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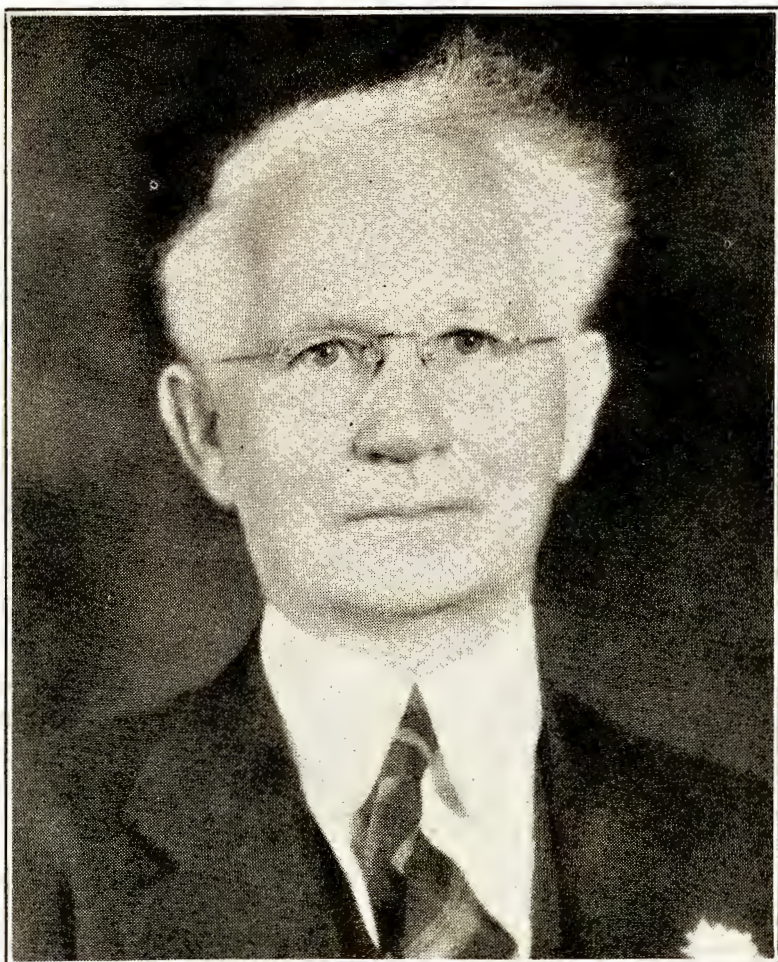
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THE CHURCH AND A FACTION

A self-confessed faction in the Church of Christ of McAlester, Oklahoma, seized the church property. A suit was filed, and heard before Hon. Judge R. W. Higgins in McAlester, Oklahoma, District 15. In the following pages will be found some of the interesting developments in the trial of the case, with some additional matter.



B. M. STROTHER, *Publisher*
McAlester, Oklahoma



C. R. NICHOL

Before our Civil Court in defence of the church of Christ, and against the "majority rule" program in some places.

Note: The following is the transcript as furnished by the stenographer. Footnotes which appear are corrections of the transcript made by C. R. Nichol

C. R. NICHOL, being first duly sworn upon his oath that the testimony he will give in this cause will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, deposeeth and saith:

DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. WELCH:

- Q. Your name is C. R. Nichol?
 A. Right.
 Q. Where do you live?
 A. Seminole, Oklahoma.
 Q. How old are you?
 A. Sixty-one.
 Q. Of what church are you a member?
 A. Church of Christ.
 Q. Are you a preacher of that church?
 A. I am.
 Q. Where were you born?
 A. Readyville, Tennessee.
 Q. How long have you been a preacher?
 A. Forty years.
 Q. Where have you preached for the church?
 A. Do you wish that I name the States, or places?
 Q. The States.
 A. Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Missouri, Alabama, Tennessee, Colorado, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, Canada, California, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, Kentucky and maybe some other states I have not mentioned.
 Q. How long have you been in the evangelistic work and pastorate work of the church?
 A. For thirty-five years in the evangelistic work.
 Q. Will you mention some of the congregations which you have served as pastor?
 A. Clifton, Texas, and Seminole, Oklahoma.
 Q. Does the church of Christ maintain schools?
 A. As a church, no.
 Q. Well, are there schools in which the doctrine and faith of the church of Christ are taught?
 A. There are schools conducted by members of the church.
 Q. Now, have you attended any of those schools?
 A. Yes, sir.
 Q. Which of them?
 A. Nashville Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee. It is now known as the David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tennessee.
 Q. Have you served in any of the schools in any capacity?
 A. I taught Bible courses in the Abilene Christian College a winter; and I served as president of the Thorps Springs Christian College at Thorps Springs, Texas.
 Q. And any other connection with any of those schools?
 A. I served as one of the regents of the school in Thorps Spring and I was elected President of that school. I delivered a number of lectures in the Abilene Christian College as long as I was there; and was elected to teach a special course in the Harding College, a senior Christian College, at Searcy, Arkansas, during the month of January, 1938, to teach a course in that school in 1938. I might say that the connection I would have with that school at present would be that I am elected to teach that course.

Q. Now, Brother Nichol, are there any publications that are maintained by members of the church of Christ which are devoted to the teachings and doctrine of the church?

A. I may answer, yes, sir.

Q. How many are there?

A. I *couldn't name the number.

Q. Will you name some of the outstanding ones?

A. Those I regard as outstanding by reason of editorship and circulation would be the "Firm Foundation," Austin, Texas; and the "Gospel Advocate," Nashville, Tennessee.

Q. Have you ever had any connection with either of the two publications?

A. I served as "First page Editor" of the Firm Foundation for several years; and I am now on the staff of the Gospel Advocate, of Nashville, and have been for several years.

Q. Have you written articles for the two publications?

A. I wrote the first page of the Firm Foundation for several years, and I am one of the staff editors and write regularly or constantly for the Gospel Advocate now.

Q. Now, are there a number of publications written by folk, I will say written by outstanding preachers and scholars, who are members of the church of Christ and devoting themselves to the doctrine of that church?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you read substantially all of those?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, Brother Nichol, from your observation and your study and your experience, do you know the doctrine, the customs, the teaching and practice, of the church of Christ with respect to the question of who has the authority in a particular congregation?

A. I do.

Q. Who has that authority with respect to recommending the program and policy of a particular congregation?

A. The elders.

Q. Now, with respect to the physical property in common, its buildings and other physical equipment, tell the court who has the authority and the right to the possession, custody and control of that property?

A. Your Honor, the elders.

Q. Now, assume a situation where the elders are asserting their right to control and regulate the property, and to regulate the programs and policies of a congregation, and a substantial body of the membership of that congregation assume a contrary attitude about a matter, and undertake to dispose of the question, where would you say the authority would rest under such circumstances?

A. With the elders.

Q. With the elders?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, under the doctrine and teachings of the church of Christ, Brother Nichol, does there rest in a congregation any authority to remove, or oust the elders?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Under what circumstances?

A. When the elders of a congregation, or an elder becomes corrupt, charges against them may be preferred as against any other member, the exception being, only, a charge against an elder must be made by

at least two witnesses, and against the ordinary member, (if I may use that term for differentiating,) a charge by one is sufficient.

Q. Now, under such a circumstance where charges of corruption were preferred against an elder of a congregation who would have authority to try and determine the truth or falsity of the charges.

A. The elders.

Q. The remaining elders of the congregation?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Then would the congregation as such, the individual membership, have any authority at that point?

A. No.

Q. Is the church of Christ a church of majority rule?

A. No sir.

Q. Under the doctrine and teachings of the church of Christ does there rest in the congregation the right to vote on and determine any matters of policy?

A. No.

Q. Now, Broher Nichol, assuming that there are three elders of a particular congregation; that by public announcement on Sunday in that congregation two of the elders announce the withdrawal or separation from the third elder and some certain other members of the congregation; assume that thereafter there is a written statement served on the two elders signed by a large number of the membership of the congregation advising those two elders that the congregation feels that by their actions these two elders have simply withdrawn themselves from the congregation and further advising and notifying those two elders that on the following Sunday those whose names are signed to this paper will propose to carry on a program of work and service in that church building. Assume that thereafter and on the third Sunday thereafter, in spite of the fact that the elders have not authorized it, certain members, included among those being some of those who have been withdrawn from, attempt to organize and hold Sunday School classes without the authority or permission of the elders, under those circumstances where would the authority, according to the doctrine and teachings of the church of Christ, rest to determine whether such Sunday School classes would be held or not?

A. With the elders.

Q. Now, under that assumed state of facts, where would the authority rest to determine whether or not those persons who had been withdrawn from would have the right to continue to attempt the holding of Sunday School classes in that church building?

A. With the elders.

Q. Now, will you state the doctrine, teaching and practice of the church of Christ with respect to the physical property, the buildings, the money, and the seats in the church house and other physical equipment as a church of Christ might own, according to the doctrine, practice and teachings of the church of Christ?

A. Your Honor, Judge, shall I simply give a statement or shall I offer the grounds upon which that doctrine is based?

THE COURT: Which ever way suits you.

