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**CENTRALIZED CONTROL
OF
CHURCH RESOURCES**



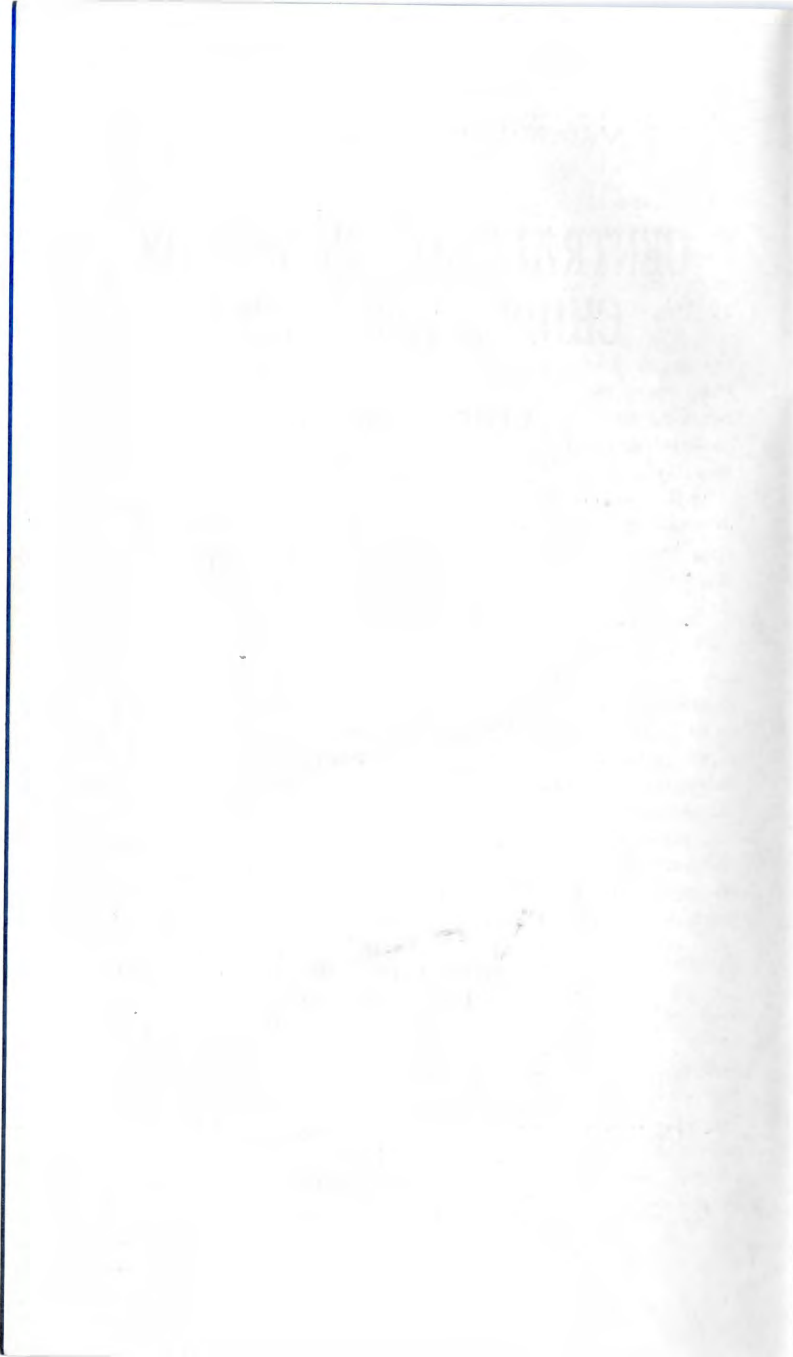
By
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CENTRALIZED CONTROL OF CHURCH RESOURCES

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ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF CENTRALIZED CONTROL

Chapter I

Every New Testament church in apostolic days was an independent and autonomous organization. Bishops or overseers were appointed in every church as soon as men could acquire the divinely prescribed qualifications. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.)

The jurisdiction of every eldership was limited to the work and resources of the one congregation of which they were members, and they had no right to send church contributions to a sister congregation, unless the receiving church was too poor to provide for its own destitute members.

No geographical area was assigned to the oversight of the elders of any one congregation, and they had no right to assume such; their bishopric was not geographical or diocesan.

1. The Beginning of Centralization.

Soon after the death of the apostles of Christ, churches in many provinces created a form of centralization by placing their work and resources under the control of an agency that exercised authority over a district that included several churches. Within a few centuries this erroneous practice produced the Roman Hierarchy.

Nearly all the denominations of today have a form of centralized authority over the work and resources of their composite groups similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church.

2. Missionary and Benevolent Societies.

A little more than one hundred years ago, many free and independent churches of Christ fell into the same error that had corrupted the religious world for many centuries. They surrendered the control of their money for evangelization to an organization which they called "a missionary society." This evangelistic organization solicited money from churches everywhere, and its officers had full control over these church contributions in preaching the gospel at home and abroad.

Churches that cooperated in this centralization project lost their autonomy by surrendering the oversight

of their resources for evangelization to an outside agency, when they should have retained it under the control of their own elders. The fact that the society preached the gospel to millions, and that thousands of souls were saved, did not justify the unauthorized removal of the oversight of church resources from the elders of the local churches to a centralized agency. Nor does it prove that the centralization method saves more souls or is better in any way than the divine method of every church's managing its own work.

Soon after the creation of the missionary society among churches of Christ, benevolent societies were organized, and they also solicited money from plain and autonomous churches. Many elders, preachers and editors who opposed church donations to missionary societies on the ground that the Scriptures do not authorize a centralized oversight of church resources in the field of evangelization and that such would constitute a surrender of local church autonomy, not only gave their endorsement of the identical type of centralization in the field of benevolence, but they also solicited funds from the churches for these ecumenical projects in the field of ministration.

Something is seriously wrong with every man's faculties of perception, who cannot see that every argument against the surrender of the oversight of church funds to a human organization in the field of evangelization applies with equal force and logic against the surrender of the oversight of church funds to a human organization in the field of ministration.

The benevolent societies have fed, clothed and sheltered thousands of life's unfortunate; but this does not justify the removal of the oversight of church funds from the elders of the local churches where God has placed it to a centralized agency where God did not place it. Nor does it prove that the centralized method is better in any way than God's method of every church's managing its own benevolent work, and accepting contributions from sister churches only when it is unable financially to provide for the poor among its own members.

3. The Sponsoring Church.

A form of centralized control of church resources, known as the sponsoring church method of cooperation, has become popular with many brethren.

According to this type of centralization, the elders of any or every church may conclude that they are "obligated" to persuade as many churches as possible to place their money under their oversight for a work of evangelization or ministration or both; because the sponsoring church elders in their own opinion have the "ability" and "leadership" to manage much more money than the members of their own congregation are contributing.

If they had as much "ability" as they claim, of course they would be able to see that according to their own process of reasoning no church would have the right to surrender the oversight of any of its money unto them, unless the elders of the surrendering church felt that they themselves did not have the "ability" and leadership" to manage all the money that was in their treasury. The fact that they cannot see where their egotistical claim places the elders of all contributing churches, makes both their "ability" and "leadership" quite questionable. But this type of centralized oversight will be discussed more fully in later chapters.

4. God's Way Most Effective.

Religious leaders have never produced any form of centralized oversight of church work and resources that is one-half as effective as independent oversight and action of autonomous churches. The Lord's way always is the most fruitful and the most effective. Man's ways are a hindrance and a curse when they run counter to God's ways. "Oh Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:13.)

a. Human evangelistic or Bible teaching organizations, such as publishing houses, Bible colleges and all other types of evangelistic or human societies or companies, are a hindrance and a curse to the cause of Christ when they persuade churches to surrender the oversight of either their work or their money to them. Much more

is accomplished when churches retain the oversight of their own resources in the field of evangelization.

b. Human benevolent organizations, such as the Red Cross, Child Haven, Cripple Children's Clinic, Rest Haven for the Aged, and many other human institutions, have a right to exist and they are doing a great work for the world's unfortunate. But the churches also have their own divinely appointed work of charity, and they have no scriptural right to abandon the New Testament pattern and donate one dime of their funds to any human benevolent society on earth. The most effective way that any church today can do its divinely prescribed benevolent work is by following the New Testament pattern in its work of ministration. Human benevolent organizations become a hindrance and a curse to the churches' work, when their promoters influence the churches to surrender their charity funds to their control.

c. If the churches that are surrendering the control of their money to sponsoring churches would use all their resources themselves in doing their own evangelistic work (like the New Testament churches did it), the Lord would be pleased and the gospel would be preached all over the world in one generation. (Col. 1:6,23.) The way these brotherhood evangelistic projects are being financed today is a hindrance and a curse to the work of saving souls.

d. Churches that are sponsoring brotherhood benevolent projects for old people or for homeless children are encouraging parents and grandparents, children and grandchildren to shirk the responsibility of providing for their own households, and are placing a burden upon the churches that should be borne by the relatives of these indigent. This is contrary to the will of God. "But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." (1 Tim. 5:4-16.)

