Edward Haun in the Western Recorder is somewhat exercised over the charge that Baptists are narrow. He asks the question: “Are Baptists narrow?” Then he proceeds at some length to expiate on Baptist tolerance along certain lines as a refutation of the charge. It seems that enemies of the Baptists have been guilty of cudgeling them with “narrow” and similar “epithets” because they “cling to certain distinctive doctrines.” For one, I admire the Baptist for their clinging proclivities as long as they think they are right. We have too much mush in religion which is a distinct symptom of lack of conviction. A lot of shallow idolaters are worshipping at the shrine of broadmindedness. They spread it out so thin that there is no depth to it. Sickly sentimentalism in religion has starved a lot of souls till they are as thin as Pharaoh’s famished cattle. The question the Baptist brother is so exercised over is really irrelevant. “Are Baptists narrow?” Well, yes, in some respects I think they are and in some other respects I think they are too broad. A more relevant question brings out the point! Are Baptist right? If they are then everybody ought to be Baptists. If they are wrong then nobody ought to be Baptists. Baptists, of course, along with other sects hold to some truth, but the truth they hold is not the “distinctive doctrines” they “cling to.” There is not a distinctive Baptist doctrine in the whole New Testament which is the best authority I know about on matters of truth. The inspired preachers and writers of the New Testament were right, wholly right, and they were not Baptists and did not teach anybody else to be Baptists. They were Christians and that measures the proper dimensions of any man in religion who is chiefly concerned about being right in religion. Anything less than that is too narrow and anything more than that is too broad. We are having a hard time hammering sectarian notions out of the wooden heads of a lot of partisan-minded religionists and we perhaps will never get the job completed but by the grace of God we propose to do our best. C. W. Pope of the Baptist and Reflector comes to the aid of his troubled Brother Haun with a brief comment in which he refers to “the distinctive denominational differences which separate us from other groups etc., etc.” Now, that is where the trouble chiefly lies. There are no “distinctive denominational differences” authorized in the New Testament. Baptists are a denomination of religious people with distinctive denominational doctrines. Since there are no denominations in the New Testament and it teaches no distinctive denominational doctrines, Baptists and other denominations are wrong. The church of the New Testament is the body of Christ including all the children of God and “the apostles’ doctrine” cannot be identified with anybody’s “distinctive denominational principles.” Better stick to the Book even if such a course does cut you off from a lot of excess baggage. Why anybody even wants to be more or less than a Christian is somewhat of a puzzle anyhow. A denomination is larger than a local congregation of disciples such as we read about in the New Testament and smaller than the entire body of Christ we read about in the same book, consequently it is not the church in any sense, unless you consider the New Testament either too broad or too narrow. A man who is simply a Christian and belongs to the body of Christ has all the truth that Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and other partisans have with the added advantage that he also has the truth that they do not have. In the very nature of the case any denomination is narrow because it builds a party fence around its constituency and cuts it off from some of the truth it ought to have. These denominational fences were built and are being maintained in defiance of clear New Testament principles.

On less than a half a page of the Baptists and Reflector I count the word “Baptist” or “Baptists” twenty-two times. If blue ribbons were awarded for the gaudiest display of party pride, it would without doubt be in order to pin one a yard wide and a mile long on the Baptists. We may look for a suggestion to change the text of scripture to read: “But if a man suffer as a Baptist, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.” “The disciples were called Christians” in the New Testament, not Baptists. Why should they be, or be called something else now? With a similar show of party pride J. L. Baggott in the Christian Index exclaims: “I wouldn’t be a half-Baptist, for our truths are too pure and noble. I wouldn’t be a Baptist-and-a-half. ... I would be just a true Baptist ready to take my place in the army of the Lord.” We contend that a true Christian can take his place in the army of the Lord and suffer hardship and do his whole duty as a good soldier of Christ Jesus without being a Baptist at all half, whole or double. If there were any Baptists “in the army of the Lord” in Paul’s day, he failed to say anything about it, and he had a lot to say about “our warfare” with the armor and weapons thereof. He did not even mention “certain distinctive doctrines” Baptists “cling to” as a part of either the armor or the weapons. The fact is if Baptists in their writing and preaching should say as little about Baptists and their “distinctive doctrines” as Paul did in all his epistles, it wouldn’t be long until we wouldn’t have any more Baptists.
WILL THERE BE AN ARMISTICE?

An Interview With Davidson

A friend of mine had a recent visit with garrulous Clinton Copyright Davidson. He writes me that he believes it would be a good thing to lay off "Brother Davidson" on the grounds that he has had enough. Davidson worked on his sympathy and my friend who has no sympathy for the Davidson schemes, yet sympathizes with Davidson and feels that we should let up, let by-gones be bygones, especially as we all unfortunately have a past which we would like to forget and have others forget if they know it. This friend of mine also lets me in on the inside of this conversation by telling me that Davidson has changed his method of approach and means of attack. He began with threats to expose some men in high places, and to sue some of the rest of us. He proposed to revolutionize and dictate the policies of all gospel papers and sought control of them by methods of force, money and intimidation. He claimed to have polled the brotherhood with a straw-ballot in the form of questionnaires and advertised 95% on his side. He not only circulated questionnaires over the brotherhood like circulars at a country carnival, but the evidence is so strong that I believe without a doubt that he is the promoter and circulator of the anonymous letters that shocked the moral and spiritual sense of brethren everywhere and everybody else who has any sense of honor or common decency. He went so far as to consult his "eminent legal counsel" and made numerous threats to sue some of us into submission to his dictatorial regime. We sent the brother word that we would meet "him and his eminent legal counsel" whenever he wished to make an appointment with us and gave him the number of our post office box and domicile as well. Somebody gave him some good advice and he dropped his legal ideas, changed the expression on his face, and began to be deeply spiritual. He traveled over the brotherhood, was banqueted by the schools and bragged on by men, even in Texas, who ought to know better. But despite his pious pretentions and spiritual sentimentalism, he left privately behind him everywhere he went a sluice of slime, in gossipping about certain men whom he had marked for destruction, that caused brethren everywhere who would have otherwise received him with a measure of grace to turn away from him.

But Copyright Clinton Davidson simply did not know the Church of Christ. He was evidently ill-advised by some who thought they did. His schemes did not work. His name has just about become "a hiss and a byword" over the whole brotherhood.

My good friend informs me that this high-pressure, super-salesman of insurance has realized that his schemes and methods will not work in the churches of Christ. He confines to him privately that whereas he started out to give the church a general house cleaning job, modernize it, reorganize it, reform it, even if he had to sue some of us, even the preachers, to do it or prove that we are grand rascals, he now has decided to abandon all such plans and purposes, and instead of doing this "negative" work just settle down to something more "constructive" and stay in his own frontyard. In other words, the impression is left on me that he has decided to attend to his own business.

The Pre-requisites of An Armistice.

Now that is a good decision if he has reached it through conversion and conviction rather than policy and diplomacy. And we have no disposition to hinder this erstwhile promoter and reformer in his good resolutions. But there are some questions and observations in order:

First: I should like to ask my good friend, and others who may be sharing his sympathetic sentiments, this question: Suppose the Bible Banner had not waged the fight on this Davidson movement with its octopus plans and schemes? Suppose he had been left to his scheming? What if his hand had not been called-definitely, effectively, positively and absolutely? Everybody who has a thinker and is using it knows that he would have been more brazen today than when he first began. What is responsible for Clinton Copyright Davidson's change (of heart) on his methods and schemes? Anybody who has mind enough to pour sand out of a boot with the directions written on the bottom can answer that question.

Second: If our Copyright brother has changed his mind and his plans, has decided to abandon "negative" work and proceed on a "positive" or "constructive" basis (a sort of a line of least resistance or no resistance) then why not let him announce this change in policy and attitude just as publicly as his former methods were announced and known. He has a paper-why not publish the statement that he has been all wrong in what he has done, his questionnaires, his anonymous letters, his efforts to intimidate, his threats to sue, his efforts to buy and bribe papers and men who have been in his way, and publicly call off his hounds of blackmail and campaign of calumny such as no religious body ever before has had imposed upon them, to say nothing of churches of Christ.

When he does this, the Bible Banner will take pleasure in publishing his statements, and proposals for an armistice will then be in order. Until he does this, we can consider it only as an effort of the brother to impress certain ones privately, win the sympathy of some and take on the role of a martyr, which is the invariable last act of a man who plays the part he has played when he meets the defeat which has been administered to him in the measure that his own challenges have called for.