A. Thank you. The church of Christ makes the claim to be governed by the scriptures. Such being the case the New Testament authorizes that the elders may be in charge of the finances of the church. That includes all property, anything representing value, in our common parlance. We base this upon a proper examination and understanding of the scriptures. In 1 Peter, 5:1 Peter asserts, I am an elder, a fellow

elder, writing to the Brethren. In the 4th chapter of Acts, verses 27 and 28, and in the 5th chapter of Acts, verses 1 and 2, we find this precedent or example: Ananias sold property that he owned and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Peter was on that occasion present. In the 11th chapter of Acts verses 27, 28 and 29. In the preceding part of that chapter you will find the history of there being a severe drouth or famine throughout Palestine, especially in Judea which is a province of Palestine. The church at Antioch made contributions of their money to relieve the poor, feed the poor who were in distress in Judea, and they sent this money to the elders of the church *at Judea. They had the distribution of that money. So far as the Lord reveals to us, Your Honor, we do not find where the church in the first century owned property in the sense that we today speak of owning property. We do find where they used †some rented building, at least one time. In the 20th chapter of Acts. I say "rented," maybe that is a presumption, but in the 20th chapter of Acts we find where the disciples met in an upper room, and the apostle, Paul, preached to them. I am presuming that they paid rent on that building. I could not prove that, Your Honor. **These examples of money being placed in the hands of the elders** are the precedent and foundation for the doctrine that **the elders have charge of the material things as well as the spiritual things**, and affairs of the church of God. They do not have to do all of that work personally; they may call to their aid a minister to assist them in teaching the work. "Feed" we interpret to mean, instruct the ‡affairs and advise them, teach them. They may call to their §work a minister to assist them in their work of teaching the congregation over which,—“feed the church of God,”—over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers. The overseers are the elders and they teach them and direct them; and they may call to their aid some man to assist in the work of teaching; so, likewise, they may appoint a committee, or name a man to administer upon all temporal affairs of the church. If someone needs assistance they may delegate a woman to go to that sick persons and take a nurse or assist in any way they can. Anything of a secular nature, they may delegate that to some other person; but it is under their supervision. And what we sometimes call the Sunday-school work is under the supervision of the elders. All of the work of the church, in a material way, as well as a spiritual way, is under their supervision. They are to have the say in the church.

Q. Is there a scripture that refers to the word "care"?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Mention that.

A. Ist Timothy, 1st chapter, is on the charge and care of the church, the overseers of the church. In II Hebrews, verses 17 and 18, (13. Heb. 17-18) the apostle, Paul, said to the Brethren that they are to have due regard for the elders which have the rule over you and watch for *your souls*; and they must give an account to the Lord Jesus;—they have the rule over you, the elders of the church. In the church of Christ they are the mature men and women, they are the elderly men and women, and not children. The Lord recognized the fact that every body must have someone to govern. We recognize that fact in our country. We recognize the fact that every body must have that, and the Lord knew it. Of course the immature minds are not prepared to take the oversight of the congregation. To that end God said there were certain qualifications that men must possess in order to be elders of the church

*IN Judea. †A rented building. ‡Instructed IN the affairs. §Call to their AID.

of God. He mentions those qualifications. *It cannot be met by the novice or young convert in the church. The ministerial affairs are placed in the hands of these mature men.

We sometimes think in terms of democracy. We do not call it a democratic form of government in the broad sense of that term, but in our own wonderful land we lay down certain qualifications, — every citizen of the country cannot vote, certain qualifications must be possessed, a certain age must be attained before you can vote, and so forth. We try to safeguard our government by declaring that only a certain character of people with certain qualifications can have a vote in the affairs of our country. God also recognized that fact and says that in the administration of my organization, the church elders, the elderly men with certain qualifications, must have the oversight, they are to rule over you. †It is what we sometimes call resident authority, and delegated authority, and when we delegate authority to a man it is no longer in our hands. An illustration: there has been given to Your Honor delegated authority. You possess some resident authority too, but your position now is delegated authority and when as a Judge you hand down your decision, the people you tell to do things know that you have authority and realize they cannot rebel against it, and set it aside, that is, authority vested in you. There may be some higher appeal to which they may go and get your judgment set aside, but the people as such, cannot do it, and in the church of God, the elders, God says, are the rulers.

Q. Now, right at that point, is there a proper injunction in the scripture to the members of the congregation to obey the elders?

A. Yes, sir, 11 Hebrews. Shall I read the verse?

THE COURT: Just as you like.

MR. DABNEY: Yes, sir. I would like to hear it.

A. I will be glad to. I think I said "11 Hebrews," but it is "13 Hebrews." "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief."

Q. Is there anything else now that you think of?

A. I do not think of anything further that I need to say.

Q. I will just ask you this one specific question: Assuming that there is a controversy in a particular congregation with the elders asserting that the worship of that congregation should be carried on in a certain way and by certain methods, and with, we will say, a substantial portion of the membership attempting to do a contrary way, then, under those circumstances, under the doctrine and teachings of the church of Christ, which of those two groups would be entitled to the possession and custody of the physical property, the buildings and so forth; that is, the elders or that substantial portion of the membership of the congregation?

A. When such condition asserts itself, there being a faction, the scriptures are very specific governing that point. In the third chapter of Titus and the 10th verse, "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse;" or reject,—The property is in the hands of the elders; if they function as they should after having admonished them, the factious, and they refuse to be in obedience to the elders they peremptorily withdraw fellowship from them.

Q. Under the circumstances then which I outlined to you, who would be entitled to the possession and physical control of the property?

A. The elders.

*THEY cannot. †OUR GOVERNMENT. ‡THERE is what we call
*11TH OF Hebrews. †13TH OF Hebrews.

CROSS EXAMINATION BY MR. DABNEY

Q. Now, Brother Nichol, you have given a dissertation of the offices and functions of the elders, I will ask you if the staff in the New Testament and church includes deacons and what is a deacon?

A. A deacon, well — which question do you want me to answer first?

Q. I want you to define a deacon?

A. A deacon is a servant.

Q. And I may ask if an elder isn't a servant?

A. He is.

Q. Of whom?

A. A servant of the Lord and of the church.

Q. Then, Peter was very pointed when he told the elders not to lord it over the congregation, wasn't he?

A. Well, his expression was not that, Your Honor.

Q. You say it is not in there?

A. No, what you said *isn't.

Q. I am asking you that question if he didn't say it, he was very pointed wasn't he, just answer it?

THE COURT: You are asking a question upon a presumption he says don't exist.

Q. Well, let us read then. In 1st Peter, 5th chapter, "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 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: 3 Neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock." Tell the court what that means.

A. What?

Q. Just what I have asked you.

A. What did you ask me?

Q. All right, I will ask you what it means to be an ensample to the flock, and what did the Apostle mean when he used that statement, "neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock." Explain that passage to the court.

A. I will be glad to, Your Honor, at least to give my conception of it. The flock that reference is made to is the church. By an "ensample" there then we would say in common English exemplary life; the proper kind of life in your business dealings, your devotion to God; live, in one broad term, the Christian life. Not "lording" it over God's heritage—or by a high handed disregard for the authority in you vested as elders of God.

Q. Abuse of authority?

A. Yes, sir, an abuse of authority, you are not to do this; take the oversight not for filthy lucre, money. "Filthy lucre" is ill gotten gain; it is not compensation that is rightfully earned but compensation that is not rightfully earned; not just money as such. But you are not to take the oversight of the church of God because you are paid for it, but because of the love for Jehovah and his work. Another question?

Q. Yes, sir. Can you give some examples wherein an elder may lord it over the charge allotted to him?

A. Yes sir I could give examples; or give it in common parlance, I can give an example—

Q. All right, go on.

A. When an elder; if he should thrust on the congregation something not scriptural, and demand that they submit to it; a thing he has no authority to demand; that would be lording it over the heritage of God.

*IS NOT.

Q. I will now give you an example—

A. No hypothetical one. I would like to have a concrete one. Par-don me, Judge.

Q. Well, I will give you one concrete now, truly concrete, taking one at a time. Suppose there are three elders in a congregation and some question arose whereby two of the elders conceived the idea that the third elder had acted in some unscriptural manner or way; and that the two elders in conjunction prepared a resolution of withdrawal or in their own way withdrew from this other elder and that one of the two stood before the congregation of worshippers and read the resolution of withdrawal and it thereafter became known to this elder that read the resolution or judgment or consideration of withdrawal that the entire assembly opposed what was done, I will ask you then, when that was made known to the elder that withdrew and the entire congregation petitioned that elder in anticipation of withdrawing, Brother Nichol, that they didn't want it done, suppose the elder proceeded to withdraw anyway; is he lording it over God's heritage?

A. He is not if the withdrawal —

Q. I am asking you to tell the court.

A. You were talking, when I stopped talking, to the other man.

Q. My attention was called to another thing.

A. The action of the elders in withdrawing from the man you have asked an expression of opinion, is under the authority of Jehovah God. The withdrawal is because of some dereliction on the part of that man. You don't give what it is, or, if there was any dereliction, you *didn't say. But, if there is a dereliction, or some cause, it is not a question of the church of Christ, Your Honor, for it to vote on whether we will do what God says to do. Here is a law of Jehovah. It is not submitted to the mature members, or one member, to vote on whether we will do what God Almighty says do. Here is God's law; if it is a guilty man, God says withdraw; and if the entire congregation rebels against that action, they rebel against the authority of what God says do. The duty of the elders in the premise would be to teach the congregation, as such, that they are rebelling against God's authority. If they refuse to right themselves, withdraw from them as a faction in the church of God.

Q. And you say with that hypothetical proposition before you that it was the duty of the elders to do what they did do, is that right?

A. That is what I said.

Q. In withdrawing from a fellow elder?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. All right, suppose, — I will go further, suppose the congregation for whom the entire eldership serves should make an open request to the elders, that they demand, or would like a hearing on the charges against the third elder, in that instance what should he elders do?

A. If the guilt of the man withdrawn from—the elder withdrawn from—in your question you do not say, of course, not desiring to quote me, that the charge against the elder must be made by at least two, —please remember that.