If the money and effort used in advertising the brotherhood charity projects under the control of a few sponsoring churches were used in teaching churches and Christians the will of God in the work of ministration, there would be fewer deserted children and neglected aged.

e. In a city that contains several congregations, like Nashville or Houston, the most effective way to build up the churches and to preach the gospel to every creature in that area is by the independent and autonomous effort of all the churches in that city. The big union meetings of the Billy Graham and Billy Sunday type, in which the oversight is surrendered to a little group, are not as effective as God's way, and both the Scriptures and human experience have proved it.

There is no excuse for centralized control of church resources.

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Chapter II

In order for brethren who differ to reach agreement on any point of doctrine or practice, the real point at issue must be clearly understood and carefully considered. If either side dodges or deliberately avoids the main issue, the breach usually widens and disturbance among the churches increases.

The actual point at issue in the present centralized control controversy has not been given much consideration.

1. What Is the Issue?

The scriptural answer to one question contains the solution to the problem: **How may a church obtain and dispose of its funds?** When the money question is answered, all other points of difference will adjust themselves, and the trouble soon will be settled.

a. The issue is not whether churches may cooperate or not; all agree that they can. The question is: Can churches cooperate by sending donations to a man-made missionary society or human benevolent society? Can they cooperate by contributing their funds to a sponsoring church for a work to which the receiving church and the giving churches are related equally?

Many of the promoters of these various types of centralized controlling agencies accuse brethren who disagree with them of being against cooperation, and they call them "anti-cooperation brethren." Whether they are ignorant of the real issue, or deliberately trying to avoid it, is not always clear.

b. The issue is not whether human benevolent institutions and man-made Bible teaching organizations have a right to exist or are doing a "good" work; that they do have a right to exist and that they are doing a good work, when teaching the Bible, is admitted generally. The question is: Do churches have a scriptural right to contribute money to these human organizations?

In defense of the missionary society, J. B. Briney and many others talked and wrote much about the good that the society was doing in the work of saving souls; and they tried to justify all that the society was doing on the ground that the Lord told the churches to preach the gospel but did not tell them how to do it. That was

not the issue at all; the issue was: Shall the churches contribute funds to any human evangelistic organization? If so, which one and how many?

In defense of the human benevolent societies, Brother Gayle Oler and many others talk and write much about the good that these human organizations are doing in providing homes for the homeless children and old people; and they try to justify all that these charity institutions are doing on the ground that the Lord told the churches to visit the fatherless and widows but did not tell them how to do it. That is not the issue at all; the question is: Shall the churches contribute funds to any human benevolent society? If so, which one and how many?

c. The issue is not whether churches may contribute to another church that is so poor that it cannot supply the needs of its own indigent, "that there may be equality" or mutual freedom from want; all agree that this may be done. The question is: May churches send contributions to another church for the work of evangelization to which all the churches are related equally?

In both the Lufkin and the Abilene debates, Brother E. R. Harper completely missed the issue, as many other advocates of centralized oversight miss it; he talked much about how New Testament churches cooperated in that Judean charity work, but he ignored the fact that no church sent a contribution to any church that was as well off as the contributing church. He would not consider the fact that the scriptures distinguish between a church that is an object of charity and one that is not an object of charity, just as they distinguish between an individual Christian who is an object of charity and one who is not.

d. The issue is not whether a church may preach the gospel by radio or television or the printed page; all admit that it can. The question is: Has the Lord legislated regarding how a church may obtain its money with which to do its evangelistic work?

Brethren who disagree with the way the Highland church in Abilene is obtaining money for the Herald of Truth radio program have been misrepresented and falsely accused time and again by Brother E. R. Harper; he accuses them of being against the Highland church and her work, against her radio program and trying to

"kill" the program. He has been told over and over that nobody is against the Highland church or her radio program; that the unscriptural way that she is raising money for the program is the issue. Yet he continues his false charges. Is it because he is too ignorant to understand what the issue is? or is it because he deliberately ignores the issue?

Brother Harper is not against Bible colleges; he is not against teaching the Bible in a college; he is not a "Sommerite"; but he is against a Bible college's soliciting and accepting contributions from church treasuries. Now, if he tried to teach A. C. Pullias and W. L. Totty that it is sinful for churches to contribute funds to Bible colleges, and if Pullias and Totty accused him over and over of being against Bible colleges; of trying to kill the schools; of being against teaching the Bible in a college; of being a Sommerite, regardless of the number of times that he stated the real issue to them; then Brother Harper would know that one of two things is true regarding Pullias and Totty: (1) he would know that they are too ignorant to understand the issue; or (2) he would know that they are deliberately misrepresenting him and avoiding the issue in order to protect a theory which they know they cannot defend. One of these things is true of E. R. Harper, and his trouble is not honest ignorance. When a man knows that an accurate statement of the issue, and a correct representation of his opponent would damage his theory, then something is desperately wrong with his theory, and with him, if he does not renounce the theory.

2. How May A Church Obtain Funds For Its Work?

Has the Lord legislated as to how a church may obtain funds for its work?

If he has not legislated relative to the way that a church may get possession of money for its work, but has left the matter to human judgment, then every church may employ any and every money raising method it may choose and that is not inherently sinful; or it may reject every known method and adopt one entirely new. If the Lord has not legislated on this point, but has made it parallel with methods of teaching the Bible or with the number of containers used in the Lord's supper, as some claim, then any church can get money for its work by

operating a grocery store, soda fountain, cotton gin, saw mill or any other secular business for profit; it may sponsor a football game or stagershow for profit; it may solicit and accept funds from anything and everybody it wishes.

If the Lord has legislated regarding the way a church may obtain funds for its work, then no church has a right to go beyond what is written and employ methods that are not included in the teaching of Christ.

3. Under What Conditions May A Church Contribute Funds To Another Church?

New Testament churches did send donations to a sister church. Has the Lord legislated as to the conditions under which this may be done? That is the issue.

If the Lord has legislated as to the conditions under which a church may contribute a part or all of its funds to the oversight of another church, the church that fails to respect the divinely appointed conditions is in open violation of God's word.

If he has not legislated in this matter, but left it to human judgment, then all the churches in the world may surrender every cent of their funds to the oversight of one eldership, and every man who would lift his voice against it is guilty of binding where the Lord has loosed and legislating where the Lord has not legislated.

For illustration: people were baptized, with divine approval in apostolic days. If the Lord has legislated as to the conditions under which a person may be baptized, the conditions must have the same degree of respect as the command itself. If he has not legislated on this point, then infants, idiots and all others may be baptized, and every objector becomes guilty of legislating where God has not.

4. Parallel Examples: The Vatican In Rome, Highland in Abilene.

A few centuries after the church was established, a "group" of church leaders concluded that their "ability" and superior "leadership" not only justified, but also "obligated," their trying to gain control of resources of the churches all over the world for a work to which all the churches were related equally. They succeeded, and

the Roman Hierarchy inevitably resulted. If the Lord has not legislated concerning the conditions under which a church may send donations to another church, then all the churches had a perfect right to place all their resources under the control of the church in Rome, and Romanism is no sin as far as centralized control is concerned.

A few years ago "a group of elders" in Abilene, Texas, tumbled into the pit-fall of this same Romish philosophy. They concluded that their "ability" and superior "leadership" obligated them to try to gain control of resources of churches all over the world for a work to which all the churches were assigned by the Lord. Though they have not gained the same degree of success as the Roman "group of elders," they have hoodwinked the elders of about a thousand churches into the practice of that rotten Romish philosophy. This reprehensible claim that their own opinion of their "ability" and "leadership" "obligated" the Highland elders in Abilene to seek control of the resources of other churches is stated in their own words in the Gospel Guardian of January 6, 1955. The point here is this: If the Lord has not legislated relative to the conditions under which churches may send contributions to another church, then both the Vatican Church in Rome and the Highland Church in Abilene are right in their identical efforts at centralized control, and no man has a right to object.

How may a church obtain and dispose of its money? Has the Lord legislated on this point? **That** is the issue.

TWO INDISPENSABLE CONDITIONS

Chapter III

1. **Conditions Stated.** No church can send scripturally a donation to another church, except under two conditions:

a. The receiving church must be in "want"; it must be an object of charity.

b. The donation must be for a work that peculiarly is the work of the receiving church; for a work of ministration and benefit to the poor members of the receiving church, which the receiving church is not able financially to perform; for a work to which the receiving church sustains a relationship that no other church sustains.

Both of these conditions obtained in every New Testament example of a church's sending a donation to another church; there is no exception.

2. **Proof Texts.**

a. Acts 11:27-30. "Now in these days there came prophets down from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul."

Both of the necessary conditions prevailed here: (1) a famine reduced "the brethren that dwelt in Judea" to "want"; (2) the money was sent for the "relief" of the Judean brethren—for a work of ministration which the receiving churches were not able to render to their own members.

