

MISSION MESSENGER

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STRONG AND WEAK CHURCHES

BY C. E. W. DORRIS

In 1873 there was but one church in Middle Tennessee that had preaching every Lord's Day. For this reason preachers in Kentucky who were acquainted with the pastor system, and accustomed to a professional preacher and sermon every Sunday, thought that the condition of the cause in this territory was deplorable and considered it a great blight upon the churches in this section. Moses E. Lard was one who wrote a criticism of said blight. Yet during a visit to Tennessee he stated that the religious promise of purity, holiness, scriptural zeal, and the disposition by the Christians to edify one another in the worship of the Lord was much better in Tennessee than in any other section known to him. Then why criticize the situation? Was it because he did not regard it as an important matter for the congregation to meet and worship God in His appointed institutions as a means of spiritual life and improvement to each individual member of the body of Christ?

Two or three earnest disciples can constitute themselves into a church and render acceptable worship to God and gain spiritual help and strength as well as a thousand. God is always ready to bless the true, humble, contrite worshipper, where only a few poor unlearned disciples meet to observe his ordinances in the lowliest cabin, as readily as he does those who meet in great temples which wealth and taste erect, and whose worship is conducted by the learned and pious located minister (which is only a new term for pastor), with a large multitude to listen with rapt attention. The fact that the personal piety and individual activity are promoted as much, if not more, in the worship and mutual edification of a few humble disciples as the eloquence of the preacher every Lord's Day ought not to be overlooked.

J. T. Hawkins joined in the above mentioned criticism of Tennessee churches. We conclude that in the estimation of these brethren, the standard of excellence for a congregation is the frequency of preaching by a professional preacher and the amount that is paid him. We speak of the professional preacher in no terms of disrespect, but to distinguish him from that number of brethren who are able to edify and build up the church by a faithful and intelligent participation in the worship of the Lord's house. The intelligent, active, live church is that which can conduct its own worship without the aid of a preacher. The church

that needs a preacher to keep it alive, whose members cannot find interest and spiritual nourishment in the study of the word of God and the simple worship ordained by Him, but must have an eloquent speaker to tickle their ears every Sunday, and to do their study for them, to worship for them is a very sick and helpless church. Others added to such a congregation only increases its weakness, just as extra flesh added to a weak, lubberly infant but increases its helplessness. The true aim of every church should be to become self-sustaining in every department and support the preacher well in the mission field. Every true church ought to, and will educate and train its own members to do all the service of the Lord's house. It can do this only by exercising them, throwing responsibility upon them, and training them to do the service needed. Only that church is strong which is able to conduct all the worship and do all the work of the church within itself. That church is doing well in our estimation, we will say, according to the Bible standard, that is able to live without the preacher, that is able to edify itself, encourage and exhort one another, do all the worship of the Lord's house and the work of the church in the world without the help of a preacher. It is only a weak, helpless church that needs, as the babe, a constant nurse. No church is firmly established until it has a number of its own true, faithful, self-trained members, intelligent in the Scriptures, who can conduct the worship and do the work of the Lord of every description in its own community.

During my labours in the Master's kingdom for fifty-seven years I have observed that the churches which live and build themselves up, study the word of God more, become intelligent in the scriptures, are more earnest and active as Christians, have a more healthy and steady growth, and wield more influence in a community than any others. Of course, if they undertake to live without the help of a preacher, and refuse to feed upon the spiritual food and teach their neighbors, they will soon die from spiritual starvation. A church that has been in existence for five or six years and still cannot meet and worship without a preacher is a stumbling-block to sinners; and if it cannot be taught to mend its ways, it ought to die and give place to one that is more faithful in its duties. It is true that in cities and large

towns the constant service of a preacher is needed. Yet the habit of preaching to the congregation alone instead of getting out to places where sinners can be reached, as did the Savior and the Apostles, is a source of weakness and inefficiency to the congregation and an injury to the preacher, and amounts to a prohibition of the gospel to the sinners. The church simply says, "We are not willing to do our work, to forego the pleasure of a learned and eloquent sermon, that the sinners may be reached." It is said that sinners may come to the meeting-house. This is true, but they do not as a rule. Men who do not believe in the Lord are not apt to seek Him. Christ never anticipated that they would, but Himself went to them, and made provisions that His followers should do likewise. We cannot hope to beat the Lord's way of doing things.

We are confident that where a church of only a dozen members in its first coming together so determined to do their own work and do it, however clumsily it be performed at first, in a few years they would be more intelligent in the Scriptures, active, self-reliant, earnest, and much more influential than if they had the best preacher in the land every Sunday. The doing of the work and the worship of the Lord is what makes Christians grow and become strong. A child will never learn to walk in its nurse's arms. Neither will a church that turns its work and activities over to a preacher. The preacher leaves the church composed of many intelligent men and women helpless, and it dies unless it can secure another preacher just as eloquent. If churches would learn to do their own work and lean upon their own God-developed strength, instead of the preacher's support, put the preacher in the mission field and weak places where he ought to be, the dictator, church-destroying, located minister would be outlawed. When churches and preachers each learn to do their work, and do it, then, and not till then, will churches rest in peace and harmony. Hold the preacher in line, and as a rule the church will stay in line. The church that does its own work and worship and relies less on preaching than others, develops, makes and sends out most preachers.

The only church in Middle Tennessee that had a located preacher doing its work mentioned in the first part of this tract did more towards securing preachers from other states than all other churches in Tennessee combined; yet it made and developed fewer preachers in proportion to its number and intelligence than any other section of Tennessee. A church that cultivates its own

talent will have preachers to convert the world. One that fails to give the opportunity for this, but employs others to do its work and worship, will have to depend upon foreigners to do its work. The danger among the brethren is that they come to think that churches are made to support preachers to preach for them, and that preachers are made only to preach for churches able to support them; and as a result, sinners out in the mission field are left to die without the gospel. Brethren, is it not time for us to change our ways?