Q. I haven't disputed that with you.

A. Well, I had cited it, but you left it out of your question.

Q. Well, we will supply it.

A. All right, then when the elder withdrawn from or the congregation should ask that "we be allowed to review this case," they are rebelling against a constituted authority; just as when the Judge hands down a decision and the people would say, "We demand a rehearing of this thing."

*DID NOT

Q. Then you say the congregation as a whole are rebellious against the authority of the elders, is that it?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You do?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. All right, who elected the elder?

A. He wasn't elected that I know anything about.

Q. Who selected him?

A. The congregation.

Q. Is the power of the servant higher than the master? Answer that question.

A. I don't think I can answer that, "Yes" or "No."

Q. I asked you to answer that question, is the servant—

A. (Interrupting) I will answer the question if he will put it in more concrete form.

Q. Is a servant of a congregation higher and greater than those he serves?

THE COURT: You may answer that in your own way.

WITNESS: Thank you.

A. When you delegate to any man authority, he possesses that delegated authority. An example of that, please Your Honor, there has been delegated to the Judge before whom I am sitting delegated authority; and possessing that delegated authority, you are above, and you can command that I do certain things under your jurisdiction, and, in that sense you are above me. As men we are all equal. *In the church of God. There is a party delegated, a certain class of men, ruler over the congregation, they at least are in subjection to it. For instance, in the church in Seminole where I reside there are boys and girls in that congregation, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen years old on up. God Almighty knew that immature children like that are not prepared to cast a vote on and have a voice in the administration of the affairs of the church, hence, there is no such thing in the church of God as popular vote in which a child twelve years old has a vote that carries as big weight as mine, although I am sixty-one years old. The popular vote in the church carries that with it, and twenty-five children in a church, all under eighteen, could out-vote seventeen mature men the age of Your Honor, if it were settled by a church vote. God said, certain men who are elders, will rule over you.

Q. Did you help write a book called "Sound Doctrine?"

Q. Turn to Volume 3, if you have it, on page 105, if you have a copy, let us read:

"DEPOSING ELDERS. A man who possesses the qualifications and has been selected by the congregation so long as he possesses the qualifications, — "

That is correct, isn't it?

A. Please finish the sentence, will you?

Q. — "or till he moves away."

A. All right.

Q. All right, so long as he possesses the qualifications is one condition though, isn't it?

A. It is to me.

Q. Or until he moves away, is another condition, isn't it?

A. That is right.

Q. He may not move away and yet fail to possess the qualifications, isn't that true?

A. Surely.

*In the church of God we are equal; but there is delegated to a certain class of men authority to rule over the congregation, and it is, at least, supposed to be in subjection to them.

Q. All right, now you turned to the court here and you said to the court that, "you can exercise judgment, you can decree certain things," you said that didn't you to the court, the Judge, just now, that is tantamount of good faith?

A. Certainly, yes, sir.

Q. Please answer, don't get excited.

A. I thought you knew it. I don't have to repeat a thing twice to make it so.

Q. All right, who carries out the judgment of the court? Will you answer that?

A. Who ever he delegates or who ever has the delegated authority or power. It is an executive power of the court.

Q. Judicial power of the court?

A. Yes, sir, and executive power.

Q. Suppose the court decrees that some man should be excluded from the court room by reason of his conduct, who does the court call on to do it?

A. The duly constituted officer.

Q. Suppose that an elder decides that someone in an assembly, religious assembly has done something whereby he should be withdrawn from, who withdraws from him?

A. The eldership of the church.

Q. It does?

A. Yes sir, acting for the church.

Q. What does Thessalonians, the letter to the Thessalonians say about that?

A. What verse and chapter are you talking about?

Q. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, I refer to the 3rd chapter of Thessalonians, 6th verse:

"Now we command you, brethern, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;" Who did he instruct in that letter to withdraw from them that walk disorderly?

A. He instructed the church to do it. The church does that, Your Honor, just as our government does things through you, as the State is doing things through you, as its representative, so we acquiesce, and we do that as we do things as a nation through our ambassador in England and France, and the elders have the rule, acquiesced in their actions by the entire congregation themselves. Thank you.

Q. Who did he have reference to in the Corinthian letter, "But if any hath caused sorrow,"

A. What are you reading now?

Q. 2nd Corinthians, 2, beginning at verse 5:

"But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many;"

What does he mean by that?

A. He meant just what it said. Does the court wish that I give an exegesis of that, the setting of that case he has read, the part of the setting of that case?

THE COURT: Just answer it like you wish.

WITNESS: Thank you, sir.

A. In 1st. Corinthians there was an incestious man in the congregation, a man guilty of having his father's wife. Reading the 5th chapter of 1st Corinthians, instructions are given to that church to withdraw fellowship from him, turn him over to Satan.

Q. But the instruction says, by Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus,

to accept him, also, taken from the 2nd letter, Paul says to restore that man if he is penitent and if the punishments has been sufficient, restore him, "Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was administered by the many;" Why by the many?

A. Because, withdrawing fellowship from him there, just after we withdraw from him, as in 1st Cor. 5, following the instruction on that man, you are not to eat with him or even entertain that man in your home, don't eat in your private home with that character, much less in the church, you are to taboo that man, sever company with that man.

Q. And then following that instruction, afterwards the man became penitent and turned from his sin and Paul says, men, restore him, lest he be swallowed up in his overmuch sorrow, so, the instruction on that man is receive him back in your fellowship. Now, I direct your attention to Volume 3 of Sound Doctrine, page 105, under the subject of Deposing Elders, where we left off was, do you see that? "Let it be remembered that elders are human, and though they make mistakes as well as all humans do, it is better to assist them in overcoming such mistakes, knowing that 'they watch for your souls,' than to organize a mob, attempt to depose them, or demand their resignation. Let it be remembered that if in your congregation there is an elder—a man possessing the qualifications, whom you have selected," who is it talking about, "whom you have selected as one of the overseers of the congregation,"—what do you mean by saying "whom you have selected as one of the overseers of the congregation?"

A. Just what I said and explained to the Judge awhile ago; and I thought that counsel got it, knowing that we elected you. You see, the Oklahoma people elected you, but children ten years old didn't elect you, but we did, the State of Oklahoma elected you, but children ten years old could not; and I tried to bring it out. In God's arrangement immature children do not cast votes, and have no voice in the selection of such things.

Q. Our minors don't cast votes either in this country, do they, either?

A. I thought a ten years old child was a minor.

Q. I am asking you that question, do we let the ten years old child vote in our country? You are saying children in the church don't cast votes and giving that to the Judge, do minors in this country cast votes? Answer it?

MR. W. J. HORTON: He has already answered it.

MR. DABNEY: Answer it again.

THE COURT: He says they don't.

Q. We will assume then what he said then, it was that the congregation, as you said down here, selected the elders, did you not, you said that didn't you? Isn't that what you said?

A. Yes, sir, and my modification of the statement.

Q. Why didn't you modify the statement when you wrote the book?

A. My conception was, in the church of Christ with the ordinary members they understand that matter full well, ordinarily members understand that the ten and twelve years old children in he church of God cannot vote for the reason that there is not vote cast in the church of God, and the ordinary member understands that children, immature in judgment, are not prepared to give expressions as to what is the wise thing to do in the church, whether it is wise to build a brick meeting house or plank meeting house, whether it is wise to employ this man to help preach or another man, whether we will select John Davis in this congregation or Bill Perkins as an elder, for they are immature in judgment.

Q. I want to ask you a question, Mr. Nichols, if you didn't talk so much but get down to the question, —

A. Your Honor, I think he talks more than I do.

Q. "***whom you have selected as one of the overseers of the congregation—he is an elder made by the Holy Spirit, and for you," you are referring to the congregation, aren't you, "for you to seek to oust him is to antagonize the Holy Spirit. It is possible that he may appear to be guilty of things which disqualify him for the eldership, but even then he should be accorded a fair hearing." What did you put that, "but even then he should be accorded a fair hearing," in for?

A. Because I meant it.

Q. You meant a fair hearing before whom?

A. Before the one before whom he must answer, who has supervision and authority.

Q. Before whom must I appear to get a hearing?

A. Am I not accorded a fair hearing when I appear before the Judge in court?

Q. Yes sir, you are. All right, when you say this down here you mean the same ones that selected him, don't you?

A. That is right.

Q. That means the congregation?

A. Yes sir, go on.

Q. Don't it? You say the person, pronoun "you" refers to the same one here that first "whom you have selected" those two pronouns refer to that same people you are talking about, don't they? Don't it, just answer the question. I don't want to be smiled at all the time, Mr. Nichol, answer my question, please?

THE COURT: Mr. Dabney, the Court will ask you not to press questions that way. The court will see that the proper questions are answered. You may answer the question.

WITNESS: Thank you.

A. The question, it occurs to me, has been answered, but I will be glad to answer it again. The congregation of the church of Christ, children, many children are members of the congregation —

MR. DABNEY: May we object to that as not responsive to the question. It is a simple, plain, question and I think he can answer it.

THE COURT: Let us see what the question was. Ask it over again.

Q. I will ask this question: "he is an elder made by the Holy Spirit, and for you to seek to oust him is to antagonize the Holy Spirit. It is possible that he may appear to be guilty of things which disqualify him for the eldership, but even then he should be accorded a fair hearing," and I am asking Brother Nichol, now, to answer this question: What do you mean, what did you mean when you said he should be accorded a fair hearing, first Brother Nichol, before whom did you have reference to that this fair hearing should be had? That is right to the point.

A. Your Honor, a fair hearing is an impartial hearing, a full hearing, a hearing in which the evidence, pro and con if there be pro and con evidence, is presented. I wonder if that is sufficient on that point.