Third: In addition to the foregoing it will be necessary for promoter Davidson to renounce his Copyrighted Christian Leader policies, and either discontinue that landscaped, ornamental, but insipid, journal or else return it to its former policies to be published by someone who knows what to write without polling the brotherhood to find out, and who has confidence enough in the truth of his cause to stand on his own ground without invoking the copyright to shield him from the exposure his erroneous movement deserves. Vulnerable indeed is the editor, paper or publisher that requires such. It is repulsive to common editorial sportsmanship and without precedent in the annals of gospel religious journalism. A copyrighted religious paper cannot be compared to or defended by a copyrighted book or any property that needs ownership or authorship protected in legal right. Such is not the purpose of the copyrighted Christian Leader. It is rather the act of religious cowards who shy at their own shadows, or who would scuttle their own ships on the high seas of honorable controversy rather than come out and fight like men.
The One And Only Way

If Clinton Davidson wants an armistice, he can get it; but he cannot ignore these issues and get it; he cannot beg for sympathy and get it; he cannot throw his stink bombs all over the brotherhood and run back to his New Jersey estate and call in visitors for private prayer meetings—and get it. His testimonial are as empty as those of Salvation Army workers and Holy Rollers. His asserted discipleship of James A. Harding is even worse when everybody knows that James A. Harding was dogmatic almost to the point of being radical in the belief that the very way Clinton Davidson makes his money (selling insurance) was a sin for a Christian. He cannot therefore talk of how he loved James A. Harding and admired M. C. Kurfess—and get it. Talking about what a hard time he had when he was a little boy, will not get it. There are too many people who had a hard time when they were little, who are still having a hard time, for that to go over with much effect. His donations won't get it, and all the publicity that Jesse P. Sewell and James L. Love can furnish him from Texas to California cannot get it. The one and only way that Clinton Davidson can get an armistice is to openly renounce what he has openly done and call in the movement which he is heading and leading through the Christian Leader—a movement fraught with all the disasters of digression that any movement could carry—a movement more dangerous to the church today than was the digressive division of fifty years ago, because it is more subtle and because so many good men in the church, including some loyal preachers of the gospel, have not seen its sinister form or observed its stealthy approach. Some of these men are sending articles and reports to the New Leader of the New Digression who, if they knew that they were lending their influence to the leading menace of the church today, would never do it. Brother Thad S. Hutson, long time a writer for the old Christian Leader, sent an article upon request to the New Leader and when he saw the influence of it, plainly told them that he would write for it no more. If every faithful gospel preacher would have the intestinal staminia to do likewise Clinton Davidson and his New Leader would have been on the mourner's bench asking for an armistice long before now.

As long as there is an enemy of the truth of the gospel in the field leading a movement against the interests of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible Banner signs no armistice. We shall fight, and in so doing we give no quarters and ask none.

The audience may now stand while we sing the refrain, dedicated to our retreating promoter, Brother Davidson: “He Came In Like A Lion And Went Out Like A lamb.”-F. E. W. Jr.

SPEAKING OF ETHICS

The Christian Leader is advertising the Jorgenson songbook “Great Song Of The Church” (or, “Great Songs of What Church?”) as it is a sectarian production. In this advertisement appears a recommendation of the book mechanically by N. B. Hardeman. I do not know whether Brother Hardeman recommended the book or not the fact that Word and Work and Jorgenson quote him is not within itself proof that he did. A journal that will misrepresent the writings of dead men like it does would not hesitate to misrepresent living men if they thought they could do it and get by. In this case, Brother Hardeman can speak for himself—but I have something to say on ethics.

The editor of the Christian Leader would not announce N. B. Hardeman's gospel meeting, backed by thirty churches of Christ in Nashville. But he will publish N. B. Hardeman's purported endorsement of this Bollite songbook! Why? There is a reason. First, it is commercial—there is money in the deal. Second, they think they are getting under somebody's skin by having N. B. Hardeman commend the songbook which has been so widely rejected lately by those who see the need of closing the blockade around the Boll party for the protection of the church.

Ethical journalism! Ethical brethren, they are! N. B. Hardeman's name was not good enough in their estimation to announce over the radio of the Central church and from E. W. McMillan's pulpit. And E. L. Jorgenson feels the same way about it—they agreed on that point. But when it comes to printing and using N. B. Hardeman's name to promote one of their publications, to capitalize on his influence, and to take a slap at those who oppose their party-begone ethics! this is a business matter!

When A. B. Keenan, of Detroit, Mich., saw the mistake he had made in allowing E. L. Jorgenson to capitalize on his name as an indorsement for his book, he recalled his indorsement, and over their protests demanded that they take his name off their sheets of advertisement: This is exactly what these other brethren should do. It is folly to oppose the encroachments of this movement upon the churches and then furnish them the money to carry on their work by buying their book or indorsing it to influence others to buy it. Plain consistency requires this stand. I occasionally hold meetings where the book is used, but it has never been purchased on my indorsement nor on even a hint in the direction, Jorgenson's Great Songs Of What Church, is the greatest source of revenue for the group of brethren that divide the church.

Briefly put, churches of Christ should not buy or use the Jorgenson songbook for at least the following reasons:

1. It is considered the link between the churches and the Boll movement, and at one time the Word and Work published a regular column of churches that used the book, under the title “See How They Go!”

2. It is Jorgenson's main financial asset. While he claims that the Word and Work has nothing to do with the songbook-still, he is publisher of Word and Work and he is publisher of the songbook! He is Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Such a claim is too thin. It would be like trying to make a distinction between G. H. P. Showalter and the Firm Foundation, or Leon McQuuddy and the Gospel Advocate.

3. The Jorgenson publications have always been full of error. So rank was one of his books with error, when it was exposed he set himself to the task of eliminating some of it (not all), but only because of the unfavorable publicity and only for business reasons. A man who does things on that principle does not deserve patronage of sincere people for that reason alone, as well as the others, that could be named.

4. The purchase and use of the Jorgenson songbooks by churches of Christ is a compromise. If the excuse that it is a good book is the only alibi-there are other good books, and even if it were necessary to purchase them from outside concerns entirely, still it would not do the harm that furnishing the money with which to operate a faction in the church will do. It would then be purely a business matter, whereas in this case it has all the complications named and many more.

When brethren get through with policy and diplomacy, perhaps we may just stand for principle and be consistent. And as I have no business interest in any songbook I suppose I can say what I have said ethically.—F. E. W. Jr.
THE HARDING COLLEGE JUBILEE

All the brethren know is what they see in the papers. That being the case many will think that the issues over at Harding College have all been settled. It is, or would be, indeed quite strange that brethren Armstrong and Benson could so soon be converted on issues so grave as the charges against their teaching which brethren Harper and Hope, and others, brought against them with such an array of evidence in the September Bible Banner. If these brethren are converted, have renounced these errors, that is fine but why not let them say so in the public press? As it is, they seem to be holding a jubilee over the fact that E. R. Harper has signed up not to “fight the school” any longer. Personally, I did not know anybody was fighting in the school. I certainly, for one, have not fought that or any other school. We have fought against the teaching that has been done in them, and against some teachers connected with them, and certain other influences which have undoubtedly been exerted for various isms, errors and promoters of said isms and errors. Furthermore, not only has certain actual teaching been done but other teaching which should have been done has not been done. Here has been the ground of the fight.

The Harding College Regime

Has Harding College been purged of these teachers? No. The same regime is there. Have they changed their attitude on any of these questions? No. In proof of this statement I offer here a part of a letter which I have from a man who was there when the negotiations for this peace pact between Brother Harper and the school was being held. This brother asked Brother J. N. Armstrong the following questions, which were given the following answers:

1. Question: Did you tell someone that in your opinion Hardeman was defeated in his debate with Bogard on the Holy Spirit question?
   Armstrong’s Answer: Yes.

2. Question: Do you believe that the Lord will ever actually put his foot upon the earth again?
   Armstrong’s Answer: Yes.

3. Question: Do you believe that there will be a period of time between the return of Christ and the final consummation of all things?
   Armstrong’s Answer: Yes.

4. Question: In your opinion, is this the period designated in Rev. 20 as a thousand years?
   Armstrong’s Answer: Yes.

5. Question: Do you believe that this will come between a first and a second literal resurrection?
   Armstrong’s Answer: Yes.

Thus Brother Armstrong is shown to be, without any ifs or ands, purely and simply a premillennialist. Of course, brethren Harper and Hope had already proved it. They also proved that George Benson, President of Harding College, was formerly one, and worse than that, almost a divine-healer, miracle-worker sympathizer. In an article now in type which Brother Harper has requested held up he proves by good evidence that Brother Rhodes holds the same views that Brother Armstrong holds. Yet they have “signed” a peace treaty over at Searcy for some reason. And Harding College is doing all the shouting and holding all the jubilees—it is evidently in their favor.

Assurances—Past And Present

Perhaps, the brethren were given some assurances as to the future. But as they themselves have testified such assurances have been repeatedly made, even in writing, and were never carried out. Hence, they made out a case against even the veracity of the men they were exposing. Upon what basis can they accept mere assurances now? If Harding College is not right, what value are their assurances? Their assurances will be worth absolutely nothing until they get right.

As the matter stands, suppose that the president, Doctor Benson, has assured Brother Harper that he will try to engage another teacher of Bible who will be allowed to teach what he wishes. Still, J. N. Armstrong remains as Dean of Bible, and all the others are there with all the objections which these brethren urged against them with such telling effect. Of what real benefit would it be to have another teacher who is not a premillennialist, just to satisfy some patrons who are not premillennialists, when the teachers who believe and teach these and other errors are retained? It has every appearance of a compromise, a mere white-wash. Any school can afford to furnish a teacher who is not a premillennialist, to satisfy those who are not, if they can keep teachers that are premillennialists to satisfy those who are and try to make softies out of the rest of the material.