We believe in preaching, for by it the world is to be enlightened and saved. We believe that churches do far too little toward sustaining the good and true men of the congregation to enable them to teach the word of God to the world. But they will never improve in this by employing preachers to preach every Lord's Day for them and thus

take the preachers from the mission fields. Brethren, preachers and all, let us awake out of our slumbers and put on the whole armor of God. Let us go out into the destitute fields, in the highways and byways, preaching the gospel in schoolhouses, anywhere we can get people to listen. When this is done, God will be honored, Christ glorified, the church multiplied, and sinners saved.

(Editor's Note: It will be hard for our readers to believe that the writer of the above is an elder of Central Church, Nashville, Tennessee, and gives his consent regularly to the hiring at a princely sum of a "Minister" to do the very thing condemned in this article. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not.")

THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH

BY W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

A brother beloved writes as follows:

"Previously I had never held any doubt as to my position on an elder's children. I taught a plurality of children, members of the body, but I am persuaded after additional study the number could be singular. In Thayer, on *pistos*, the primary meaning would not necessarily indicate those believing to be of the faith. Barnes agrees with this position, but is this not a questionable one in view of the usage of the same in so many passages (2 Cor. 6: 15; 1 Tim. 4: 3; 4: 10; 5: 16; 6: 2; Rev. 17: 14)? If there should be a plurality of children with all of the older ones Christians while one or more should be infants I believe he would be safe to assume the overseership. It appears to me that it is one thing to have children that would faithfully execute the father's commands and discharge duties while quite different to so lead and train them to desire an entrance into the kingdom. Would you suggest that an elderly man otherwise qualified could be a bishop even though none of his several children had obeyed Christ and they have now gone out into the world to make homes for themselves?"

Reply To Above

The reader is referred to previous issues of the paper in which I suggested that the word *pistos* translated "faithful" in Titus 1: 6 did not necessarily imply that the children under consideration be in the church. The word simply means "trustworthy, steadfast, dependable, of good fidelity." It has to do with the nature of one's reliability in whatever relationship is under consideration. It seems to me that it is the relationship of the father to the children which is under consideration, and which would

qualify or disqualify the father to rule in the congregation, and not the relationship of the children unto God. The "faithful children" of Titus 1: 6 are the "children in subjection" of 1 Timothy 3: 4. They demonstrated their fidelity by subjection to the father, and he demonstrates his ability to lead by having them that way. It is admitted that Titus 1: 6 may be somewhat obscure, but 1 Timothy 3: 4 which gives the domestic qualifications is plain, and the obscure should be explained in the light of the plain and understandable passage.

There is nothing in the word *pistos* which indicates the object of one's fidelity. Thus, the word cannot be arbitrarily translated "Christian." It must be shown by contextual or supporting evidence what is embraced. The passages cited by our brother demonstrate this fact. In 2 Cor. 6: 15 "believer" is used in opposition to lawlessness, darkness, unbelievers and idolaters. The context shows that God is talking about His sons and daughters (verse 18). In 1 Timothy 4: 3, which our brother mentions next, believers are identified with those "who acknowledge the truth." In 1 Timothy 4: 10 they are mentioned as a special part of all men, for whom Jesus is the Saviour. In 1 Timothy 5: 16 it is evident that believers are members of the church. In 1 Timothy 6: 2 they are said to be brethren. In Revelation 17: 14 they are identified with those whom the Lamb has chosen and called.

The word *pistos* was in common usage long before the Holy Spirit adopted it to convey God's message. The revelation of God did not change the meaning of the term, but gave it wider scope and higher relationship. Since the New Testament scripture is by and large a revealing of our relationship

to God, it is evident that the term would more frequently occur in this setting than any other, but to say that it invariably means the same is to assert what cannot be sustained. The word is a term of relationship, and that relationship must be established by the context, either adjacent or remote. The true student is interested only in arriving at the exact meaning of the inspired writer if possible.

The word *pistos* is twice translated "true" as in 1 Tim. 3: 1, "This is a *true* saying," where Young translates, "Stedfast is the word." The other occurrence is 2 Cor. 1: 18, "As God is *true*" which Young translates, "God is faithful." Since it is translated "faithful" children in the passage under discussion, I mention that the same translation of the term is applied to Abraham (Gal. 3: 9); Moses (Heb. 3: 5); God (1 Cor. 1: 9); and Christ (2 Thess. 3: 3). It is applied by Paul in Titus to the word of God (1: 9) and to his saying (3: 8). All that can be said about the children of the bishop based upon Titus 1: 6 is that they must be "trustworthy, and not accused of riot or insubordinate." If either of these last accusations can be sustained, the father would not have them in subjection and could not qualify as a leader of God's house, not being able to control his own household.

My brother asserts, "If there should be a plurality of children with all the older ones Christians while one or more should be infants I believe he would be safe to assume the overseership." That is his *opinion*. He does not *believe* it because he has no divine testimony to the effect that a man may safely assume the overseership if all his older children are Christians while one or more are infants, and he cannot believe that upon which he has no testimony. If he argues that thus the man would have Christian children, he must base it upon the word *pistos* in Titus 1: 6, and that is the very point at issue.

He is correct in stating that it is one thing to have children who will faithfully execute the father's commands and discharge duties, and quite different to lead and train them to desire an entrance into the kingdom. But what is the reason for the qualification demanding a certain kind of children? Is it to demonstrate the father's ability to lead people to desire an entrance into the kingdom, i. e., to convert non-members? Or, is it not rather to "take care of the household of God"? Certainly an elder is to try and convert everyone whom he can influence to accept Christ, but that is not his work as a *bishop*, but as a Christian. He does not need to have children to qualify for that work. The reason he is to have obedient children is to qualify for a specific office. "For if a man know not *how to rule* his own house." When he demonstrates a knowledge of how to rule a family or household, he has fulfilled the requirement of that particular

qualification. He should not be kept out of the eldership by *an interpretation* of the qualification which is not a part of God's revelation. It is for that reason we must be sure to study diligently to see if we may determine God's mind as it has been revealed.