Q. Before whom?

A. Before the constituted authorities in God's word to such matters, just as clear as a fair hearing before the court, and the elders are the ones before whom, — the statement as read, they who are "made by the Holy Spirit," the elders are made by the Holy Spirit, and in defense of that statement, Acts. 20; 28, "feed the church of God, over which the Holy Spirit had made you overseers," that is the basis for that statement. Thank you.

THE COURT: Your contention is that when they come to the spiritual court and spiritual affairs of your church that the elders is the court?

WITNESS: Yes sir, they are the rulers, according to Acts or Hebrews 13; 7, and the exhortation is to submit to those who have rule over you, that is the eldership.

THE COURT: And as to procedure of hearing complaints that is at the discretion of the elders?

WITNESS: Yes sir.

THE COURT: That is if it is a case that needs no evidence to explain itself, they can act?

WITNESS: Yes sir, without any evidence whatever. If there is a question as to the guilt, of course they make those investigations until they are fully satisfied the man is guilty. Then when the guilt is established it is not a question then to be voted upon, but do what the Lord says they must, execute that law.

THE COURT: That is, the elders' minds, they must be satisfied?

WITNESS: Yes sir, that is the interpretation.

THE COURT: And not the congregation that passes on that matter, but the elders' minds, they largely are the ones to pass on that?

WITNESS: Yes sir.

THE COURT: And when the mind is once satisfied of such guilt as he may then possess then he is authorized to act?

WITNESS: Yes sir, I think so.

CROSS EXAMINATION CONTINUED BY MR. DABNEY:

MR. DABNEY: That the record may be made to speak about this, I want to read the rest of this paragraph: "For some one to form a dislike for the elders, and make a motion to depose them, and attempt to carry such by a popular vote, without the elders having been given a fair trial, is nothing short of mob spirit."

Q. Now, Brother Nichol, did you write that paragraph in Sound Doctrine, Volume 3, page 105 under the head of Deposing Elders, and which I correctly read, did you write it and which I correctly read and you followed me, are you satisfied I read that correctly, you followed me, didn't you?

A. Yes sir.

Q. I want that in the record. Now then I call your attention to the same volume, page 117, "Leaders in Withdrawal." Please follow me as I read:

"The elders who are appointed overseers in the church are by that appointment the responsible leaders in all such matters. They should carefully and prayerfully investigate any case brought to their attention, and if a public offense, bring the results of their investigation before the church, making known the facts of the person's guilt or innocence, giving the evidence upon which they base their conclusions."

What do you mean there, Brother Nichol, when you said there, to bring the matter before the church and hear evidence?

A. I submit he *isn't correctly stating it.

Q. Well, "give evidence," giving evidence, "making known the facts of the person's guilt or innocence, giving the evidence upon which they base their conclusions." All right, what do you mean by that?

A. Your Honor, I meant just exactly what I said. Need I comment upon it? The charge is made against some man who is a member that on a certain occasion he was drunk on the streets. Then the elders should make investigation of that matter. They should not on some hearsay, mere hearsay, withdraw; hence they should carefully and prayerfully make investigation; but when knowing one of the members on a certain occasion was drunk on the streets, if he refuses after being admonished to right that offense, to hear, is not penitent in his heart for that act, the evidence is made known and there is no course to follow but to withdraw and the elders may do that. I thank you.

Q. Now, I ask you this, you gave as an illustration, drunkenness. Suppose that the charge against the elder may be something other than drunkenness, some charge by someone that he has been guilty of something else, not mentioning it, drunkenness is a simple thing, all right, suppose, Brother Nichol, that the elder says "I am not guilty," and the other two elders — let it be elder or member, — "I am not guilty, somebody has misunderstood my actions and somebody has misquoted me. I would like to have a fair hearing and let me bring up my witnesses and you bring up any witnesses as you have heard of and let us go into this matter fairly and let me have an opportunity of making my defense," I want to ask would you do it?

A. Before whom, — pardon me?

Q. Before the three elders, Bless your Soul, first just answer it.

A. Now, state your question again, I thought he meant the church. (Question read by reporter.)

A. All right. The guilt of the derelict must be established in the minds of the elders, that guilt established was upon evidence that they impartially and fairly heard. When that is found and declared that is the end of it. It occurred to me and does now that counsel fully understands that the criminal is convicted.

MR. COUNTS: I am going to object to that portion of the answer not responsive to the question.

MR. DABNEY: None of it has been, it hasn't been all morning.

THE COURT: In these matters the court is a little more liberal than in the ordinary case —

MR. DABNEY: All right —

THE COURT: Let the court get through. In these matters the court possibly should be rather liberal. I am trying a church matter, and it is a different thing to the ordinary lawsuit. Ordinarily, Mr. Dabney, we sustain and overrule objections right along, but in this matter I am not doing so.

All right, Brother, you may go on.

MR. DABNEY: Proceed.

A. I thought I had finished.

Q. You believe, do you not, Brother Nichol, that any person, member or elder in a congregation should be accorded the right of self-defense, don't you?

MR. WELCH: Objected to as incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial as to what he individually might believe, —

Q. I will ask you this, —

MR. WELCH: But he may say what the doctrine of the church is.

THE COURT: Yes, I think so.

Q. I will present the question differently, I will ask you if it is not the teachings and practice and custom and doctrine of the church, all over the country, to accord to every member, officer or otherwise, of any

congregation, the right of self-defense in a hearing or investigation of a charge against him? Answer that question.

A. It is not mandatory, nor is it the practice of the church of Christ to accord to any man, necessarily, what you say. He may be withdrawn from, and is often withdrawn from, without even being advised the act was going to take place of being withdrawn from, and maybe not even notified for weeks he was withdrawn from. For instance a man who commits an unmentionable crime, he is in the hands of the law, he is sent to the penitentiary. We don't serve any notice on that man, ask him to come to trial on the accusations against him, guilt is established and withdrawn preemptorily from that person without any kind of trial.

THE COURT: Your contention is his right to appear before the elders is merely a matter of grace?

WITNESS: Yes sir, that is all, purely a matter of grace.

THE COURT: In your church now, the church of Christ don't have the ordinary church trials we sometimes see in other churches?

WITNESS: No, sir, — no, sir.

THE COURT: Where they meet publicly and hear the witnesses publicly and make a record of it, what is said, and so forth?

WITNESS: No.

THE COURT: That is conducted by the elders?

WITNESS: Yes sir, conducted by the elders, the investigation is made by the elders.

CROSS EXAMINATION CONTINUED BY MR. DABNEY:

Q. I want to ask you, Brother Nichol, is a body of elders made up of infallible men?

A. No.

Q. Are they made up of infallible men?

MR. WELCH: He answered it, no.

MR. DABNEY: Well the court was busy, I don't believe he heard.

Q. Now in the event that those who are hearing the case desire they then may after hearing the evidence just withdraw from this other person without ever telling him about it or letting him be heard, is that your conclusion of the matter?

A. Your Honor, I so stated and gave an example of a man in the penitentiary, they don't even notify the person withdrawn from. I thought counsel heard it.

Q. Brother Nichol, I am talking about spiritual men and not murderers. Why do you give the example of a murderer.

A. Your Honor, sometimes men in the church commit murder, I thought counsel knew it.

Q. I admit it but thanks be to the Grace of God but few do it and my mind don't run along that line. I am talking about the people who worship daily in the church, what do you say about it?

MR. WELCH: I object to that.

THE COURT: I believe it has drifted onto a line where I will have to sustain the objection.

MR. DABNEY: I cannot help being thankful my mind don't run on murder.

MR. WELCH: I move that remark be stricken out of the record, I think it is a reflection and I resent it.

THE COURT: Let the court speak —

MR. DABNEY: He should not have answered murderers, I am not talking about things like that, I am talking about the daily worshiper, not forgetting that the man

of God may go along and stumble, what are you going to do with that?

THE COURT: The gentleman on the stand gave that as an example to show what, and state the elders don't have to give a man a hearing.

Q. Let us read further.

A. What page, please?

Q. 117, I am not off that page yet "If the accused is found guilty, and will not repent, they should announce that they have exhausted their power to reclaim him, and failed." That who should announce?

A. The elders.

Q. Who are they going to announce to?

A. To the congregation.

Q. What should they announce?

A. The guilt of the man and withdrawal from him.

Q. All right, you said other things here, "they should announce that they have exhausted, ***" that is going the full limit of that power isn't it? "***their powers to reclaim him," reclaim him, bring him back into the fold, isn't that what that means?

A. Turning from his sin.

Q. Yes sir, that that eldership body has failed is what you mean?

A. That is what it says.

Q. "As the object is the salvation of the erring, ***" You believe that, don't you, just like you wrote it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. "***if there are those in the congregation who feel that they may be able to lead the brother to repentance they should be importuned to make the effort." Who is going to importune those likely members in the congregation to redeem that wayward man?

A. Anyone may.

Q. How about the elders trying it?

A. They may, but no undue time should be consumed by such a ceremony.

Q. The results of their efforts should be made known to whom?

A. The congregation.

Q. What has the congregation to do with it when all of the power is vested in the elders?

A. The congregation is commanded to obey the rule of the elders. Hence they must acquiesce in the action of the elders.

Q. Suppose a congregation says "I don't believe you did the right thing about it?"

A. They are in rebellion to the elders and are refusing to submit to the ones ruling over them.

Q. There is an old story in the Bible of the blind leading the blind. Supposing the elders themselves were the blind, what are you going to do, act through a blind man? The congregation are not blind and can see wide, but suppose the act of the elders is that of the blind, very briefly how would you answer that?

THE COURT: It seems like we are getting away from the spiritual matter now. Those things exist in a church and may exist in a court.

Q. Let me read further —

THE COURT: But when they exist it is just too bad for the court or church.