Though this passage does not state specifically that the church at Antioch sent the relief (it only says that the "disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief"), yet the following quotations do show that churches as such did send when the two indispensable conditions existed.

b. I Corinthians 16:1-4. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week

let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me."

Here, the contributions were from churches to a church. And the donations were sent under the two required conditions: (1) the church in Jerusalem was an object of charity; (2) the money was for the benefit of the poor members in the receiving church; for a work of ministration within a poor church, and never for the work of general evangelization.

c. 2 Corinthians 8:1-3. "Moreover brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the church of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord."

The same conditions existed here as in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4. The churches of Macedonia were poor, but they were not objects of charity, like Jerusalem; they had "power" to give, and they gave "according to their power"; Jerusalem, the receiving church, had no "power" to give.

d. 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 shows that both conditions existed, and the design of the charity to Jerusalem is stated clearly; "that there may be equality."

e. 2 Corinthians 9:12-13 states that the gifts to the Jerusalem church were to fill "up the measure of the wants of the saints"—not for evangelization, a work assigned to all churches.

f. In Romans 15:25-27 Paul states twice that these donations are for the poor saints in a destitute church.

3. Illustrated By Baptism.

a. Baptism; prerequisites and design.

The examples of conversion in The Acts reveal clearly that faith, repentance and confession are prerequisites of baptism. No person can be baptized scripturally, except under these three conditions, because the scriptures contain no command, no example, no necessary

inference to justify baptism in the absence of these three prerequisites.

The specified design of baptism is "for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38.) When a person is baptized "for the remission of sins," many additional blessings are bestowed upon the new-born babe in Christ, and much good is accomplished in addition to the specified purpose; but that does not prove that a person scripturally can be baptized in the absence of the appointed design, "for the remission of sins," or where there are no sins to be remitted.

d. Donations from a church to a church; prerequisites and the design of donations from a church to a church: "For I say not this that others may be eased and ye distressed; but by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality: as it is written, He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack."

This passage makes the two prerequisites indispensable in the contribution from a church to a church: (1) the receiving church was in "want"; (2) the gifts were for a work of benevolence for the poor members in the receiving church, which the receiving church was not able to perform without aid from sister congregations. Therefore no church can send scripturally a donation to another church, except under these two conditions, because the scriptures contain no command, no example, no necessary inference to justify such contributions in the absence of these divinely appointed prerequisites.

If the specified prerequisites are indispensable in the act of baptism, why would not the specified prerequisites be indispensable also in the practice of donations from a church to a church?

The specified design in a church's sending a contribution to a church is "that there may be equality." (2 Cor. 8:14.) In this verse, Paul explains what he means by the word, "equality." He says, "But by equality: your abundance at this present time for their want; that their abundance also may become for your want; that there may be equality." Nothing has been omitted

in this quotation, except the interpolations of the translators; and with the interpolations removed, every student should be able to see clearly that Paul means **mutual freedom from want** in his use of the word "equality."

When many churches sent contributions to the poor church in Jerusalem "that there may be equality," many blessings were received and much good was accomplished in addition to the specified design; but that no more proves that a church may send scripturally a donation to another church in the absence of the divine design—mutual freedom from want—than the reception of other blessings proves that a person may be baptized scripturally in the absence of the divine design—"for the remission of sins."

4. Reason For Prerequisites and Design.

The reason for these prerequisites and design in churches' sending contributions to another church is as clear as the noon-day sun. If these divine restrictions had been respected and observed, if no church had sent any of its resources to another church, except when the receiving church was an object of charity, and "that there may be equality," Romanism would have been impossible; because the centralization of control of church resources is the very foundation and essence of Romanism.

If these prerequisites and this design are not respected and observed to the letter, then the flood gates are thrown wide open to centralized control of church resources by any group of elders who, through either ignorance or egotism, may want to manage more than God intended for any one eldership to manage; then the development of another hierarchy can be measured daily by the degree of their success in this ungodly practice. And he who cannot see that this is true has never studied the history of "the falling away" to any profit at all.

TWO KINDS OF CHURCH WORK

Chapter IV

A recognition of the fact that the New Testament reveals two distinct kinds of church work is indispensable in a profitable study of the sponsoring church controversy.

A failure to distinguish between things that are different prevents a great many people from understanding the will of God on many religious subjects.

1. Two Kinds of Sinners.

Two kinds of sinners are in need of forgiveness: (1) alien sinners; (2) erring citizens in God's kingdom. Many denominationalists are ignorant of the gospel plan of salvation from sin, because they do not accept the fact that the Lord makes distinction between these two kinds of sinners, and that he does not require the same things of both kinds.

To the alien sinner the Lord says, "Repent ye, and be baptized" (Acts 2:38); to the citizen sinner he says "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord." (Acts 8:22.) But many people do not observe the difference in these two kinds of sinners and God's commands to them. Therefore they turn to examples of forgiveness of "lost sheep" (such as the sinful woman, Luke 7:44-50; Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1-10; the thief on the cross, Luke 23:40-43), and wrest the scriptures and make void God's word to alien sinners by applying to aliens the things required of sinful citizens.

2. Two Kinds of Believers.

The Bible makes a clear distinction between two kinds of believers: (1) obedient believers; (2) disobedient believers.

The "faith only" advocates ignore this truth. They read, "Whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16), and similar passages, and apply them to both kinds of believers. When they are told that all passages which contain promises to believers always apply to obedient believers only, and never to disobedient believers, they do not listen. When they are pressed to present a passage in which God promises salvation to a disobedient believer, they ignore the dis-

inction between the two, and usually give a reference that applies only to the obedient believer.

3. Two Kinds of Church Work.

The New Testament reveals two kinds of church work: (1) a work to which the churches are related unequally; (2) a work to which the churches are related equally. The distinction that inspiration makes between these two kinds of church work is as clear and definite as the distinction it makes between the two kinds of sinners, or the two kinds of believers.

a. Every church has a work which strictly is its own, and to which it bears a relationship and a responsibility that no other church bears.

Providing for its own indigent is one example of this kind of church work. Every church is responsible for the care and ministration to its own poor in a way that no other church is responsible.

Another example of this kind of work: every church must assemble on the first day of the week and worship God. No church can meet and worship without a **place** in which to meet and worship. Every church bears a responsibility in the selection and preparation of its own meeting place that no other church bears.

This kind of church work is a work of ministration, and when a church is unable financially to perform this service to its own members, other churches then must supply the poor church with funds for this work "that there may be equality," or mutual freedom from want. Many passages of scripture were presented in chapter three to prove this.

b. Evangelizing the world is the other kind of church work. This work has been assigned by the Lord to all the churches, and therefore they all are related equally to this obligation and responsibility.

The Bible does not contain one verse of scripture authorizing a church to send a donation to another church for this kind of work—the work of evangelization.

All the churches are equally related to the work of evangelization of every creature in the whole world; they are not related equally in the work of ministration to their respective indigent.

In the Abilene debate, Brother E. R. Harper tried desperately to make void the divine distinction between these two kinds of church work in precisely the same way that denominationalists try to make void the distinction between the two kinds of sinners, and the distinction between the two kinds of believers. When pressed for scriptural authority for a church's sending a donation to another church for the work of evangelization, he would cite a reference that applied only to that charity work in Judea, exactly as the "faith only" advocates cite references that apply only to obedient believers when they are pressed for a passage to show that God saves disobedient believers. If it is sinful for denominationalists to mis-apply and wrest the scriptures, it is sinful for others to do the same thing in exactly the same way.

4. Two Kinds of Stewards.

The two classes of stewards in the kingdom of God are: (1) the individual Christian; (2) the local church.

The Lord has placed certain restrictions upon a church's acquisition and disposal of funds which he has not placed on the individual Christian.

The theory that a church may obtain and dispose scripturally of its money in every way that a Christian may do so, is contrary to gospel truth. Some argue that a congregation can do anything that an individual Christian can do, because they think that one Christian may be the church in a certain place.

The word "church" in the New Testament is never used to designate only one person. Like the words "flock," "congregation," "assembly," "group," "herd," etc., it is a collective noun, and therefore is not susceptible to individual application. In 1 Timothy 5:16 the Holy Spirit makes a clear cut distinction between the individual Christian and the church: "If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened."

An individual Christian rightfully may engage in secular business or gainful employment for profit. (Acts 18:3; 2 Thess. 3:8-10; and other passages.) A church as such has no right to engage in either. An individual may donate his money to human organizations: such as Bible colleges, publishing companies, benevolent institutions

and many other human establishments. But no church as such has a right to donate one dime of its money to any human organization.

That a church may buy the products or services of human institutions has never been doubted; it is admitted generally. But a church's donating its money to such institutions is a violation of God's will.

EVANGELIZATION: A WORK ASSIGNED TO ALL CHURCHES

Chapter V

1. Meaning of the Word "Evangelize."

To evangelize is to preach the gospel. Evangelizing and preaching the gospel are synonymous.

When the Jerusalem church was scattered, "they therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." (Acts 8:4.) They evangelized; they all were evangelists.