We freely admit that if a man acts as a Christian father and properly trains his family, the presumption is that his children will obey the gospel at the proper age, yet we do not see that this is the point in the qualification. As to the final question of our brother, I can conceive of a man being in a denominational organization and rearing respectful, obedient children in that organization. At the age of fifty the father learns the way of truth more perfectly. He and his wife become members of a congregation of saints. He diligently and seriously applies himself to the study of the Book, and leads some others to Christ, but he cannot budge his children from sectarianism. "A man's

foes shall be they of his own family," applies in their case in matters religious, although they still maintain a proper respect for their father as a man. In ten years, having arrived at the age of sixty, the entire congregation desires him to serve as one of the bishops. Would our querist refuse to appoint him on the grounds that his children disqualify him?

These are grave matters and worthy of consideration of all. We set forth our views in reverence and godly fear. We trust that they are right, but we hold ourselves ready to change if proven to be wrong. None of us will ever reach heaven by contending for an error which we know to be such. That is why we welcome the challenges to what we offer. We do not want to go to the grave teaching error. We respectfully suggest that all of our readers study these matters in the light of heaven's revelation, and may the eyes of the understanding of all of us be opened.

We stopped at a little church at Daphne. This church which was built in the very early days of Christianity is now a Greek Orthodox Church. The whole structure was so small it seemed almost like a miniature. Inside the building we could see how the years had faded and smoothed the mosaics, and the countless number of people had worn the stones of the floor. There was a very small altar in one end of the minute chapel where several devout Orthodox worshippers kneeled and prayed while we were there.

We drove on along the road to the town of ElYSIS where we wandered through the ruins of the ancient town. This is a sea coast town, and just off shore there is an island which makes a natural harbor. Behind the town is a range of hills which drop onto a plain which slopes to the sea. This geographic description we could call the stage setting for one of the greatest dramas ever played by man. The time of this dramatic event was about 400 B.C., and the name of it was the Battle of Salamis. This narrow neck of water between the town and the island was where the mighty navy of Xerxes the Great, Emperor of Persia, met the Greek fleet. On the plains behind the city was where the Persian and Greek armies met. Xerxes himself sat on one of the hills in the background where he could see the whole scene being played below him. If he won the battle he would have conquered all of Greece, but he did not win. The Greek navy battered the navy of Xerxes, and the small Greek army fighting for their homes and families overcame the Persian hosts and defeated them so badly it brought the second world empire crashing down in ruins.

We drove into the city of Athens at dusk, and after dinner the most beautiful of all sights in Athens was there for us to behold. The Parthenon, high up on the hill of the Acropolis, was lighted with huge floodlights. The ruins of that building standing in brilliance against the blackened sky brought back to us memories of those great men who had once walked between those pillars . . . Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and the preacher of truth, the Apostle Paul.

Our stay in Athens was much too short for us, but we had to be going on. We boarded a plane and flew down over the old city of Corinth, the Corinthian Canal, and then on toward Rome, "The Eternal City" where our story takes us next month.

ATHENS—CLASSICAL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

BY TEDDY L. RATLIFF

The most surprising thing about Athens was not the beauty of the ancient temples, for I had expected that, but rather the beauty of the modern buildings and wide streets. From the first impression I received driving along the tree lined boulevards from the airport until our plane dipped its wings in farewell as we flew out over the Adriatic Sea I was completely awed by the beauties of the modern buildings and stores.

It was not long until Dr. Bossing, Dr. Cralle and I adapted ourselves to the Athenian way of life. Up early in the morning, a light breakfast, then about 1:00 o'clock a big lunch followed by a wonderful siesta, then a full afternoon of activity followed by a very late dinner. But we never could quite get accustomed to the hour of retirement of the Greeks, about 2 A.M.

We ate most of our meals at a small restaurant one block from the Constitution Square in front of the Palace of Justice. It was a very small sidewalk cafe, and the owner was so honored that Americans were eating there he insisted on serving us himself and gave us the very best he had. It certainly was gratifying to find such friendliness so far from home.

We enjoyed walking around the streets of the downtown area, for they were so very clean and bright. The sidewalks were made of marble nearly everywhere, and the store fronts too were made of marble. Everything was spotlessly clean. The store windows were beautifully decorated with displays that rivalled, some even surpassing those of New York's Fifth Avenue.

I had my hair cut in a very modern barbershop that was decorated with marble statues. Incidentally, the cost of a haircut in Athens was about fifty cents. I stopped and had my shoes shined at a sidewalk bootblack's stand. That cost me 1000 drachma, about seven cents.

Not all of the points of interest of Greece are in Athens, but many are within a day's journey of the city. Being students of the Bible and history we decided to make a few trips out into the Grecian countryside.

We flew over the plains of Marathon where the Greek and Persian troops met in battle for the first time. The Persian Host with its hundreds of thousands of men and animals attacked the Greeks in a battle which was to decide the destiny of Greece. With all odds against them the Greeks banded together in small groups, and with their heavy armor protecting their bodies they cut their way in and out of the Persian ranks easily inflicting such heavy losses upon the invaders, who were clad in light cloth tunics, they were forced to withdraw in defeat.

It was during this battle the Greek runner ran to Athens for help, establishing the first marathon run. The distance of the present day marathon run is 26 miles, 385 yards, the distance from the plains of Marathon to the city of Athens.

We drove along the road toward Corinth through the countryside. This particular area was rather barren and rocky. We did see a few vineyards and some herds of sheep and goats, but that was about all.

GIVE A BIBLE

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THE WORTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL

By ROY LONEY

"The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls" (Exo. 30:15). This was the shekel of the sanctuary, equivalent to our poll tax which requires that each individual give the same sum as a tax to the government. It was a yearly offering used exclusively for tabernacle service, and was paid to make "atonement for your souls." The rich did not give more; the poor did not give less. This indicates that in the matter of atonement for the soul, each stands on equal footing before God. "God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him" (Acts 10:35).

