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The Greatest Questions In Christendom

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The Greatest Questions In Christendom

- 1. Can Roman Catholicism Win America?—
"Yes"**
- 2. Can Modern Protestantism Win America?
—"No"**
- 3. Can the Church of Christ Win America?—
"Yes"**

Including a tract by Mr.
W. G. Malcomson, on "Mutual
Ministry in the Worship of
the Church of Christ"

1946
MACEDONIAN CALL
918 Congress Avenue
Indianapolis 8, Ind.

I. Can Roman Catholicism Win America?—"YES"

"Two years ago the Roman Catholic Church launched a campaign to shut Protestant missionaries out of Latin America. The campaign was launched in Washington, not Rome. The initiative was taken by the American hierarchy, not the Vatican. The Christian Century [a strong modernistic journal] determined to learn what this aggressive new policy meant. To make sure it could speak with authority, a member of its editorial staff was assigned to study the present structure and purposes of the church in America.

"Harold E. Fey is the field editor of the Christian Century. A graduate of Yale Divinity School, he lived for several years in the Philippine Islands. In the capital of that Roman Catholic country, he had opportunity to form a first-hand acquaintance with the culture and institutions of a country in which the church had been dominant for centuries. For the past decade he traveled extensively, in Europe and Asia as well as in America, and has had unusual opportunities to observe the development of church policy. During the past two years he has read extensively in the current literature of American Catholicism. All of the data presented in these articles comes from Catholic sources.

"The material presented in their booklet first appeared in and was copyrighted by the Christian Century. It was contained in the issues of November 29, 1944 to January 17, 1945."—Data concerning the tract, in which **Mr. Fey decides that Roman Catholicism CAN win America with the organization they have.**

II. Can Modern Protestantism Win America?—"NO"

Now (April, 1946) Dr. C. C. Morrison, editor of the same Christian Century, is writing a series of articles entitled, "Can Protestantism Win America?" He compares it now with what it has been in the past, and decides that it is not now by any means as influential in the life of America as it once was. He thinks that Protestantism can NOT win America. He blames it all on "Secularism", materialism, worldlyism.

It is astounding that he can analyze conditions so well, but can be so far off as to the underlying cause. It is true that secularism has had much to do with the impotency of Protestantism today, but Romanism, too, has had secularism to contend with, yet she is gaining in strength all the while. The difference is that Romanism is built around a religio-political machine, and it does not matter so much about piety. Witness on this point, the Roman Church of the Middle Ages. But Protestantism was built on faith and piety, and modern Protestantism has lost its faith.

Dr. Morrison can not see that it is largely the Modernism such as taught so boldly by himself and his friends that has taken the life out of Protestantism. Can Protestantism have faith enough to resist the encroachments of Romanism, when Dr. Oxnam, the president of the Federal Council of the 25,000,000 Protestants, refers to the God of the Old Testament as "dirty bully," because he punished the people back there for their sins? (See Oxnam's book, "Preaching in a Revolutionary Age," published by Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York, Page 79.) Oxnam's speech was delivered before Yale divinity students in 1944. Protestantism will continue to decline and Romanism will continue to grow in America, till Protestantism gets back to fundamental belief in and practice of the Bible.

III. Can the Church of Christ Win America?—"YES"

And now we come to the important question, Can the Church of Christ, as portrayed in the New Testament, win America. I answer strongly in the affirmative, YES.

The Church of Christ of the First Century won millions to its banner, and laid the foundation for the overturning of the great Roman Empire. How did they do it in the First Century? How can we do a similar work in the Twentieth Century? These are questions which we shall consider from now on in this booklet.

We wish to show that in the New Testament Church EVERY MEMBER was a priest unto God, and a missionary for him, and that the great weakness in both Romanism and Protestantism is that practically the whole work is done by the clergy.

We reprint a tract by Mr. W. G. Malcomson, which was first published in 1922, entitled "Mutual Ministry in the Worship of Churches of Christ." A brief biography of Mr. Malcomson will be found at the close of the booklet. We consider that this reprint contains some of the most revolutionary and most important and most neglected truths of the Christian religion, and that it strikes at the root of the greatest evil in the Christian world—the kingdom of the clergy. We ask that the reader peruse with care every word and scripture reference. The tract follows:

Mutual Ministry in the Worship of the Church of Christ

By W. G. MALCOMSON

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, writing to the saints at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus—referring to the distribution of various supernatural gifts for the instruction, guidance and development of the Church of Christ, which is his Body, says Eph. IV, 11-16.

"(11) And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) for the perfecting of the Saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ; (13) till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (14) that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; (15) but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him who is the head, even Christ; (16) from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in, due measure of each sev-

eral part: maketh the increase of the Body unto the building up of itself in love."

The foregoing verses (Eph. 4:11-16) are freely rendered by the scholarly commentator Macknight, as follows:

"(11) And he appointed some, indeed, apostles, and some prophets and some evangelists; and some pastors, and teachers, and bestowed on them the supernatural gifts of inspiration, prophecy, miracles, languages; and on some the power of communicating these gifts to others: (12) to enable them to fit the saints, even the believing Jews and Gentiles, for the ordinary work of the ministry, in order to the building of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, by converting unbelievers in every age.

"(13) These supernaturally endowed teachers are to continue in the Church until, being fully instructed by their discourses and writings, we all, who compose the Church, come through one faith and knowledge of the Son of God to perfect manhood as a Church, even to the measure of the stature which, when full grown, it ought to have; so that the Church thus instructed and enlarged is able to direct and defend itself, without supernatural aids.

"(14) So that having recourse at all times to their writings, we may no longer be children who, having no sure guide, are tossed like a ship by waves, and whirled about with every wind of doctrine by the cunning arts of false teachers, and by crafti-

ness formed into a subtle scheme of deceit: (15) but that, as faithful ministers, teaching the truth of the Gospel from love to our people, we may make all the members of the body increase in him who is the head, or chief teacher and director, even Christ. (16) By whom the whole body of his disciples being aptly joined together into one harmonious Church, and firmly knit, through the exercise of the gifts proper to each individual, he maketh his body to grow, in proportion to the inward operation, of each particular part, so as to build himself by the love his members have for each other, leading them to exercise their gifts for the good of the whole."

It seems clearly evident that the supernatural endowments were to be limited to a time described as "till we [the members of the body] all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

In other words, the apostle having represented the Church as Christ's Body, in a state of childhood (as it were), being few in number and incomplete in knowledge, he now informs these Ephesian brethren that the supernaturally endowed individuals were to continue in the Church, till it became so enlarged and so well instructed that it would be able to sustain itself without such supernatural aid. Such advanced state of the Church the apostle refers to as that of a "full grown man" to which state

when the Church shall arrive, the supernatural gifts of the Spirit are to be discontinued, as being no longer necessary.

That the Church of Jesus Christ was to be sustained and perpetuated through the co-operative efforts of the individual members of the Body, is clearly indicated by plain apostolic directions. Paul writes the brethren at Rome, Rom. 14:19, "So then let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby we may **edify one another.**" And in writing to Timothy, who had been left at Ephesus for the specific purpose of guiding the Church, Paul says, 1 Timothy 2:2, "**And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to TEACH OTHERS ALSO.**"

These instructions are in accord with those given by the Apostle Peter in his letter 1 Peter 4:10. "According as each hath received a gift ministering it **among yourselves**, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

That the mutual exercise of the various qualifications of respective members were designed to be manifested not only in life's common activities, but that they were to be individually manifested in the public worship, for the edifying or building up of the Church, seems also clearly evident.

1 Cor. 11:18. "For first of all, when ye come together **in the church.**" 1 Cor. 11:22. "What have ye not houses to eat and

to drink in? Or despise ye the **Church of God?**" I Cor. 11:33. "Wherefore, my brethren, when **ye come together** to eat, wait one for another." I Cor. 14:19. "How be it, **in the Church** I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

While we may readily understand that, though there might be many occasions where members of the Body, either few or many in number, would meet together incidentally or by arrangement, yet we may also understand that there were certain stated occasions when the Church, as so designated, came together for the purpose of divinely directed worship.