Evangelists preach to citizens in the kingdom of God as well as to aliens. "If thou put the brethren in mind of these things," said Paul to the evangelist Timothy, "Preach the word." (2 Tim. 4:2.)

In Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, he devotes more space to how and what these evangelists were to preach to the churches, than to how and what they were to preach to aliens. Whether preaching to the church or to aliens, they were doing the work of evangelists.

2. The Work Assigned.

Every church must be active in the work of evangelization. It is God's will for the church to make known His manifold wisdom. (Eph. 3:10.) The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15.)

This is not a work that a church may assume at its own pleasure or discretion after its establishment. It is a work that the Lord has assigned to every church from its beginning—from the very "first day" of its existence. When it ceases this work, it loses its New Testament identity.

No church is either too young or too small to engage in the work of evangelizing the world. The church at Philippi had "fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day" of its existence, until the day that Paul sat in a Roman prison and wrote a letter to it; and he said he was confident that it would continue that work "until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:3-6), and that church never turned over one dime of its money to the control of a sponsoring church.

No poverty can become deep enough and no persecution can become injurious enough to exempt any church

from the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the world. The church at Jerusalem was so poor that it had to have money from other churches for the relief of its members; but it never received one cent from another church for the work of evangelization, and yet in the lowest depths of its poverty it continued to preach the gospel without stint. The cruel persecution that was poured out upon it was unbearable, and the members had to flee from their city and their homes; but the work of evangelization went on. "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." (Acts 8:4.)

The theory that poor little churches cannot do their evangelistic work, unless they send their money to a sponsoring church, is totally false and contradicts everything the New Testament teaches on the subject. The centralization of church resources under the oversight of a sponsoring church is no help at all to any church or to any good work. It is a hindrance to the work and a curse to the cause of Christ in exactly the same way that the missionary society became a hindrance and a curse one hundred years ago.

The way that the Highland church in Abilene is gathering money from other church treasuries for the Herald of Truth evangelistic project is a hindrance and a curse to the work of evangelization. It is a perversion of the divine pattern, and every perversion thwarts the purpose of God and vitiates the gospel of Christ.

If churches today could be persuaded to imitate the New Testament churches in the use of their own resources and opportunities, the knowledge of God soon would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Oh, that mortals could be persuaded to believe that "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are" God's ways higher than man's ways!

3. The Field Assigned.

In the work of evangelization, the Lord has assigned the whole world as the field of every church and every Christian. (Matt. 13:38.) No church has a monopoly on any geographical area, regardless of size. Exactly the same area has been assigned to every church, and there is no righteous way to change God's assignments; there-

fore, all churches sustain equal relationship to this field and to this work.

In the Gospel Advocate of December 15, 1955, Brother Thomas B. Warren "assumes" that the elders of congregation "A" may "assume" the oversight of the work of evangelizing in an area or diocese; he "assumes" that "this work then becomes peculiarly and exclusively the work of congregation 'A'." The fallacy of Brother Warren's diocesan concept of evangelistic work has been pointed out in another tract.

4. Mission Accomplished.

Within one generation the people of God preached the gospel to every nation as the Lord had commanded. In Colossians 1:6, Paul said that the truth of the gospel "is come unto you; even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing." In verse 23 he said, "If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven." It could be "preached in all creation under heaven in this generation, if the Lord's people would imitate the faith, method and zeal of the first century Christians. How did they accomplish their mission?

Christians "went about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ." (Acts 8:4, 5.) Wherever they went, they proclaimed the Christ. They were taught to support financially the preachers of the word: "But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." (Gal. 6:6.) From the beginning of the church, they continued stedfastly in the "fellowship." (Acts 2:42.)

Churches as such "sounded forth the word of the Lord" in every place. (1 Thess. 1:8.) Paul taught the churches to support gospel preachers, and that the Lord had ordained "that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor. 9:6-14.)

By its own chosen carriers the church at Philippi "sent once and again" unto Paul's need. (Phil. 4:14-18.)

Paul received wages from "other churches" as he ministered in Corinth. (2 Cor. 11:8.)

It stands as a historical, Biblical, undeniable fact that New Testament churches sent directly to gospel preachers engaged in evangelistic work, and never to any kind of intermediate controlling agency.

GOD'S LAW OF EXCLUSION

Chapter VI

God's law of exclusion requires that the silence of the scriptures be respected. Every man who speaks must speak as the oracles of God (I Pet. 4:11).

The missionary society, the benevolent society, the sponsoring church types of co-operation, and instrumental music in worship, are unscriptural innovations which have been introduced into the work, worship and service of God in violation of this law.

1. Statement Of This Law.

When the Lord uses a generic term in telling man what to do, then names a specific of that generic term, and does not express his approval of any other specific of that generic, man is forbidden by God's law of exclusion to employ any specific other than the one named.

When the Lord uses a generic term, but does not name any specific of that generic or if he expresses his approval of the employment of other specifics of that generic term, then man is at liberty to employ any or all the specifics of that generic that may be expedient.

2. When Restricted To Only One Specific?

a. Noah was told to make the ark of wood. **Wood** is a generic term; oak, pine, cedar, gopher and others are specifics of the generic "wood". God named one of these specifics to be used; He specified **gopher**. Nowhere did he express his approval of any other kind of wood in the ark. Therefore, God's law of exclusion forbade Noah's use of any other kind of wood with the same degree of finality as if God had said, "Thou shalt not use other kinds of wood". There was no "principle", either "eternal" or temporary, to justify the use of pine in making the ark.

b. Christians are told to make "melody" in church worship: "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

"Melody" is a generic term with many specifics: that is, there are many kinds of "melody" or music; such as singing, playing on mechanical instruments, yodeling, humming and whistling. The Lord has legislated as to

the kind of "melody" or music to employ in worship. He specified **speaking words** that may be understood in **spiritual song** (Col. 3:16; I Cor. 14:13-19), thereby forbidding all other kinds of music by His law of exclusion.

The advocates of instrumental music in worship ignore God's law of exclusion, and they contend that the same "principle" involved in singing is involved also in instrumental music; therefore they erroneously conclude that instrumental music is permissible, not by command or example or necessary inference, but by "principle eternal". By that kind of logic, Noah could have justified the use of oak in building the ark.

One must distinguish between the things that are specifics of a generic term and the things that are **not** specifics of that generic in order to apply properly God's law of exclusion. A failure to make this distinction may cause one to think that instrumental music or whistling in worship is parallel to the use of song books or the tuning fork. But the tuning fork and song books are not **kinds** of music; they are **not** specifics of the generic music. If they were **kinds** of music they would be specifics of the generic melody, and they would be forbidden by the specific "sing", as other kinds of music are excluded by it. In order to justify another kind of music, one must present the passage of scripture in which God has expressed his approval of another kind in worship.

c. Naaman was told to dip seven times in the "Jordan" and be healed of leprosy. (2 Kings 5.) When Elisha named the "Jordan" and did not in any way express his approval of any other river, he thereby excluded all other rivers and Naaman knew it. Therefore, he asked: "Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them. and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage", because he knew that Elisha's naming the "Jordan" forbade his using any other river.

d. In Chapter III of this study, several passages of scripture were presented, which show beyond reasonable doubt that God specified and described the work and the conditions for which and under which one church may send a contribution to another church. He specified and

described a work of charity in a church that is too poor to provide for its own indigent. Nowhere in all the New Testament has the Lord expressed his approval of a church's sending a contribution to any other kind of church for any other kind of work.

In the Lufkin debate Brother E. R. Harper admitted that the scriptures contain no command or example or necessary inference of a church's sending a contribution to a church that is not an object of charity and for a work of evangelization. He argued that the same "principle" involved in the Judean charity work is involved also in the Herald Of Truth evangelistic work. Therefore, he concluded that the practice of sponsoring churches in begging and accepting donations from churches all over the world for evangelization is permissible, not because of any divine command or example or necessary inference, but because of "principle eternal".

Of course, Naaman could have adopted Brother Harper's philosophy, and he could have reasoned that the Jordan, the Abanah and the Pharpar are all rivers; that the same "principle" involved in dipping in the Jordan is involved in dipping in the rivers of Damascus. Then he could have concluded that dipping in the Pharpar is permissible, not because of any command or example or necessary inference, but because of "principle eternal"? Why didn't Naaman reason like Brother Harper and the instrumental music promoters? Because he was not that illogical and reckless in his thinking.

If Naaman's dipping for the cure of leprosy was not restricted to the river Jordan by God's law of exclusion, then any river in the world would have been permissible, for Elisha did not say, "Thou shalt not dip in other rivers".

God's law of exclusion is the only thing in all the Bible that forbids counting beads, instrumental music, meat in the Lord's supper and burning incense in worship. If this law does not exclude innovations in worship, then every innovation known to man can be justified by Brother E. R. Harper's "principle eternal".

