of any organization you are interested in be transacted in being transacted according to parliamentary forms.

Do not forget that the greater brains in the finest parliamentary assemblies on earth regard inflexible rules as necessary to secure well-defined action and profitable results.

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CHURCH MEETINGS

The regular business or conference meeting of the church should be attended to by all the members unless they are prevented by sickness. These meetings are usually held but once a month, or as often as deemed necessary by the church

body, or on Saturday, and brethren should not let their work interfere.

A brother who was transacting some other business outside of the church, was once asked if he could be in a certain neighborhood on a certain Saturday. He replied, "No, I can not be there on that day." When asked for an explanation he replied, "My church meets on that day, and I when united with it fifteen years ago I made a covenant to meet with it every session, and I expect to always be there."

This is the feeling that brothers and sisters should have in regard to all of their church meetings. They should want to attend every service, and they should feel duty bound to attend each church meeting. The members should meet promptly at the time appointed. The habit of being late should be discouraged by everyone. The song services should commence before the time set for public service. If the time set is to be 11 o'clock, from one-half to three-quarters of an hour should have been spent before that time in singing songs of praise to the Lord, and prayers by different brethren.

If the business meeting is held after the preaching, when it has concluded, the moderator should at once announce the order of business. He should not consume the time with unnecessary talk, but without seeming haste, get through with the business as soon as possible.

The members should be properly instructed to speak promptly and to take a lively interest in keeping everything in order. When one knows of which business ought to be brought up, he should not wait for some one else to speak, but should at once introduce it to the meeting.

It is best to have a regular "order of business." While it may not make any material difference as to which subject is taken up first, yet to my mind the following order could be recommended:

1. Invite orderly visiting brothers and sisters the same faith and order to seats.
2. Extend an invitation for new membership.
3. Take up any references from previous meetings.

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4. Take up matters touching fellowship.
5. Give an opportunity to introduce any new business.

The sermon should close with an invitation to persons who have a hope in Christ to come to the church for membership, the first order of business (to invite visiting

brethren to seats), taking but a word and passing. If the sermon has been what it should be, those ought to unite with the church will, perhaps, be in a better frame of mind than after the routine of business has been finished.

Matters taken up under the head of "reference: are properly referred to as "unfinished business," and may be taken up without a motion, unless it is something that has been referred, to be taken up at another more convenient time, without the day being set. This would need to have a motion to be taken up.

When the order for matters touching fellowship are reached, the moderator should ask, "Are they're any matters touching fellowship which have been dealt with in gospel order that should be brought before the church?"

I deem this form better than asking, "Is the church in peace?" While it is to be considered to be in peace until something is brought before it, yet brethren have their little difficulties, and get their feelings hurt, and while they cannot say, "All is peace," yet the matter is not in condition to bring before the church. I have known the clerk's minutes to read, "All is in peace," when most of the members knew that there were some bad hurts not healed. None of the members felt just right to have the minutes to read "not at peace," and then none were in a position to speak.

It would be better to have the clerk's minutes read, if nothing is brought up, "nothing was brought up touching fellowship," which would be the fact and all would be satisfied with the statement.

Under the heading of new business," any subject relating to the interest of the church, not before taken up, can be introduced. It is usually better to talk subjects over with the members before putting them before the church while in session, as it should be the aim of all to promote only harmony and peace and have the brethren all see alike, if possible, on every subject acted upon.

Free discussion should be had on all subjects, and all should be resolved that they will *not give offense to any brother or sister by word or action.*

Special meetings may be appointed by the church for the transaction of any stated business that might come before the church either before or after the regular meeting time. No number of members have the authority to call any provisions in their rules of decorum for calling special

meetings, which leaves the matter wholly with the church while in their regular session.

Some of our churches have two services on Saturday, through the summer months, the members taking their dinners with them. After the morning services an adjournment is taken for dinner, and when called together again the church business is then taken up and followed by short talks by the brethren and pastor. It seems to me that this is a good way to do these things. As a rule, the members of the churches do not get to see each other enough, and this brings them together so that they can cultivate friendship and love.