A Far-reaching Action

We wish to be generous and charitable, but in our humble opinion there has been a let-down for the truth in these proceedings. There has evidently been some rather heavy pressure somewhere—I know not where. Sometime ago Brother Harper wrote the Bible Banner asking for a full edition of the paper to put these matters before the brotherhood. He believed it was urgent. His request was granted, and an array of evidence was submitted by him and others (some of whom have not backed up), and a special issue of the Bible Banner was devoted to these issues. Had we known that these brethren were going to turn right square around and enter a peace pact with Harding College on mere assurances, without any changes having been made, with the same regime in control, on such a far-reaching action involving the destiny of the cause of Christ in a whole section of the country—well, with all the charity I can command it seems to me that there has been a triumph in Arkansas for the wrong side in this fight for the truth. The school must have got the drop on Brother Harper and brought him out with his hands up.

It may have been a question of surrender or be scalped. In that case a man has a choice to make. As for me and the Bible Banner—we do not surrender. We do not fight that way. As for my scalp, they can have it, if they can get it, but we will not put up our hands nor surrender, nor sign pacts and peace treaties with any regime which has stood for and taught as much error as that which is in control at Harding College, and some of the others. When these schools are purged of the teaching, and of the teachers who are doing the teaching and otherwise exerting the wrong influence in various ways, then and then only will be the time to smoke the peace-pipe.

The jubilee at Harding College may, with all the big headlines in other religious papers, sound overwhelming for all to join in the parade—but we have not learned how to smile to the kind of music. We simply want our readers to know that the Bible Banner has not relented and will not relent on any of these issues, or side-issues, and we have just begun to fight if the affair at Searcy is to be considered a call for surrender or else. It will be else. And hereafter, let me add, the Bible Banner will furnish its own picked material for its specials and not turn the number over to someone who hits and runs.

We are still here and—They Shall Not Pass—F. E. W. Jr.
CONCERNING MAKING IT A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP

It is oftentimes said that since R. H. Boll does not make his theories a test of fellowship, and has so declared that he does not and never did, and never will, we therefore should discontinue the fight on him and his party and settle down to good fellowship. It is strange how limited some good men are in discrimination who are thoroughly capable along other lines. For instance, a certain brother wrote the editor of Word and Work concerning the matter of fellowship, and he thinks the answers given by Brother Boll settle the controversy. I think I know who the brother is, believe I could spell his initials, but the Word and Work did not reveal his identity so neither will I reveal my guess.

In parallel below are the questions this brother submitted to R. H. Boll, editor of the Word and Work of the Pre-millennial church, and the same identical questions Brother John T. Lewis submitted to E. R. Errett, editor of the Christian Standard, of the Christian Church. I hope the brother who asked Brother Boll these questions will see this parallel. I would send him this issue of the paper if I thought he would read it, but these sweet-spirited brethren lose their tempers easily when they read something like this and it might be wrong to put his spirituality to such a test: Nevertheless, here is the parallel.

The Word And Work
(R. H. Boll, Editor)

Bro. Boll: In view of the fact that you are so often accused of causing strife and division, I desire to ask you a clear-cut question and would appreciate a clean and clear-cut reply.
Question: 1. Have you at any time, anywhere, made your position on prophetic problems, with any individual or congregation, a test of fellowship?

Boll's Answer: 1. “I have never at any time or anywhere made my teaching on any prophecy a test of fellowship.”

Question: 2. Have you at any time, anywhere, directly or indirectly, divided any church?

Boll’s Answer: 2. “I have never at any time or anywhere, directly or indirectly, divided a church. I have on several occasions helped to re-unite congregations where division existed or was threatened.”

It is plain that any digressive can make the same specious plea against fellowship and the same protests on tests of fellowship as made by the Boll party and their neutral sympathizers. Anybody that can see through a ladder-ought to be able to see the fallacy and sophistry hidden in their protests against disfellowship. Their plea for tolerance is but a demand for the unhampered privilege of teaching any error or ism dear to their hearts. But the digressives claim the same right, and could feed them out of their own spoon, which they would either have to take or as Brother Srygley remarked, “change the spoon.” Surely, sauce of the goose should be salad dressing for the gander!-E. W. Jr.

The Christian Standard
(E. R. Errett, Editor)

Brother Errett: In view of the fact that you are so often accused of causing strife and division, I desire to ask you a clear-cut question and would appreciate a clean and clear-cut reply.

Question: 1. Have you at any time, anywhere, made your position on missionary societies or instrumental music, with any individual or congregation, a test of fellowship?

Errett’s Answer: 1. “The answer is an unqualified ‘No,’ we have never made these matters a test of fellowship.”

Question: 2. Have you at any time, anywhere, directly or indirectly divided any church?

Errett’s Answer: 2. “The answer is ‘No,’ with merely this qualification there have been a few occasions in which we have exerted some influence that may be considered to have led to division, but the occasion was not over instrumental music,” etc.

CULLED FROM CAMPBELL

In the Fort Worth debate, J. Frank Norris attempted to make a grandstand play with his garbled perversions of Campbell's writings, not only on the premillennial questions but on the baptism question as well. In the Oklahoma City debate, E. F. Webber made a mild attempt to do the same thing, but was afraid of getting burnt and shied away. In the Birmingham debate, Glen V. Tingley waxed bold (misled by Norris) and launched a broadside of quotations (misquotations) from Campbell. We were fair and gave the gentleman notice that if he persisted we would make him sorry that he ever heard of Campbell. He thought it was a bluff and launched out again. We opened our steam-trunk, brought out a set of Millennial Harbinger’s, opened them at the disputed pages, and read the actual words of Campbell on these issues until Tingley turned white in the face, and refused before the audience to shake hands on what Campbell said. He dropped Campbell. Such is the misuse perverters of truth make of the writings of men, and we could not expect them to do better with the word of God.

Of late the Word and Work, edited by R. H. Boll, has been doing a similar thing. The editor had been running a column on “Culled From Campbell” in which garbled quotations from Campbell are being fed to the readers with evident effort to make them believe that Campbell was a premillennialist or in sympathy with premillennial views and wild prophetic interpretations. We positively know, by Campbell’s own writings, that such is not true and they know it also. Honest men will not do such things, but these men are not honest. Their own acts prove it. The brethren among us who do such things and teach such things are no better than those men among denominations that do such things. They will all do the same things and will collaborate against men who defend the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The editor of the Bible Banner has a set of the Millennial Harbinger’s from 1830 (the first issue) through Alexander Campbell’s entire editorial and writing career. He also has the Christian Baptist complete in the seven years of its publication, by Alexander Campbell. In the near future, we shall begin a column in the Bible Banner which shall be entitled “Culled From Campbell,” and we propose to prove that R. H. Boll and the Word and Work are perverting the writings and the views of Campbell exactly as did the denominational debaters referred to and apparently with the same intent and no higher motive.

We can give Word and Work all that it may want of Campbell. And if we had R. H. Boll before an audience as we have had these other men, we would force him as we did them to shake hands with us on Campbell or turn white behind the gills and refuse to do so. To say that it is downright sinful to misrepresent and pervert the writings of dead men is not half as strong as it could be said and stay within the bounds of truth, but it would hardly be editorial language and we therefore desist with the declaration that such utter lack of honor among men who attempt to guide the thinking of people with pen is tragic, indeed.-F. E. W. Jr.

The Bible Banner has several sets of B. W. Johnson’s Commentary on N. T., 2 vols., new .......... $5.00
THE MAN ON THE OTHER SIDE
HOMER HALEY

Some issues arise among the affairs of men in which the Christian should not take a side at all; for example, the carnal conflict between Germany and the Allies. In this he should neither be "for" nor "against," for in the mind of God probably neither is right, but both wrong. But there are spiritual issues before the church in which every Christian should know definitely the side he is on; he should know himself, and be glad for others likewise to know.

There are some points upon which the Christian may be on the "right side," but sees fit to "step aside," when he steps aside, he definitely becomes "on the other side." The Levite and the priest sought merely to step aside when they saw the Samaritan, beaten and robbed, in need of their support, but God says they passed by "on the other side." This a Christian does when he seeks to side-step either an issue which needs his support, or a binding obligation which needs his execution. In stepping aside he becomes "on the other side."

This principle is forcefully taught in Obadiah's prophecy against Edom, when he sounded the doom of that nation. The prophet introduced a specific case, an occasion when Israel was being besieged and overrun by an enemy nation, to show the merit of her condemnation. Edom rejoiced in the destruction of Israel, although the two nations were related, both having descended from Abraham through Isaac. Of the incident the prophet says, "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that thou scatterest." (Matt. 18:30) This leaves no middle ground to the disruption of the church; introducing a policy or attitude leads ultimately to apostasy. It is insufficient for a Christian to say "I am not for" a certain thing, if the principle involved is wrong. If it is wrong, he must be against it.

