

Macedonian Call

"Come Over into Macedonia and Help Us."—(Acts 16:9.)

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The World Outlook in Religion

THIS ISSUE of the Macedonian Call has been turned over to a subject which we have neglected very much through the past fifteen years—Church Government. And it has been neglected to our sorrow. The words "Church Government" look cold, and they seem to name a dry subject. We ask the reader to peruse with care the material we have gathered together for it. The world is languishing. And why? I believe it is because there is so much hypocrisy among professed Christians. In the first place, the modernists are hypocrites for pretending to teach the gospel, yet tearing it down. And leaders of churches who are in official position are not true Christians in life, so many of them. And—the great mass of the people are not living the devoted lives the Lord ordains, and have little conviction. Read carefully the clippings we have given. Let us restore the LIFE and DEVOTION of the early Christians as well as the doctrine, and possibly we can accomplish more for the Lord.

The Political Outlook

I need not tell you about the gloomy outlook in the civil governments of the world. Hitler tried to rule the earth. Stalin now would do the same. Nations generally are for themselves without regard for the rights of others. Almost every nation internally is in a turmoil with some trying to gain advantage over others. Capital would dominate labor if it could, and labor would be even a worse tyrant than capital if it gets the chance. Pride, ambition, selfishness are at the bottom of it all. Christ alone can take this out of the hearts of men, but it seems that men do not wish to have anything to do with him. Even churches are often dominated by selfish and ambitious men.

RELIGION IN THE WORLD IN GENERAL

"Life" Magazine recently sent a man around the world to investigate the condition of religion. He found according to his notion that there was considerable interest in the hereafter, but that organized religion had little hold upon the people. The Magazine for March 10, says, "While these things are true they do not alter the fact that institutional religion has little influence over the masses and over contemporary social orders and agencies . . . Such is the universal paradox—man under such terror of the future that he is turning with new openness of mind to a spiritual interpretation of life, while the churches are less and less able to command the active loyalty of the masses."

Man is a worshipping animal, but it is certainly true that he is turning away from the churches. And why? What have the churches with their Modernism to give them? They preach now a social gospel, but not the faith of Jesus Christ. Religion Organizations are too often in the hands of ambitious and selfish men. In other words, the churches are well filled from top to bottom with hypocrisy, and the masses are turning from such.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM BY ITSELF DOES NOT LIFT MAN FAR

For a thousand years through the Dark Ages, it had a good chance: having nearly all the civil and religious authority over men, yet we know what was the condition of the world, what an utter failure it made. The reason was that it did not give the Bible to the people, but kept it from them. It was not till the Reformation came that men began to progress in morals and even civil matters. Romanism, then, to protect itself had to inaugurate a counter-reformation. To see the truthfulness of my statements, let one compare the countries where Romanism has had supreme sway with the countries where protestantism had had most of the power. Look at Spain, South American countries, the Philippines before America took them over, etc., etc., and they are all backward and degenerate in many ways. Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany before the Kaiser and Hitler gained control, and England and the United States have stood at the head of the nations in advancement and in liberty.

The reason is that the great principles of truth and righteousness found in the free circulation of the Bible have led these nations ahead of the Romanist nations where the Bible has been restricted. Protestant denominations have been had enough in political manipulation in the bishops, but Romanism has been far worse. That Romanism is impotent to pull herself up is practically admitted by a Catholic bishop himself. In the daily newspapers for March 12, 1947, we have this:

CHICAGO, March 12—The most Rev. John F. Noll, Catholic bishop of Ft. Wayne, Ind., today asserted that "80 per cent of the Protestant affiliation is rural, and it is in rural America where family life is most wholesome and where the divorce rate is still low."

"On the other hand," Bishop Noll added in an address at the 15th annual convention of the National Catholic Conference on Family Life, "where the bulk of Catholics live, one-half of the marriages end in divorce. It

is where they are located that the big motion picture houses are located, the filthy magazine racks, the taverns and gambling halls."

Bishop Noll told the conference "the restoration of the family is nearly hopeless because in the last generation we did not sufficiently stress the obligation on the part of every child of God to live in keeping with that relationship (of the family), and because even now we seldom remind them of their obligations in the army of Christ to fight for the acceptance of His code of conduct.