Under the gospel there is "neither Jew nor Greek; neither bond nor free; male or female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Christ gave himself a ransom for all which means that he placed an equal value upon every soul. The blood of Calvary can redeem the rude savage with the same efficiency as it cleanses the educated scholar. The price paid for the rich was the same as paid for the poor. The soul of the black man is of the same value as that of the white man in the heart of Him who hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth. The gracious invitation of our Lord is world-wide and age-lasting for "Whosoever will, let him come," and "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." There is no one so insignificant as to be ignored by our Lord.

The ninety and nine sheep safely sheltered in the fold cannot satisfy the heart of the loving, compassionate shepherd as long as one small lamb is astray. The sheltered ones are left within the safety of the fold, while the anxious shepherd goes out into the darkness of the night, searching over hill and dale, seeking the one that is lost, and great is his joy when the straying one is found. Neighbors and friends are urged to "rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." And when the wandering soul is brought back to God, "Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." So Jesus states in all tenderness that "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." And if we should cause one of these little ones to stumble, it would be better that a millstone be hung about our neck and we be cast into the sea. Therefore we should "Take heed that we despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven."

Each individual possesses the "spark of

divinity" in the sense that he has a spirit that came from God and must return to God, and God is the father of that spirit (Heb. 12:9) for we are "the offspring of God" and the father has exactly the same love for each of his children. Christ was despised and persecuted by the self-righteous Pharisees because he was a friend of publicans and sinners. His enemies were slow to learn that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Had they not have been lost in sin, they would have had no need for a Savior. Through Christ the vilest sinner can find perfect cleansing in his redeeming blood. "Wherefore he is also able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The eternal rewards offered to one equal what is offered to all. Heavenly mansions are available to the humble working man the same as to the cultured Minister in the pulpit or to the most respected of moralists, for the promise is, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God." There will be no slums in heaven. Some people will not live on the "wrong side of the tracks" for in that land eternal all will be equality, love and joy. The ragged beggar Lazarus became the bosom companion of the great Abraham, and the sinful Magdalene who was honored by being permitted to be the first to meet the risen Lord, will find no social barriers in that land of the blest. The redeeming blood of the Savior makes all one in Christ Jesus.

A NEW COMMANDMENT

An article appeared in Reader's Digest, Sept. 1950, entitled, "Science Discovers Real Love." The article describes people who have become mentally ill and one of the standard prescriptions used by the physicians was "love unsolicited." The article goes on to say, "the scientists are trying to catch up with Jesus. He, too, had man's future in mind when He said, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.'"

If science has discovered real love, why don't we, as members of the Body of Christ, turn to the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of the book of Matthew and do some exploring. I read in Matt. 5:38-39, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Our blessed Savior spoke those words yet I have heard my own brethren contemptibly say, "The Bible doesn't say what to do after you have turned your other cheek." Brethren, whether you mean that statement or not, these verses are not to be laughed about.

A few days ago I heard a brother tell his son to smash someone through the wall if they didn't quit pestering him. My mind was called to the teaching of Paul; "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." To smash someone through the wall, I'm sure, wouldn't be the admonition of the Lord. Christ's admonition is summed up in the 12th verse of the 7th chapter of Matthew when he said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." I am compelled to believe that this verse is disregarded more than any other verse in the Bible. That's why I have entitled this article as it is, because I think this verse is almost as new as it was nearly 2,000 years ago.—Bob White

SIGN OF DIGRESSION

Your article on "Restoring The New Testament Church" is just as I have thought it should be with the church now, meeting from house to house and preaching and teaching everywhere we get the opportunity. Spending our time in this manner instead of paying for church buildings. In my opinion the fact that brethren think they must have a meeting house set apart for what they call worship is not a part of the faith and practice of the New Testament scriptures. This attitude shows where the emphasis is, which is to me one of the first steps toward digression.—Joe Miner, Morristown, Tenn.

KANSAS CITY STUDY

Robert H. Brumback will conduct a study at 26th and Spruce Street Church in Kansas City, from January 13 to February 13, with day sessions devoted to a study of Second Kings and Isaiah, followed by a study of James. Night sessions will consist of a study of "Heresies Of The Religious World" dealing with such topics as Salvation by Faith Only; Possibility Of Apostasy; Are Feelings An Evidence Of Pardon?; and Will Christ Reign On Earth? The church will arrange for housing for as many as possible. For reservations write to: The Elders, Church of Christ, 26th and Spruce Sts., Kansas City, Missouri.

MISSION MESSENGER

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Dedicated to the task of arousing churches in this state and elsewhere to a greater zeal in mission work, and assist in developing the talents of all to be used to the glory of God.

What Does That Mean? . . . by E. M. ZERR

1 Timothy 2:15

The misuse that is made of this passage is to say it gives assurance to the woman that she will pass safely through childbirth. It cannot mean that, for the salvation is made conditional that she *continue in faith*, etc. It would be foolish to say a woman will live through that event provided she lives right afterward. Besides, the facts of history are against it, for there have been too many good women who have not lived through it, and two cases are recorded in the Bible (Genesis 35:16-19; 1 Samuel 4:19-22). Neither can it be replied that a woman was chosen to bring the saviour into the world and hence she and her kind have the promise of salvation through her act, for that is just as necessary for the man as for the woman. The part that Mary performed in nurturing and giving birth to Jesus was like the experience of all mothers, but that was not anything done by her personal choice. Furthermore, Paul was writing about women in general, and they have nothing to do with the birth of Christ.

There are regular terms of salvation set forth in the Gospel that all people must

observe regardless of their station in life. But there are special duties that apply in particular to those who are parents or children; husbands or wives; and neither of them can take the place of the other. The special duty of women is to bear children, which is one of the conditions on which she may be saved. That is why Paul wrote what he did in 1 Timothy 5:14. Of course motherhood alone will not assure a woman of salvation, but she must follow it up with a life of "faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." One who is able to bear children and refuses to do so will find herself in trouble at the judgment day. This is not very favorable for people who practice birth control instead of self-control. If a woman is not ready to bear children, then she is not ready to get married, for that is one of God's chief purposes in instituting the marriage relation. It is very important that all women who are disciples take the proper attitude on this subject. They should not enter into marriage with the one motive only, since childbearing is one of the conditions on which she may be saved.

therefore, work at it earnestly and diligently.