Some of the ideal activities of worship in the Church of Jesus Christ are portrayed in Acts 2:42. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

In the absence of the direct personal teaching by the apostle there became available to the Church, as time passed on, the various letters written by these inspired instructors for use in building up the Church.

So Paul, in an epistle to his faithful brethren at Colosse, directed that they procure and read a letter sent by him to the Church at Laodicea, and that the Laodicean Church have read to it his epistle, sent primarily to the Colossians, (Col. 4:16). And writing to the Church of the Thessa-

lonians, he says, "I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren" (1 Thess. 5:27). Also, "So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours" (11 Thess. 2:15).

As we today, after a lapse of many centuries, are enabled to read portions of this same apostle's teaching, we can not but note how, with a solicitude similar to that shown by the Lord Jesus, in imparting to his disciples his kindly instructions and exhortations before leaving them; Paul, up to the very eve of his own departure, continued to indite words of timely instruction, kindly rebuke, helpful exhortation, and wise guidance, for individual Christian conduct, and specific injunctions as to various named items to be observed in the public assembly, in order to the much desired building up of the Body of Christ, which is the Church.

In this connection, we refer to the words of Paul written to his brethren at Rome, Rom. 12:4-8: (4) "For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office, so we who are many are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another." (Commenting on verse 5, Macknight says: "The meaning of the figure is that Christians depend on one another for their mutual edification and comfort, as the members of the human body depend on one another for nourishment and assistance.") (6) And having gifts differing according to the grace

that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; (7) or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry or he that teacheth to his teaching, (8) or he that exhorteth to his exhorting."

Further, to the same brethren Paul writes, Rom. 15:14: "And I, myself, also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to **admonish one another.**" In Eph. 5:19, "Speaking **one to another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord."

Paul enjoins the Thessalonian Church, I Thess. 5:11, "Wherefore **exhort one another** and build each other up even as also ye do." In Heb. 10:24-25, we read: "And let us consider **one another** to provoke unto love and good works; (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but **exhorting one another**; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh." Paul, writing to Timothy, directs him as follows: "Till I come give attention to reading, to exhortation, to teaching" (I Tim. 5:13). Commentators, without dissent, note this passage as referring to public worship. (See Macknight, and Conybeare and Howson.)

It is such co-operative efforts of the various members **in the Church**, as directed by the apostles, which "maketh the in-

crease of the Body unto the **building up of itself** in love" (Eph. 4:16).

Scripture and secular history agree that the primitive disciples assembled statedly on the Lord's day "to break bread." The many quotations already submitted make plain to us that they were also enjoined to **mutually** attend to teaching, exhortation, the fellowship, to prayers, and the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. And, as in the Corinthian epistle, that they were reprov'd, cautioned, and exhorted, when their practice was out of accord with the Divine Will. 1 Cor. 11:22. "What have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I praise you not." Also Heb. 5:12, "For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the Oracles of God."

A practical, intimate and illuminating reference to the history and conduct of one congregation in apostolic times, is given in the Epistle of Paul to the Church at Corinth. That this Church did not lack in apostolic guidance as to details of worship is shown by Paul's words to them, as follows: "For this cause I have sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways, which are in Christ, **even as I**

teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17).

In regard to important incidents connected with this particular Church and its strength, weakness, and characteristics, the celebrated authors, Conybeare and Howson, in their well-known work, "The Life and Epistles of Paul," express themselves as follows:

"We are introduced as it were behind the scenes of the Apostolic Church, and its minutest features are revealed to us under the light of daily life. We see the picture of a Christian congregation as it met for worship in some upper chamber, such as the house of Aquilla or Gaius could furnish. We see the administration of the Holy Communion terminating 'the feast of love, etc.'

"But while we rejoice that so many of the details of the deepest historical interest have been preserved to us by this Epistle, let us not forget to thank God who so inspired his apostle that in answer to questions of transitory interest, he has laid down principles of eternal obligation."

It is universally agreed that, beginning at least with the 20th verse of the 11th chapter of 1 Corinthians, the apostle distinctly refers to the conduct of the brethren in the public assembly on the first day of the week, and gives specific instructions in regard to observing the Lord's Supper, promising also to give the matter further and personal attention upon the occasion

of his next visit. See verse 24. "And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come."

In the 12th chapter, still referring to the Church, the apostle recognizes a condition of things which existed in the apostolic times, namely the endowment of many of the members with various supernatural gifts, which were manifested in the public assembly.

It seems remarkable to us, in these days, when we think of the extent and variety of the gifts which were exercised by the different members of this Church at Corinth.

Some are given the word of wisdom, some the word of knowledge, some a miraculous faith, some the ability to heal diseases, some the ability to work spiritual gifts and miraculous powers in others, some the gift of foretelling future events, some the faculty of speaking in various foreign languages, others were given the faculty of interpreting what was spoken, in order to the edification and exhortation, and comfort of the Church. Some were also gifted to pray, and others to sing.

It is more strange to us, however, to learn that there was a measure of dissension among even those spiritually endowed men, some who possessed what they considered inferior gifts envying others whose gifts seemed superior, and those who possessed gifts admitting of great personal display, behaving with pride and even in-

solence towards others not so highly endowed.

In addition to the disorder in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper, which was rebuked by the apostle, we are shown that great disorder also existed in the public exercise of the spiritual gifts. Some men were so proud of the gift of speaking in foreign languages that they vied with one another in oratorical demonstration, and, as several would insist on speaking at the same time, the result was frequent confusion, to the sacrifice of edification, and especially so in cases where no interpretation of the speaking was given.

In order to correct this deplorable condition, the apostle, in the 12th chapter, informs his Corinthian brethren that all these diversities of gifts proceeded from one Spirit, and that in the exercise of their various ministrations they were serving one Lord. That these wonderful gifts, with such apparent difference of importance were intended to operate in harmony with each other, just as different parts or members of the human body co-operate to the proper development and exercise of its functions as a body. He refers to the foot, the hand, the ear, the eye, implying their mutual relation each to the other, and their associated relation to the body as a whole.

Then, applying this beautiful allegory to the Church, the apostle tells these Corinthians that, in their collective capacity, they are the body of Christ, and each of them a

particular member of that body, and he teaches the responsibility which each member should bear toward every other member in affording mutual assistance in the development one of another, also in a mutual manifestation of care and sympathy, and mutual participation of suffering, even if necessary—and that all the members, though many, should have a common interest in the one Body, of which each forms a vital part.

The apostle demonstrates the unwisdom and wrongfulness of any member or class of members exercising their God-given ability in such a way as to exalt themselves and their specific endowment to the extent that the operations of their less-gifted brethren are completely obscured, resulting in a practical assumption of the functions of the entire body. In this connection he inquires, "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing" (v. 17). "If they were all one member, where were the body?" (v. 19).

The ability to speak in foreign languages was especially misused, and the selfish exercise of this God-given ability, together with other features of the public meeting condemned by the apostle, resulted in a method or a "way," if you please, of conducting the services which lacked not only the proper spirit, but prevented the mutual edification of the body.

So the apostle, by no means condemning the great gifts, because of their unrighteous

abuse, says in effect to his brethren at Corinth: It is well for you to desire these spiritual gifts, but inasmuch as your present way of publicly exercising them is not conducive to the results which God designs for the upbuilding of the body of Christ, I will now show you a better, a more excellent "way" of manifestation.

It is Emerson who says, "Do not argue, illustrate." The value of such method of imparting instruction was well understood by the Apostle Paul.

As a teacher of a kindergarten class, after describing the general features of a class performance, steps out into the room, and, taking the place of a pupil, would say, "Now I show you," just so does the apostle of the church of Corinth in the 31st verse of this 12th chapter, "But desire earnestly the greater gifts, and still a more excellent way I show unto you." Then, placing himself, in imagination, among them as a fellow member, before imparting to them the specific instruction promised, like a wise teacher he impresses upon them the absolute necessity not only of possessing, but also of mutually exercising, the eternal principle of "love," without which, no matter how striking might be their wonderful spiritual demonstrations, or exhibitions of religious fervor, either in or out of the public assembly, the result would prove absolutely profitless (chap. 13, v. 1-3). In verses 4-7 he personifies this indispensable acquirement, and portrays its unique character-

istics. In the 8th to the 12th verses he announces that the time was coming when the public exercises of these marvelous, miraculous endowments in which the men of Corinth were glorifying themselves, would all be done away with, while, as he states in the 13th verse, the vital and eternal principle of "love" shall ever remain the gracious heritage of the faithful members of the body of Christ.