"In the large cities, where we (the Catholics) constitute from one-third to two-thirds of the entire population, we should have long been exerting leadership as campaigners for Christ. Instead our people have been sycophantic followers.

"Nearly all the evils of society prevail where we live and not where Protestants live. There are only 7,000,000 members of the Protestant churches in the 50 largest cities of the United States where there are 20,000,000 of us."

PROTESTANTISM "HAS" BLESSED THE WORLD BUT "NOT" SO MUCH NOW

Chillingworth, a great disputant of a few centuries ago, cried, "The Bible, I say the Bible, only, is the religion of the Protestant." And it was because Protestantism did try to restore the Bible to the people that she did so much good to the world. She preached a heaven and a hell, and a judgment where all men must answer for the deeds done in the body. But those glorious days are past, for Modernism has left heaven in the Bible but thrown out hell. The leaders talk much of a "social gospel" but little of the gospel of Christ which brought them into existence. The world can not be elevated by a mere human philosophy which they try to reduce Christianity to.

There are millions of people in the power of the Federal Council of Churches who still believe the Bible but the organizations have been captured by the few modernists. As in Russia there are only a few communists who rule that great country, so in Protestantism there are the few who have gotten a hold of the machinery of churches and are running the whole to suit themselves not God who established the Church. The only remedy for it all is to get back to the simple Church of the New Testament with elders who are humble and who guide the Church according to God's will and not their own.

But here again comes in human nature. Paul warned the Church at Ephesus night and day for three years that "grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also, from among your own selves, (the eldership), shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20.) Even a professed true Church of Christ today can move along all right for a little while, and then the very thing that Paul warned of concerning Ephesus, comes to pass here. Ambitious preachers will enter the Church, and unscrupulous elders will arise and try to become lords. Older brethren in the Church know these things and have warned, but younger ones, can not, can not, see. Our brethren across the waters in England and Scotland understand these things, and so do older preachers in America, and hence we print quotations from them:

BRITISH BRETHREN ON "THE MINISTRY OF BISHOPS"

We have just received two booklets on "The Bible and the Church," which is a report of Addresses at a series of studies held at the Church of Christ, Hindley, England, June 1-13, 1946. It is excellent reading, containing speeches by different brethren. Bro. F. C. Day has an article on "The Ministry of Bishops", which I wish I had space to copy in full, but can at this time give only a few excerpts which are important as we study Church Government.—Pub. M. C.

Nearly all the evils in the Church have arisen from bishops desiring POWER more than LIGHT. They want AUTHORITY not OUTLOOK. Whereas their real office is not to rule; though it may be vigorously to exhort and rebuke; it is the king's office to rule; the bishop's office to oversee the flock; to number it sheep by sheep; to be always ready to give full account of it. Now it is clear he can not give account of the souls, if he has not so much as numbered the bodies of his flock. The first thing, therefore, that a bishop has to do is to put himself in a position in which, at any moment, he can obtain the history from childhood of every living soul in his diocese. Down in that back street, Bill and Nancy, knocking each other's teeth out!—Does the bishop know all about it? . . .

Peter says, "Tend the flock," be a shepherd. The imitable teaching of Jesus on this subject is given in Luke 15: 3-7. "And he spake unto them this parable, saying, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulder rejoicing." . . .

It is no excuse to pretend that as you have not been ordained a bishop then you are not responsible. Every member of the Church, as he grows older in service, must become better able to discharge those duties that devolve upon him. We are saved to serve. As we grow up some one younger is watching and emulating our conduct. The elders must give counsel in difficulties; give instruction and warning. This can only be done as we ourselves grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We must know the Word before we can teach it to others, the Word that is able to make us wise unto salvation. Such men will not need to give addresses on what should be the Church's duties towards elders. Their lives will teach that, and they will be respected for their work's sake, and be worthy of the confidences of all. . . .

The elders should not be the only teachers. Elders will find much to occupy their time in carrying out work at the meetings, but should find time for visitation and prayer. They should be an exemplification of what James says is pure religion and undefiled before God and Father, by visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction and keeping themselves unspotted from the world.

AN OCTOGENARIAN MEDITATES ON THE CHURCH

W. W. Otey whom I have known for half a century, writes in the Firm Foundation, an article on "Meditation at Four Score Years". He presents some conclusions which I consider worth passing on. I shall comment some after each paragraph.—Pub. M. C.