Each church should preserve a correct record of its proceedings, and to that end should have a capable clerk, one who writes well and can have the minutes of the day ready by the time is through its business.

The minutes, as made out, should be read, and corrected if need be, so that it will correctly state what business has been transacted. The clerk should record the minutes as approved.

I would recommend that churches get a well-bound record book, one that will last for a number of years. A part of it should be ruled to show clearly the names of all members, the dates when they united with the church, and their ages. The form should be carried out to show date of death, if remaining in the church till death. But if dismissed by letter, or excluded, the form should show the fact and the date; if dismissed by letter the name of the church in which the letter is placed should be given.

It would be impossible to take the books kept by many clerks and to not be able to ascertain who are members of the church. This is certainly different to what it should be. Most of the books show who joined the church and when, but that is as far as the record goes. When members die no record is made where it can be found, nor when letters of dismission are granted is the fact stated anywhere except in the minutes making the order, making it necessary to search the whole book through to get at the facts.

The names of the members should be on the left-hand side of the left-hand page and the ruling should extend across the right hand page.

When members are absent from the meeting the moderator may inquire if brethren present know the reason as absence. In this way deacons may learn of sick members, or

information may be given to all the membership regarding the sick and needy. Then when members are unavoidably kept away from the meetings, knowing that inquiry will be made as to the reason of their absence, they will try to let the church know as the cause.

Others who might be inclined to be indifferent about attending the meetings would give the matter more serious thought if they knew the circumstances of their remaining away from church meetings would be inquired into.

Some of the churches call the roll of members when the church sits for business and the clerk makes a minute of the number present. I do not see any reasonable objection to this practice, and there are good points in its favor. It should certainly be the desire of all to have every member attend all the meetings if possible.

On all questions that come before the church there should be a full vote. None should try to escape responsibility for the action of the church. They cannot do so by refusing to vote, for not voting is equivalent to voting on the side of the question that prevails. But members should express their best judgement on every motion, and when the voice of the church is taken let that be the end of the matter. It is all right to reason together on a subject before the vote is taken, but it is not right to try to stir up dissatisfaction after the majority has decided it, for it is impossible to have a unanimous vote on each and every question. The majority should not however become overbearing, for it is necessary to exercise mutual forbearance so that peace may abound in the church. But it is usual, and I think that I am right, for the majority to rule in all matters except in the receiving of members, dismissing members by letter and in choosing a pastor.

The members should observe proper decorum at the church meetings, whether the services are in progress or not. There should not be undue levity during the intermission nor before nor after services. Every one has come together as members of the church of Christ, and should demean themselves as such.

It is my judgement that the Lord's supper should be observed when the members come together as a church. If the business meeting is on Saturday, let the communion services be on Saturday too. This is the practice of many of our churches. The mixed multitude that attends the

Sunday services for the public proclamation of the gospel often breaks the solemnity that should prevail at the celebration of this sacred ordinance. Generally, on Saturday, the members of the church are nearly alone together, and they can feel more impressed with the lesson that was given in the upper chamber where Jesus and his disciples were alone and brake bread and took of the cup (Mark 14:15-25) as all His followers are to do to the end of time in remembrance of Him.

The Lord's supper is a church ordinance and should be considered a church service, and be partaken of when the members come together as a church.

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RECEIVING MEMBERS

Receiving members into a primitive Baptist Church is quite different from receiving members into any other worldly organization on the earth. To become a member of any other organization one has only to comply with the requirements of that body.

But to become a member of the (true Church of Christ,) the Primitive Baptist Church one must have something done to him that he cannot do himself- - *he must give evidence of an inward work of grace*. It is no advantage to a church to receive for membership persons who have not been born again of God (John 1:13; 3:5).