Today God's nation is a "holy nation," comprising a "peculiar people." As respects this nation and Himself as its founder, Jesus Christ has clearly declared the religious position of every man when he said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Matt. 12:30) This leaves no middle ground on any issue involving the integrity of the King, his kingdom, or the doctrine and obedience of his covenant; which three are inseparably united by Himself.

There are declared enemies of Christianity today, men who are definitely on the other side, comprising "the other side" itself: Infidels, those set for the destruction of Christianity; blasphemers and the lawless, who scoff at it, and who are set on immorality and crime; and false prophets who deliberately set about to foster on the world a false religion. Among these latter are such persons as Mohamed, Joe Smith, Mrs. Eddy, Judge Rutherford, and the like.

Then, there are those who are "as one of them." The man who would be neutral, a moral man, but not a Christian; his influence is against Christianity. Oftentimes he is more injurious as an enemy to Christ than the outright infidel, because of his hindrance to those who recognize him as a "good moral man."

There are those also who preach theoretical speculations to the disruption of the church; introducing a policy of softness and compromise which nullifies the gospel of Christ, making it void. These, likewise, become definitely "as one of them," men "on the other side." The brethren in the church who affirm they are on the right side, but apologize for these, seek quietly to "step aside," becoming "as one of them," certainly "on the other side" also.

Occasionally a brother argues that he has no time to look into such matters and decide concerning them; that he just leaves that to the preachers. Such a one might as well argue the right of the Catholic to leave his thinking to the priest, while he spends his time thinking about something else. Any point that is vital enough to become an issue in the church, is worthy of the careful study of every Christian. If it is a Bible issue, the Bible will be the book he should study. As a Christian he should study the Bible regardless of his business. While studying it, he could make the issues confronting the church the particular phase of the book he investigates in his regular Bible study. To argue the point of letting the preachers do the studying and deciding on important Bible topics and issues, is to argue the right of the Catholic to do the same with the priest, which again, puts him "on the other side," for he is arguing a false proposition.

Especially should men "in high place" in the church be definite in their stand on issues confronting the church, and those opposing such issues, and in making themselves clear in their position. Every man in a responsible place wields an influence over others; he is molding the thought of younger Christians and of congregations. To practice the policy of "stepping aside" is to lead others to "the other side," which is to become as one of them on that side. This policy or attitude leads ultimately to apostasy. It is insufficient for a Christian to say "I am not for" a certain thing, if the principle involved is wrong. If it is wrong, he must be against it.

Those who introduce mechanical instruments into the worship of God today claim to be "of Israel." But when any innovation is introduced into the worship or faith of the New Testament the principle of faith is violated, and the authority of Jesus Christ rejected, by those who advocate such practices. These pervert the doctrine of Christ, becoming enemies of the truth; standing "on the other side" as "one of them." With whom does the Christian Church have most in common today, the church of Christ or denominations? The answer definitely fixes their position so far as God's Israel of today is concerned.

This point of a definite stand would not be complete without a word about those who step aside from duty and righteousness, thereby becoming "on the other side." The child of God who would live in ungodliness becomes the enemy of Christ; not being "for" him, he is "against" him. He cannot rejoice in victory of the church; he is not alarmed at the defeat of it. To him, it simply doesn't matter. Likewise the Christian who shirks responsibility in the fight of the church for spiritual and numerical growth; or vital issues involving the life of the church, becomes "as one of them," the man "on the other side."

Every Christian is called by Jesus to combat. It is while the battle rages and issues hang in the balance that God expects the hardest, and most determined effort on the part of each. When every ounce of life and fight is put into the battle waged, God promises the victory. To simply "step aside," or fail to "take a side" is to become "on the other side;" and with the side of error doomed by the eternity of truth, one thereby sounds his own death knell. He stands or falls according to the side he is on in this conflict, and his faithfulness to that which is right.
BOLLISM IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

GILBERT E. SHAFFER

The premillennial doctrine has divided many of the denominational churches and in many places it has divided the church. There are, however, but few churches, or people, that teach this doctrine publicly or from the pulpit. The germ is generally planted in the minds of people privately.

We have in the city of Jacksonville, Florida, a premillennial congregation. The preachers for this congregation in order as they have labored are: J. E. Boyd, Homer Hawse, now in St. Petersburg, Florida, and at the present Morgan H. Carter.

Perhaps the question should be asked and answered: How did Bollism reach Florida? Homer Rutherford came to the Riverside Park congregation in Jacksonville and preached for eight or nine years. He gained the confidence of every one and sowed the seed of premillennialism. Many of the members tell me they remember sermons he preached that had a premillennial tinge. At one time he tried to advertise a meeting as a “Premillennial Church Of Christ” This was blocked by the brethren and the advertising was not done under that name. One brother recently told me that Rutherford said he believed this doctrine so strongly that it was essential to his salvation that he preach it.

The seed that had been planted in the minds of some of the members continued to grow until it crystallized into a congregation. Those that believe that theory separated from the church and formed a congregation known as the “Woodstock Park Church Of Christ.” Rutherford came back to Jacksonville, over the earnest protest of the church that he not come. They told him that if he came he would divide the church. He came, and the congregation was started. He has made repeated visits to hold meetings for this group.

The Riverside Park congregation has always contributed a great deal to mission work and to helping young men through school. While Rutherford was here three young men were sent to school and two of them, perhaps the third, spent some time in the “Boll School” in Louisville. “Men were sent to school and two of them, perhaps the true to the statement made by Paul to the elders of the Church. They were not of us.” (I John 2:19)

One of those boys is now preaching for the ”Digressives” and the second is an out and out, “Bollite.” It shows that when you leave the truth on one point there are no limits to your journey.

The “Bollite” congregation purchased a building that was built by a denominational church, and this deal was financed from Louisville, Ky.

There are three congregations in Jacksonville, the leadership of which has never been under the influence of this doctrine. They stand side by side in the fight against every kind of “ism.” These congregations are: Riverside Park, Springfield, and Kings Road. Gilbert E. Shaffer is minister of the Riverside Park congregation, Wilson Herron is minister of the Springfield congregation, and H. A. Godbold is minister of the Kings Road congregation.

The church was made stronger when those who believed the premillennial doctrine went out from us. “They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us.” (I John 2:19)

What has happened to the church in Jacksonville is true to the statement made by Paul to the elders of the church in Ephesus. (Acts 20:29-30)

This teaching is deadly poison that will destroy the Church.

THE ELDERSHIP

The number of preachers who show a marked disregard for the elders of the church is growing. There is too much levity and burlesque in the “Preacher’s Meetings,” so much the order of the day. Reporting a meeting, in the Gospel Advocate, of that nature which was held at Waco, Texas, the reporter indicated that there had been considerable merriment and funmaking over the Eldership—playing on the word “ship” in various ways. It was said that one speaker called for chapter and verse for the word “eldership,” anyway, as though there could be no such thing because there was no such word in the English text.

Someone might have as reasonably called for the chapter and verse for the word “membership.” If the speaker’s argument (?) meant anything we have no membership in the church by the same reasoning that he would have no eldership.

There is too much profane disrespect of the elders of the church and general disregard of the divine arrangement already for any encouragement to be given to it in Preacher’s Meetings.

In this issue of the Bible Banner Brother C. B. Douthitt has a lengthy, wholesome and scholarly treatise on the Eldership. It is provocative of thought and deserves special and careful reading. I do not accept fully every conclusion he reaches, but his article breathes due respect for God-made elders of the church and promotes reverence for the divine will.

It is certainly true that any man possessing the God-given characteristics is a God-made elder, and such recognition should not be withheld from such men. But it also seems to me still, that after Titus had set in order the things that were lacking at Crete he then appointed elders in some definite manner. Two things were to be done according to Paul’s charge: 1. Set in order the things lacking; 2. Appoint elders. And when Paul returned to the churches he had planted and “appointed for them elders in every church,” he must have done something definite “for them.” As to procedure, since it does not specify the particular manner any method of naming elders which does not infringe upon other principles taught in the New Testament would be an “appointment” such as Paul charged. If the elders are to be named, that is an appointment. Men are elders either by assumption or appointment. Personally, I would rather be one (if I were one) by appointment than by assumption. It would be difficult for a man to believe himself an elder in the church if he had not been named one. And when that is done he is appointed.

If he is not qualified a mistake has been made, but certainly no greater mistake than if he should be considered one or acting as one under the no appointment idea. It reduces itself to a question of elders by appointment, or by assumption-which? I would say-by appointment.

If an elder exercises authority in enforcing the will of Christ as revealed in the New Testament he is not a “lord” and is not “lording.” If I understand the word “lord” it means one who sets up his own will on his own authority. It requires authority sometimes to enforce the will of Christ in a congregation, to keep innovators out. Elders exercise authority under Christ, but it is authority nevertheless.

“What is everybody’s business is nobody’s business” is not in the New Testament, but it is true and is consistent with what is in the New Testament.-F. E. W. Jr.
THE ELDERSHIP

C. B. DOUTHITT

It is God’s will for each member of the church to do what he can for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. “To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” (Jas. 4:17) Each is responsible to the full extent of his opportunities and ability.