Assuming that love is indispensable, the apostle begins chapter 14 by exhorting his brethren to make "**love**" the object of their constant pursuit, but spiritual gifts the object of their earnest wish. And of the possible gifts, instead of those which made for personal display, he asks them to desire the gift of "prophecy" (v. 1).

Webster defines the word prophecy as used here, "To give instruction in religious matters, to interpret or explain scripture, or religious subjects; to preach; to exhort; to expound." This meaning is made more evident in verse 3, "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and consolation." See also verse 24.

As a physical instructor in recommending exercises to qualify his pupils for the ordinary occupations of life, would say, "Run, jump, wrestle, spar, swim, etc., but rather walk," just so does this master instructor in spiritual things exhort his brethren, while desiring the extraordinary spiritual endowments, to prefer, rather, the

more practical and ordinary gift of prophecy (v. 1), giving his reason therefor in verses 2, 3, 4.

The learned McKnight, in commenting on verse 3, chap. 14, says, "When the apostles, who were endowed with the **word of wisdom** and the superior prophets, who were endowed with the **word of knowledge**, prophesied, they did it by inspiration, called (v. 6) revelation and knowledge. But there were other kinds of inspiration, called in the same verse **prophecy** and **doctrine**, which belonged to the inferior prophet. These were said to **prophecy** when by inspiration they uttered prayers and psalms in which the church joined them; or delivered a discourse relative to some point of doctrine or practice. All being done in a known language, the church was edified, exhorted and comforted."

In verses 5 to 25 of this 14th chapter, the apostle shows that the chief end to be served in the mutual exercise of these gifts is the edification of the body; and in verses 26 to 33 he gives a brief illustration of "a more excellent way," as he had previously promised.

In the "more excellent way" as expounded in these few verses, the apostle portrays a picture of the brethren mutually exercising these gifts in the public assembly, but under the law of love; and where each member in turn, with thoughtful consideration of the rights and benefit of the others, either offers or withholds the mani-

festation of his gift of song, or teaching, or language, or revelation, or interpretation, in such a manner and with such spirit that, instead of the ill effects of rivalry and confusion which had developed from the misuse of these great gifts, the result would be the mutual edification or building up of the body of Christ, **which God intended.**

In concluding his specific teaching to this church at Corinth in regard to public worship, and as emphasizing the fact that the more excellent "way" did not imply any changes in the revealed items of worship, or in the character of the spiritual endowments, but mainly referred to the considerate, loving and orderly exercise of these endowments, the apostle says in verses 39 and 40, "Wherefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy and forbid not to speak with tongues. But let all things be done decently and in order." Which means, according to Webster, "becomingly and by arrangement."

A definite conception of what constituted the various items of public worship as approved by the apostles' teaching seems to have been thoroughly apprehended by many intelligent and devoted students of God's Word during the early part of the past century, when a sincere attempt was made to return to New Testament teaching and practice.

It is a significant fact that though many such efforts were made at different periods, by various unassociated individuals, yet, in

the main, the general results arrived at were practically the same, and the order of the public assemblies, whether in different parts of our own country or across the sea, were markedly similar as to the character and items of mutual observance, all based upon the scriptural teaching.

The general conception of divine worship thus independently arrived at could not, perhaps, be more plainly portrayed than in a quotation from an article published by Alexander Campbell on page 658 of the *Christian Baptist*, sixth edition, 1843. It is as follows:

"It is not alleged by me that there are no divinely-instituted acts of Christian worship nor ordinances in the Christian Church; nay, the contrary I have undeviatingly affirmed. These are a part, an essential part, of the Institution of Favor. It is not discretionary with disciples whether they shall or shall not enter the kingdom without obtaining the remission of their sins by immersion; whether Christian societies shall regard the first day of the week to the Lord; whether they shall show forth the Lord's death at the Lord's table till he come to raise the dead; whether they shall continue in the fellowship for the saints and the Lord's poor; whether they shall sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; unite in social prayers, and in reading the sacred writings in their regular meetings. These are the traditions of the holy apostles, who were commanded to teach

the disciples to observe all things which the King in his own person had commanded them. But they are not in these observances bound by a prescribed form.

"There is no law, command nor precept prescribing the form of immersion, the place where, nor the manner in which the subject shall be disposed of in the act. There is no mode of observing the Lord's day—no law upon that subject. There is no prescription concerning the time of meeting in the congregation; whether they shall first do this, and then that; or whether they shall eat the Lord's supper standing, sitting, kneeling, or reclining; whether prayer and singing shall always succeed or accompany each other; whether all shall pronounce the same words after the speaker, or only say 'Amen' after his thanksgivings. In brief, there are no distinctions of this sort in the Institution. With regard to moral injunctions the great principle called the golden rule is a fair sample. Exhortations and admonitions concerning morals, found in the Epistles, grew out of the occasion, or were suggested by the inadvertencies of the disciples. But had these Epistles never been written, or only a part of them, the Christian Institution would have been perfect and entire, wanting nothing. The gospel, yes, the gospel, the proclamation of God's philanthropy, as it was uttered by the apostles on Pentecost, or in any of their converting discourses, would have been, and still is, alone suffi-

ent to produce those principles in the heart which issue in all holiness and in all morality."

The consensus of secular historic testimony is to the effect that the public worship of the early church followed the practice implied by the apostles' teaching, as indicated in the many scriptural references already submitted. Historians so testifying are Mosheim, Giesler, Rothe, Neander, Coleman, McCulloh, Beverly, Tyndall, Haweis, Kurtz, Pressense and practically all others of repute.

To the intelligent and sincere follower of Christ the fact that the practice of mutual edification is ordained by God for the development and perpetuation of the Church of Christ is sufficient reason for a faithful endeavor to cultivate it; but it is a demonstrated fact that no church can remain truly strong where it is systematically neglected. We say "truly" strong because apparent strength is not always true strength.

At the time the noted Beecher was in the zenith of his renown, and a seat in his great church at Sunday service could be obtained only by ticket previously secured, a gentleman met one of his congregation and said to him, "What will you do when Beecher dies and what will become of this great congregation?" The man hesitated a moment and replied: "The church is not Mr. Beecher's church, it is God's church, and God will take care of it regardless of the personality of Mr. Beecher."

Some time after this Mr. Beecher died, and at immense expense one of the most able preachers in the world was brought over from London, England, to take his place. Inside of a year there was no longer any difficulty in procuring a seat in the building, and the services lost the unique popularity which prevailed under the ministrations of the great Beecher.

Suppose we take a number of narrow strips of steel, such as we frequently see used in the forming of elevator enclosures in stores and office buildings, and lay them on the floor about an inch apart, then on top of and at right angles to those lay an equal number of the same kind of strips. On top and across the center of this double layer of steel strips we lay a bar of iron, which, upon being strongly magnetized, so affects the steel strips that when the bar is raised to an upright position they retain their relative places and present when upright and surrounded by a frame, the appearance of a substantial lattice steel fabric. Remove the magnetized bar, and the detached strips fall at once in disorder upon the floor. Now take the same strips, but intertwine them in lattice form, apply the magnetized bar, raise the fabric and stand it against the frame, as formerly; remove the bar and the lattice fabric still stands; because of the relationship through which each strip is contributing support to the others, and all are vital factors in the unity of the completed fabric.

The first arrangement of the strips is a picture of the church where the operation of practically all of its vital functions are dependent upon one man. The second illustrates the condition when mutual responsibility is assumed by the various members in accordance with the New Testament teaching.

It is not a well-known fact that too many assumed mature congregations today are in the habit of practically suspending prescribed items of divine worship in the church, on occasions of the absence of the professional teacher?

And too often the teacher, when present, by his natural assumption and performance of the major activities of the service, keeps closed the doors of opportunity to the exhortation, praise or prayer of the less insistent members.