The Bible teaches by divine example, as shown in previous chapters of this study that churches did send donations for relief of the saints in another church that

was unable to provide for its own poor. The Lord's failure to express his approval of a church's sending a donation to a church that is not an object of charity was due to one of two reasons: (1) it was an oversight; or (2) He purposely left it out. It was not an oversight; therefore, this practice of churches' sending contributions to a church must stop right where the receiving church ceases to be an object of charity; otherwise, God's law of exclusion is violated, both the receiving and contributing churches go beyond what is written, and they show a lack of respect for the authority of God's word.

If this is not the stopping place, the Bible contains nothing to prevent the centralization of all church resources under one eldership. The sponsoring church devotees say that this is not the stopping place, yet some of them contend that placing all church resources under one eldership is unscriptural. But not one of them has been persuaded to state plainly where the stopping place is. They are obligated to present a passage of scripture to show where the stopping place is, or renounce their Romish doctrine of centralization.

3. When Not Restricted To One Specific?

a. Christians are commanded to "go" and preach the gospel. Walking, running, riding, sailing and many other methods of travel are specifics of the generic "go". By divine example the Lord has expressed his approval of more than one method of going. Therefore, preachers are not limited to one method of travel; they are at liberty to use any method that may be expedient.

b. Christians are told to "teach." Writing, speaking, object lessons, visual aids and many other methods of teaching are specifics of the generic "teach". The Lord has not named any method to the exclusion of other methods. Therefore, teachers of the Bible may use any or all methods.

Advocates of the missionary society have tried to justify church contributions to the society by the claim that the society is only a method of "teaching," or a method of "going". Neither the church nor a missionary society is a specific of either the generic "go" or the generic "teach". Both the church and the human society are institutions that employ methods of going and of

teaching. The churches should be more able in selecting and employing methods of "teaching" and of "going" than any human missionary organization.

c. Christians are told to "visit" the fatherless and widows. The word "visit" as used by James (1:27) is a generic term. To supply food, or clothing, or shelter, or medical care, or other necessities is to "visit" those in need. These are specifics of the generic "visit"; they are methods of "visiting". God did not specify one of these specifics to the exclusion of other methods of visiting; therefore, all these necessities may be provided.

Advocates of the human benevolent societies have tried to justify church contributions to their human benevolent organizations in exactly the same way that the advocates of the human evangelistic societies have tried to justify church contributions to their organizations. They claim that their organizations are only methods of "visiting", and that a church is not restricted in methods of visiting; therefore, they conclude that the churches may turn their charity money to the benevolent society, if they wish to do so.

Their error is due to their ignorance of the fact that neither a church nor a human benevolent society is a "method" of visiting. After a church sends its money to a child caring institution or an old folks home, the institution still must select and employ some method of "visiting" the needy that have been committed to its care. The churches should be more able in selecting and employing methods of "visiting" than any human benevolent organization.

In the Woods-Porter debate in Indianapolis, Brother Woods never did seem to be able to understand the difference between a child caring institution and the house that shelters the children. He argued that the care of orphan children necessitates a place or a house where they could be sheltered, and then erroneously concluded that a child caring organization is a place or a house where children are sheltered. He failed to understand four important facts: (1) that neither a church nor a child caring institution is a place or a house in which children are sheltered; (2) that both the church and the human benevolent organization are institutions that

provide places or houses in which to shelter children; (3) that churches can and must provide houses and places in which to shelter their indigent, and not surrender the oversight of their work to a human benevolent society; (4) that the churches have no more right to surrender the oversight of their benevolent work to a human benevolent society than they have to surrender the oversight of their evangelistic work to a human evangelistic society.

4. When Is An Example Binding?

Students frequently express difficulty in determining when an example is binding. A clear understanding and a correct application of God's law of exclusion will remove that difficulty.

According to Acts 20: 7-9, the disciples met upon the first day of the week, in an upper room, to worship God in observing the Lord's supper.

a. The **place** was a third story room. Is the **place** element of this meeting binding? If not, why not? The place element is not binding, because the Lord in another passage of scripture (John 4:20-23) expressed his approval of spiritual worship in all places. If God had not expressed his approval of any other place, then his law of exclusion would bind Christians to an upper room as often as the Lord's supper is observed.

b. The time element in this example is "the first day of the week". Is the **time** element binding? If so, why? The time element is binding because the Lord nowhere in all the Bible expresses his approval of a church's observing the Lord's supper on any other day of the week. Therefore, according to the statement of God's law of exclusion in the first topic of this chapter, to eat the Lord's supper on any other day of the week is to go beyond what is written, and to violate God's will.

In order to determine whether a specific of a given element in an example is binding the student must know the answer to this question: Has the Lord in any other passage expressed his approval of any other specific of that given element? If he has not expressed his approval of the use of some other specific of that element, then the specific under consideration is binding.

HUMAN TRADITION, THE "MOULD" INTO WHICH HIS MIND WAS CAST

Chapter VII

"Then there came to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" (Matt. 15: 1-2).

Then Jesus declared in no uncertain terms that human tradition in religious practice (1) causes men to transgress the commandment of God, verse 3; (2) makes void the word of God, verse 6; (3) makes service vain, verse 9; (4) was not planted by the Father, verse 13; (5) shall be rooted up, verse 13; (6) is advocated by blind guides, verse 14; (7) leads to the pit, verse 14.

Yet, in the face of all that Jesus said in condemnation of human tradition in religion, "blind guides" of every stripe exalt it above the word of God and try to justify their ungodly conduct by it.

In a long article in the Gospel Advocate of July 8, 1954, Brother E. R. Harper wrote a defense of centralized control of church resources which he called "congregational cooperation," and in it he admitted some things that ought to shock his followers into some straight thinking.

He did not claim to have obtained any thought, idea, suggestion, or information whatever from the Bible on his "congregational cooperation"; he made no reference to the Bible. He frankly admitted that his theories of "congregational cooperation" came from human tradition, and that his mind, his thinking and his actions were molded and shaped by uninspired men. But let him state it in his own way; here are his words:

"Now during the passing of these years here are the events that have transpired and these events are the 'moulds' into which our minds were cast and from these 'moulds' have come our thinking and our actions. **EXAMPLES** Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tenn. My first example is that of the great Tabernacle meetings in Nashville, Tenn., with Brother Hardeman doing the speaking. This is the first example of 'congregational cooperation' I ever knew about. Over forty congregations 'cooperated' in this great event."

Then he mentioned the Music Hall meeting, the Tampa, Fla. meeting, the Little Rock Radio Program and the Indians in Oneida, Wisconsin, as events that "moulded" and shaped his mind, thinking and actions concerning centralized control, but not once did he claim that the Bible had anything at all to do with "moulding" and shaping his mind, thinking and actions regarding his conception of "congregational cooperation."

At the time of the first Ryman Auditorium meeting, Brother Harper was nearly twenty five years old, had been a member of the church for about eight years, his father was a preacher, and Ernest had been taught in the sacred writings from a babe; but he frankly confesses that he had never heard of the type of "congregational cooperation" that he is defending, until he saw it in the Ryman Auditorium meeting in 1922 A.D. He said, "This is the first example of 'congregational cooperation' I ever knew about." Of course he means that this is the first centralized control type of congregational cooperation that "he ever knew about"; because he "knew about" the type of "congregational cooperation" that was practiced in that Judean charity work, for he had been reading about that all of his life; but that was not the sponsoring church centralized control type.

Brother Harper admits also that he is not the only one that learned the sponsoring church type of "congregational cooperation" from the traditions of men; he says that is where the churches that are practicing it learned it too, and that the "Guardian men have been in the middle of it all", and he admits that that is his "point in writing all this" in his article in the Advocate of July 8, 1954. Here is what he says about it:

"My point in writing all this is: If churches are doing wrong in their helping each other in this great work of evangelization they have learned it from examples we have set before them and you Guardian men have been in the very middle of it all. Now when you have helped to teach and train churches and preachers to do this, you need not think you can 'change every one of them just because you now have decided it all wrong.'"

As to which and how many of the "Guardian men" Ernest refers, may not be known. But one thing is

certain: No "Guardian" man was ever a greater or more zealous teacher and defender of human traditions in religion than was Saul of Tarsus. He said of himself: "And I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1: 14).

Another thing is certain: No "Guardian" man, after learning that human traditions in religious practices are dangerously sinful, ever was more ashamed of it, or broke away from it more thoroughly, or fought it harder than did Paul. When he learned that his zeal for the "traditions of my fathers" was making havoc of the church and destroying souls in hell, he "conferred not with flesh and blood"; he **changed** immediately, and was so ashamed of what he had done in defense of traditions that he did not feel worthy to be called an apostle.

Ernest Harper ought to bow his head in shame, and repent; for this is what he says about the apostle Paul, "Guardian men", and all others who may have "changed" and are now fighting that which he admits is of an authority no higher than human tradition:

"Now when you have helped to teach and train churches and preachers to do this, you need not think you can 'Change every one of them just because you **now** have decided it all wrong."

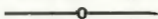
Did any unbelieving Jew ever stoop low enough to hurl such an insult at Saul of Tarsus? Did any infidel ever say to Saul after his change: "Now Saul, you once fought for the traditions of our religion, and you need not think you can change every one whom you have taught just because you **now** have decided it all wrong"? Ernest should memorize this verse: "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah" (Prov. 17: 15).