Every child in every Christian home should be looked on when born as a possible teacher of the religion of Christ. He should be brought into the kingdom of God by faithful home teaching and so forth. Then he should be taught that he cannot be faithful without making efforts to become an efficient teacher of the word of God. If the churches should work at it like this, in a few years we should have efficient teachers, elders, deacons, and preachers, and the "minister" would not be needed and the preachers could give themselves to evangelistic service—as did New Testament preachers.

This means a real sacrifice. It means to give time and effort. It means to work at it. I cannot hope for many Christians to do it. We are so entangled with the affairs of this life that we haven't time to fit ourselves to serve the Lord and to build up his church. We had far rather hire the minister to do the work for us, so we can give ourselves without distraction to our business.

As soon as our children are able to hold jobs, we are encouraging them to get jobs, and by the time they are grown and old enough to take responsibilities and to have been efficient leaders, they are entangled also in the business life and it is an endless chain. I positively do not believe most men can fit themselves to be elders as described in the New Testament under the present regime of affairs.—J. N. Armstrong in "The Living Message." (Editor's Note: How much Harding College, of which Brother Armstrong was president contributed to the state of affairs which he deprecates, only our Lord can tell. But that it has had a tremendous influence in building up a special clergy cannot be successfully denied by any who know the facts.)

HEADED INTO DENOMINATIONALISM

It is declaring nothing new to say that there are few qualified elders or bishops. So the "minister" has grown up to fill or supply a crying need. The church found itself without teachers. What could be done? Our failure to become efficient teachers opened the opportunity for the "minister." The brethren recognized that there should be elders, feeders of the flock, overseers. But they had none. So the need pressed gravely and heavily upon them, and as the best thing possible to them they secured the services of a good preacher of the gospel. At first they tried to make the arrangement scriptural by calling the preacher "the evangelist."

Some of the churches when their preacher was old enough "made" him an "elder" and called him the "teaching elder." The brethren did not want to do wrong, but were anxious to be faithful to the Book, while they met a real condition. Now this evangelist is the "minister" of the church. He has grown up through necessity to fill the place vacated or empty because no one in the congregation was able to fill it.

I should be far from trying to fix the blame. But I do know those in the congregations that loved the Lord and wanted to do something for his cause were up against

the odds. They were struggling between two realities—a church with no teaching, no interest, no service, and no possible remedy at home—nobody able to teach and to stir interest and lead the church into service and work. Pressed by these two stubborn facts or conditions they imported a teacher and leader and the "minister" is here to stay.

The faithful preacher does what he can to develop teachers and elders, but he makes slow progress, but "his" congregation grows in membership and thus becomes bigger and less able to care for itself than when he came into their midst. His very work that enlarges the congregation creates at the same time a greater need for more efficient leadership. The brethren feel all the more helpless with the large church than they did with the smaller one. So he has to remain, or if he goes away, another must be secured to take up the work.

The remedy for all our ills and unscriptural conditions is easy to prescribe but difficult to apply. A few however will use it.

In the first place every Christian should be a teacher. He should feel the responsibility as much a part of his duty as to break bread or to give of his means. He should,

WHICH WAY?

The practice of hiring a preacher to come in and occupy the pulpit regularly, speaking every Lord's Day morning and night, and even teaching at the midweek service, was not the practice of congregations in apostolic days. We can never fully restore the church to its original status, so long as we retain a practice which was not in it. We must either rid the congregations of the system of professional edification at a price, or abandon our plea that we are the New Testament church. We must either restore the inalienable right of every faithful brother of ability to address his fellows unto edification "when the whole church be come together in one place" or admit to the world that we are compromising with sectarianism and retaining a practice borrowed from the great apostasy.

It is not a question of whether we can still be popular and adopt the Lord's plan. It is a question of whether we can be

saved if we refuse to do so. Our task is not to determine what men want, but to accede to what God wants. If ridding ourselves of the devil's livery will cause thousands to abandon us, then they must go, but "they will go out from us because they were not of us." If it comes to pass in some cities with scores of luxurious meeting-houses that so many will depart we will need only one or two little places to meet, then we must make the sacrifice, if it can be called a sacrifice to divest ourselves of temples of pride.

We stand today at the crossroads of destiny! The churches in America are halting in "the valley of decision." Two cities beckon. One is Jerusalem with unadorned simplicity in which every child of God is a minister and priest in his own right. The other is Rome with its special clergy! The sands of time are running out for this generation. We must soon decide whether we shall allow pride, haughtiness, display and wealth to rule our hearts, or if we shall humbly bow before the King!

Preachers must make a startling, dream-shattering, heart-rending decision. They must choose whether they can go on building up a system which heaven did not reveal, or if they shall teach the church to stand on its own feet and to send them forth. Shall they remain in nice homes with everything made ready to their hands, or let the poor have the gospel preached unto them, while they personally "continue to hunger, and also to thirst, and to be naked, and to be knocked about, and to be homeless, and to toil working with their own hands" (1 Cor. 4: 11, 12)? Which way—Rome or Jerusalem? God be with us! God help us!—*W. Carl Ketcherside.*

WAS GOD MISTAKEN?

Did the God of creation make a mistake in providing the means for edification of the church? Did the one who made such wonderful provision for the sustenance of the physical body of man, err in His method of building up the spiritual body of His Son? Surely He could have bestowed all of the spiritual gifts upon the most talented man in each congregation if He had so desired, and thus placed the public phase of edification in the power of one individual, and arranged for the hearers to regularly support such an one to minister unto them.

Was it an oversight of the divine mind which distributed the gifts so that "the manifestation of the Spirit was given to each one for a beneficial purpose" (1 Cor. 12: 7). Since we have learned that *the only way* to convert the world is to secure the best speaker and thrust him forward as the representative of the church, shall we conclude that God was "off the beam" when He arranged that when "any one may come in, an unbeliever or unlearned, he is convicted by all, he is discerned by all . . . and so having

fallen on his face, he will bow before God, declaring that God is really among you?"