In this respect the church is like the human body. “For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, who are many, are one body in Christ.” (Rom. 12:4, 5) The eye can see; God gave it that power; therefore it is God’s will for it to do what it has the ability to do for the good of the body. The ear has the God-given power to hear; it is God’s will for it to hear for the good of the body. In the Lord each member must use his God given talents and ability for the good of the body of Christ.

All the members of Christ’s body are not equal in training and knowledge. Some can do what others cannot do. Those who have experience, knowledge, training and ability to a high degree are capable of leading, guiding and developing the flock. They are duty bound to do this work which they are able to do. They are told to “tend the flock of God which is among you.” (I Pet. 5:2)

What the scriptures teach regarding these capable workers in the local churches has been misrepresented and misunderstood. The names by which they are designated in the New Testament, their qualifications, their work, and how they have made have been misapplied, misunderstood and perverted.

Names By Which They Are Designated

I. ELDER. Presbuteros: Older

This word means older, and when used to designate a worker in the church it means one who is old in wisdom and experience to guide and direct others in the way of truth. An example of this usage appears in I Pet. 5:5. “Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder.”

The word presbuterion in I Tim. 4:14 is translated “presbytery” in the King James and American Standard versions. This word means “eldership,” or “assembly of elders,” and is so translated in some good versions of the New Testament. In Luke 22:16 the same word is translated “assembly of the elders;” in Acts 22:5 it is translated “estate of the elders.” The “presbytery” and the “eldership” mean the same thing.

2. BISHOP. Episkopos: Overseer.

This word means “overseer” when used with reference to a worker in the church, and is so translated by the King James version in Acts 20:28.

The elders are the bishops, and the bishops are the elders in the church of the New Testament. Though the two words are not identical in meaning, yet both are applied invariably to the same men, and no distinction whatever is made between the bishops and the elders. The titles are used interchangeably. “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the Church.” (Acts 20:17) Then in the 28th verse to the same men Paul said: “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.”

The elders of the 17th verse are called bishops in the 28th verse. Also, the meaning of the word places the oversight of the local church upon the bishops. This responsibility is placed on the elders, for Peter said, “The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder. Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight.” (I Pet. 5:1, 2) They are the same in work, the same in responsibility; ‘they are the same men.

Before the kingdom was established some of the disciples aspired to places of prominence and power. (see Matt. 20:20-28) Soon after the days of the apostles some in the church began to manifest the same ambitions which characterized James and John during the personal ministry of Christ. This led to the creation of an office unknown to the New Testament, and superior to the eldership. When such an office had been produced by that worldly ambition which Jesus condemned, it became necessary to bestow some title upon the officer, which would distinguish him from the elders over whom he had been given, or had assumed, authority. Therefore the title of “Bishop” was wrested from its scriptural usage and applied to one above the elders, and to an office for which no provision was made in the New Testament. This was one of the first steps in the development of the Roman hierarchy. The creation of other offices followed, necessitating the unscriptural adoption of a title for each.

Any distinction of authority, work, qualification, or responsibility between an elder and a bishop is a step in the direction of an ecclesiasticism which ultimately will corrupt the simplicity toward Christ and his kingdom. Christ himself is the only “Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” above the elders in the local congregations. (I Pet. 2:25)

3. PASTOR Poimen: Shepherd.

This word means “shepherd,” and signifies a “feeder,” or “one who tends the flock.” The Greek word “poimen” appears almost a score of times in the New Testament, and is translated “shepherd” in every place except Eph. 4:11. Why this one exception, no good reason has been given.

The pastors are the elders, bishops, overseers in the church. The name pastor (meaning shepherd) implies the responsibility of feeding the flock. This obligation and duty is placed on the bishops by Paul in Acts 20:28. Also, the word “poimen” implies the duty of “tending the flock.” This responsibility was placed on the elders, for Peter told them to “tend the flock of God which is among you.” (I Pet. 5:1, 2) Therefore, they are the same workers.

A preacher-evangelist-engaged to teach for one year or for ten years is not the pastor, and even may not be a pastor. In apostolic days there were many teachers and evangelists who were not pastors. But all the pastors were elders, bishops, overseers, shepherds, and the distinction
made between them in modern parlance and practice is contrary to the Scriptures.

These three names: elder, bishop, pastor (like the names disciple, brethren, saint, Christian) refer to the same group of workers in the church of God. They are called elders because they are older in wisdom and experience; they are called bishops because they are overseers of the work; they are called shepherds-pastors-because they tend and feed the flock.

A Plurality Of Elders

Each congregation had more than one elder, if it had any at all. Some of the churches existed for a time without any elders, but none existed at any time with only one elder, so far as the scriptures show. Paul and Barnabas visited many congregations and "appointed for them elders in every church." (Acts 14:23) This term "appointed" will be discussed later; the point emphasized here is the fact that they left a plurality of elders "in every church." In his letter to the Philippians, Paul addressed "the bishops" in the plural. If any man ever became the Presiding Elder, or the "Bishop of the Philippian Diocese," in apostolic days, the scriptures do not reveal it. And from Miletus Paul "sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17), church in the singular, elders in the plural. This was the rule in all the churches when acting under apostolic direction. It is scarcely conceivable that any congregation that had existed for a considerable time could have only one man in it with the necessary qualifications for an elder.

Qualifications

In order to do the work assigned to elders, with an appreciable degree of efficiency, one must possess certain prescribed qualifications which can be acquired only by growth and development. Though all of them can be attained by prayerful and diligent effort, none can be acquired instantaneously by a transmission or bestowal of authority by one human being upon another.

These qualifications are listed in I Tim. 3 and Titus 1, and are given here as they appear in the American Standard Edition of the New Testament.

1. Blameless. This means that one must so live that no charge of impure motive, or of evil conduct, or of false teaching can be sustained by any accuser. It does not require sinless perfection, else there never could have been an elder in any congregation. Sinless perfection is impossible; blamelessness is not. Zacharias and Elisabeth were blameless in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. (Luke 1:6) As touching the righteousness which is in the law, Paul was blameless, (Phil. 3:6) and all the saints in Philippi were told to "become blameless." (Phil. 2:15) None of these was sinlessly perfect.

2. Husband of one wife. By a careful consideration of this statement in the light of other passages of like significance, it becomes evident that it does not bar all single men from the eldership. In I Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:6 the same thing is required of elders that is required of all Christians in I Cor. 7:2: "Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband." That is, he must have but one wife and be true to her. After saying "Let each man have his own wife" (I Cor. 7:2) Paul explained in verses 32-34 that under certain conditions some single men could be better servants of the Lord than they could be if married. If any of these passages had forbidden celibacy without exception, then Paul certainly would have exercised his "right to lead about a wife." He was qualified for work in every capacity; he was not married. Some have not the "continency" of Paul, but others do have it. In answer to the question: "Can a man be a bishop or a deacon that has no wife?" David Lipscomb said:

"We believe an unmarried or childless man, if otherwise qualified, may be a bishop or a deacon. I think where the Scripture says "the husband of one wife" it means he must have but one wife and be true to her." Queries and Answers (Kurfees).

3. Rule well his own house. Qualification for the work of an elder is the only thing required here. Experience in the training of children supplies that qualification. That experience and qualification can be, and have been, obtained by a man who is not the father of the children trained. A man who has failed in the training of children, or who has never had experience in training them, certainly could not "take care of the church of God." The man who has proved through either failure or inexperience that he "knoweth not how to rule his own house" is precluded from the eldership.

"Then he speaks of his having children. It means, since the rule was to have children, if he has them, he must rule them well. "But if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (I Tim. 3:5) This shows the end of the wife and children was disciplinary to teach and train the persons for the work of caring for the house of God. Now if a man gets his training in some other way and shows his fitness of ruling, even though he has no family of his own, shall the church be deprived of his proved talent? Queries and Answers (Kurfees).

(These quotations from Lipscomb and Sewell are given because of the confidence that so many have in their ability as teachers, and not because I consider them to be authorities in religious matters.)

4. Temperate. Temperance or self-control demands that he partake only to a mild and helpful degree of things beneficial, and abstain totally from things harmful and hurtful. Also, he should be temperate in his criticism of the faults of the weak, temperate in his praise of others, temperate in all things.

5. Sober-minded. His mind must be so trained that he, is not thrown off balance, but still can exercise good judgment and retain the proper use of all his mental faculties, even when under the most trying circumstances of adversity, prosperity, or opposition from the most unscrupulous adversary.

6. Apt to teach. He must not only be able to commit unto others the things taught in God's word, but he must be able also to defend the truth against error. His aptitude to teach must be of a sufficient degree to enable him "both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers." (Titus 1:9) "For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers... whose mouths must be stopped." Elders must be prepared to do this. Controversy with gainsayers is excellent training in the development of this qualification.

7. Given to hospitality. An elder should be generous in his reception and entertainment of strangers or guests. His home should be an example to all others in genuine hospitality. This forbids all churlishness on the part of an elder, both in the church and in the home.

8. Orderly. Only those who are observant of order and well-regulated procedure in their own lives can conduct the work and worship in such a way that "all things be done decently and in order" in the church. Orderly teachers make orderly disciples.