The so-called churches are only anxious to have persons become members of their organizations, and seem to think it but a stumbling block to preach that sinners must be born again. They try every scheme that they can conceive of to get their numbers in full. But Primitive Baptist can never follow such practices without forsaking the doctrines of the Bible and changing the principles of true service to God. We may be very anxious for our churches to grow, but adding the world to them will only subvert the very end we wish to attain - - the increase of our spiritual enjoyment. Unconverted persons, being of the world, will want to bring in worldly things, which will soon destroy the church.

But all the members, together with the pastor, should want to see only all who have a hope in Christ become members of the church. Of course before coming in they will need to accept the doctrine of grace and feel willing to submit to the order of the church. Here is a work for the pastor. He should instruct them in the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. In his sermons he should have it

in his view that there may be persons in the congregation who need instruction that they may some day become faithful members of the church.

The pastor and each member of the church should search out (Jeremiah 16:16; Matt. 4:19) all who have a hope of salvation, talk to them to know if they are in harmony with the doctrines and practices of the church, and encourage them to do their duty.

I feel that it would be right when persons desire to unite with the church, and are too timid to arise and come forward, for members who know their feelings to obtain their consent to bring the matter before the church. There

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is no good reason for making it as difficult as possible for the timid and weak to come to the church. It is hard at best for them to feel that they have a right to come to the church, and often all the members of the church, and have fellowship for them, but because these persons are so weak, and have so little trust in themselves, and have so many doubts to struggle with, they remain out of the church to their own sorrow and to the disappointment of the members. Surely this is not right. The church home is intended as a joy for pilgrims on this earth, and every barrier should be taken out of the way, or at least none erected.

I have heard of some ministers who, when announcing that the door of the church is open for the reception of new members, say, "now if you can stay away just do so; but when you can no longer stay away, come to the church." Whether the theory of these brethren is wrong or right, certainly it is that they can find neither example nor precept in the Bible for such teaching. The Bible is full of exhortation and encouragement. One would not say to a child, "disobey your father just as long as you can, but when he forces you to observe his precepts do so." If it would be showing disregard to an earthly parent to teach in this manner, is it not contempt for our heavenly Father to teach this way to His children? When we find one who gives evidence of the Spirit's work in his heart, we find one who ought to openly profess Christ before men by coming to His church.

It is a common to request a person who desires to join the church to come forward and give his or her hand to the minister. The person is then seated conveniently until the hymn is finished, if the congregation is singing. When the congregation is seated the minister or moderator requests

the applicant to tell the church what the Lord has done for him or her, and to speak freely, as he or she is among friends. When he or she has finished, the members are given the opportunity to ask questions that they may desire that may be fully persuaded in their minds as to his or her experience of grace and fitness for the church. Then the moderator asks, "What will the church do with the application?" A motion is then in order to receive the applicant for baptism, or to reject, as may be the mind of the members. When the question is put forth, every member should vote, and the church must be unanimous if the candidate is to be received. The form of voting is usually by the raising of the right hand.

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If the person is received the brethren all extend the right hand of fellowship as a token of their love, though the candidate is not considered to have full privileges of the church until after baptism.

The ordinance of baptism should be attended to as soon as possible after the candidate has been received. If it is the duty and privilege of an individual to be baptized, it is not becoming for the church to encourage a delay. Nothing can be considered as baptism except total immersion in water by an ordained minister, authorized by the (Old Line) Primitive Baptist Church.

Restoring members is receiving persons back into fellowship who have been excluded. This is done by the excluded member going to the church from which he was excluded and making acknowledgements for the wrong committed, which, if satisfactory, is followed by a motion to forgive and restore to full fellowship.

It sometimes happens that such excluded members move away from the church of their membership into the bounds of another church and while they are excluded if they repent, they repent, the church in whose bounds they now live will know more about the evidence of repentance than the home church, and it is my opinion that it would be right for such persons to go to the church whose members know of their lives, and make application for restoration, and have this church recommend their home church to restore them and give them a letter, which could then be made a matter of record when received by the church to which they came with their application for restoration. It seems proper to me that the church where they want membership should judge

their lives and make the recommendation for their restoration.