Now that experience has proven that a fluent speaker with flawless English and persuasive words is an absolute essential to the existence of the church and to enable us to hold up our heads among the sects, it may appear that the choice of Paul to bear the good news to the Gentiles was unfortunate. Certainly the apostle was forced to admit that when he came it was "not with excellent speech or wisdom" but "in weakness and in fear with much trembling, and my speech and what I preached were not with persuasive words of wisdom" (1 Cor. 2: 1-5). Is it possible that having observed our superior approach, if God were to write the New Testament over, He would alter it to conform to our better methods?

It seems God could not anticipate the streamlined machine age. Consider His method of training evangelists. Paul took Timothy on such discouraging journeys, often with meager support and subjected to hunger and thirst, it is a wonder that the young man stayed in the work. With the unlimited knowledge possessed by the apostles it is amazing that they did not start a school and ask the churches to send their men to be trained. Of course, this was done later at Alexandria, Egypt, but the apostles were all dead by then, and the church drifting off. Either God must have made a mistake in giving His plan, or we are making one in not following it.—*W. Carl Ketcherside.*

MARY OF MAGDALA

The present series of articles by Brother Roy Loney reach the mountain peaks of human interest and thought. It is with no sense of detraction that we refer to a matter of minor importance in the closing paragraph of the one in this issue, where our esteemed brother implies that Mary, of Magdala, in Galilee, was a sinful person, in a special sense. This common idea regarding the character of Mary is without Biblical foundation. It probably stems from some of the traditional tales which became current in the Roman church.

Mary is first introduced in company with "Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Christ of their substance" (Luke 8: 2). This shows she was not a prostitute or woman of vile character. It also implies that she was not poor. Certainly she was not a social outcast if she moved in the same circle with one whose husband held an important office in the king's household. The fact that this unfortunate woman had been possessed of seven demons does not argue that she was morally impure, for demoniacal possession occurred even in children. Such a person was not necessarily dissolute any more than an insane person is depraved.

Mary supported Jesus with her personal

funds during his earthly ministry, she stood by the cross weeping as he expired, she came while it was yet dark to the sepulcher on the first day of the week. She was the first to see the risen Lord, and first to carry the glad tidings to the disciples, although to them "her words sounded as idle tales." The faith of Mary is like a rock of granite, for when others were "fools and slow of heart to believe," acting upon less testimony than they had been exposed to, she acknowledged that the Lord had risen and become the first fruits of them that slept. Truly Jesus chose a faithful witness to carry the resurrection message to doubtful men.—*W. Carl Ketcherside.*

SAINT LOUIS DEBATE

The Ketcherside—Wallace debate in St. Louis was held Nov. 26-30 in a large hall, and attended by hundreds of eager listeners. The order was excellent. Questions discussed dealt with the one man ministry system, colleges, and the work of evangelists. A great deal of material in addition to that used at Paragould was introduced and considered.

Brethren gathered daily with the Manchester Avenue congregation for fellowship and edification. Sessions were held morning and afternoon. Those who presided by invitation of the elders were L. E. Ketcherside, Peoria (Ill.); Vernon Hurst, Bristol (W. Va.); Hershel Ottwell, Hartford (Ill.); and Fred Killebrew, Senath (Mo.). Questions considered included: What sectarian tendencies among us need to be eliminated? What scriptures are commonly misapplied? What are the bases of fellowship and dis-fellowship? What factors are essential to a complete restoration? Brethren attended from fifteen states and Canada.

A telegram challenging Wallace for a debate on the college and minister issues at Valdosta, Georgia was received and read. Following that debate a return engagement in St. Louis will be arranged. Arrangements are being made for the publication of the debate just completed. It will be a valuable contribution to your library of current material. We still have copies of the Arkansas debate for sale. The price is \$3 per copy.

DIRECTORY

Roy Loney informs us that he and Harold Shasteen have compiled a new directory of congregations, including a list of gospel preachers. The cost is 25c per copy. Order from Roy Loney, Wellsville, Kansas.

GIFTS THAT LAST

FOR ADULTS: Cruden's Complete concordance, \$3.50; Smith's Deluxe Bible Dictionary, \$3.50; Johnson's People's New Testament With Notes, 2 volumes for \$5.00; Zerr's Bible Commentary, 3 volumes for \$10.

FOR CHILDREN: Story Of The Gospel,

\$1.35; First Steps For Little Feet, \$1.35; Bible Pictures And What They Teach Us, \$2.25; Story Of The Bible, \$2.50. Order them now!

ARKANSAS STUDY

W. Carl Ketcherside and Hershel Ottwell will conduct a Bible Study at Beech Grove, Arkansas, for two weeks, starting January 3. Classes will be held morning, afternoon and night. Those who plan to attend from elsewhere should notify Franklin Cunningham, Route 2, Paragould, Arkansas.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

An understanding of marriage rites as observed in remote regions may help you to understand how Laban could palm off on Jacob the wrong woman, and the unsuspecting bridegroom be kept in ignorance of the true identity of his mate until later. We came across the following description while reading an account by Austen H. Layard, of his research into ancient Nineveh and Babylon, undertaken for the British Museum, in 1850.

Cawal Yusuf having invited me to the marriage of his niece, we left Nimroud early in the morning for the village. The Cawal followed by the principal inhabitants on horseback, and by a large concourse of people on foot, accompanied by music, and by children bringing lambs as offerings, met us not far from the village. It was already the second day of the marriage. On the previous day the parties had entered into the contract before the usual witnesses, amidst rejoicing and dances. After our arrival, the bride was led to the house of the bridegroom, surrounded by the inhabitants, dressed in their gayest robes, and by the Cawals playing on their instruments of music. She was covered from head to foot by a thick veil, and was kept behind a curtain in the corner of a darkened room. Here she remained until the guests had feasted three days, after which the bridegroom was allowed to approach her.