9. Lover of good. A lover of good does not love to do evil things. He endeavors to develop traits of goodness in his own life, highly esteems such qualities in others, and
welcomes every opportunity to “work that which is good toward all men.”

10. Just. He must be impartial and fair in all his relationships with men of any race or class, conforming always to truth and proper standard. He will be neither tyrannical nor unreasonable in his requirements and expectations of others. His requirements must not exceed the demands of the Lord.

11. Holy. Only the consecrated, clean, sincere, and gracious in heart are suitable for the leadership of a “holy nation.” The flock of God needs a living example of holiness; the elders must supply that need. A group seldom rises above its leaders.

12. Gentle. There are times when an inflexible and unyielding attitude by the elders is indispensable. When conditions demand it, such an attitude should be assumed; but conditions do not always require it. The elders come in contact with people and problems that require only mild and soothing words. One who has not developed the quality of gentleness will not be able to guide some of the brethren in the way of righteousness, nor solve some of the problems that arise.

13. Holding to the word. Elders sometimes are tempted for the sake of “policy” to deviate from the plain path of God’s word. Their convictions, based upon a clear understanding of the truth, should never allow them to turn to the right or to the left, regardless of how great the pressure from the adversary. They must hold to the faithful word uncompromisingly in all matters of work, worship and discipline; no man can be an elder until he learns to do this. The word must be his sole rule of faith and practice, the final appeal in all matters of church polity. It is the sword of the Spirit, and without it, one is vulnerable even to the weakest foe.

14. Good testimony from without. In order to lead the church in the great work of propagating principles of righteousness, an elder’s demeanor must be such as to win the respect and confidence of the community. The early Christians were persecuted severely, yet those who knew them well marveled at their righteous and honorable deeds of charity and self-denial. The truth they taught was opposed, but their conduct was “without reproach.” Their behavior gained some who at first rejected the word. (I Pet. 3:1) To become an elder a man must “take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men.”

Lest some conclude that it is impossible for any man to possess all these qualifications, two things should not be overlooked: (1) In apostolic days elders did exist, and therefore they did have these qualifications, without which they could not have become elders in fact. (2) Every one of these qualifications is required in some measure of all Christians. All must be blameless (Phil. 2:15); monogamous (I Cor. 7:2); training their children (Eph. 6:4); temperate (II Pet. 1:5); sober-minded (I Pet. 1:13); teachers (Heb. 5:12); hospitable (Heb. 13:2); orderly (I Cor. 14:40) lovers of good (II Tim. 3:2); just (Phil. 4:8); holy (I Pet. 2:9); gentle (Titus 3:2); holding the word (Phil. 2:16); of good testimony from without (Col. 4:5). The elders are those who have developed these Christian virtues to a degree acceptable to God for leadership.

Interdicted Evils

The Scriptures not only give the good qualities that must be acquired and developed by all who would become elders, but they also forbid men of certain disposition and behavior from becoming bishops.

1. No brawler. A brawler is a noisy, quarrelsome, pugnacious, contentious wrangler. His behavior is not conducive to that tranquil and quiet life that should characterize the people of God, and he cannot be an elder in fact, even though appointed formally by the brethren.

2. No striker. Even when a bishop is smitten, he must not strike back. Rather let him turn the other cheek also. Vengeance belongeth unto God. “Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example. ... who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not.” (I Pet. 2:23)

3. No lover of money. A lover of money is not free always from base and questionable methods of obtaining personal gain. He is a bad example. The spirit of liberality necessary for the work which the Lord has assigned to the church of Christ, would be prevented by a leadership of covetous men.

4. Not self-willed. A self-willed man has not a proper regard for the will of God, nor for the will of others when the revealed will of the Lord is not involved. He is too obstinate and unmindful of the wishes of others, and could not keep the peace among the brethren.

5. Not soon angry. One who is irritable and inflamed on every opposition has not proper control of his own temper, and cannot win and retain the respect and esteem of those with whom he is associated. This is a harmful proclivity, but by conscious effort anyone can overcome it.

6. Not a novice. Not a new convert, and not one who has departed only recently from the ranks of sectarianism, for such has not sufficient knowledge and experience to be an overseer. He has not been proved, and there is danger of his becoming “puffed up,” and consequently falling “into the condemnation of the devil.” Men occasionally enter the church with the obvious determination of assuming immediately the role of Moses and leading the church out of the wilderness. They should be reminded gently, but firmly, that the word of the Lord teaches that all must learn first, then do, then teach.

The Work Of Elders

The particular work or obligation of each member of the body of Christ is determined by his ability and opportunity to do “that which is good.” More was required of the five talent servant than was required of the servant with only two talents; more was expected of the two talent servant than of the man with only one talent; yet the obligations of the one talent man were as binding as those of the five talent servant. “And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.” (Lk. 12:48)

The elders in a congregation are the men who have developed the qualities prescribed by the Scriptures, and they are more capable in the performance of certain duties; therefore, their ability has increased their obligations to the Lord and his church, and a work has been assigned especially to them. This does not mean that no one else can do any part of the work, but they must see that the work is done as the Lord has directed.

Servants, Not Lords

The word “authority” has been used so carelessly and frequently in connection with the work of elders that some evidently have reached the conclusion that the elders occupy a place of power over the church like that of mayor over a city. That conclusion is in error. Beyond their guiding, teaching, exhorting, warning, and setting a good example for the flock, the bishops have no authority at all.

When James and John asked the Lord for places of power and authority in the kingdom, Jesus precluded forever the possibility of any man’s attaining such a place in the kingdom of Christ. He said in reply to their request: “Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,
and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 20:25-26) Those in the church who render the greatest service and exercise no authority are the first and greatest. Service belongs to the kingdom of Christ; lording it over others belongs to the kingdoms of the world.

The elders have no authority in the common acceptation of the term. The church is an absolute monarchy with Christ as sole law-maker, executive and judge. He has all authority, and not one of these three branches of his government has been delegated in any measure whatever to the eldership. The eldership is not a divinely ordained ecclesiastical court patterned after the Jewish Sanhedrin to sit in judgment, render decisions, and hand down decrees to which the rest of the brethren must humbly submit. Questions of right and wrong are already settled and fixed by the Scriptures. The elders, because of their training and experience, should be able to distinguish between right and wrong in all matters of church work, and it is their duty as shepherds to lead the flock in the right way by teaching and guiding them, and not by manifestoes, decrees, and "official acts." In matters of mere preference all Christians, except the self-willed (qualified elders are not self-willed) are willing for the wishes of the congregation to be carried out. There is no need of an ecclesiastical court on earth. The New Testament contains the decisions and decrees of Christ the sole Judge, the Supreme and only Court. Men, in order to become elders, had to learn what these decrees are, and having learned them they must teach them to others, and entreat others to obey them; they are not to usurp judicial authority and become a court themselves.

Elders are fallible and some of them are wrong sometimes in both teaching and conduct. To the elders of a certain church Paul said, "From among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20:30) In matters of disciplining the disorderly they have erred many times, and their "official acts" have been contrary to the Scriptures and harmful to the church. This is especially true when they meet in a secret chamber and assume "authority" to withdraw the church by "official act" from a disorderly member, sometimes even never even reporting the "action of the elders" to the church; or if reported, they merely announce that the elders have withdrawn the church from a certain wrong-doer. One member or group of members cannot withdraw others from any wrong-doer by an "official act." Withdrawing is an individual act to be performed by each person in the church. Paul said: "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." (II Thess. 3:6) This means that each Christian himself must sever all social relations with the disorderly, and "have no company with" them (I Cor. 5:9); "with such a one no, not to eat" (I Cor. 5:11); but "mark them. . . and turn away from them." (Rom. 16:17) This cannot be done by proxy. The elders, with their training and knowledge of the word, are in a better position to know from whom to withdraw; therefore, they should set the example by severing all social intercourse with the persistent sinner, should warn the brethren against him, and teach them to follow the admonition of the Scriptures and "not to keep company" with the one to be disciplined. If social relations with the erring are not discontinued, he is not withdrawn from in fact.

The Scriptures say: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them:" (Heb. 13:17) in the seventh verse it says: "Considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith." To what extent are the elders to be obeyed? When and in what are they to be imitated? In what way do the elders "have the rule over you?" These are questions of practical importance and they must be answered in the light of revealed truth.

The command to obey is applicable only when the elders speak "unto you the word of God." (Heb. 13:7) Some elders in times past have spoken "pervasive things," and it is possible for them to do so today. In such cases, of course "we must obey God rather than men." When any man in the church speaks "unto you the word of God," he should be obeyed. (See I Cor. 16:16) To that extent all must be "subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." (Eph. 5:21) Only in that sense and to that extent are the elders to be obeyed. The order in Heb. 13:17 was given because they were speakers of the word of God. When they speak anything else, the order does not apply. The example of the elders is to be imitated in so far only as they imitate Christ. Paul said: "Be ye imitators of me," then qualified the statement with the clause, "even as I also am of Christ." (I Cor. 11:1) Just that far and no further must all Christians imitate one another.