Q. "The results of their efforts should be made known before the final action of withdrawal." Now, then, the meaning of that, the elders should make it fully known to the congregation that they have exhausted their means in trying to redeem the wayward man and the elders have been unable to redeem him, and all of that should be referred to the

congregation before the announcement of withdrawal or action of withdrawal should take place, is that what you said?

A. That is what I said.

Q. "When final action is taken the entire congregation should concur in the matter." That is what you said?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, I will ask you if I have read correctly, for the benefit of the record, on page 117, under the head of "Leaders in Withdrawal." Have I read that correctly?

A. You read verbatim et literatim, but not et punctatim

Q. I have read, not the diacritical markings?

A. No, I didn't mention diacritical markings. There are none there.

Q. I did read word for word what you said?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you wrote it?

A. Yes, sir.

RE-DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. WELCH:

Q. Just one question. Assuming a situation like counsel talked to you about, where the elders have taken an action and a large group of the congregation just state their honest belief that the elders have done the wrong thing, and that situation reaches the point that the body or congregation one Sunday just come up and worship, where the elders are doing the thing they think wrong, isn't it the doctrine of the church of Christ that it is the duty of the members to go away rather than to attempt to take the property away from the constituted authorities?

A. I will have to talk a little to answer that. Under the conditions named it is the duty of the elders to withdraw fellowship from that number of people creating themselves into a faction. When they become factious it is the duty of the elders to withdraw and they no longer are a part of the congregation.

THE COURT: Gentlemen, I believe the court has the idea the Reverend has as to the matter of eldership as he interprets it, sees it from the Holy Writ and as he states it, his church acts—that is, they are powerless without the elders, the church is a church of elders and their power, they have all the spiritual power over the church, and if they make a mistake there is no way to correct the error, no power above, just as though the Supreme Court, our Supreme Court would finally speak, even though in error there is no way to correct it. It is the duty of the members to acquiesce in that holding and that the laws or rules and usages of the Church, the Holy Writ, as the church of Christ understands it, requires that the gentleman has given us on the stand, and naturally the usage and doctrine of the church is based on the Bible as they see it.

Q. Perhaps I haven't made this clear. You have heard the statement made by the court. Now, what do you say to that same authority with reference to the temporal affairs of the congregation, its property?

A. I attempted to bring out —

MR. COUNTS: He stated that the church had the property of the church.

A. — That the elders do.

Q. The elders have the authority?

A. The elders have the authority over the property of the church under the usages and practice of the church as authorized by the scriptures.

THE COURT: Of course, there is another question the court has to meet further on in trying this lawsuit, if it is tried according to the laws of the State of Oklahoma, and I will hear from the attorneys on that.

WITNESS EXCUSED.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA,
PITTSBURG COUNTY—ss.

I, Lennie Baker, hereby certify that I am the duly appointed and qualified court reporter within and for the Fifteen Judicial District of the State of Oklahoma composed of Pittsburg and McIntosh counties; that the above and foregoing transcript in a true, correct, complete and full transcript of my shorthand notes of the testimony of C. R. Nichol taken at the trial in cause 15922, D. B. Killebrew, et al. vs. A. C. Grimes, et al. in the District Court of Pittsburg county, Oklahoma.

Witness my hand this 19th day of July, 1938.

LENNIE BAKER

Court Reporter.

LAW AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH VERSUS MAJORITY RULE AND CHAOS

By Foy E. Wallace Jr.

It is surprising how many members of the church think the church should be run like a political organization or a labor union.

In the Gospel Advocate of May 6, 1937, W. E. Brightwell gave a timely treatment of that form of anarchy known as the "sit-down strike." He used the rebellion in the church at McAlester, Oklahoma, as an example of the effect of such propaganda on the church. His drastic treatment of this vital subject, and his death dealing blows to the strike spirit in the church, the parent of which is the majority rule doctrine, deserves the widest currency possible, and is here copied in full:

A SHAMEFUL SITUATION

W. E. B.

If this piece had been headed, "A Church of Christ Goes on a Sit-Down Strike," it might have sounded like a sensational newspaper report, and some of the readers might have been instantly frozen into an attitude of incredulity. Check the following facts and see if that is not virtually what has happened:

During a few months of last year Foy E. Wallace, Jr., canceled some of his meetings and devoted considerable time to a special work at McAlester, Okla. The brethren had purchased an old theatre building, which had originally cost approximately \$125,000, and remodeled it for use as a down-town church home. It had all cost only about \$10,000, the most of the debt having been liquidated. Apparently there was a ripe opportunity for some good work. However, there had been trouble brewing in the congregation for many months. All had united in this effort, in which Brother Wallace assisted, but he gave up the attempt because these troubles prevented it from proving effective.

Both before and after Brother Wallace labored with the congregation, C. R. Nichol and R. L. Whiteside had been called to attempt to straighten out the tangles, but their efforts were fruitless. Last fall, a few weeks after Brother Wallace's work had ended, the trouble flared again. B. M. Strother and D. B. Kille-



Foy E. Wallace, *Evangelist*

Brother Wallace labored with the congregation in McAlester for a time before the division caused by the self-confessed faction took place. He offers some interesting and profitable observations, and scriptural arguments.

brew, who had long been elders of the congregation, and about fifty of the older and more conservative brethren withdrew fellowship from what they termed a faction. This faction numbered about one hundred members, and included A. C. Grimes, who had been appointed an elder a comparatively short time previously.

On the Sunday following the withdrawal, those withdrawn from went to the church building at about seven o'clock in the morning and occupied the building, holding it against Brethren Strother and Killebrew and their associates, so that they could not worship in the building that day. They also, with these good brethren locked out, effected a "reorganization," naming elders and deacons from their own number. They further changed the locks on the doors, and have been holding the property until the present time, a period of approximately six months.

The old church, led by Brethren Strother and Killebrew, sought a restraining order in court to regain possession of the building. The holders of the building answered in court, and in their original petition based their claims to the building upon "majority rule," but later they substituted another plea. The matter has been delayed in court, through technicalities of the law, during this period, and is still unsettled, with the old church barred from using it.

R. L. Whiteside has sought to bring about a reconciliation since the building became involved, but without avail.

All the well-known elements common to rebellion in the church—and rebellion has grown all too common—are present at McAlester. Some of these are: The members of the sit-down faction have sought to impeach the character of the godly men who through sense of duty took action against them. They have employed a preacher and have engaged in feverish activity, claiming great progress. Partisan strife seems to be a more effective incentive to action than love for God. Those who divide churches are not the ones who either build the house or the congregation.

The sit-down element has severely criticized these brethren for bringing court action, and have said that Brethren Strother, Killebrew, et al., should read 1 Cor. 6: 1. I say (not the brethren at McAlester) that all "sit-downers"—political, economic, or religious—should read Ex. 20: 15 and Eph. 4: 28!

A sit-down strike, regardless of who perpetrates it, or any circumstance connected with it, is highhanded robbery. It is not merely that in spirit, but in letter; not just tantamount to it, but technically and scientifically that! It cannot be tolerated in any realm without destroying all authority and encouraging a reign of terror. No Christian can, no Christian does, participate in any such tactics. Every "sit-downer" should be forced to spend two years in a penitentiary on a diet of bread and water. I have no sympathy for a sit-down striker, nor for anybody who does sympathize with him.

Ever since the plague broke out in America I have wanted to say these things, but there was no excuse to discuss them, for they were outside the realm of spiritual things proper to be discussed in a religious paper. But when people have anarchy in their hearts, it will manifest itself in every realm of activity—even in religion. The McAlester affair is a consummate disgrace upon the cause of Christ. It ought to be despised by every honest soul in the brotherhood. The spirit of the Christ that said, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes,

which I also hate," demands hate as well as love—they are merely the front and back sides of the same great sentiment—the most potent power of the human heart.

The "striking" brethren took exceptions to the foregoing article; raised a great protest, and through Brother D. W. Kelley, a newcomer whose membership was not with the congregation, undertook to offset the influence of the article by a attack on the elders,—on Brother B. M. Strother, in particular. Brother Kelley was given a hearing through the Gospel Advocate, June 3, 1937. (Brother Kelley united with the faction after his article appeared in the Gospel Advocate.) His article is quoted in full, as follows:

BROTHER KELLEY'S LETTER

Brethren:

McAlester, Okla.

Please permit me to say a few words relative to your article one page 426 Gospel Advocate, under date of May 6, 1937, and styled "A Shameful Situation."

First, I want to say that I am not formally identified with either group of these brethren because I feel that there is sin on both sides.

When I moved to McAlester in the early part of this year, I found a group meeting at the church building, another group meeting at the Legion Hall, and others meeting nowhere.

I immediately (with one other brother) began to try to bring about a reconciliation. Having had some experience as elder in two congregations in Western Oklahoma, and being in a position to contact each group, I tried to work carefully, but at the same time work to the best interest of the cause of Christ, by shielding no individual.

Our efforts were mainly to get all parties taking a leading part in both groups to come together in a meeting to discuss matters pertaining to the church difficulty, and try to settle them. All of the brethren meeting at the church building agreed to this, and some of them shed tears over the situation, and begged that they be shown by the Bible wherein they had done wrong, so that they could correct their errors.

Brother Killebrew agreed to this meeting, but Brother Strother refused it, and has therefore hindered the reuniting of the church at McAlester.

Because of my efforts to bring about reconciliation, I have most, if not all, of the facts pertaining to the situation here, and feel that the author of the article which you published was either badly misinformed on some facts, or deliberately misrepresenting the truth.

This article coming in the manner and at this time has done more to thwart our efforts and widen the breach now existing than anything that could have come along this line.

Your article states that about fifty of the older and more conservative brethren withdrew fellowship with Brethren Strother and Killebrew. Not so.