The courtyard was filled with dancers, and during the day and the greater part of the night, nothing was heard but the loud signs of rejoicing of the women, and the noise of the drum and the pipe. On the third day the bridegroom was sought early in the morning, and led in triumph by his friends from house to house, receiving at each a trifling present. He was then placed within a circle of dancers, and the guests and bystanders, wetting small coins, stuck them on his forehead. The money was collected as it fell, in an open kerchief held under his chin.

After this ceremony a party of young men, who had attached themselves to the bridegroom, rushed into the crowd, and carrying off the most wealthy of the guests, locked them up in a dark room until they consented to pay a ransom for their release. The

money thus collected was added to the dowry of the newly married couple."

OUR GREATEST NEED

Before there can be a full restoration of the New Testament church there must be a restoration of the spirit which characterized the early Christians. This will require a complete reformation of individual lives. A great many today have united with the church, as they phrase it, who have never been converted unto Christ. They hold a sectarian concept of the church. This must be eliminated, and pride crucified, with humility restored, before the church can be restored. There must be a desire for souls to be won and this desire must fill every heart. Nor must it be a desire that someone else win souls. Every child of God must realize that his is a personal duty to go everywhere preaching the word. We must not send out missionaries. We must be missionaries! We dare not say, "There he is Lord, send him!" We must cry, "Here am I, O Lord, send me!" Our songs are generally much more scriptural than are those who sing them. We blend all of our voices in hymning, "I want to be a worker for the Lord," but in practice we show that we mean "I want *him* to be a worker for the Lord." Too often when we sing, "It pays to serve Jesus" we infer that without pay we'll not do it! An overwhelming love for God, an overwhelming desire to see men rescued from the clutches of sin—those are the essentials to making us become servants of all—the first requisite to greatness in the Kingdom. Let us cultivate ourselves to that end.—*W. Carl Ketcherside.*

GODLY ELDERS

If the church had not lost sight of God's pastor system, we would not today have a system of our own devising. If we had concentrated time, money and effort in the development of elders as we have in the training of preachers, the church would be much closer to the apostolic pattern. It is time to reverse our procedure. There is no use establishing congregations without correcting the deficiencies and appointing elders in every city. First convert the man to the Lord Jesus Christ, then teach him the word of life, then train and develop the converted and taught person to serve as bishop, and the church will be well on its way to true scriptural growth. Can we meet the challenge?

CREATION AND SPECULATION

If Darwin was a true prophet the Bible is all speculation. If man was evolved, how and where did the sex distinctions develop? We have male and female now—how long have they continued and which was first? Man began as a creation and continues by procreation (Gen. 1: 27, 28). Childbirth is common. Records say that four babies are

born each minute. They all have two parents. How long since they had neither? We are sure there was never a babe without a mother.—*A. R. Moore.*

IS IT EXPEDIENT?

We all could agree that it would be lawful for a church to call a preacher to preach for them. How long? Has the Lord given the time limit? Very likely you would answer—as long as it is expedient for him to stay. Well, then, is it expedient for the church to locate a preacher to occupy the pulpit every time the church meets for a year, or years? Can any church develop its talent into leaders, "bishops and deacons," under such a procedure? Could the teacher develop a song leader by doing all the singing himself? Or could the music teacher ever teach a student to play the piano by doing all the playing herself?

The church needs to develop teachers, bishops and deacons, and the preacher may play a great part in such development, but not by doing all the teaching himself. My observation is that wherever the church, in any place, has used a preacher, or preachers, every Sunday in the year, for a few years, instead of developing their bishops or leaders is more dependent on the preacher than they were at first, and the longer the located minister is located, it seems the more he is needed there.—*Alva Johnson* in "Christian Appeal."

DALLAS DEBATE

Perhaps by the time you read this the editor will be in public discussion with Brother Flavel Colley, at Dallas, Texas. The theme of the four nights investigation is the system of ministry among the churches. Brother Colley will defend the one man system as scriptural. I will defend mutual ministry as God's program for edification of the church. Pray that truth may prevail. The discussion will be held Dec. 1-4 at the Beckley Theater in Oak Cliff, an auditorium seating 750, located on Beckley Avenue, one block off Woodin.

Volume Six of BIBLE COMMENTARY by E. M. Zerr will soon go to press. It will be uniform in style, size and binding with previous volumes, and will contain all of the notes and comments on every New Testament book from 1 Corinthians through Revelation. Truly it will pack a wealth of material for the Bible student between its covers. Advance orders will be sent out immediately upon our receipt of the books.

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Do not forget that in our next issue E. M. Zerr starts a new column under the heading "Bible Word Studies." These will be worth keeping.

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Send the paper to your friends for a year so they can share its good things.

THIS and THAT from HERE and THERE

If you know of members and friends of the church living at Baltimore, Catonsville, Ellicott City or Frederick (Maryland) send their names and addresses to Church of Christ, P. O. Box, Catonsville 28, Maryland . . . John Snyder reports a good meeting at Curtisville (Ind.) with Borden Higginbotham and Charles Powell. . . . Henry Boren and wife, and Leon Frederick and wife have placed membership with the congregation at Springfield (Mo.). . . . Randall Lane came to bless the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Justice, Springfield (Mo.). Sept. 29. . . . Thanks to Henry Boren for 5 subscriptions. . . . We have just read a most interesting tract on "The Apostolic Order of Things" written by G. C. Stillinger, Ontario (Calif.) who is 85 years of age and strong in the faith. . . . Ashley H. Elson reports gifts of \$75 from Wauneta (Neb.) and \$50 from Denver (Colo.) churches to apply on the building at Pueblo (Colo.) where construction work is progressing with all outside work completed. . . . Viola E. Barron reports the church at Downey (Calif.) increased by four additions recently. . . . We have received a most inspiring letter from Bro. J. Holmes, Goole, Yorks., England. . . . Ray Hall reports 13 congregations represented at the all day meeting at Bogard (Mo.) Oct. 18, and expresses appreciation for the efforts of Bernell Weems. . . . Dale Hall is expected to return from Germany in December. . . . Percy Pascoe, St. Louis (Mo.) will be released from service in Germany and will return soon. . . . A little son, J. Sherman, has come to bless the home of Jack and Arlena Wheat, Farmington (N. Mex.) arriving Sept. 12. . . . Bros. Inous Wisenbaker and L. J. Dasher were hospitalized during the month past. We pray for their full recovery. Both are members at Valdosta (Ga.). . . . We regret to chronicle the death of Sister Laura McNew, Desloge (Mo.) on Oct. 23. . . . Our sympathy is extended to Sister Harriet Spray, St. Louis, whose husband departed this life Oct. 29. . . . Kenneth Van Deusen spoke at Moundville (Mo.) Oct. 11, while Herb Clark was there Oct. 25. One has been added by membership transfer recently. . . . Paul Ketcherside asks us to notify you that the congregation in Tribune (Kans.) meets one block south of City Hall. . . . E. M. Smith began a meeting at West Riverside, where he has recently been working, on Nov. 1, and he also appointed Clarence Storm and Earl Fiscus as elders. . . . One was restored recently at West Riverside (Calif.). . . . W. E. Wells, Greenville (Fla.) who is 84 years old, says he does not approve of many modern practices in the churches. . . . Thanks to Velmah Starkey (Calif.) for five subs.