Yes, the Pharisees and scribes of Matthew 15 could trace their "tradition of the elders" through many generations, but they could not trace it quite far enough; they could not trace it back to the Old Testament, the law of God under which they then lived.

The advocates of sprinkling for baptism, and the

instrumental music worshippers can trace their practices back through many years and many events; but they cannot trace them back to the New Testament; they must stop in Rome.

Brother Harper and other centralized control defenders can trace their traditions back through many recent events, and on through the missionary society and benevolent society, and all the way back to Rome; but there they must stop. They cannot find even a vestige of centralized control of church resources in any form in the New Testament. Does Matthew 15:1-14 mean anything at all to them?



"SHOW US A BETTER WAY TO DO IT"

Chapter VIII

Personal observation, secular history and the Bible all unite in the declaration that a lack of faith in God is a chief cause of apostasy. "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God." (Heb. 3:12.) Then in verse 19, "And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief."

Many people have lost faith in God and do not know it. They continue to believe in the existence of God, and that the Bible is the word of God; but they do not believe God. Many today do not know that to lose faith in God's wisdom or God's way of doing things is to lose faith in God.

People who lose faith in God think that their own wisdom and ways of doing things are wiser and better than the Lord's wisdom and ways. When their pernicious ways are attacked, they often cry out: "Show us a better way to do it." Showing them the Lord's way of doing it does not settle the matter with them, because they do not believe that the Lord's way is better than their own. They declare openly that the Bible way of doing some things is "unwise," and that they "know it is wiser today to" do it their way. How can any man convince such unbelievers that God's way is "a better way to do it"?

1. Affusionists.

To show an affusionist that "they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38), is an easy assignment; many of them admit frankly that was the apostolic way of doing it. But to convince them that their way of bringing a little water to the candidate, and sprinkling a little on the candidate is not "a better way to do it" than the apostolic way, is difficult indeed. How can one comply with the affusionist's demand, "Show us a better way to do it," when he does not believe that the Bible way is "a better way to do it"?

2. Eve.

God told Eve to abstain totally from the fruit of a

certain tree in Eden. She understood God's way, and repeated it to Satan, and stated the penalty of disobedience. (Gen. 3:1-3.) But she was told of another way which was not God's way. She then believed no longer that God's way was "a better way to do it." She lost faith in God when she lost faith in the wisdom of God's plan for her. She apostatized; she died. Unbelief was the cause.

3. The Israelites.

Samuel had no trouble in showing the unbelieving Israelites that government by judges was God's way; but he could not convince them that he was showing them a "better way to do it" than their own way, because they had lost faith in the wisdom of God. (1 Sam. 8:4-22.) And when they rejected God's wisdom, they rejected God's plan of government; when they rejected God's plan, they rejected God. (1 Sam. 8:7.) How could Samuel show them "a better way to do it," while they were arguing that their kingly form of government was "a better way to do it" than God's way? (1 Sam. 8:19-20.)

4. Sponsoring Church "Joint Action" Advocates.

When the advocates of the sponsoring church hobby say, "Show us a better way to do it," they do not mean, "Show us the Bible way to do it," in either the field of evangelism or benevolence.

In the field of evangelism they understand clearly that New Testament churches sent wages directly to the preachers in distant places, and that no intermediary controlling agency existed between the preacher and the churches that contributed to his support. Paul said, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you" (2 Cor. 11:8); again, "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need." (Phil. 4:16.) But our "joint action" brethren state frankly and publicly that the way that the apostles and the New Testament churches did it "is unwise," and they say that they "know it is wiser today" to do it another way; therefore they do not believe that they have been shown "a better way to do it," when they are shown the Bible way.

In the Gospel Advocate of October 6, 1955, one of the staff writers of that journal wrote the following:

"I say that is unwise because brethren have found it so in the past when certain preachers collected from so many such churches amounts which far exceeded a reasonable salary for the work done. I know Philippi sent to Paul, and I know there are preachers today as worthy and as trustworthy as Paul; but I also know it is wiser today to support the man by joint action, cooperation, so there will be no temptation put in the way of the man and there will be no chance for unworthy men to hurt the cause of our Lord and the churches sending him money."

The Gospel Advocate is controlled by men who hold the same views as that staff writer, and they will not permit any man on earth to reply to that Modernistic teaching, or to make any correction whatever of it in that journal.

Therefore, when men connected with the Gospel Advocate say, "Show us a better way to do it," they certainly do not mean, "Show us the Bible way to do it," for they say they already know that. Here is what they say they know already: (1) they know how "Philippi sent to Paul"; (2) they know that the "joint action, cooperation" for which they contend did not exist then; (3) they "know it is wiser today" to do it another way, the "joint action" way; (4) they know it is "unwise" to do it today like Paul and the New Testament churches did it.

Like the Israelites in the days of Samuel, their trouble is not a lack of understanding of the way of God; it is a lack of faith in the wisdom of God.

The three distinct segments into which the centralized control defenders are divided on "a better way to do it" in caring for homeless children will be discussed in the next chapter.



"SHOW US A BETTER WAY TO DO IT" (Concluded)

Chapter IX

In the work of caring for homeless children and old people, the centralized control proponents are divided into three distinct parties represented by three religious papers: Boles Home News, Firm Foundation and Gospel Advocate.

Every group thinks all the others are wrong, and all who oppose their peculiar hobbies are falsely accused of being "against helping little orphans." They cry out to one another and to all: "Show us a better way to do it." Each denies that the ways of the other are "a better way to do it," but not one of these three groups thinks that the Bible way is "a better way to do it."

1. The Boles Home News Theory.

The Boles Home News segment argues that churches should care for orphans by sending donations to benevolent societies governed by "a board scattered all over the country," and that are no "part of the organizational set up" of the church. Brother Gayle Oler, editor of Boles Home News, has registered in strong language his opposition to orphan homes as a part of the "organizational set up" of a church. In the Boles Home News of September 10, 1954, he said:

"But why should anyone deem it to be necessary or even to be desirable that any child-caring facility, public or private, to be a part of the organizational set up of the New Testament church when it is obvious that there was no such organizational set up in the New Testament."

In this and in several other numbers of Boles Home News he reveals clearly that he thinks that the "organizational set up" of Children's Home of Lubbock and all others that are under the control of an eldership are unscriptural and wrong. He said that these child-caring institutions, "whether public or private, must have no organic connection with the church." "Must" is a strong auxiliary. (See Boles Home News, Nov. 25, 1954.)

If Brother Oler and his party can see that it is unscriptural for churches to contribute from their treasures to such an "organizational set up" as Children's Home of Lubbock, because "it is obvious that there was

no such organizational set up in the New Testament," they ought to be able to see also that it is unscriptural for churches to contribute from their treasuries to such an "organizational set up" as Boles Home or the Red Cross or any other benevolent organization separate from the church; because it is obvious that there was no such organizational set up in the New Testament."

The New Testament says a great deal about the fatherless and widows, about collections for poor saints, and about how funds were raised, transported and delivered to the churches of which the poor were members (Acts 6:1-4; 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; and other passages); but neither Brother Oler nor any other member of his particular school of thought has ever had the audacity to claim that any verse of the Bible even remotely indicates that any New Testament church ever contributed one cent to any human benevolent society such as Boles Home. Therefore, no man can prove by the Bible that the Boles Home way of doing it is "a better way to do it."

Every objection that the Boles Home News party can present against churches' contributing to ecumenical charity projects like Children's Home of Lubbock, the Firm Foundation group can present against churches' contributing to benevolent societies like Boles Home.

2. The Firm Foundation Theory.

The Firm Foundation is controlled by men who belong to a group that holds a theory diametrically opposed to the way that the Boles Home News supporters argue is "a better way to do it" in the field of benevolence.

This segment thinks that churches should send contributions to a church that is sponsoring a brotherhood charity project, like Broadway in Lubbock, in which the child-caring institution is a part of the "organizational set up" of the church, and which the Boles Home News says is unscriptural and "must" not be.

Brother Reuel Lemmons, editor of the Firm Foundation, in a letter to Roy Cogdill, published in the Gospel Guardian of April 21, 1955, clearly stated his attitude toward the Oler and Boles Home News theory of "organizational set up" in caring for homeless children. He said:

"If by an 'Institutional Orphans Home' you mean one with a board scattered all over the

country, if you don't have as much trouble corraling your memory as you did your reasoning, you will remember that as a high school kid I was cutting my teeth on the issue you fellows are just now raising so much sand about while you were still hooking your thumbs under your bright red suspenders, pulling your tight legged britches high on your hips, setting your sailor straw square across your head, and spitting off the curb in Frederick, Oklahoma. It was twenty years after that that you even became aware that there was an issue. I taught then that such a set-up could not be defended, and I haven't changed my mind about it since."