"For years I have observed that much of our preaching and writing is legalistic rather than spiritual, and with not much more heart appeal than a treatise on mathematics or a lecture on physics."

He is exactly right. When I was a boy I was disgusted in preachers discoursing on Baptism when there was not a person in the house that had not been baptized, and I determined then that when I became a preacher I would try to give the brethren something suitable to their needs. The whole brotherhood has been more legalistic than devotional from the beginning. Ever we have emphasized the form of baptism to be observed rather than the "raised-to-walk-in-newness-of-life" to be lived. Had we talked half as much about "putting Christ on in baptism" as in being dipped in the water, the Church of Christ would be an institution altogether different. **A Church that is not a spiritual Church is no Church at all**, and hence though this paper has said much on Christian Living, it intends more and more to emphasize the purity of life Christians are to live. Our troubles come because of a lack of full conversion.

"I have observed that some church members will rally to the defense of an immoral preacher, and denounce the one who reproves the sinner. They consider it a greater sin to rebuke the sinner than to be guilty of the sin. This I have never been able to understand."

Who does understand such? It shows that many professed Christians are converted to the man, instead of to Christ, and are following men; then when their idol is rebuked they resent it. The same is true of doctrinal sins. If one tries to show the dangerous trends of preachers some adore, they will fight the reprover even though they are opposing the plain Word of God.

"I have observed that a desire to have the pre-eminence, to be 'leaders', has engendered jealousy, envy, and caused most of our factions to be established."

Yes, is it not true that the desire for pre-eminence like that of James and John, is the cause of most of the trouble in the Church, and even in the world in general? Preachers wish to become the leaders of churches and thus usurp authority over the elders. Elders wish to be lords over God's heritage and squelch any reproof of their machinations, and cast out of the church those who contend for God's ways. Some are ambitious to get into the office of elder rather than into the work of elder. Some would try to group churches that they may be at the head of the group. And all this in the Church of the lowly Nazarene who humbled himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross that he might take such selfishness out of man's heart. Church History is a confused and saddening story of the pride and ambition of men who were supposed to be converted from such worldly ways. And the end is not yet.

DANIEL SOMMER ON ELDERS AS "HUMBLE SERVANTS, NOT BOSSES"

Bro. Sommer preached and taught the gospel nearly seventy years. One of his great fights was against the Bible Colleges attached to the Church. After he was 83 or 84 years old he softened somewhat in his attitude toward the college PEOPLE, going contrary to his former teaching of receiving not perverters of the doctrine of Christ. We hold no man responsible after he reaches such

age, for it is according to nature to soften, and I don't wish any one to hold me responsible then, IF I change my teaching of half a century. In his book, Plain Sermons, we have a few thoughts regarding bishops and their work which may help us as we study Church Government.

—Pub. M. C.

Now we are prepared to consider that some man will say, "I think the authority that elders have should come down rather than come up—should come down from above rather than come up from the congregation." In answer to this we may safely say that when the church makes selection of a man, who, by obeying the Holy Spirit, has qualified himself to be an overseer, then the authority **does come down from above**. The Holy Spirit states the qualifications, and the Holy Spirit sets forth the teaching which a man must obey in order to develop those qualifications. Then the Holy Spirit indicates the procedure that the church should adopt in selecting the man for overseer. When all this has been done, according to the Holy Spirit's directions, then all the authority that a man has in the office of overseer, or bishop, in the eldership of the church, certainly comes down from above.

But the less a man who is to be chosen, or is chosen, to be an overseer, thinks of **AUTHORITY** vested in himself, the better it will be for him, and for the church that may choose him. The authority is to be found in the word of God, and as a humble servant of the church the business of the overseer is to do everything which that word requires of him, in a humble manner. The same is true of deacons and evangelists. The less men think and say about their authority, the better it will be for them, especially in the Church of Christ. As a rule, the more a man is disposed to think of authority (and "obedience" and "rebellion" and "insubordination"—D. A. S.) the less he is fitted for official position in the church, or anywhere else.