Who is prepared to assume responsibility for such conditions, which are too common, in the face of the plain scriptural teaching—as to mutual duty and obligation in the church worship?

Willful departure from divine directions has always been followed by disastrous results, and some years ago Mr. Francis E. Clark, a devoted Congregational minister, noting the depressed condition which was obtaining in the Congregational Church under the usual routine ministrations of the one-man system, and desiring to produce more individual interest and diversified service, organized "The Young People's So-

ciety of Christian Endeavor," which, with its vital feature of mutual co-operation, filled such a widely-felt want that it spread **ALL OVER THE WORLD, a humanly wise attempted substitute for the divine plan which had already been provided, but had been lost sight of in the mists of denominational systems.**

Mr. Clark, in an interview in the city of Detroit on January 7, 1921, said: "The first society came about from the need of young people in my church for means through which they could take active part in church work, and I see in the growth recognition of its needs." It is claimed that the society in forty-two years has established 80,000 branches and has a present world membership of 4,000,000.

The divinely sanctioned practice of mutual edification in the Church of Christ not only exemplifies the principles of unity and co-operation, but also produces the valuable result of developing the younger members to take the places of the older in the family of God, in harmony with Paul's instructions to Timothy. II Timothy 2:1, 2: "Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and **the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**"

In view of the considerations now before us some one may ask, Would it be feasible in these days to introduce the practice of

mutual edification in the Church in conformity to apostolic precept?

Would it answer to have a typical church "come together" and arrange a proper programme for mutually conducting the public worship, and by some acceptable method decide upon certain assumed qualified brethren to co-operate in the services and read, pray, sing, exhort, teach, etc.?

It may be granted, perhaps, that after reasonable preparation some such selected persons would be able to read the Scriptures intelligibly, some to offer prayer, some to sing, others to speak words of exhortation or comfort, and others to impart some measure of instruction.

(It is assumed of course, in this connection that the "breaking of bread" is already a stated observance in the worship). Some one might reasonably ask, "Would not such procedure be true and acceptable worship according to apostolic teaching?"

In reply to this query, it might be conceded that, so far as common observation could determine, such worship would be acceptable, and yet it might be so lacking in certain essentials as to render it more mechanical than spiritual.

In other words, the literal outward conformity to a certain divinely-directed system of worship would not of itself make such worship acceptable to God.

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit" as well as "in truth."

Under the Mosiac law the various ceremonial items of public service were repeatedly and emphatically described, so that the worship of Jehovah might be unmistakably performed; but, under the Gospel, the more glorious ministration, the better, clearer, the more lucid and life-giving system the whole matter of Church government the public worship is portrayed in such general, though plain teaching, as to evidently preclude the intention of a servile, uniform ritual of observance.

Well-minded persons may seriously differ as to the relative importance of the various prescribed items, and also as to the order of their observance in the true worship, but to the sincere student of God's Word there can be but one conclusion in regard to the spiritual attitude required on the part of the mutual participants in order that the worship may possess the vital elements of spirituality and truth.

While, as such, the Church is not divinely directed as to relative order of personal co-operation in the worship, yet, in the apostle's teaching, we meet with many definite, inspired directions enjoining spiritual principles of general Christian conduct, which, when manifested by the brethren, will result in true and acceptable worshipers and worship.

Among such divinely-inspired injunctions to the brethren are the following:

"If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk" (Gal. 5:25).

"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorifying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. For each man shall bear his own burden. But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him, that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:2-6).

"And walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweet smell" (Eph. 5:2).

"Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—to God, even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:19-21).

"The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder, and a witness of the suffering of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the

crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise ye younger be subject to the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:1-5).

"And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint hearted, support the weak, be long suffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all" (1 Thess. 5:14, 15).

"Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. 15:1).

"Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye; and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:12-17).

"And I, myself, also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Rom. 15:14).

"Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus; that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God" (Rom. 15:5-7).

If a typical congregation in our day were to earnestly appropriate the apostle's teaching, some of which has just been quoted; if the members of such congregation, in an attitude of loving service, produced by the Spirit of God through his word, were striving to exemplify in character and life the injunctions so plainly given, there need be no possible doubt that the worship rendered by them would be acceptable to God.

"For such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers" (John 4:23).

Can it be true, then, that failure on the part of many congregations to devoutly exemplify the worship of the primitive church is because the members do not realize their personal obligation to the body of Christ?

That, through lack of spiritual life or apprehension on the part of individual members, who might be useful in consecrated service, the church as a body is hindered in its scriptural upbuilding, is sadly

true of many congregations. Thus crippled, the church fails to manifest the characteristics necessary to development. But who can estimate the possibilities of an awakened church co-operating in scriptural worship? A picture of such intelligent, devout service is portrayed by the apostle in one of his letters (Eph. 4:15, 16).

"But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which **every joint supplieth**, according to the working in due measure of **each several part**, maketh increase of the body unto the **building up of itself** in love."

Brethren beloved, and fellow members of the body of Christ, in view of the sacrifice which has been made on our behalf, and the love which prompted it, should we not endeavor to render in the public worship such service as will be pleasing to our Lord, and will tend to the building up of his body which is the church?

Why not, then, resolve to offer, humbly but willingly, in God's service, such gifts and acquirements as may be acceptable to the church, and in harmony with the apostle's teaching, whether of reading, song, prayer, exhortation, teaching, or other enjoined service, conducted in order and to edification. By such action the church will prosper in its mutual interest and co-operation and be better qualified to further and sustain the spread of the Gospel.

With consecrated intelligence let us perform our duty personally, and as a congregation, spiritually and willingly, following the apostolic injunctions, and "in truth," according to revealed directions. The result must be true success, for all further responsibility rests with the Lord God Almighty, and he never fails.

"Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen" (Jude 24).

It has been conceded by many that though the practice of mutual edification, in the church, is in harmony with the divine will, yet there are many specific difficulties in the way of such practice, under present-day conditions.

In response to such suggested position, are we not safe in assuming that, if God intends that divine worship is to be perpetuated "in the church," in accord with certain vital principles, then it is safe to infer that such necessary principles are revealed in the scriptures.

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 1:16, 17).

It is clearly revealed that all worship acceptable to the Lord must be performed in accordance with his expressed will.

"God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

The observance of the primitive worship in the "more excellent way" implied that love be an acquirement of the mutual participants. "And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).

Some of the attributes of such love are set forth in the apostle's teaching as follows: "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

It would seem evident, then, that true and sincere exemplification of "love," on the part of the participants, is absolutely essential to acceptable worship.

Thus it is clearly implied that those who aspire to co-operate in the prescribed worship are expected to possess, and becomingly portray, the characteristics of kindness, forbearance and humility, to such extent that self is subordinated in the sincere

effort to please the Lord. These and other like characteristics are embodied in the prescribed vital principle of "love."

In the light of scripture teaching, may we not wisely proceed to consider some difficulties suggested by our friends, which seem to be in the way of the practice of "mutual edification" in the public worship of the congregation, under present-day conditions?

1. "The scriptures adduced as supporting the mutual-edification system are of an hortatory and not of an obligatory nature, while the scriptures demand obedience to the "Episcopoi," and therefore to whatever system, consonant with the written records, that they set up."

In response to the above it will be pertinent to inquire, to what extent are we to construe the following references as merely "hortatory"?

Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The apostle said, "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

"Not forsaking our own assembling together as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another" (Heb. 10:25). "Teaching and admonishing one another" (Col. 3:16). "Wherefore exhort one

another, and build each other up, even as also ye do" (1 Thess. 5:11). "Seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. 14:12). Jesus said, "He that heareth you [the apostles] heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth him that sent me" (Luke 10:16). "And why call ye me Lord, Lord **and do not the things** which I say?" (Luke 6:46). "Whoso heareth and doeth is pronounced a wise man; whoso heareth and doeth not is pronounced a foolish man, whose work resulted in failure—not being in accord with the divine will" (Luke 6:49).

It has been plainly shown that the practice of mutual edification is enjoined in the "written record." Obedience to any other practice by whomsoever "set up" would be out of accord with the will of the Lord.

2. "Difficulty of inducing members to mutual participation in various prescribed items of public worship."