A church should not be too rigid with their members that have been excluded. When the church sees by their lives that they are humbled and repentant, and have turned away from the course that cut them off, it should invite them back to membership again. The purpose of exclusion should not be to destroy the members, but to turn them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. 5:5) and when that end has been attained the purpose has been served, and there is no reason to keep them out any longer. True, it would be right for them to turn at once, and acknowledge their wrong, and come humbly to the church. But

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we should remember the weakness of the flesh, and follow after the admonition of our Lord Jesus Christ and "do unto others as we would have them do unto us."- - Luke 6:31.

In receiving members by letter, the church will satisfy herself that the church who is issuing the letter is sound in the faith and in gospel order. A letter from such should be all the recommendation needed to obtain membership. When the letter is handed in, and has been read, the moderator should give the person presenting it an opportunity to talk to the church, after which a motion to dispose of the application will be in order.

If the person bearing the letter (in person) is received, the clerk of the church should be instructed by the moderator to at once inform the clerk of the church who is issuing the letter of restoration of the fact so that its records may be kept complete.

Persons may be received on "relation," that is, they may have had connection with a church which has gone down by and by, so that they cannot get letters of dismissal, and they may come to the church and relate the facts of their dismissal, and they may come to the church and relate the facts of their connection with said church, and satisfying the facts of their connection with said church, and satisfying the members that there is nothing to bar them from membership, may be received. But as long as the church of their membership is in existence, members should get letters of dismissal before uniting with another church.

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LETTERS OF DISMISSION

When members desire to change their membership from one church to another they should get a letter from the church of their membership and present it to the church where they desire to make their home. The only purpose for which a letter can be granted is to unite with another church. Some brethren have labored under the mistaken idea that as soon as a letter of dismissal is granted the person receiving it is out of the church until he puts it into some other church, but such is not the case. Brethren sometimes desire to get out of a church because they become offended at some brother, or at some action of the church, and in such cases have been known to ask for letters of dismissal when they had no idea of uniting with any other church.

The fact is, a letter of dismissal, according to its own terms, does not dismiss anyone until it is presented to some other church and is accepted. And so a person holding such a letter as much belongs to the church that issued it as he did before it was granted, and his obligations are in no wise changed. And it is the duty of the church to look after him just the same as before the letter was issued until he shall put it into some church.

Sometimes brethren who live at a distance from the church ask for letters, giving as a reason that they are so far away that they cannot attend the meetings of the church. This is no reason at all, because as above stated, they still belong to the church as long as they hold the letter. Letters of dismissal should not be granted unless members desire to join other churches, and it would be right to ask what church they desire to unite with. It requires a unanimous vote of those present to grant a letter of dismissal.

I would recommend the following form for letters of dismissal:

The _____ Primitive Baptist Church
(post office, county and state), holding the following
doctrine;

Special atonement by Jesus Christ for the elect of God,
who are predestinated unto the adoption of children, and
kept by the power of God unto glory.

Do certify that Elder, Deacon, Brother or Sister
_____ is a member in good standing and

in full fellowship with us, and is by this letter dismissed from us when joined to another church of the same faith and order.

If the holder of this letter does not become a member of some church within one year from this date, this letter will be considered null and void, and he is required to report to his church reasons for holding the same, with such other information as the church may require.

Any church receiving this letter will please notify the clerk of the receipt of said letter.

Given by order of the church at the regular conference meeting on the _____ day of _____, _____.

_____ Pastor

_____ Church Clerk

This letter was read and accepted by _____ Primitive Baptist Church (post office, county, state) on the _____ day of _____, _____, and received into our permanent records.