. . . . Loren McCord is now to be stationed in the Caribbean area for a period of service. Pray for him in his new station. . . . Arnold Perry immersed one at Kenova (W. Va.) on Oct. 25. . . . Mark E. Linn reports excellent study with E. M. Zerr at Martinsville (Ind.) where 6 adults and 3 children did not miss a single session. . . . Our hearts are saddened by the news of the death of little Larry Alan Weekly, 3 years old, of Exeter (Calif.) who was killed when a trailer tongue fell and struck him. Funeral services were conducted by Arthur Freeman, Oct. 24. . . . Roy Loney reports seeing C. R. Turner immerse 3 at Topeka (Kans.) Nov. 5 and also states that he began a meeting at Greensburg (Kans.) with Harrell Ridley assisting. . . . On Oct. 25, Carroll Wrinkle of Dallas (Tex.) spoke at Southwest Church; Roy Loney of Wellsville (Kans.) spoke at Webster Groves; Clifford Yeldell of Dallas (Tex.) at Lillian Avenue; John W. Spickler of Rockford (Ill.) at Manchester Avenue, all in the Saint Louis area. These brethren were among the vanguard of those arriving for the debate. . . . Brethren at Stockton (Calif.) inform us that negotiations are under way which may produce a debate between Leroy Garrett and Guy N. Woods in their city. . . . E. M. Smith began a two weeks effort at West Riverside (Calif.) Nov. 1. . . . Two were added by membership transfer at Compton (Calif.) Oct. 25. Wilbur Storm concluded a two weeks effort at Compton on October 30, and the congregation presented him a wristwatch as a token of their appreciation for his sterling worth in their development program. . . . A song fest was held at Riverside (Calif.) on Nov. 1. . . . O. C. Dobbs, Sr., Birmingham (Ala.) informs us that he has sent propositions covering the modern pastor system to Jack Meyer, with the invitation to get any "pastor" in that city to take his place if he wasn't willing to try his hand. Brother Dobbs is fully aware that the clergy system which has fastened on the churches is the greatest modern departure from apostolic simplicity, and he is fearless in meeting the issue. . . . As a result of the debate in Saint Louis some three other brethren arranged propositions covering the school and pastor system issues. If these debates materialize we will keep you fully informed as to time and place. The fight is on, O Christian soldier! . . . Nancy D. Skaggs reports the church in Springfield (Mo.) is on the road to greater accomplishments. Henry Boren gave an impressive message to the brethren there on Nov. 1. . . . We have been asked by several what disposition G. C. Brewer is going to make of the false accusations which he filed in that one-way street,

dead end journal, the *Gospel Advocate*. We do not know as yet but we are corresponding with him. One thing about the *Gospel Advocate* is that it can never be proven wrong, for it will not permit a reply. If it does this time, it will be an exception. . . . Our beloved and respected brother, Walter Crosthwaite, who is publisher of *Scripture Standard* in Great Britain, reached his 80th birthday on Oct. 30. He served as an evangelist in the Slamannan District in Scotland for a number of years where many were won to Christ through his efforts. He has been a staunch defender of the old paths, and an ardent pleader for a return to apostolic simplicity among the churches. . . . L. E. Ketcherside has just completed a work lasting one month in the Galesburg (Ill.) area which included much personal work and teaching in the homes of individuals. . . . Clifford Deister's present address is 918 Sheridan St., Salina, Kansas. . . . Sister Hyatt reports seven states represented in the 300 persons present for the all day meeting and basket dinner at 63rd and Blue Ridge church, Kansas City, on Nov. 1, during the meeting conducted by William Hensley. Brethren attended from Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. Although there were no additions during the two weeks of gospel preaching, there was much encouragement given for the future. . . . We urge all of our readers to send for a copy of Wallace-Ketcherside debate. You should keep abreast of the stirring issues now confronting the churches. The cost of this book is but \$3, and we suggest that after reading yours, you pass it on to others who may also be interested. . . . The editor began a series of gospel meetings at Southwest Church, St. Louis, immediately upon conclusion of the debate. With almost a week yet to go at time of this report, there have been many more non-members in attendance than we have ever seen before. Too, there is a real interest in the messages, and two have been added to our forces thus far, with others as prospects. . . . Herb Clark and Doy Rhoton assisted in the personal work during the meeting with Leroy Garrett at Independence (Mo.) with the three of them going from door to door with the message of salvation. After that meeting Bro. Garrett moved on to Chillicothe (Mo.) while the others went to Dallas to aid in arranging for the debate there. . . . We are in need of additional readers if we continue to publish this paper and hold the price without raising. Can you mention it to brethren and friends and send in a club of subscriptions? Can we count on you? . . . Don't forget to send your orders for Bibles to us at once.