Such members should be reminded of their privileges, duties, opportunities and personal responsibilities (Rom. 12:4-8; 15:14; Eph. 5:19; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24, 25; 1 Tim. 4:13).

3. "Assumed inability of members in many instances to personally function in desired public activities."

They also should be led to realize their privileges and responsibilities as outlined under No. 2 and exhorted and assisted in every way to develop such qualities as should be manifested in the revealed wor-

ship. "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. 15:1).

4. "Conditions where members may have the ability to publicly participate, but have poor judgment as to proper division of the available time. Cases also where some may be disposed to take part too frequently and at too great length."

The Apostle Paul enjoins that "all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40). With the spirit of love and forbearance dominating, there should be no difficulty in observing a mutual deference such as was enjoined by Paul in the days of miraculous endowments, where it is taught that members were to publicly function, **in turn**, that they should defer one to another, and if necessary individually refrain from the public service even though prepared to speak (I Cor. 14:29-33).

5. "Conditions where members may be willing, but with limited education and experience. Zeal and proper spirit, but lacking cultivation and suitable development."

The more-gifted and better-informed members should co-operate in the instruction and development of their less-advanced brethren (I Peter 4:10), and all should apply themselves to advancement in divine knowledge and in the use of such talents as the Lord has given them for his service (II Tim. 2:15).

6. "The bad effects resulting from crude, unassimilated and ill-prepared ef-

forts that would be possible when every Tom, Dick and Harry could hold forth."

With assumed proper appreciation of the importance and the solemn responsibility of the personal service, a sincere desire to serve the Lord, and real discernment of the "Lord's body," is it likely there would be any crude, unassimilated and ill-prepared effort on the part of "Tom, Dick or Harry"? Would not rather the studied, deliberate, consecrated and prayerful preparation resulting from such appreciative spiritual condition be likely to bring forth measurably-finished, reasonably-assimilated and acceptable efforts on the part of **Thomas, Richard and Harry?**

7. "All spiritually-minded speakers would soon be crowded out by the forward and conceited ones."

Why should other than spiritually-minded persons aspire to the public service? Would such service assumedly rendered by persons who were disposed to crowd less-insistent brethren out, be true or acceptable worship? Is not the character of acceptable worshippers also outlined? (Rom. 8:9). "But if any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 12:10). "In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another" (Phil. 2:5). "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

Would not also a measure of forbearance on the part of the better-qualified brethren toward others not so highly gifted be a

reasonable manifestation of enjoined patience and continued kindness, though suffering long? "Love suffereth long, **and is kind.**" (See Phil. 2:3; 1 Cor. 14:26-33).

8. "The confusion caused by any divergence of views among strong-minded members."

9. "The door inconsiderately opened to wild, fanciful and unsound doctrinal teaching."

The elders of the church are responsible for judging and ruling as to the character and extent of its ministers and public ministrations (Acts 20:28). Parents are expected to discriminate as to the character, quantity, quality and distribution of the food provided for their children. "Decently and in order," according to Webster, means "becomingly and by arrangement" (1 Cor. 14:40). "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them; for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account" (Heb. 13:17). The overseers should guard the church against confusion and wild fanciful teaching.

10. "Inability of the average member of the average congregation to present the claims of the Gospel in any challenging way."

The inability of the average person to discourse satisfactorily on any topic in which he may not be heartily interested is no criterion by which to determine what would be the ability of the same person in regard to a subject in which both mind and

heart were intensely involved. Does not practical experience confirm the fact that there is a logical relation between the real interest which persons possess in a subject or person, and the disposition and ability of such persons to intelligibly discuss the same. By what system of logic may some persons be considered capable of acceptably expressing themselves regarding their respective interests and activities in earthly life, and the same persons be deemed unable to properly discourse upon the more vital and intensely-important issues pertaining to eternal life? If the proper spiritual interest be present, may we not expect its natural manifestations, as indicated by the following scripture?

"And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth to his exhorting; he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom. 12:6-9).

11. "The certainty that, since the majority of the church members will drain their thoughts dry of spiritual food in three or four discourses, the public instruction would soon become but wearisome repetitions, disheartening the speakers themselves and disgusting the sinners and younger element of the church."

Why should the wells of earnest human expression be drained dry when they may be continuously fed by the everlasting springs of the Word of God? Is the plan of the Lord to be blamed because men may refuse to partake of the water of life, which God has so freely provided?

12. "The superlative character and supreme importance of the claims of the Gospel make it imperative that they be presented by trained and mature minds to the exclusion of the young and immature."

While this objection has no direct bearing upon the question of "Mutual Edification," yet it is pertinent to observe that the chief qualifications implied by the scriptures which definitely refer to successful Gospel preachers are a familiarity with the facts, and the willingness to persist in declaring them. When all the Jerusalem church, "**except the apostles,**" was scattered abroad (Acts 8:1), they "went about preaching the **WORD**" (Acts 8:4). "And some of them traveled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch. At Antioch they preached the 'Lord Jesus' and the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:19-21).

13. "No fair-minded man can deny that many good things result from the pastoral system. Are these advantages to be lost?"

There need be no issue between the divinely-directed practice of mutual edification in the prescribed worship and the scrip-

tural oversight of the church by its elders, or pastors, whose duties and responsibilities are clearly and repeatedly delineated.

Reference to the Scriptures enables us to make intelligent comparison between the New Testament and the present "pastoral systems" (so called).

Paul, speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, says (Acts 20:28): "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."

We are informed that the word rendered "to feed" signifies "to exercise all a shepherd's care"; in other words, "to be pastors."

In this connection it is important to observe how studiously every approach to what may be styled the monarchical principle seems to be avoided in the revealed constitution of the church.

There is indeed one Lord and Head who is invisible, but nothing like a visible head, or recognized leader.

We find no office which was designed to be occupied exclusively by a single person, and no position in which one man stands alone and pre-eminent among the brethren.

In the church at large we find not a solitary pope, but twelve apostles. In a local church we find not "the pastor," but "pastors." So we read (Acts 14:23) of "elders in every church."

Dr. Hackett, commenting on this verse, says: "The term is plural because each church had its college of elders (See also Acts 20:17 and Titus 1:5), not because there was a church in each of these cities. The elders or presbyters, in the official sense of the term, were those appointed in the first churches to watch over their general welfare and discipline. With reference to that duty they were called also 'episcopoi,' that is, superintendents or bishops."

That the names were entirely synonymous appears from their interchange in such passages as Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:3-9.

The presbyters, or bishops, were not, by virtue of their office, teachers or preachers, nor, on the other hand, were the two spheres of labor incompatible with each other. See from 1 Tim. 5:17 that some of those who exercised the general oversight also preached the Word. Compare also 1 Tim. 3:2.

The foregoing representations exhibit the view of Mosheim, Neander, Rothe and others who are eminent in such inquiries.

The vital question would seem to be, "What is the Lord's revealed system for perpetuating his church?" and not a question of comparison, between it and any other suggested system or systems.

14. "The good things of the mutual edification system. Can they not be secured and enjoyed at other meetings of the church, thus withholding from demoraliza-

tion the principal assembly of the congregation?"

The "good things," so called, of the system of mutual edification properly understood, would seem to form a part of the prescribed services of the church when as the "Body of Christ" it is assembled for divine worship.

In referring to the miraculous endowments which ushered in the more normal practice, the Apostle Paul speaks about edifying **"the church"** (1 Cor. 14:4, 5). In verse 12 members are exhorted to seek to excel unto the edifying of **"the church."** In verse 19 the apostle states that **"in the church"** he would rather speak five words, etc. In the same connection he refers, in verse 23, to the **"whole church"** being assembled. In verse 26 he portrays some of the items of worship desired in the church assembly, and in verse 39 he enjoins that the services be conducted "decently and in order," or becomingly and by arrangement.

Would it not thus seem that, while Christians are at liberty to arrange such incidental or regular gatherings as may be deemed wise, and to promote the education and spiritual growth of one another by every lawful procedure, yet under divine guidance provision has also been made for **specific worship of the church on the first day of the week, embracing the Lord's Supper and other related features which should have their place in every mature scriptural**

congregation, in order to its mutual edification or building up as a body.