_____ Church Clerk

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ERRING MEMBERS

Seeing that all are weak it is to be expected that all will err from time to time. This is the teaching of scriptures. - - John 8:7; Rom. 3:23. Christ died for sinners and the regulations given the church show that its members will probably do wrong. The most prominent men mentioned in the Bible either confessed error or were convicted of it. Christ taught that offenses would most certainly come (Matt. 18:7) and exhorted us to forbearance and forgiveness (Matt. 18:21; 18:35; Luke 11:4). So while the fact is to be deplored, yet we should not get discouraged when the members of the church do wrong, for such has been the history of men and women throughout all time.

But the church, if walking according to the rule laid down in the scriptures, is well calculated to correct such wrongs and bring the erring back to the way of that which is right. This is the end for which these rules were given,

and when they are used otherwise they are perverted. The pastors of churches, and every lover of the prosperity of Zion, should try to impress on the members of the church the thought that one object of the church is to correct the erring and save them from their weaknesses.

While it is admitted that members may go wrong, and forbearance should be exercised towards them, yet the church should not encourage wrong doing in any direction, either in permitting brethren to violate the rules of right or fail in demeaning themselves as members of the church.

The course to be pursued with all erring members is much the same in all cases. True, there is a difference between giving personal offense to a brother and committing a wrong which affects no one member more than another, but the principle upon which the brother is to be approached to save him is one and the same. *The object in approaching him should be to save him to the church and preserve the fellowship of the brethren.*

When one brother gives offense to another, the matter is just between the two brethren and should be settled without any one else knowing anything about it. The brother or sister offended is to go at once to the offending party, being sure that he or she goes in the right spirit. - - Matt. 18:15. If a brother or sister, instead of taking this course, should begin to tell the matter to others, he then

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has given offense to the whole church, and should make his own acknowledgements to the church in regular session. And the church should take up the case of any brother or sister who claims that a brother or sister has trespassed against him or her, and is talking about the matter instead of going to the proper directions given as cited above.

But if the brother or sister has gone in love to the one who has trespassed against them, and has not been able to settle the matter, he or she may take one or more brethren with him or her to reason with the brother or sister who has trespassed, the being to have brethren try their influence to have the matter settled, and not to simply make a witness out of them against the offender. *It would be proper to take along friends of the one who has trespassed, and not his own friends, and especially should they be careful not to take persons who do not have good feelings for the brother or sister, for they would be inclined to make more trouble instead of making it less.* If the brethren taken effect an agreement, here the matter

stops. But if they fail to accomplish anything, the offended brother or sister will take the matter to the church that the church may judge of it. The object in going to the church with it should not be to have the brother put out of the church, but to rest the matter with the church for its decision as to who is in the wrong. The church should investigate the matter until the members are ready to give their decision, which should be accepted by the two brethren. But if either of them will not submit to the decision of church, the church may drop them from her fellowship, and he "shall be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."- - Matt. 18:17.

If the brother or sister who is offended does not take the matter up, and go to the brother or sister who has trespassed, and it becomes known to the trespassing brother or sister that he has aught against him or her, he or she should at once go to the offended brother or sister and try to reconcile him or her. See Matthew 5:23,24. He should precede just the same as in Matthew 18:15-17. Some brethren seem to feel that the offended brother or sister must take up the matter, or no attention is to be paid to it. But any brother or sister who has the interest and peace of Zion at their heart should not want anyone to be carrying a hurt against him or her if he or she can heal it with an explanation or an acknowledgement.

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If two brethren have a difference between them, and are hurt at each other, and will do nothing to be reconciled or bring the matter into the church for its decision, and it becomes known to the members, they should have the deacons go to each of them separately and show them that they should not be irreconciled to their brethren, and try to get them to settle the matter. If they cannot get them to act they should take other brethren with them to reason with the brethren. If they accomplish nothing, the matter should be brought into the church. Feuds in a church should not be tolerated. Brethren should be willing to acknowledge their wrongs and forgive others as they ask the Lord to forgive them.