I have worshiped with these folk and fifty people cannot be found there, counting women and children.

Your article states that A. C. Grimes had been an elder a comparatively short time. I have been informed since reading your article that he had been an elder approximately five years.

Your article further states that the locks were changed on

the doors. The brethren firmly deny this charge, stating that the same locks are on the doors which were originally there.

I agree with you that there is a sit-down strike here, but it is with the followers of Brethren Strother and Killebrew, because they do nothing toward carrying on the Lord's work, except to meet for about one hour on Lord's day, and nothing more is done until the next Lord's day.

The brethren at the church building have both morning and evening worship on Lord's day, meeting for men on Monday evening, midweek meeting for the entire church on Wednesday evening, and ladies' Bible class on Thursday afternoon. They also assist in carrying on the work at several mission points on Sunday afternoon.

I, too, am opposed to "sit-down strikes" and agree that the situation here is a disgrace on "the cause of Christ," but I cannot permit this disgrace to become more so by permitting this article to go unchallenged, since Brethren Strother and Killebrew will do nothing to try to bring about peace.

I am not denying that C. R. Nichol, R. L. Whiteside, and possibly others have tried to bring about reconciliation in the past, but I do state that the recent efforts have been thwarted by brethren opposed to those now worshipping in the church building.

Let me state again that I am not now worshipping with either group of these brethren, because I cannot feel that it is the proper thing to do. (I go to a neighboring congregation to worship.)

My purpose in writing this article is to correct some mis-stated facts and to try to keep down further disgrace on the cause of Christ in McAlester, Okla.; so, in fairness to all individuals concerned, I insist that this be given space in your paper at just as early date as possible.

D. W. KELLEY.

Those of us who know Brother Strother's life and good works, as a man and an elder, felt that he and the cause he upholds should be defended against such attacks, and the following statement was drawn for publication:

CONCERNING THE McALESTER (OKLA.) AFFAIR

In the Gospel Advocate of May 6, W. E. Brightwell had an article entitled "A Shameful Situation" in which he administered a timely rebuke to the strike spirit which has torn asunder the church in McAlester, Okla., and has involved the church in a lawsuit. A certain brother who signs himself D. W. Kelley, an outsider, took it upon himself to deny the statements made in Brother Brightwell's article and to belie the sources of his information. Inasmuch as we have personal knowledge of affairs at McAlester, we feel that it is not only in interest of the cause locally, but also generally, that we say that the statements made by W. E. Brightwell were substantially correct, varying only (if at all) in minor details which do not affect the case as a whole. We wish to say further that we know D. B. Killebrew and B. M. Strother and know them to be godly men and efficient elders in the church, faithful to the Word of God in teaching and in example and that they have made a most commendable

and laudable effort at great personal sacrifice to preserve law and order in the church at McAlester where the strike spirit reigns. If Brethren Killebrew and Strother have erred, they did so in their efforts to preserve peace with the faction over too long a period of time. We wish further to state that we know personally that Brother Strother did meet repeatedly with the members of the rebellion and exhausted all efforts and patience to dissuade them in their course. When their efforts failed, as a last resort, the leaders of this rebellion were withdrawn from. We wish to say, therefore, that the statements of one D. W. Kelley represent a gross injustice to the elders of the church and are a denial and perversion of the facts in the case. We firmly believe that Brother B. M. Strother has done more for the church in McAlester than the whole faction have done. The Brother D. W. Kelley who comes to the aid of the faction, admitted his imperfect knowledge of conditions, having only recently moved into McAlester. The party spirit in him was breathed into his article and he failed to hide the fact that he is definitely lined up with the rebellion. As to the comparatively recent appointment of A. C. Grimes to the eldership it was and is evident to all who know the conditions that he was selected by the factious element and has been their leader in all their machinations to overthrow law and order in the church. He has in fact never been an elder of the church as a whole but only of a faction and factional part of it — that part now in rebellion against God's order. If such an element in the church can possess the property belonging to the church at their will, then no church has a warranty deed to any property. Having had opportunity to study and to know the conditions at McAlester, we believe the cause of truth will be served in publishing the statement that we regard those who have seized the property of the church, held in trust by the elders, as a most unscriptural and vicious faction and that their possession of the church's property is on par with that unlawful and unscriptural procedure which has always characterized digression in all of its forms. We make this statement in the love of the truth and in the defense of those godly elders whom these factionists seek to destroy, and also as a word of caution to gospel preachers everywhere who may have been beguiled by the propaganda which has been circulated by the leaders of this rebellion.

Signed Foy E. Wallace Jr., C. R. Nichol, R. L. Whiteside

When the devil possesses people to such an extent that they will start a sit-down strike in the church building at seven o'clock on Sunday morning and occupy the building through the day in order to keep the elders of the church out; exactly as the labor strikers have occupied certain industrial plants; rope off the pulpit and the space around the communion table as a "no trespass zone" in order to bar certain ones from leading the service; they should not feel libeled when charged with such a little thing, in comparison, as changing locks to the doors of a building they had already seized. Things as bad and worse were done. But if any statement of the case varies to the slightest degree or in some minor detail, it is played up as a **misrepresentation**, though it changes not the case as a whole. It would be difficult to misrepresent the spirit that has imbued the McAlester church strike unless it should be to call it Christian.

INVOKING THE LAW

As a shield to criminality these strikers seek refuge behind 1 Cor. 6, which they insist means that the elders should submit to this seizure of property and surrender their rights under the deed to these strikers without civil action to defend their title to the property held by them as trustees. If it violates 1 Cor. 6 for elders to petition the court for their legal rights under the deed, it is an equal violation of the passage for those who hold the property by seizure to answer to the petition. If it violates the passage for the elders to appear in court as plaintiffs, it is equally wrong for the faction to appear as defendants, for they are **in court** with their brethren when they could have stayed out of court by doing the thing they demanded of the elders—by relinquishing their claims. Their own construction of 1 Cor. 6 would force them to do this rather than violate the passage by appearing in court as defendants in such a case as theirs, for in so doing they are also **going to law** with brethren. Did not Jesus say, if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also? While they apply 1 Cor. 6 to the elders, why not apply this passage to themselves and give up the building?

Does 1 Cor. 6 shield criminals in the church? Does it protect anybody in or out of the church in the seizure of property that belongs to others? A warranty deed, deed of trust, vendor's lien, chattel mortgages, legal foreclosures, and other forms of legal action could not be executed between brethren, for there would be no basis of civil rights and protection. If this is the meaning of 1 Cor. 6, no church has a warranty deed to property—they just **think** they have a deed—for they could not petition a civil court in defense of their title against seizure by any person or group of persons who happened to be brethren. Any individual or faction in the church could claim the property and take it! If that is the force of 1 Cor. 6, let it be known, so that all the digressives in the church may disregard the restrictive clauses in the deeds, and all other factionists as well, and let them walk in, sit down, and take possession of the property with no legal action to hinder them. The faction in McAlester would not apply their own argument to a digressive element in the church, should such insist on taking over the property.

Civil law in Rom. 13 is set forth as available to Christians when its protection is required. The civil court is referred to as an officer to protect Christian citizens against law violators and evil doers. Paul said that he (the civil law) is a minister **to thee** (the Christian) for good. How could this be true if the Christian could not avail himself of the protection of personal and property rights which the civil law affords? Why put a restrictive clause in a church deed if the elders of the church could not defend the deed against any element in the church that would seize the property? Why have a deed at all, if that is the meaning of 1 Cor. 6? As a matter of fact, a deed defines the owners of the property; and when the property is held in trust by elders of the church, it must be proved that said elders are **disqualified, unfaithful, and do not hold the property for the purpose set forth in the deed, before they can be legally dispossessed.** This the McAlester rebels could not do, so they staged a sitdown strike, seized the property, forced the elders to become the plaintiffs in the court instead of themselves, and inconsistently ran to 1 Cor. 6 for shelter crying: "in the spirit of Christ" it is unscriptural for the elders to take it to court! But it was their own action that put it in court—and after all, **since the men the elders have taken court action against were all previously withdrawn from, how does it violate 1 Cor. 6?**

A FACTION REBELS

As proof that they are themselves the faction, hear their own testimony as verified by Brethren Nichol and Whiteside:

By invitation of Brethren Killebrew and Strother we the undersigned attended a meeting in McAlester the night of September 24, 1936, in which some brethren of the Church of Christ, in McAlester, were interviewed by Brethren Killebrew and Strother. In this interview Brother Grimes said "a faction exists in the church and there is a rebellion against you elders." On being asked how many were in the faction, he said, "about ninety percent of the congregation." When he was asked, "Did you canvas the church to find out?" he replied, "I did not." When asked to name some of the faction, he said, "those you invited tonight?" Brother Strother asked Brother Grantham: "Is it not a fact that there is no fellowship between the faction and the body?" Brother Grantham replied: "There is no fellowship."

Signed: R. L. WHITESIDE,
C. R. NICHOL.

Brother Brightwell aptly said that strikers would do well to read certain scriptures that enjoin lying and stealing. And it is significant that those who hold the building by seizure are the ones who have little or nothing invested in the building. Those who bought and paid for the property are those who have been ejected and barred from it. They are the ones who have maintained the Christian spirit in spite of being forced into court, for when some of the able-bodied men who stood with the elders proposed to go in and throw the strikers out (and they could have done it) the elders restrained them and refused to allow physical combat. Who were the Christians in that case—the elders or the strikers?