By the neglect or disregard of these divine provisions may it not truly be said of present-day congregations, as Paul said of some individuals in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:30), "For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep."

15. "Is not the scriptural practice of mutual edification substantially covered in congregations having a resident minister who regularly assumes the province of teaching and exhortation in the Lord's day worship, and where the conduct of the meetings generally, the presiding at the Lord's table, thanksgiving, prayers, etc., are taken care of by various qualified members?"

Careful consideration of the various scriptures setting forth the worship of the church in apostolic times **fails to disclose provision for any one person with or without title, assuming the practice of doing all the formal teaching and exhorting in the principal assembly, on the first day of the week.**

Such practice is thus manifestly out of accord with divinely-revealed precedent.

As with all other efforts to substitute something for the plan of the Lord, the result is detrimental as follows:

a. It places the "resident minister" in the unscriptural position of appearing to distinguish himself from his brethren by

gratuitiously assuming a pre-eminence as a fixed personal factor in the meeting of the church every first day of the week.

b. Members are deprived of opportunity of personal co-operation in teaching and exhortation, for which any verbal service by another is no scriptural substitute.

c. Members are unlawfully deprived of opportunity for the development which grows, not only through studious, prayerful preparation, but also by the experience of practical effort.

d. The practice is hurtful to the uninformed visitor, and also to the partially-instructed believer, both of whom, by failing to have presented to them a church worshiping according to the divine model, are naturally unable to discriminate between the divinely-directed order and the **humanly-devised services mistakenly adopted from the common practice of the various sects.**

e. It promotes a **wrong conception** of the divine character of the prescribed worship which was intended to be perpetual and universally adaptable, during the Christian dispensation, by intruding into it an uncertain personal element, the incidental absence of which leaves a void in the required order of activities.

In the prescribed ritual of worship under the Jewish dispensation, the incidental or accidental absence of any **one** common priest could not disarrange the order or progress of the worship, but in this human-

ly-arranged feature of the church services today, while the High Priest, Jesus, is always present (though invisible), yet the absence, for any reason, of one certain priest may prevent a complete functioning of the church worship.

Does not such possibility of uncertainty show lack of accord with the always unfailing divine provisions for the possible certain performance of all worship required by the Lord?

It should be here stated, however, in all fairness, that the resident minister (so called) should not always be too strongly condemned for what might appear to be unwarranted assumption of the privileges and duties of the brethren generally, for in too many instances, by reason of the thoughtless, preoccupied or slothful overseers, and perhaps an uninstructed or unawakened membership, no provision is systematically made for carrying on the prescribed worship "becomingly and by arrangement" as the scripture demands (1 Cor. 14:40). The responsibility thus unjustly and unwisely thrust upon him is often uncomplainingly assumed by the "resident minister" of the church.

Such "overseers"—so miscalled—should, without delay, resign from all pretense of service, or in thoughtful activity, devoutly assume the duties and responsibilities entrusted to them by the church; and in conjunction with an enlightened and spiritually-awakened membership, endeavor by de-

vout co-operation to assume their respective proportional measure of the public service which may have been unrighteously imposed upon an overworked minister.

16. "If some members have been favored by a natural gift for money-making and apply themselves to acquiring ample means, which they freely use in the Lord's work, should not their liberal contributions be considered of equal value to personal service in the public worship, and answer as a practical substitute for it?"

When we consider that man is primarily indebted to the favor of God for every desirable material acquisition within his temporary control, even "the coin of the realm," so to speak, and after a comparatively brief period of possession such control is ended, through the ever-changing conditions of life, or perhaps by death, premature or otherwise, when we consider these things, does it not seem unreasonable to regard with self-approval our making of what we may feel to be liberal donations toward what is commonly deemed the Lord's work?

In view of the fact that, rightly speaking, our entire means belongs to him who "holds all the wealth of the world in his hands" and that we are only brief custodians of the Lord's possessions, for which, sooner or later, we must render account of our stewardship—is there not a question as to the propriety of considering our "gen-

erous" contributions as gifts, in the full sense of the word?

We are actually granting nothing which the great God does not in reality already control, and which may be brought into use at his will whether through the hands of its present seeming owners or through some other agency.

But man has within his individual power the privilege of granting to the Lord a personal gift esteem by him to be far beyond the value of the transitory wealth of the world, and God graciously asks of him not his belongings, but himself, his real heart interests.

Man is privileged to voluntarily manifest his **individual** consecration to the Lord by acceptable **personal** authorized service.

In established recognition of the man's gracious adoption and sonship, the Lord has provided for him stated opportunities, to openly voice his gratitude, his prayer and praise, also to **mutually participate in words of instruction, hope and helpfulness with his fellow travelers on the way to eternity.**

Such provision is embraced in the orderly arrangement of the church worship on the first day of the week, together with the promised personal presence of the invisible Lord.

Need it now be asked if the most liberal contribution of transitory means could in any sense be made to answer in place of

such sincere personal service "in the church" as the man may be fitted for?

Some thoughtful and sincere brethren have been heard to express sympathy for and interest in the principle of mutual edification in the church, and openly deplore the fact that in so many cases the eldership is inefficient and the evangelist or resident minister does not apprehend its obligatory character or appreciate its importance, and consequently the church meetings move along in a routine of conduct involving the least possible personal action or responsibility on the part of the brethren generally.

As common members of the body of Christ, before we arraign those whom we have selected to be overseers in the church and bewail the fact that they are not exemplifying all the revealed qualifications pertaining to their positions, (Acts 20:17-35; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5), before we condemn the eldership in **its seeming failure, let us in humility, and with sincere desire to learn our own duty** before the Lord, consult some portions of the living oracles which may apply to **us**.

While we have found that many specific obligations are laid upon the **eldership**, we should not fail to also notice that all the members of the family of God are besought to contribute lives of suitable service as recognized children of the Lord (Rom. 12:1).

We can not fail to become more and more seriously convinced of our responsi-

bility as individuals when we consider the number and character of the specific messages addressed not pointedly to elders or evangelists, but to **us as members of the body of Christ** personally, and collectively.

Let us carefully note to what class Paul's letter to the Romans was written—Rom. 1:1-7—and for pointed portions of that letter note the twelfth chapter, verses 1 to 21, inclusive, 14:19; 15:14, 15; 16:17, 18. Note I Cor. 1:1, 2 as to whom that letter was indited, and for pointed messages I Cor. 1:10, also 15:58. Note also Gal. 1:1, 2; Eph. 1:1; 6:10-13, inclusive; Phil. 1:1; 127, 28; 2:12-16, inclusive; 3:16, 17; chap. 4; I Col. 1:102, and 8 to 10, inclusive; Col. 3:12-17, inclusive; also 3:23-25; I Thess. 1:1; 5:14-18, inclusive; II Thess. 3:4-6, inclusive; Heb. 3:1; 3:12-14; 6:9-11; 1024, 25; I Peter 1:1, 2; 4:7-11, inclusive; 5:6-11, inclusive.

In view of the many pleadings and inspired injunctions which plainly apply to us as individual and collective members of the body of Christ, and considering our own **shortcomings in exemplifying their spirit** and practice, what little reason we seem to have for our complaints as to the inefficiency of the eldership.

May it not be true that if we were prayerfully to apply ourselves to the teaching so generously provided for our guidance, comfort and support, and were to strive to fulfill the revealed will of our Lord in character

and conduct, that the blessing of God will follow our efforts?

Manifesting an active and unselfish interest for each other, with love and forbearance characteristic of the mind of Christ, would we not be likely to find joyful and intelligent co-operation on the part of our encouraged eldership, and the helpful assistance of the evangelist in our development in the Christ-life and the preparation for such prescribed public service as the Lord may respectfully qualify us to perform?

Let us, then, resolve with the help of God to do our part. The Lord God will certainly bless our efforts.

—W. G. Malcomson.

Scholars Agree with Malcomson

Read closely this passage concerning the worship when "the whole church be come together into one place,"—"How is it then, brethren, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine [teaching], hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." (1 Cor. 14:26.)

This shows that in what is evidently the most important meeting of the church (not some little side meeting), **several** brethren took public part, and that they did not have the one-man preacher-pastor system which is almost universal today. Though these were inspired men, it shows God did not intend to center his worship entirely into the hands of one man.