If a brother violates the law of right with respect to morals, or his duty to the church, he should make his acknowledgements to the church. The manner of proceeding in such cases is much the same as in cases cited above. The deacons should go to the offending brother or sister alone and try to show him the error of his or her way, and how he

hurts the church by his actions, and try to have him come and acknowledge his wrongs. Before bringing the matter to the church they should take other brethren to reason with him or her. Of course any brother or sister can take such matters up, but members do not like to do things that are just as much the duty of others, and which will seem to indicate that they have a personal feeling in the matter.

These classes of offenses cover all acts that are clearly forbidden in God's word and such things as are certainly inconsistent with the character of a member of the true church of Christ.

One of such things I will mention because it is so generally disregarded, and because some brethren seem to think that nothing can be done in such cases, and that is, remaining away from the church meetings. We certainly have on this subject (Heb. 10:25) and the church is in error if it is not enforced. Members who "forsake the assembling of themselves 'together'" with the church are worth nothing to keep the church up. Of course if they are too far away to attend, or sick, or old, that is different. The church will be able to judge, however, whether members are blamable for remaining away from the church or not. Where they are at fault they should either amend their ways or the church should drop their names from her roll, stating the cause

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thereof. There should be an effort made to recover such members the same as for other wrongdoing. It is contempt for the church and is disregarding the scriptures to stay away from the church meetings when it is possible to attend, and such a practice should not be tolerated.

The authority of the church is from God, and the members of the church have the right to make void its laws by permitting members to ignore them. Sometimes members declare that they will not attend the meetings, and that they do not want membership in the church. Such brethren should be labored with at once, and if they do not see the error of their way, the church should not keep them on her roll of membership, as the church should not be a prison for anyone. If the authority of the church is firmly upheld it will command more respect from the members and there will not be so much trouble. Nothing should be done hastily nor harshly, but all action taken should be deliberate and kindly, showing the fear of God and the love for His children.

Churches may sometimes err and some member may be wronged. If there seems a probability of this in any case, the church might agree with the individual to have brethren come in from other churches to hear the matter and give their advice. Brethren met under such circumstances may form a council and hear the evidence submitted by both sides. The council has no power to pass upon the matter farther than to advise, as the only power of action is in the church. Yet other churches might take the judgement of the council as a basis for their action in passing on to which they would receive. This procedure may also be followed where a church may be divided over questions which members have not been able to decide among themselves. Both parties should join in calling for a council of brethren and submit all things fairly, desiring to know the right and to do it. As before said, the council cannot decide the matter for the church, but the brethren forming it may give their best judgement, and the brethren submitting the matter should sacrifice personal feelings, if the doctrine nor practice of the church is compromised, and come together on the recommendations of the council and live in peace. Of course it is better for brethren to settle their difficulties among themselves when at all possible.

Most of the troubles in churches come from talking too much. What is said about a little grievance makes more

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trouble than the real grievance. A good rule for every member of the church is to remember, *don't talk about any brother or sister*. If this rule were observed there would be but little trouble and what there was would not spread very far. But as soon as brethren get started in talking about a grievance they get other brethren interested, who soon take part, and in a little while many are into the trouble over a very trivial affair. Another good rule is, *don't get mixed up in someone else's trouble*. The best rule of all is, "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be ye of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. - - (2 Cor. 13:11.

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CHOOSING A PASTOR

Making choice of a pastor is very important matter with a church, and should be gone into prayerfully. Some churches are so situated that they have but little choice about the matter, as there is but one minister available in

their area. These churches should be satisfied and get the best possible service from the minister who attends them. If he is not the most brilliant, nor the best gift that they know of, they should not begin to mistreat or neglect him, but take all the more care of him and pray that God may bless him to their needs and them in their service. Many ministers are discouraged because it is so plainly manifest that the membership of the church does not think they have sufficient ability to serve the church. This is wrong. If the church cannot do better, let it make the very best of the situation.