Also, the associate editor of the Firm Foundation, Brother M. Norvel Young, is an employe of the Broadway church in Lubbock, of which a brotherhood child-caring institution, called "Children's Home of Lubbock," is a part of the "organizational set up." Therefore, the Firm Foundation is an avowed proponent of the theory that the brotherhood child-caring institution under the control of an eldership is "a better way to do it" than either the Boles Home News or the Bible way.

3. The Gospel Advocate Theory.

On "a better way to do it" in caring for homeless children, the Gospel Advocate is a vociferous defender of a theory contrary to both the Boles Home News and Firm Foundation parties.

The Gospel Advocate argues that the churches should "visit the fatherless" by contributing from their treasuries to the sponsoring church ecumenical benevolent institutions (such as Children's Home of Lubbock) which Boles Home News opposes and the Firm Foundation defends; it also contends that the churches should contribute to benevolent institutions (such as Child Haven and Boles Home) under the control of "a board scattered all over the country," which Boles Home News defends and the Firm Foundation opposes.

With unreserved editorial endorsement, in the autumn of 1954, Brother Guy N. Woods, staff writer for the Gospel Advocate, wrote a series of articles in that journal in which he argued that churches should contribute money to both kinds of benevolent institutions: (1) those that are "under an eldership" and that are a "part of the

organizational set up" of a church; (2) those that are under "a board scattered all over the country" and that are no part of the "organizational set up" of any church. He also affirmed this theory in a debate with W. Curtis Porter in Indianapolis in January of 1956.

Brother Woods is a new convert to the Gospel Advocate theory that churches scripturally may contribute money to human organizations or societies. He is what the editor of the Advocate calls "A Johnny-come-lately." Until recently he wrote copiously against a church's donating to Bible colleges and to orphan homes under the control of "a board scattered all over the country," like Child Haven and Boles Home.

The following quotations from Brother Woods' speeches, books and articles show that he has not been in agreement with the Gospel Advocate segment very long:

"People who are contending, as they say, for primitive Christianity, for New Testament Christianity, should stand for the church of the New Testament, and leave others to spend their time and money on human societies, if they cannot be persuaded to do better. This writer has ever been unable to appreciate the logic of those who affect to see grave danger in Missionary Societies, but scruple not to form a similar organization for the purpose of caring for orphans and teaching young men to be gospel preachers. Of course it is right for the church to care for the 'fatherless and widows in their affliction,' but this work should be done by and through the church, with the elders having the oversight thereof, and not through boards and conclaves unknown to the New Testament. In this connection it is a pleasure to commend to the brotherhood Tipton Orphan Home, Tipton, Oklahoma. The work there is entirely scriptural, being managed and conducted by the elders of the church in Tipton, Oklahoma, aided by funds sent to them by the elders of other congregations round about. We here and now declare our protest against any other method or arrangement for accomplishing this work." (A.C.C. Lectures, 1939.)

Therefore, in 1939 Brother Woods declared as clearly as any man could state it, that he thought the Tipton Orphan Home sponsoring church method was the only

scriptural way for the churches to care for homeless children, and in no uncertain terms he registered his "protest against any other method or arrangement for accomplishing this work."

In the Firm Foundation, February 3, 1942, in a review of G. C. Brewer's book, "Contending For The Faith," Brother Woods said:

"The section on colleges and Missionary Societies in which the author attempts to prove that it is scriptural for the churches, as such to contribute from their treasuries funds for the support of Christian colleges, falls, in this writer's opinion, far short of the mark. Brother Brewer insists that there is a difference in sending funds to a Christian college, a human institution, and in doing the same with reference to a Missionary Society. Through long dreary pages this is argued at length; all of which, to this writer, is a sea of mud! Perhaps it is our own denseness; and if Brother Brewer and those who profess to see such a difference wish to consider our inability so to do a manifest mark of immaturity, they are at liberty to do so. We can write only as the matter appears to us at present. We are frank to confess that we lack the inner wisdom or whatever it is that enables one to accept without question the theory that it violates no principle of reason or revelation to support a human institution designed to educate young men for the 'ministry,' and yet insist that it is subversive of both reason and revelation to support an institution similarly organized to keep these young men in foreign fields preaching the gospel they learned in the college! In our view brethren surrender their contention against the Missionary Society when they espouse such a view of the colleges."

In the Annual Lesson Commentary of the Gospel Advocate Company, Lesson XI, 1946, Brother Woods set forth his and the Gospel Advocate's views in these words:

"There is no place for charitable organizations in the work of the New Testament church. It is the only charitable organization that the Lord authorizes or that is needed to do the work the Lord expects his people to do. Generosity Of The Philipian Church. (Phil. 4:15,16.) Here, too, we see the simple manner in which the church in Philippi joined with Paul in the work of preaching the gospel. There was 'no mission-

ary society' in evidence, and none was needed; the brethren simply raised the money and sent it directly to Paul. This is the way it should be done today."

The way that Philippi sent directly to Paul was the way that Brother Woods and the Advocate thought in 1946 "it should be done." But today they do not think "it should be done" that way. They think now that the way "Philippi sent to Paul" is "unwise," as stated in the Gospel Advocate of October 6, 1955, by Roy Lanier.

"I say this is unwise because brethren have found it so in the past when certain preachers collected from so many such churches amounts which far exceeded a reasonable salary for the work done. I know Philippi sent to Paul, and I know there are preachers today as worthy and as trustworthy as Paul; but I also know it is wiser today to support the man by joint action, cooperation, so there will be no temptation put in the way of the man and there will be no chance for unworthy men to hurt the cause of our Lord and the churches sending him money."

This shows beyond reasonable doubt that the editor of the Advocate and his two staff writers, Woods and Lanier, are all three "Johnnies-come-lately" to their Modernistic contention that the Bible way is "unwise."

4. Opposition Is Not New.

According to the above excerpts from his own pen, Brother Woods' statement that "until less than five years ago, there was virtually a universal endorsement of, and hearty support for, the benevolent activities among us," such as Boles Home (Gospel Advocate, Oct. 14, 1954), is wholly inaccurate.

Also, Brother Reuel Lemmons, editor of Firm Foundation, uses strong words in declaring that Brother Woods' statement is false. According to Brother Lemmons, if Woods didn't "have as much trouble corraling" his memory as he did his "reasoning," he would remember that the Firm Foundation editor was knowing "on the issue you fellows are just now raising so much sand about," before he had many teeth with which to know. He claims that he cut his "teeth on the issue."

Roy Cogdill, publisher of the Gospel Guardian, has been in this fight for many years, but according to Lemmons this issue did not start with Cogdill. Lemmons says that he was chewing away on it while Cogdill was still pulling at his "tight legged britches," and "spitting off the curb in Frederick, Oklahoma," twenty years before Cogdill "even became aware that there was an issue." If Lemmons is right, then the Advocate is wrong in its charge that opposition to an orphan home "with a board scattered all over the country" is a "Johnny-come-lately."

5. Why Not A Three-Way Debate?

A three-way debate among the three segments of the centralized control hobby would not be enlightening; but it would be interesting to listen to all three groups prove their contradictory "total situations" by Tom Warren's "syllogism."

The best way, the Bible "way to do it" will be presented in the next chapter.

THE BEST WAY TO DO IT

Chapter X

The Bible way is the best way to do evangelistic and benevolent work. The New Testament reveals clearly the way these two kinds of work were done in apostolic times.

1. Evangelistic Work.

a. Individual Christians "went about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ." (Acts 8:4-5.) They were taught to "communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. (Gal. 6:6); that is, they were taught to continue stedfastly in the "fellowship" (Acts 2:42) for the support of gospel preachers. (1 Cor. 9:6-14.)

b. Churches as such "sounded forth the word of the Lord" in every place (1 Thess. 1:8) in two ways: (1) by their own chosen carriers the churches sent funds directly to preachers in distant places (Phil. 4:14-18; 2 Cor. 11:8; and other passages); (2) they sent preachers into distant places to preach to other churches and to the world. (Acts 11:22; Acts 13:2-3; and other passages.)

The Bible does not say that no church sent a contribution to another church for evangelistic work; then how do we know that none did it with divine approval? The Bible does not say that no church sent a donation to a missionary society for evangelistic work; then how do we know that none did it with divine approval? We know it by the same way that we know that no church used mechanical music in worship with divine approval; we know it by God's law of exclusion. (See Chapter VI.) How do we know that the way the New Testament churches did evangelistic work is "a better way to do it" than the sponsoring church or missionary society way? We know it because we know that the revealed wisdom of God is better than the wisdom of men.

2. Benevolent Work.

In the work of benevolence many complicated situations and difficult problems confront the churches. But the word of God completely furnishes the people of God unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17.) To deny that it does this is to deny the all-sufficiency of the scriptures. Every problem and every practical question pertaining to

this work are reduced to the very essence of simplicity unto all who fully believe and diligently search the scriptures. Those who doubt the wisdom of God and the practicality of his ways will never come to a knowledge of the truth. It was not given unto that type to know the truth. (See Matt. 13:11-15; 2 Thess. 2:11-12.)

a. According to the New Testament, how should a church provide for its worthy indigent, when it is able to do so without outside help?