But true to form, the strikers in this case attack the characters of the best men in the church. They are accused of being everything from Popes to reprobates. There never was an elder that majority-rulers objected to who was not called a pope. The particular elder in McAlester who is called pope (because he was in their way) is the man who has done more for the church during the thirty years he has been an elder than all these strikers put together. He has been there from the beginning while those who are causing the trouble, many of them, have come in later, even recently. B. M. Strother is respected by his fellow townsmen as honorable in all his dealings, upright in personal life, known to be a good man, a successful business man, and has even been a friend in need to some in the church who now malign him. Yet such an elder in the church of the Lord must suffer calumny at the hands of a rebellion in a church that is ruled by the mob spirit. Brother Whiteside told me that he regarded Brother Strother one of the best qualified elders he has ever known except in one point—he has been too lenient with those who have caused this trouble in the church. Brother D. B. Killebrew, his senior (in age) and fellow-elder, insisted on dealing with the disorderly a long time ago, but Brother Strother believed patience would solve the difficulties and save the offenders, and he wanted to save them. Brother Killebrew was right, as Brother Strother now sees, but the anomaly of the situation is that this lenient man is the one who is called pope by the rebellious faction, and they vent their spleen at the man who for their sakes waited too long to deal with them.

PREACHERS VERSUS ELDERS

The history of these cases is nearly always connected with preacher trouble. A preacher comes to "take charge" of the church. But when the elders insist on having charge, it becomes a case of a young preacher versus the older elders. For wisdom the old elders would be the best choice by far. But the young preacher is fresh out of college and has some late ideas about things. The elders do not take quickly to his mod-

ern notions (thanks to the elders), so the elders are referred to as "anti-quoted" and the young preacher proceeds to modernize the church. When the elders decide that he has gone far enough, they call his hand. In turn the preacher calls some meeting; the scheming begins; petitions are circulated to remove the elders; the sequel is a divided church, and the elders are blamed for it all—and in a sense they are to blame, for having such a preacher in the first place. But in it all, the preacher plays as innocent as Mary's little lamb—he never did a thing, except to follow the dear people, and **he stayed to save the church!** Splitting the church is a wonderful way to save it.

THE MAJORITY-RULE BACKGROUND

The McAlester trouble is another case of the evils of majority rule with the preacher complex in the background. It is modern in that they can claim the distinction of staging the first sit-down strike in a church of Christ. They are welcome to the distinction. Let all churches of Christ give them the first and last claim to it. It is a monument to their shame and a dishonor to their name. In the court proceedings, their attorney, Allen D. Dabney, an elder in the church at Eastland, Texas, based his plea on majority rule, as his arguments in connection with his cross-examination of C. R. Nichol as set forth in this pamphlet disclose. It is clearly evident that Attorney Dabney was ill at ease and awkward while Brother Nichol was at perfect poise and composure at all times. Dabney was wild and boisterous to such an extent that he was called down by the court; while Brother Nichol was courteous and respectful, yet firm and unwavering; his answers withering to the attorney. One well-known and able evangelist, Will M. Thompson, said to the writer that he had debated and attended many debates with Baptist preachers but an ordinary Baptist preacher never did take a more complete whipping than Attorney Dabney took at the hands of his witness, C. R. Nichol. The Judge, himself, remarked at one point that the attorneys did not have much business asking **some** of the preachers questions or trying to cross-examine them! It is evident that the court was deeply interested in Brother Nichol's testimony, and his respect for Brother Nichol was not concealed. Had Brother R. L. Whiteside been allowed to testify fully, instead of being restrained, another valuable chapter could have been added to this booklet. For some reason the attorneys dismissed Brother Whiteside from the stand without offering him opportunity to discuss the important issues before the court in the wise and masterful manner, characteristic of Brother Whiteside.

Those who were called to testify against the elders, and for the majority plea of Attorney Dabney were: Robert M. Alexander, C. M. Stubblefield, A. Leroy Elkins, and Geo. O'Neal. Those who were called by the elders to testify for the organization of the church were: R. L. Whiteside, D. A. Dirk, W. L. Thurman, C. R. Nichol, and M. E. Ewing, an elder of the church in Madill, Okla.

Any effort now on part of this faction to disclaim belief in and practice of the majority rule doctrine will be futile, as this was the contention of their attorneys, who even attempted scriptural arguments to support their contention in the court.

THE SELECTION OF THE SEVEN — ACTS 6

It is claimed that the selection of the seven in the sixth chapter of Acts is precedent for majority rule and voting in the church. A careful study of this case will show no such example. The order of the apostles was that certain men with named qualifications be found among them and appointed to the special service in demand. The decision of the apostles to have this done pleased them all — not a majority. The manner in which the seven were **looked out** is not set forth but it certainly does not carry out the idea of voting on the qualifications of these

men by the whole multitude. While I have never undertaken to prove anything by men, the comments of David Lipscomb on this case is particularly in point and is here given:

While they called the whole multitude together, they directed the brethren to select from among themselves seven men. It would not have been proper to tell the sisters to select from among themselves seven men. "From among themselves" indicated that those selected were of the same sex and class as those selecting. It was desirable that the whole multitude should understand the directions given, and that inquiry should be made of all, of the character which the men had made; but the brethren were to do the selecting. The direction, "Look ye out from among you," carries the idea of mutual inquiry, consultation and agreement among themselves as to the persons possessing the qualifications. It was not a nomination of candidates and electing by vote The wants of the Hebrew widows were hitherto supplied by the Hebrews. It is not likely that those supplying the Hebrew widows satisfactorily would be stopped from doing it and the duty transferred to foreigners. Then the names of those appointed (verse 5) are all Grecians. God, in his wisdom, has seldom left the people of one nation to the mercy of a strange and prejudiced people. As the means were contributed chiefly by the Hebrews, it is not reasonable that it would be taken out of the hands of the Hebrews and placed in the hands of foreign and distrusted persons, as foreign Jews were, to minister to their own Hebrew widows. No people have ever grown so unselfish as to submit quietly to such discrimination against themselves. Even the Apostles showed jealousy under much less provocation. The meaning is that these Grecians were chosen to minister to the wants of the Grecian widows, and means were put in their hands that they might not be dependent upon the care of the Hebrews not in sympathy and not familiar with the strangers and their wants,

It seems evident that the expression "this saying pleased the whole multitude" can only mean that all, both Hebrews and Grecians, were satisfied with the command given by the apostles. It is also evident that there was no selecting and voting done by the church; rather the Grecian men selected from among them (the men) those who were qualified to serve as the apostles had directed. To use this case as an example for majority rule and voting in the church, or even as an example for the selection of elders and deacons, is about as weak as the household argument for infant baptism. Brother Lipscomb drives the nail at the right place when he says: **It was not a nomination of candidates and an election by vote.** And may we add, there is no hint that it was even intended to be a precept or an example for the selection and appointment of elders and deacons in the church. The apostles themselves had direct control in the whole affair.

THE CASE OF DISCIPLINE AT CORINTH — 2 Cor. 2:6

Another passage which has been stretched by some to prove majority rule government in the church is the case of discipline in the Corinthian church. Attorney Dabney imagined that he had a "case" in this passage. The man was guilty of incest — taking his father's wife. (1 Cor. 5: 1-3) Paul commanded the church at Corinth to put the wicked man away — withdraw from him. (Cor. 5: 1-3) They obeyed the apostolic command. Later Paul wrote them that the punishment **inflicted by the many** was sufficient. (2 Cor. 2:6) So it is urged by majority rule adherents that **the many** means **the majority**, and hence by majority rule action

this discipline was administered in the Corinthian church. Now, if this is true, we have exactly **what majority rule doctrine is** — namely, **a church voting on whether it would or would not obey the command of the apostle!** Paul had positively commanded the withdrawal from this man — yet we are told that the church voted on it, and settled it by the **majority**, as to whether they would do it or not! That is majority rule doctrine, certainly enough, but **this passage does not teach it and this case is not an example of it.** The weakness of it can be seen even by those who teach majority rule if they will think, for do they not tell us that where the apostles have spoken, there can be no majority rule? They tell us that majority rule comes in only where God has not spoken. But in this case God had spoken — the apostle had given a direct, positive command. So according to their own doctrine it would have been wrong for the Corinthian church to decide it “by the many” — the majority! So they are about to prove that the church at Corinth sinned, and thus try to prove that majority rule is right by an example that was wrong!

The expression “the many” does not mean the majority; — but **the church** on one hand in contrast with **the individual**, or the man, on the other. When Paul said that the punishment inflicted by **the many** was sufficient, it only meant that the church had obeyed his command. The reader can trace the use of the expression “the many” in other places and see that it refers not to majority but to the whole. “The many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting shame and contempt.” (Dan. 12:2) The expression **the many** in that passage simply means **all**. I wonder if majority rule adherents think that only a **majority** of those that sleep in the dust shall arise? Rather does it not mean the same as Jno. 5:29: “The hour cometh when all that are in their tombs shall come forth.” Thus we have “the many” in one passage and “all” in the other on the same subject.

If there is authority for majority rule in Cor. 2:6, it gives the church the power to set aside an apostolic command by “the many,” the vote of the majority! That is good Catholic doctrine. Majority rule government is Baptist doctrine, and its logical consequences lead to the authority of the church over apostolic command, which is Catholic doctrine. The enigma of it all is, why some of the brethren who testified in court on behalf of such a faction cannot see it.

THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE — ACTS 15

An old stock argument of the digressives for delegate conventions and societies and majority voting in general, from the very beginning of their innovations, has been the so called “conference” of apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Yet there is as much authority in Acts 15 for the Methodist Conference as there is for delegate conventions and majority rule. It shows the limit to which brethren will go to justify this parent of all innovation — majority rule in the church. But if Acts 15 is an example of **the church** settling the question of dispute, we have another case of **uninspired men** setting aside and supplanting the **inspired wisdom** of the apostles by majority decision. On this point we cannot do better than to submit to the reader the comments of R. L. Whiteside on the conference of Acts, in Gospel Advocate, April 21, 1938.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER OF ACTS

Was the question of circumcising the Gentiles passed on and settled by the church at Jerusalem, or by the apostles and the elders?—X, Oklahoma.