But where a church has the opportunity of making choice between ministers it should do so very carefully. Different members will have their likes and dislikes, each finding what is congenial to him in different ministers. As far as possible this influence must be guarded against. A member who is a jolly, jovial disposition would like to have a pastor who would indulge his disposition, while he or she, perhaps, needs a sedate pastor to curb his or her disposition towards undue levity. The needs of the whole church and her surroundings must be taken into consideration, and then all should pray to the Lord of the harvest to send a laborer. There should be due notice that a pastor is to be chosen. Let it be understood by all that unless all should want one certain man that someone will not get his first choice, but that all should feel that the will of the Lord is to be found in the majority and should be followed, and the call made unanimous. When the vote has been taken, let the name of the one receiving the majority be announced. Then let there be a motion to make the call unanimous, and if possible let the motion prevail by unanimous vote. But if there are any who for conscience sake cannot vote to make the choice unanimous, the call fails. No Primitive Baptist minister can afford to try to preach to a church where there are objections that cannot be laid down. The church might demand of the objector his reasons and then pass on them as to whether the member is justified in holding them or not, and he may waive them at the judgment of the church. Or if he persists in objecting, when the church thinks it to be without reason, it may deal

with him for opposing it without sufficient grounds. This same course might also be taken in the reception of members where there is objection. But in either case the action of the church in the end should be made unanimous.

Some churches choose a pastor for an indefinite period, while others choose for a period of one year. The latter allows both church and pastor to be free when the time expires, and a change can be made if thought advisable. If a pastor is chosen for an indefinite time some members may feel that they can get better service by changing, but none might feel like bringing the matter up, and it might drag along to the injury of the church.

Churches may get into a condition where it is not prudent to call a pastor. They may then get ministers to preach for them until conditions change and it is thought advisable to choose a pastor. A minister who was not ordained might preach for a church regularly and have some ordained minister administer the ordinances.

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CONSTITUTION OF CHURCHES

In every community where there are a sufficient number of brethren to keep up regular services, and have the gospel preached, there should be a church body. These brethren have the power to organize within themselves. As no one church or member can be inferior to another they do not have to get authority from some other body to organize into a church. Of course the persons who come together to meet as a church must be regularly baptized persons, and if they belonged to other churches must have letters of dismission. But a minister might go into a country where there were no 'Primitive Baptists' and receive and baptize enough persons to organize a church, and if the faith and practices were apostolic the church would be a church of Jesus Christ in order. The first churches were doubtless organized in this way.

It is common, however, when brethren wish to meet together as a church where they are convenient to other churches, to ask that a council of brethren be sent to them from the churches nearest, not to give them authority to constitute a church, but to witness their soundness in the faith and gospel order, and to recommend them to the churches in general as being one with them in faith and practice. When a council of brethren are met for this purpose they choose a moderator and a clerk. Then the standing of the proposed membership is examined, to see if they have letters from churches that are in order, or have been properly baptized. Then the church covenant with the names of the members affixed is read, and the articles of faith upon which they have agreed are examined. All being

found to be in order, the council moves to approve and to recognize them as a church in order, which is further manifested by the council extending to the members of the church the right hand of fellowship.

The newly constituted church then chooses a moderator and a clerk and adopts suitable rules of decorum, establishes meeting days, etc., and takes its place among the sisterhood of churches. The following form of church covenant may be used:

We, whose names are subscribed below, do hereby covenant together to meet as a church of Jesus Christ, holding the doctrines set forth in the attached articles of our faith, and agreeing with each other to such practice as is

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taught in the scriptures. This church is to be known as the _____ Primitive Baptist Church.

Witness our hands hereto subscribed this _____ day of _____, _____. (Here follow the names of all who enter into the constitution.)

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FINAL NOTICE

This work has been written while pressed with many duties, the manuscript being prepared on trains while going to appointments, and at various short intervals, and I am painfully aware of many defects. But in response to requests of many brethren I send it forth, hoping that it will awaken investigation on the subjects treated.

Submitting these "Suggestions," I am yours to serve in the gospel,

WALTER CASH

Marceline, Mo., September 8, 1899.

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