Commenting on this passage Robert Young, whose Analytical Greek and Hebrew Concordance to the Bible is so highly prized in the Christian world, and who is the author of 30 or 40 standard works in the religious world, says this on the passage above, in his Concise Commentary of the Bible:

"From this and other passages it is clear that **the upbuilding of the Church was not confirmed then, as now, to one, or at most two, of the congregation, but WAS THE PRIVILEGE OF ALL THE MEMBERS**, and though such a practice is liable to abuse (James 3:2), it is possible that **its entire disuse now has led to still greater evils** obvious to all—"quenching the Spirit."

John Milton, perhaps the most famous Puritan of all time, wrote a tract against the whole clergy business, and says this on the passage quoted from Paul above (Christian Doctrine, Chapter 23):

"The custom of holding assemblies is to be maintained, not after the present mode, but according to the apostolic institution, which did not ordain that an individual, and he a stipendiary, [hireling], should have the sole right of speaking from a higher place, but that **each believer in turn should be authorized to speak, or prophesy, or teach, or exhort, according to his gifts**; insomuch that even the weakest among the brethren had the privilege of asking questions, and consulting the elders and more experienced members of the congregation. 1 Cor. 14:26, etc., 'when ye come together, every one of you,' " etc.

The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, an old standard work in the Christian world, says this under the heading "Clergy":

"It may be considered settled that there is no order of clergy, in the modern sense of the term, in the New Testament, i. e., there is no class of men mentioned to whom spiritual functions **exclusively** belonged. **Every believer is a priest unto God. Every believer has as much right as anybody else to pray, to preach, to baptize, to administer communion.** (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:19-22; 3; 12; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 2:27 Rev. 1:6; 5:10, etc.)."

All of this is in harmony with Paul's command to a preacher, quoted above, (2 Tim. 2:2)—to develop "faithful men who shall be able to teach others." The greatest evil in the religious world is the Clergy. We should make every Christian a "commando" soldier, qualified to meet any emergency in the great fight against Satan, and a failure to do this has had much to do with the stagnation now in Christendom.

All of this is in harmony, too, with what Jesus says: "Be **not** ye called Rabbi for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call **no man** your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your **servant**. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matt. 23:8-12.)

What would Jesus say now of the titles, "Reverend," "Father," "Doctor of Divinity," etc.?

Conclusion

We are sorry to say that Roman Catholicism, with its religio-political system, can indeed win America, and will do it unless it is stopped by the faithful preaching and **teaching** of the pure Word of God.

Protestantism with its modernism of infidelity concerning the Bible and Jesus as the Son of God, we are sorry to say can NOT win America.

The Church of Christ has in the past failed to win America because it tried to do it through seminaries, Bible schools and colleges. These schools are human organizations established by Christians to do part of the work of the Church and hence are unscriptural, for Paul says that there is "ONE Body", and that the Body is the Church, and "unto God be glory in the Church," (Eph. 3:21.) These schools have developed a clergy which has usurped the office of eldership in its feeding the church.

The true Church of Christ CAN win America:

1. If it will re-produce the HOME as it was in the First Century, in which parents were commanded to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

2. If it practise the personal evangelism of the First Century when all the disciples "went everywhere preaching the Word." (Acts 8:4) and by which the church at Antioch was established, (see Acts 11:19-30), and by which the church of Rome was probably established, inasmuch as there were

strangers of Rome converted on the day of Pentecost. (See Acts 2.)

3. If EVERY PREACHER will become a theological seminary in and of himself, and "commit what he knows to faithful men who shall be able to teach others." (2 Tim. 2:2.) **The preacher should quit doing the work of elders and should develop "faithful men" to become elders.**

4. And IF we have the life and zeal of the Christians of the First Century. Is the reader willing to do his part? Maybe you can help by—circulating this tract. May God help us all to be faithful Christians.—D. A. Sommer.

Brief Biography of W. G. Malcomson

Bro. Malcomson was a preacher as well as an architect. My father, Daniel Sommer, told of holding a protracted meeting with him in early life, somewhere near Detroit, Mich., which was his home. Leroy M. Hull, "attorney and counselor at law," for Bro. Malcomson in his business of architecture, kindly prepared the following few words concerning him for us:

"William George Malcomson was born in Hamilton, Ontario, April 7, 1853, and came to Detroit with his parents in 1857. He came into the Church of Christ when 16 years of age and began faithful work which lasted until his death on October 19, 1937. He was intensely interested in mutual edification and never tired of explaining its benefits to any one interested. He had a library of several hundred religious books and knew exactly what book to select and where in the book to turn for points of discussion. He demonstrated this on so many occasions in our discussions on Sunday afternoons at his home. As a result of many years of careful study and practice, he became a wonderful speaker and preacher. During his middle age, he went over Michigan on Sundays speaking for different congregations. His success in his chosen field of architecture was equally outstanding, because he gave to it as he did to everything he undertook the best that was in him—intelligent hard work."

J. A. HARDING ON "MUTUAL EDIFICATION"

Many years ago J. A. Harding, a preacher and editor from Tennessee, visited the old Plum Street Church in Detroit, where Bro. Malcolmson worshiped most of his life, and he described the worship, which we copy in part:

"The teaching and preaching are done by the members, except when some brother visits them by chance, and takes part in this work, or when an evangelist is engaged in holding a series of meetings with them. They also have a meeting for the children on Sunday afternoons, and a prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings.

"There are more than twenty of them who engage publicly in teaching and exhortation, and many more who lead in prayer and in reading the Scriptures. The average attendance at the Sunday service is better, in proportion to the membership, than at any other church I have ever known.

"Confessions at these meetings are frequent. Of those who have been added to the congregation since its beginning, by far the greater number were received at the regular meetings.

"When the hour for opening arrived, the elders took their seats upon the platform. This was the first thing to which I was not accustomed, and, hence, particularly attracted my attention. The one who was to preside for the day arose and read a hymn, which the congregation, while standing, sung. The elder then read a portion of Scripture. After the reading he announced that certain brethren were sick, calling out their names, and that they would be remembered in the prayers. This was said so touchingly and the prayers were so fervently delivered, that I felt myself to be indeed in the midst of a band of brethren and sisters.

"After the prayer, another song was sung. At this point an invitation was given to any baptized believer, who desired to take membership with the congregation, to come forward and do so. One lady presented herself and received from the elder the right hand of

fellowship. The supper, which is regarded as the prime object of the meeting, was then attended to. . . . After this, a song was read and sung, and then the collection for the treasury was taken up. In addition to the weekly contribution, a collection is made once per month for the spread of the Gospel.

"The presiding officer now called upon a young man in the audience to read the 'regular lesson.' In response, he arose, and standing at his seat, read in a distinct and impressive way the book of Jude. At the close of the reading, the president said: 'If any brother has a word of teaching or exhortation, let him say on.' The brethren were requested to improve the time, which they did. Several short, excellent speeches were delivered. The exercises were closed by a speech from the elder, who wound up with an invitation to sinners to confess their Savior. A concluding song was sung and we were dismissed. Thus an hour and a half had been pleasantly and profitably passed. **I am sure such meetings are far more Apostolic, and by far more beneficial than those to which we are accustomed.**"—Old Path Guide.

(Harding referred to the one man system. Of course, the order of the items in this worship is immaterial. Sad to say that the Bible Colleges which Harding afterward helped establish and endorsed, have overthrown in general this simple, scriptural system of edification which he here upheld.—D. A. S.)

MARTIN LUTHER ON THE "EVANGELIST"

A Lutheran preacher said a few years ago in Indianapolis on the centennial of the beginning of Luther's work:

"But not only was Luther an evangelist announcing anew the gospel of Christ, but **he preached the reformation idea that every Christian should be an evangelist. The biggest lesson which the churches of today must learn from Luther is that every Christian is to be an evangelist. That was the New Testament idea and the idea of the reformation. IF AMERICA IS EVER BROUGHT TO CHRIST, IT MUST BE DONE THROUGH LAYMEN.**"

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL SAID—

"If, indeed, teachers cannot be prepared for want of time to study, why do they (preachers) make a monopoly of teaching: for by attending to Paul's instructions to the churches at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and others, it will be seen that **teaching is a thing not to be restricted to an individual of an assembly, but that every man in an assembled body of Christians, possessing in a greater or less degree the gifts for teaching or exhortation, should not be obstructed,** (which is **not** done when we have preaching all the time—D. A. S.) **but allowed the opportunity to exercise the same. But this is not permitted when one man engrosses all, and drinks up too, the resources of the congregation,** which ought to be appropriated to the use of the poor, as Paul enjoins."—Christian Baptist, p. 28.