The church at Jerusalem presents a clear and complete answer to this question, because the scriptures reveal (1) how that church obtained funds for this work, and (2) how it used or disposed of its funds.

To supply the needs of the poor in this church, the members gave; they continued stedfastly in the "fellowship." (Acts 2:42.) Some were so generous that they sold their "lands," or "houses," or "possessions," or "goods" and "brought the prices of the things sold and laid them at the apostles feet"; that is, they placed these funds in the treasury of the church and at the disposal of those who had the oversight of this work. (Acts 2:45; Acts 4:34-37.)

Now, that is the way that a church whose members are able to supply the money should obtain funds for its work. Not one cent was obtained through the church's operation of any secular business. Neither Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37) nor any other Christian (Acts 4:34-35) deeded or willed any land or any other possession to the church with a stipulation that would require the church's operation of a secular business. They "sold" their possessions and gave the "prices" as the need required. Any church that allows itself to become involved in the operation of a secular business to obtain funds with which to do its work goes beyond the teaching of Christ and shows a lack of respect for the authority of Christ and a lack of faith in the wisdom of God. Elders who know what the Lord said and did to those who made the Old Testament Temple a "house of merchandise," ought to know what to expect from him, if they permit his spiritual house to become a "house of merchandise." The Christ has legislated regarding the way a church may obtain funds for its work, and that legislation must be respected.

b. How was this money for the poor used, or disposed of, by those under whose oversight and at whose disposal it had been placed?

The Jerusalem church distributed these funds to its own poor right there under the oversight of its own members at whose disposal the funds had been placed. The contributors laid the money "at the apostles feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." (Acts 4:35.) Does any gospel preacher have an imagination wild enough to cause him to guess that the apostles or elders surrendered the administration of those funds to a human benevolent society such as Boles Home or the Red Cross or Child Haven?

c. When the number of poor disciples in that first congregation increased to such an extent that the men who had the oversight could no longer personally distribute to the needy and perform their other duties, what course did they pursue as the best "way to do it"?

Every one who can read plain English should be able to understand the Bible answer to this question. There is no "better way to do it" than this: "Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose" seven men "whom they set before the apostles." (Acts 6:1-6.)

The disciples were called together, and they selected qualified men from among themselves to serve the church in the daily ministration to the poor. The inspired apostles of Christ commanded the church to do it in this way; therefore, this is God's way. Nowhere in all the New Testament does the Lord express his approval of a church's ministering to its own indigent in some other way. This shows beyond reasonable doubt that God wants

every church, through its own qualified and chosen deacons, under the oversight of its own bishops, to administer its own resources in providing food, clothing, shelter and other necessities to its own indigent members. In this way, a church can do this work of ministration more efficiently than any man-made benevolent society can do it. To lose faith in the way the apostles commanded the church to do it is to lose faith in the wisdom of God.

d. How long should a church continue to supply the needs of a worthy member?

"Distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." (Acts 4:35; also see Acts 2:45.) Therefore, this must continue as long as any worthy member is in "need" of this benevolence.

An indigent Christian may have children, or parents, or others who are not members of the church, but who are rightfully dependent upon that Christian for support. A Christian's "need" or "want" is not supplied until the "need" of those also who have a right to look to him for support is supplied.

One for whom the church is responsible may cease to be an object of charity because of marriage, or adoption, or inheritance, or government pension, or gainful employment. Since no "distribution" was made," except as "any one had need" (Acts 4:35), all church donations for any one who ceases to be an object of charity must stop right there.

e. When churches are unable to provide for their own worthy poor, what is the scriptural solution to the problem?

This is a practical question, and the Bible presents a clear and complete answer; otherwise, it would not furnish the people of God "completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16-17.)

Here is the Bible solution to that problem, and there is no "better way to do it": "Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. And the disciples every man according to his ability,

determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul." (Acts 11:27-30.)

Here the answer is given to every question pertaining to this Judean charity work. Who were reduced to poverty by a famine? Answer: the "brethren that dwelt in Judea." From where did relief come? Answer: from disciples in the church at Antioch. By whom did the Antioch disciples send the relief to the brethren in Judea? Answer: by Barnabas and Saul. To whom did Barnabas and Saul deliver the funds? Answer: to the elders in the stricken area. How did the overseers in the Judean churches administer this relief? Answer: the answer is not in this passage. Why isn't the answer in this passage? Answer: because the Holy Spirit in Acts 6:1-6 already had revealed the will of God through a divine command as to how a church should administer its funds for its poor members, and a church that will not heed a command of God in Acts 6 would not obey it, if the Lord had repeated it in Acts 11. Why didn't the disciples of the Antioch church place this "relief" under the administration of a sponsoring church or man-made benevolent society? Answer: because inspired men knew "a better way to do it." Why do some today think that placing the oversight of such relief under a sponsoring church or a human benevolent organization is "a better way to do it" than the way revealed in Acts 6:1-6 and Acts 11:27-30? Answer: because of their unbelief in the wisdom of God, as shown in Chapter VIII of this study.

f. If help for a poverty stricken church must come from the treasuries of several contributing churches, what is the best "way to do it"?

During a long famine the church in Jerusalem received help from several other churches in order to provide for her own poor. Inspiration clearly reveals every step that was taken by the cooperating churches from the beginning to the end of that work. The Lord's devoting so much Bible space to the way that work was done could have only one purpose: namely, to serve as a pattern for churches for all time to come.

By a careful study of 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, and 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, every one should be able to under-

stand clearly how New Testament churches cooperated in supplying the "need" of a church that was too poor to provide adequate care for its own. Here is the way that they did it, and no man ever has found "a better way to do it."

(1) Churches that were able to do more than care for their own poor were informed of the poverty among the saints in Jerusalem, and were taught to send relief to that church. (2 Cor. 8:6-7; 2 Cor. 9:3-5 ;Rom. 15:25-27.)

(2) Churches were taught to raise this money through liberal Lord's day contributions by their members to their treasuries. (1 Cor. 16:1-2.) From the beginning of the church, the disciples had been contributing on the first day of the week as a divinely prescribed act of Lord's day worship (Acts 2:42); but now the poverty of the saints in Jerusalem required even greater liberality in these Lord's day contributions. (2 Cor. 8:1-11.)

(3) The contributing churches used the best means available at that time in transporting these funds to Jerusalem. They did not have the convenience and security of present day postal and express services; therefore, every church chose its carriers of this bounty to Jerusalem. (1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:32.) They did not give "all this money to Paul to be put in one bag" and carried by him to Jerusalem, as some claim. That is the very thing that Paul said he would not permit. (1 Cor. 16:3-4; 2 Cor. 8:18-21.) The inspired account of this journey with this money to Jerusalem shows clearly that the men approved by the contributing churches were traveling in that company with that money. (Acts 20:1-38; Acts 21:1-17.) Occasionally they would separate and meet later at an appointed place (Acts 20:13-14); but from Caesarea they all traveled on together to Jerusalem where the brethren received them. (Acts 21:15-17.)

(4) When these funds reached the overseers of the Jerusalem church, they already had the best and the only kind of divinely appointed organization ever given for efficient administration of relief for a church's destitute members, as shown clearly in the answer to questions "c" and "e" in this chapter. Please read them again.

The will of God demands by divinely approved

example that every church provide shelter, food, clothing and other necessities for its own poor, through its own deacons and under the oversight of its own bishops; and nothing is more clearly revealed in the Bible. (Acts 6:1-4.) If a church is not financially able to obtain these necessities, then other churches that are able to do more than care for their poor must supply the poor church with funds that she herself may do this work. How can any man who knows anything at all about the organization and work of the New Testament church conclude that it is God's will for the overseers of a local church to surrender the oversight of funds for its own destitute members to some other organization?

g. May a church scripturally contribute funds to another church, or to a family, or to any other institution that operates a predetermined campaign of soliciting the control of funds with which to supply the needs of poor people to whom the soliciting institution sustained no peculiar responsibility before the project was planned?

Certainly not, is the answer to this question.

At the risk of being repetitious, let it be said that a church may contribute funds to another church that is unable to provide adequately for its own poor, and many passages of scripture have been presented in this study to prove it; but no church has a scriptural right to contribute one cent to a church that has concocted a plan of obtaining control of money from other church treasuries with which to supply the needs of poor people to whom the receiving church sustains no peculiar responsibility. If it is God's will for one church to gather up the poor from everywhere, and then beg other churches for money with which to support them, then it is God's will for every church to do the same thing. Is it God's will for all the churches to start campaigns of begging one another for funds?

If a brother is financially unable to provide adequately for his own household, then the church must supply his "want"; but no church has a right to contribute one cent to a man, whether he be the head of a family or superintendent of Boles Home or Child Haven, who has gathered up the fatherless and widows from everywhere with a predetermined plan to obtain possession of church resources with which to buy land, live stock, printing presses, auto-

mobiles, farming equipment, trucks and buses to use in hauling the fatherless and widows all over the nation, in order to get more money with which to buy more land and build more houses.