Because of their proved ability as spiritual workers, the elders are able to win the confidence, respect, and admiration of all the true and faithful members of the church; therefore they have a greater influence for righteousness among the flock than others who do not possess their spiritual attainments. The qualifications of elders, which have already been presented, are nothing more than traits of Christian character which must be developed by all who would have the greatest influence for good among the brethren. Through their influence of example and teaching, the elders "have the rule over you," and in no other way. When a man, by his teaching and manner of life, leads people into the way of truth and righteousness, he is ruling over them in fact, whether the people know it or not. When Peter told the elders to exercise the oversight, he charged them strictly to do so by "making yourselves examples to the flock," and not by "lording it over the charge allotted to you." (I Pet. 5:3) That is the way elders must rule and exercise the oversight. Exercising "authority" over others is "lording" it over others. (Compare Matt. 20:25 and I Pet. 5:3) Both the authority and the lordship in the church have been retained by Christ. Strictly speaking the elders have neither.

The Office Of A Bishop

The word "office" as applied in the Scriptures to a work in the church does not have the same connotation as when used in connection with a civil government. In the government of the world when a man is inducted into office he can do that which it would be unlawful for him to do if he were not in this office. In the church it has no such meaning. The work of an elder is not official in the sense it would be unlawful if done by other children of God.

The bishops have an office only in the sense that all Christians and all members of the human body have offices. "For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ (Rom. 12:4-5).

The eyes, the ears, and the hands are officers in the sense that they have a work to do for the good of the human body. All the members of Christ's spiritual body, including the elders, are officers in the sense that they have a work to do for the good of the spiritual body. All Christians have the office of priest. (I Pet. 2:9) All are "kings and priests unto God." (Rev. 1:6) but the office of kings and priests in the church should not be exalted above the work of kings and priests. Nor should the office of a
bishop be exalted above the work of a bishop. There is no separate Greek word for the term office in I Tim. 3:1, where it applies to the bishops only. There is a separate word for the term in Rom. 12:4, where it applies to all children of God.

### Duties Assigned

From the specific duties given below, it is plain that the work or office of an elder is to serve, not to subjugate; to convince, not to command; to beseech, not to browbeat: to guide, not to goad.

1. **Examples to the flock.** (I Pet. 5:3) Elders are examples or patterns in which the excellencies of Christ are exemplified to all the flock. When Paul admonished them to “take heed unto yourselves” (Acts 20:28), he placed upon them the duty of so guarding their lives that nothing evil may creep in and prevent their being good examples for the church. Their conduct and teaching must be such that none will go astray in following them. They must be good examples in everything that is right for a Christian to do. To fall in this duty is to cease to be an elder. Salt that has lost its savor “is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.” (Matt. 5:13)

   All the people of God are taught to lead exemplary lives. (I Pet. 2:12) But the elders, because of their highly developed spiritual traits, are more Christ-like, and therefore better examples, or should be.

2. **Exercising the oversight.** (I Pet. 5:2) Never was a more important or more sacred obligation given to men. A “charge” has been “allotted” to the elders. That charge is “God’s heritage,” and they must endeavor continuously to protect that charge from all evil, to feed it proper food, and to build it up in the most holy faith. Though they themselves do not do all the teaching, nor lead all the singing, they must see that the work is done in the most effective way possible; they must see that all error is expunged from both sermon and song.

   As has already been pointed out, they are to exercise the oversight by teaching the truth and “making yourselves examples to the flock,” and not by exercising authority and “lording it over the charge allotted to you.” (I Pet. 5:1; 3)

3. **Feed the church.** (Acts 20:28) To feed the church is to teach it the word of God. Without this spiritual food a Christian cannot grow, nor even live spiritually. The people of God must be taught their duty as citizens in the kingdom, and they must be “indoctrinated” so they will not be tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine that blows, and for these reasons God gave some to be pastors (shepherds). See Eph. 4:11-15. Through a knowledge of the word the faith of the church is increased, the adversary is defeated, and greater activity for righteousness is produced. The elders must supply that knowledge.

4. **Tend the flock.** (I Pet. 5:2) This means the elders must watch in behalf of souls, lead into the way of truth by word and example, and protect the flock from the evil one.

   Once when certain new and fantastic theories were pervading the churches and causing disturbance in many sections of the country, the elders of a local church sent for a capable preacher to come and deliver a few sermons presenting the Scriptures that expose the fallacy of those theories. Though the theories had never entered their “charge,” these elders knew that the souls of those in whose behalf they must watch would be exposed sooner or later to the theories. They knew the souls of the people could be protected from those theories only by acquainting the people with the Scriptures that condemn them. Those elders knew how to “tend the flock of God” and to watch in behalf of souls.

   In view of the true elder’s wide experience, noble attainments, sacred obligations, and holy duties, he deserves the hearty cooperation, high esteem, and earnest prayers of every person in the church. No charge should be received against him, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses (I Tim. 5:19), and his burdens should not be made heavier by thoughtless and unjust criticism. “But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work’s sake.” (I Thess. 5:12, 13) Each must give an account for his attitude toward his God-made leaders.

### How Elders Are Made

Two kinds of elders are now extant. There are man-made elders and there are God-made elders. The man-made ones are elders in name only; they are a hindrance to the work, and it is better for a church not to have any than to have that kind. The God-made elders are filling a divine purpose, and no church ever had too many of that kind.

   To the elders of the church at Ephesus Paul said, “The Holy Spirit hath made you bishops.” (Acts 20:28) But whom does the Holy Spirit make to be elders, and how does he make them? In I Tim. 3, and in Titus 1, the qualifications are clearly stated. Other Scriptures give the work that men with said qualifications must do. Any man with the prescribed qualifications who does the work assigned to elders is a God-made elder whether he is ever ordained by formal ceremonies or not. A man who possesses the ability which the scriptural qualifications give him, but who does not use that ability in doing the work assigned to men with such attainments, is sinning against God and the church.

   The Scriptures teach that every one must do what he is able to do, are so abundant that no one can deny this truth. Any man who is not doing the work he is qualified to do, certainly should be urged through the teaching of God’s word to do that work. This is all that the Holy spirit does in making elders, so far as the Scriptures show.

### The Word “Appoint”

In Titus 1:5, Paul said: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee the charge.” In this verse Paul did not leave Titus upon his own initiative and opinion in the manner of appointing, but he told him to do it “as I gave thee charge:” then he repeated that charge by naming certain qualifications or traits of Christian character which Titus must develop in the Cretans by teaching, training, exhorting, and reproving them. In this manner elders were made-appointed. The meaning of the word “appoint” in Titus 1:5 does not include a formal ceremony of any kind; the word does not necessarily imply a formal ceremony, and there is not one word in the context to give the slightest indication that there was a formal ceremony. Young’s Analytical Concordance shows that the word “appoint” in Titus 1:5, and the word “make” in II Pet. 1:3, are translated from the same Greek word, kathistemi. Peter made (kathistemi) Christians to “be not idle nor unfruitful” by their acquisition of the traits laid down in II Pet. 1:5-7. Titus appointed (kathistemi) Christians to be “bishops” by their acquisition of the traits laid down in Titus 1:6-9. After attaining the specified traits by growth and development, no formal inauguration was necessary in either case. If formal ceremonies are not implied by kathistemi in II
Pet. 1:8, why should we conclude that such formalities are implied by kathistemi in Titus 1:8?

The word “appoint” in Acts 14:23 does not come from the same Greek word as in Titus 1:5, yet the context shows that the apostles “appointed for them elders in every church” in the same way that Titus appointed them. Acts 14:22 shows that Paul remained with these churches, teaching them, confirming their souls, and exhorting them till “they had appointed for them elders in every church.” After certain ones in these churches had been taught, confirmed in the faith, exhorted and developed, certainly Paul would urge them to do the work of elders, which they now were qualified to do. This is all that the meaning of the word “appoint” in this passage includes. It is true that our English word “appoint” has many meanings; but no word has two meanings in the same usage. Therefore we have tried to find its meaning as used in Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5, where it is used in connection with elders. We have not found that its meaning includes a formal ceremony in either passage.

Our word “appoint,” like our word “election,” has been associated so freely and frequently with some kind of inaugural ceremony, until it is difficult for some to think of the word without giving it that connotation. The Christian’s “election” is mentioned in I Thess. 1:4; but that does not mean he entered the church by a vote of its members, though in some usages of the word it might include in its meaning a popular vote; but it does not have that meaning when it is used with reference to a Christian’s “election.” And so it is with the word “appoint.” In some of its usages it might include in its meaning a formal induction into office; but it does not have that meaning when used with reference to an elder’s appointment, as already shown.

Difficulties Encountered

Before a church undertakes to induct men into the “office of a bishop” by some kind of formal inauguration, it should consider carefully certain difficulties that are sure to arise.

1. If a new Testament precedent for such formality cannot be found, those who follow any particular formal ceremony must necessarily walk by human opinion, and not by faith. When we must close our Bibles and look to human opinion for guidance, mistakes are more than probable. I have never found that New Testament precedent.

2. When a church attempts to place men in the eldership by such ceremonies, it faces the danger of having two sets of elders—a man-made set and a God-made set. If unqualified men are inaugurated, as is often the case, then that church has man-made elders, and such are always more harmful than helpful.