A letter accompanied the foregoing question; but to eliminate all personalities and places, I give only the question. In answering the question in a satisfactory way, we must first get the background and facts before us.

At first the converts to Christ were Jews. It was hard for them to see that Christianity was a religion separate and apart from Judaism, and that God would extend the blessings of salvation to the Gentiles without their becoming converts to the Jews' religion. The brethren at Jerusalem took Peter to task for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, but he convinced them that it was right to preach to the Gentiles and to baptize them. But the extreme Jewish Christians, having to admit that it was right to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and baptize them, contended that they could not then be saved unless they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses. To them Christianity was just another sect of the Jews' religion, or a sort of extension of that religion. Some of these agitators came to Antioch, where there were many Gentile Christians, and greatly disturbed the church by contending that these Gentile Christians must be circumcised and keep the law, or they could not be saved. Paul and Barnabas knew these disturbers were wrong, and contended with them. However, the Judaizers never did recognize Paul as an apostle of the Lord, and what he said had no authority with them. To settle the disturbance, and to satisfy the minds of the members at Antioch, it was necessary that the matter be passed on by those whom no one questioned. It was, therefore, appointed that Paul, Barnabas, and some of the local brethren "should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question"—not to the church, but to the apostles and elders. It was revealed to Paul that he should go. Paul and Barnabas did not go to Jerusalem to learn what the will of the Lord in the matter was, for they knew. But it had become a serious question, and was likely to destroy all the work Paul had done or could do. Hence Paul says of the trip: "And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain." (Gal. 2: 2.) If this agitation was to be kept up, and all the churches he had established, or should yet establish, were to be torn up, or brought under the law, then his work in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles was all in vain. This private talk Paul here mentions is that mentioned in Acts 15: 6. Hence, after Paul and Barnabas told the church about their work among the Gentiles (verse 4), and the Judaizing teachers had made their demand (verse 5), then the apostles and elders gathered together to consider the matter (verse 6). They evidently came to a full understanding as to what the will of the Lord was in the matter, but it was necessary to quiet the church by bringing it to a correct understanding of the matter. They, therefore, went before the whole church, and the logical and orderly arrangement of the speeches that were made to the church shows that the apostles and elders had agreed on the order of the speeches. Peter had been the first to preach to the Gentiles; he, therefore, spoke first, giving evidence to show that God had accepted the Gentiles. Barnabas and Paul then spoke of their work among the Gentiles, and showed how God had approved their work by the signs and wonders he had wrought through them while they were establishing churches among the Gentiles. Their speeches, as well as Peter's were devoted to giving evidence that God had accepted the Gentiles. Then James spoke. He gave no evidence and made no argument, as the others had done, excepting to call attention to the fact that carrying the gospel to the Gentiles was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Amos. Instead of arguing the question, James told what was to

be done concerning the matter. Peter, Barnabas, and Paul had given all the evidence needed; James delivered the judgment, or the decision. "Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God." (Verse 19.) To argue that the church passed on this question of circumcision is to argue that a vote was taken to see if the church would indorse what this inspired apostle said should be done. If so, I suppose it was fortunate that they voted to sustain this inspired utterance of James! The decision voiced by James was put into writing for the benefit of all churches that had Gentile members, and it bore the signature of the apostles and elders, and not of the church. It contained the decrees of the apostles and elders, and not of the church. Some time after this Paul and Silas visited the church Paul and Barnabas had established. "And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem." (Acts 16: 4.)

This matter of circumcising the Gentiles and requiring them to keep the law of Moses, or allowing their churches to be free from any such entanglements, was fundamental. If that question was decided by a majority vote of the church, then any other matter can be so decided.

If the church voted as to whether the decrees announced by this inspired apostle should be enforced, then churches can vote as to whether any other thing taught by an apostle should be binding.

If the matter was to be settled by the church, why was it not settled at Antioch, where the trouble arose?

If the church at Jerusalem could establish decrees by majority vote that became binding in all parts of the world, then any church today can pass decrees that are binding on all other churches.

The meeting at Jerusalem has been used in support of Methodist conferences, general assemblies of the Presbyterians, and conventions; and now I have heard at least two gospel preachers use it in support of their contention that the church en masse should pass on everything with which it has to do. And we berate the sectarians for perverting the Scriptures!

The foregoing from the pen of this man of God and Bible scholar seems to me to be final on the Acts 15 argument. Only innovationists and factionists will persist in perverting these scriptures to justify their wickedness, which as Peter said, "the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction."

FALLIBILITY AND INCOMPETENCE

But interposes one, are the elders always right? If not, how can a church get rid of an undesirable elder? Personally, I never knew of all the elders of the church going bad at the same time. If an elder needs discipline why not follow divine instructions? If he does not need discipline perhaps it is not as important to remove him as an elder as some imagine. I dare say that a preacher of ordinary personality can visit among the members of any congregation and dissatisfy enough of them with its best elders to cause trouble. But granting that the case is against the elder and that he should be disciplined—why not follow I Timothy 5:19 and then proceed as in the case of any other member? This way of having all the elders to resign in order to get rid of one

elder is about as sane as withdrawing from all of the members in order to discipline one disorderly member. Could we not just take all the members back—except the bad one? Great procedure that! Its about the size of the idea some little pastor has when he propositions the elders that **he will resign if they will**. Yet they were elders of the church, and it was doing well, before he was born!

A point which has been too much overlooked in all the discussions of **competence**, the church government and majority rule question is the question: "**who is competent to rule the church?**" We hear it said that certain elders are not competent to rule the church. Well, who appointed them? Does not the fact that a church appoints incompetent elders become **prima facie** evidence of their own incapacity to administer the affairs of the church? A church that **has** incompetent elders, would certainly be incompetent itself to run its affairs through its members rather than its elders. If they were so incompetent as to select incompetent elders, it looks as if the incompetency is general and not confined to the eldership. Majority rule would only aggravate such a condition and create more incompetency instead of relieving the situation.

As for "majority rule"—it is seldom majority rule, but **preacher rule**. The preacher gathers his voters; he controls them and they vote like he tells them to vote. True, he stays in the background—but so does a general in the battle. The preacher, nevertheless, is the general, and but for the preacher it would be difficult for a church to have a division—they would hardly know how to go about it.

A RECAPITULATION

Some demand "chapter and verse" that **condemns** majority rule and voting in the church, even if they cannot find authority for their majority rule system in the New Testament. For their sake, and information, the following summary is presented.

First: Majority rule does not discriminate between experience and inexperience, nor regard knowledge as anything. It violates the New Testament principle that some by experience are more capable of discernment than others; should teach, and others be taught; should rule, and others submit. "For when by reason of time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilled (without experience) in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. 5:12-14).

Second: Majority rule makes elders subject to the church instead of the church subject to the elders and reverses the New Testament principle: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief." (Heb. 13:17).

Third: Majority rule is the parent of the ballot, or vote method, and becomes the occasion of politics, electioneering, instructing children and young people "how to vote," all of which results in division of sentiment and is contrary to the New Testament injunction: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (I Cor. 1:10).

Fourth: Majority rule encourages preachers to disregard and ignore the elders and cater to the wishes of the majority in the church. A preacher of ability and personality can work up a sentiment in the con-

gregation against the elders, and with his majority-rule doctrine divide the church, in flagrant violation of the New Testament command to "know (recognize) them which labor among you (the elders), and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves." (I Thess. 5:12, 13).

Fifth: Majority rule breeds anarchy in the church; leaves the church in a state of uncertainty, without permanent leadership; and is against the New Testament command to the elders to "take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers (bishops), to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28). Any argument against unqualified elders cannot apply here for that same contingency exists, and is even more likely to exist, in cases of congregational rule. That is not the cure for the condition.

Sixth: The demand for majority rule always comes from an uninformed and unruly element in the church; not from pious, consecrated people who are content to worship God in spirit and in truth, or from preachers who think that to be "the minister of the church" is to hold office of high authority and who do not respect the authority of the elders over them. It is strange that preachers who want majority rule will recognize the authority of the elders when the elders **engage** them, but refuse to recognize the authority of the elders when they deem it best for them to leave. Such preachers **take** the work of the church upon the **authority of the elders**, but insist on **keeping** it by the **majority vote** of a personal following. Most any preacher, who is a "good mixer" can put such a thing over with young people, indifferent members whose interest has been revived to "take sides," and with the uninformed in general. This is a perversion of everything the New Testament teaches on the duty of members of the church to the elders. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." (I Pet. 5:5).

There is no possible way to harmonize congregational majority rule with the foregoing and many other New Testament instructions to elders and members of the church in their respective duties and relations one to another and to the church.

THE CURE FOR CONDITIONS

Is there any cure for these defections? Yes. The return to the New Testament order of elders that rule, deacons that serve, congregations that obey, members that work, and preachers that proclaim the word.

The placing of this pamphlet in the hands of elders of every congregation, and every gospel preacher in the land, is prompted by the unselfish love of the truth, generous soul, liberal purse, and benevolent spirit of the humble man of God who is having it published, Brother B. M. Strother. He sends it forth with the fervent prayer and the ardent hope that it may accomplish the desired end of informing and warning elders of the churches, his fellow-elders everywhere, of that insidious evil growing up and spreading among the churches with an alarming rapidity, threatening the very organic life of the New Testament church — the evil of majority rule. We join him in that prayer and may heaven guide the course of this pamphlet and bless its mission and reward him who has rendered the cause of truth this munificent service.

SEC. 562
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