(And yet Bethany College which Bro. Campbell established helped much to destroy the scriptural teaching he presented here.—D. A. S.)

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN SAW HIS MISTAKE

"Benjamin Franklin saw this error of the past before he died, and frequently expressed his regret that he had not come to see the matter in a clearer light thirty years ago, in time to have given his influence to remedy the evil. In his last days he was of the opinion that the instructions of Paul to the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 12th to 14th chapters, inclusive), had been greatly undervalued, and that neglect of that instruction, and the routine work of monthly appointments, had together laid the foundation upon which the pastoral system has been built. He regarded the 'pastorate' as an unscriptural office, and constantly made war upon it."—Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin.

(Franklin lived so soon after the reformation started that he did not see the evils of the Bible colleges and the lack of mutual teaching till near the close of his life.—D. A. S.)

EDWARD GIBBON ON THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH, AND THE RISE OF THE CLERGY AND THE CHURCH OF ROME

"The societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman Empire were united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution. . .

"The public functions of religion were solely intrusted to the established ministers of the church, the **bishops** and the **presbyters**; two appellations which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same office and the same order of persons. The name of Presbyter was expressive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wisdom. The title of Bishop denoted their inspection over the faith and manners of the Christians who were committed to their pastoral care. In proportion to the respective numbers of the faithful, a larger or smaller number of these **Episcopal presbyters** guided **each** infant congregation with equal authority and with united counsels. . .

"**Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic**, and although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual as well as a friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was not yet connected by any supreme authority or legislative assembly. As the numbers of the faithful were gradually multiplied, they discovered the advantages that might result from a closer union of their interests and designs. Toward the end of the second century, the churches of Greece and Asia adopted the useful institution of provincial synods. . .

"**The institution of synods was so well suited to private ambition, and to public interest, that in the space of a few years it was received throughout the whole empire. . .**

"The same causes which at first had destroyed the equality of the presbyters introduced among the bishops a pre-eminence of rank, and from thence a superiority of jurisdiction. . .

"The office of perpetual presidents in the councils of each province was conferred on the bishops of the principal cities; and these aspiring prelates, who soon

acquired the lofty titles of Metropolitans and Primate, secretly prepared themselves to usurp over their episcopal brethren the same authority which the bishops had so lately assumed above the college of the presbyters.

"Nor was it long before an emulation of pre-eminence and power prevailed among the Metropolitans themselves, each of them affecting to display, in the most pompous terms, the temporal honors and advantages of the city over which he presided. . .

"From every cause, either of a civil or of an ecclesiastical nature, it was easy to see that Rome must enjoy the respect, and would soon claim the obedience, of the provinces. . . **The progress of the ecclesiastical authority gave birth to the memorable distinction of the clergy and the laity.**"—(Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. 15.)

(The only way to overcome the religious power of the apostate Church of Rome is to reproduce the Apostolic Church with its congregational church government, and its elders (bishops) in each congregation, and its personal evangelism by every Christian; and to get rid of the schools which always have been incubators of a clergy.)

DAVID LIPSCOMB ON "WEEKLY PREACHING"

"(1) Is it right for a preacher of the gospel to have regular monthly, semi-monthly, or weekly appointments at the same church? . . .

"These examples show that Paul remained one, two or three years at a place; that he taught in meetings of the church and publicly on every occasion that offered. He also threw himself with such energy and devotion into the work that both day and night and from house to house he warned and admonished both Jew and Gentile to repent and turn to God.

"Public preaching, monthly or weekly, is a poor substitute for the earnest labors of the early preachers and teachers. **These early preachers kept constantly in view the preparation of the church to live, worship, and edify itself WITHOUT THE PRESENCE AND**

HELP OF A PREACHER OR TEACHER FROM A DISTANCE.

"A preacher may by weekly or monthly appointments **aid and instruct a church how to worship and DEVELOP ITS ABILITIES to worship and serve the Lord.** I cannot see that weekly or monthly appointments **if that is kept in view,** are wrong. There is **danger,** if this is not kept in view, that the church accept this as a permanent condition of things and all its worship **degenerate into a routine of monthly meetings or merely a meeting to be ENTERTAINED by a speech from the preacher.**"—Lipscomb, Questions and Answers, p. 90.

(In other words, if such a preacher will resurrect II Tim. 2:2, and will commit what he knows to "faithful men who shall be able to teach others", he will soon **work his way OUT** of the services of the churches he visits, and then those churches can help him in new and weak fields. But most preachers are working their way **INTO** the services of the churches so that churches can not do without them or some other preacher from a distance.)

HEAR CAMPBELL AGAIN

"Preaching the gospel and teaching the converts, are as distinct and distinguishable employments as enlisting an army and training it, or as creating a school and teaching it. Unhappily for the church and the world, this distinction, if at all conceded as legitimate, is obliterated or annulled in almost all protestant Christendom. * * * **They seem to have never learned the difference between preaching and teaching.** * * * Yet we are informed that the apostles, daily in the temple and from house to house, ceased not to **teach and preach** Jesus Christ. They **preached** Christ **to the world,** and they **taught** his Gospel and its institutions **to the churches** which they had gathered, or to the households they had converted. The commission itself, as reported by Matthew, explicitly and fully lays out their work. * * * The Lord's day, the Lord's supper celebrated, the Holy Scriptures read and

discoursed upon, accompanied with SOCIAL prayer and praise; exhortations, reproofs, admonitions, as occasion demands, are tendered. **And an eldership and a diaconate are for these very purposes ordained.** * * * But this result one cannot expect from a monthly visit of an evangelist, who, for the time being, converts your church into a missionary field, addresses a promiscuous assembly, convened to hear a TEXTUARY speech."—Millennial Harbinger, 1853.

"Mosheim, from the mass of evidence on this subject to which he had access, satisfactorily shows that the first theological seminary, established at Alexandria, Egypt, in the second century, **was the grave of primitive Christianity.** Yet, it appears that the first school instituted for preparing Christian doctors was the fountain, the streams whereof polluted the great mass of Christian professors, and completed the establishment of a paganized Christianity in the room of the religion of the New Testament."—Christian Baptist, pp. 61, 62.

DAVID LIPSCOMB ON "SELF-EDIFYING CHURCH"

"A church that has to send to others for help to conduct its services in worship or work is not a self-supporting and self-edifying church. This is true, no matter how great the number, the talent, or the wealth of the congregation. . . .

"Will not our working people, while learning and asserting their right in other things, learn their right to serve God for themselves and enjoy his blessing and favor? Without these all other blessings are vain and delusive.

"Every member of the church can and should participate in all the service of the church; and the members are not only competent to do all the work pertaining to the church, but they need this work and service for their own spiritual growth. . . .

"Every child of God, by virtue of his birthright into the family of God, a family of kings and priests unto

God, has the right to perform any and every service connected with the Church of God, limited only by his ability to do it decently and in order. **All should be encouraged to take part in the service,** and in doing the service each manifests his talent for the work and trains himself for fitness in God's work.

"The congregation is the school for educating and preparing men for any and all the work God has commanded to his church."—Gospel Advocate, May 31, 1906.

(And the Bible College, and her daughters, which David Lipscomb established has largely developed the one-man preacher-pastor system among those who have followed him. And the same colleges are gaining more and more authority over the churches, and leading them astray.—D. A. S.)

GOD'S PLAN OF CONQUERING AMERICA AND THE WORLD

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.)

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15, 16.)

"The disciples went everywhere preaching the word." (Act 8:4.)

"And ye fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 5:1.)

"The things which thou (Timothy—ALL preachers) has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2:2.)