3. If some in the church are formally inducted into the eldership and others of equal or superior qualifications are not so inducted, as is often the case, the church is sure to get the idea that only the inaugurated ones are elders or have the right to do the work of elders.

This is an injustice to all the qualified uninagurated, and the Lord’s plan is not unjust. It is a denial of their scriptural rights to do the work which they have trained themselves to do, and which the Scripture teaches they must do.

4. Once the precedent of making elders by formal ordination is set by a church, then any scheming preacher who may get into the congregation is given an open door for his unscrupulous selfishness. If such a preacher is a good politician, he can pick his own men for the eldership, and with the unscriptural conception of “the author-

4. “How may we know who the elders are, if there is not some kind of formal induction into the office?”

The best way to find out who the janitor is, is by standing around for a while and seeing who does the work of a janitor. If one does not do the work of a janitor, he is not a janitor in fact, though formally appointed. The best way to find out who the elders are, is by standing around for a while and seeing who does the work of elders. If one does not do the work of an elder, he is not an elder in fact, though formally appointed. How could a church formally appoint only scripturally qualified men to the eldership without first knowing who those men are? If they already know, before formal appointment, who the qualified men are, then question Number 4 is answered.

5. “If elders are not formally appointed, who has authority to discipline the disorderly?”
Again that idea of authority bobs up. What step in correcting the erring does a man have the authority to take after his ceremonial induction into the eldership, that he did not have the authority to take before his induction? “If a man be overtaken in any trespass,” every one who is spiritual must make an effort to restore him. (Gal. 6:1) “If thy brother sin against thee,” you are to take the first step in disciplining him (Matt. 18:15) If he persists in his wrong-doing, the withdrawing, as an act of discipline, is an individual act to be performed by every member of the church, as already shown. All this could be done scripturally even in a congregation that had no elders at all.

6. “Will not the formal appointment give the elders a feeling of confidence and assurance?”

It more frequently gives them a feeling of authority and lordship and ruins them. That “feeling” of authority and lordship produced the Roman Catholic system.

7. “Have any of our scholarly preachers taught that qualified men, who do the work, are elders whether they are formally appointed or not?”

If the New Testament teaches a thing, it should not make any difference what “our scholarly preachers” have taught. But for the benefit of those with whom it does make a difference, I will say that it was taught by David Lipscomb, on page 197, in Queries and Answers; by E. G. Sewell, on page 203 of the same book; by M. C. Kurfees, on page 391, in Biographies and Sermons, and it is a known fact that he held this view throughout his long ministry.

8. “Is not the word “appoint” a generic term like the word “go,” and are we not at liberty to choose any one of its specifics?”

It is true that the terms “appoint” and “go” are generic terms, and both have several specifics. It is also true that when the Lord designates a specific of any generic term, then that specific becomes indispensable to the obedience of the command contained in the generic term. When the Lord said “go,” he did not designate any specific of that term, therefore the apostles were at liberty to set aside any specific of the term and go by any method they chose. But when Titus was told to “appoint,” a specific of that term was designated, as already shown by the context of Titus 1:5. Titus was told to “appoint,...as I gave thee charge,” and thus the specific was designated. The context shows that he appointed by teaching, training and developing certain qualifications among the Cretans. Since he had to do it “as I gave thee charge,” it necessarily follows that that was the way he had been charged to do it. Therefore that specific way of doing it becomes indispensable to the command enjoined by the word “appoint,” and we are not left to choose our own specific of the term, as we are in the term “go.”

9. “Has it proved successful, when practiced?”

Many congregations attest the fact that it is both practical and successful. The history of the work of the Haldeman Avenue Church in Louisville, for the last fifty years, abundantly proves the practicality of God’s method of making elders. Anyone who will visit Haldeman Avenue and carefully observe its work of charity, its fellowship, its loyalty to truth, its firm opposition to error wherever found, the ability of its elders, its unity through all these years, its evangelistic work at home and in destitute places, the spirituality of its members, the number of weak congregations it is now aiding, the thousands of tracts distributed each year, or any other phase of work the Lord teaches the church to do, surely will be convinced of the success of the Lord’s way of making elders. Haldeman Avenue does not claim perfection, but when it comes to the practicality of the truth under consideration, it is not ashamed to compare its work with that of other congregations in existence today. During all the period of digression and speculation that has sprung up in congregations around it, Haldeman Avenue church has stood as a mighty fortress against it all; it has never divided, nor even approached division. Therefore the success and practicality of this truth is proved, if Haldeman Avenue church is successful and practical.
enthusiasm and growth has been preceded and accompanied by a marked increase in Biblical preaching and evangelistic fervor.

The period of the apostles was, of course, the time of the greatest preaching the church has known. One cannot read the record of their labors without realizing how intense was the evangelistic zeal of the church in that day. And the gospel spread into every part of the Empire. Thousands became obedient to the truth; the church was in full swing, and seemed destined to sweep the earth with the gospel of Christ.

Scarce had the apostles died, however, until inertia set in. For three hundred years there was no really great preaching to be heard. Apostacy was working its deadly influence throughout the whole church. Compromise was the order of the day.

Then for a brief time came the revival of the fourth century. Commenting on the characteristics of the preaching of this era, Dargan (History Of Preaching, p. 70) says,

"Preaching is largely exposition of Scripture, often on a short text, sometimes continuous on whole books, or on subjects. Doctrine also becomes now increasingly important as homiletical material."

Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa (younger brother of Basil), and John Chrysostom were the outstanding preachers of this period. And their sermons which are extant, especially those of Chrysostom, are almost like commentaries in their Biblical content. Here is solid expository preaching—none of your seeking after sensational tid-bits to tickle the palates of sermon-tasting dilettantes.

Under such preaching the church was revived. Religious enthusiasm flamed again; evangelism became the watchword of the day. And had Chrysostom had successors of his calibre to continue the work, it is not at all impossible that the great apostacy into Catholicism might have been averted.

But alas! those successors were not. So the church entered the dark ages, going into eclipse for over eight hundred years. During this period there were a few only—a few outstanding preachers. And their voices were drowned in the chaotic confusion accompanying the rise of the papal power.

With the twelfth century came the heralds of the dawn—the dawn of a new day in preaching and in religion. It wasn't time for the Reformation yet—not by three hundred years. But the work of Luther would have been utopian—absolutely impossible had it not been for the preparation made by such men as Bernard of Clairvaux (1091—1138), Peter Abelard (d. 1142), Thomas Aquinas (1227—1274), and Francis of Assissi (1182—1226). These men were all Catholics, but they saw dimly what Luther saw more fully—that Catholicism as then practiced was something altogether foreign to both the teaching and spirit of Christ and the apostles. And the sermons of these great preachers are in sharp contrast to the sermons of their contemporaries. For they are overwhelmingly Biblical in content and evangelical in tone.

Under the persuasive power of such preaching religious enthusiasm swept the world, culminating, to be sure, in the misguided Crusades. But nevertheless the church attained a prestige and an influence which she had not had for eight hundred years.

After the death of this group of outstanding preachers there came another slump in religious zeal, with only an occasional man of power rising above the common crowd to give mankind a renewed vision of the power of the gospel. And these preachers, forerunners of the Reformation, were without exception men who relied strongly on Biblical themes and evangelistic zeal in their work. Among them the best known are probably John Hus of Bohemia, John Wycliffe of England, and Jerome Savonarola of Italy.

Then came the Protestant Reformation with its great emphasis on both the Bible and evangelism. These were the two factors that assured its success. With such powerful exponents as Luther, Calvin, and Knox, and with Biblical preaching and evangelistic zeal, the reasons for the tremendous influence of this movement are easily seen.

To thinking Christians the lesson from this hasty glance at the history of preaching and of religious influence is obvious—and portentous.

For unless we be deceived there is present within the church of Christ today a discernible trend away from both Biblical preaching and evangelistic fervor. And except there be a general awakening to the situation, we anticipate shortly a toboggan-slide ride down the greased chute of apostacy—if indeed that ride has not already begun.

To be more specific, we have become not a little disturbed, for one thing, by the absence from too many of our meetings of the old time Biblical themes which our forefathers thrilled and through which they gave the Restoration movement its first great impetus. Instead of these themes—themes which required much detailed and expositional preaching from the Book itself—we are likely to have a variety of pep talks on a multitude array of trivialities.

Right along with that tendency, for another thing, has grown up the idea that the "local preacher" (whom the churches seem determined to make a pastor in every-thing but name) can do all the evangelizing necessary in any given territory. Hence there is a general disposition to follow the sectarian practice and practically abandon all concerted evangelistic efforts.

Thus we believe we can see working even now in the church the twin evils that have brought on every great apostacy in the history of Christendom—a decline in the Biblical content of sermons, and a lessening of evangelistic fervor.

But if the danger is obvious, we can thank God that the remedy is no less so. It can be stated in few words: preachers who will preach the gospel, and churches which will sacrifice to support such preaching. This way lies the salvation of the church; any other course will surely be disastrous.
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