Though elders and deacons are, more than any others, responsible for the work of executing, or carrying out, the divine will, in the congregations that choose them, yet they should attend to that work as humble **SERVANTS**, and not as **BOSSES**. All elders, deacons, and evangelists, who have the idea of authority encircling in their little heads should study these words of the Savior: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and that they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20: 25-28.) This was spoken to the apostles who were to be the highest earthly officials in the church, and it should cause all ideas of authority, or greatness, to be banished. . . .

What is the remedy for all this where it exists? What is the teaching which will avoid all this? The Savior's words as already quoted in regard to being servants, must be considered. Then the 6th chapter of Acts must be considered. The apostles had authority to do everything connected with the church. But instead of taking the entire matter into their own hands they called the multitude of the disciples together. They laid the matter before them. And that which they said "pleased the whole multitude." As a result, everything on that occasion was done in a satisfactory manner. And this is the only plan by which a congregation can be kept in a

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favorable frame of mind, and be led to co-operate with the officers. Those officers who don't know this much, or don't care whether the congregation is kept in a favorable frame of mind or not, are not fit for their positions. If they will not learn this much they will scatter the church. Thus it has been, thus it is, and thus it will be.

The apostles consulted the congregation in regard to the selection of men for the work which deacons are required to do. The evangelists are required to follow the example of the apostles in this particular. Therefore, they must consult the congregation in selecting both deacons and elders. Then, the deacons and elders must follow the same example in selecting preachers, and in transacting all other business of the church. They must do this if they would have the church to be united, and happy, and prosperous.

"OBEY", "RULE", "SUBMIT"—Hebrews 13:17

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you."—(Hebrews 13:17.)

The idea that some try to enforce today is that this passage shows that Christians should obey elders with a blind obedience, much as Germans did Hitler in the War. Let us examine the Greek words and see.

Hypoko—"submit"

This Greek word is used only once in the New Testament, and so one will have to go to the classical Greek to learn its true meaning, for he can not go to other passages in the New Testament. Liddell-Scott Greek-English Lexicon (which is probably the greatest classical Lexicon of the kind in the world), says: "to retire, withdraw, depart (as from ships); to retire from (one's seat) for another; to draw back from, to yield, give way, comply; to yield to (one's arguments); to submit to, to obey." The reader can easily see that Paul was not talking of blind obedience to our leaders, but of deference, respect, etc.

Hegeomai—"rule"

"To be leader, or chief."—Berry. "To be a leader, chief."—Robinson. "To lead the way, to be over; that is, to have authority over, be leader, chief; to preside, govern, rule."—Greenfield. "To go before, to go before on the way, and so to show the way, guide; to lead especially an army or fleet, and so to command, rule."—Liddell and Scott.

"To lead, guide, conduct, direct; to teach, instruct; to preside, rule, govern, reign."—Groves. "To lead, to go before; to be a leader, to rule, command; to have authority over; leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel."—Thayer.

Notice this definition of Thayer—It sounds very much like Peter's words, **"NEITHER as being LORDS over God's heritage, but being ENSAMPLES to the flock."** (1 Peter 5: 3.)

Peitho—"Obey"

"To persuade, use persuasion, seek to persuade, endeavor to convince."—Greenfield. "To bind or tie to in order to lead, turn, conduct; to persuade, convince, prevail on, influence, induce, urge."—Groves. "To persuade, to influence by persuasion, to seek to please, to conciliate, to appease, to render tranquil."—Berry. "To persuade, to conciliate, to bring over to kind feelings; to pacify, to quiet; to win over, to make friends with, to conciliate."—Robinson. "To move a person by WORDS, or ACTIONS, to anything; to persuade; to induce; to move by persuasion, or conciliate; to influence, to convince a person of anything."—Donnegan. "To prevail upon, win over by any fair means, esp. by words, to talk over, persuade; to soften, appease, propitiate, make one's friend."—Liddell and Scott. "To persuade, that is, to induce one by words to believe; to make friends of, win one's favor, gain one's good will; to seek to win one, strive to please one; to persuade unto, that is, move or induce one by persuasion to do something."—Thayer.

Reader, all this Greek would have been unnecessary, if some leaders ambitious for power had permitted the English text to explain itself. Peter explains it all when he says of elders: **"NEITHER as being LORDS over God's heritage but being ENSAMPLES (examples) to the flock."** (1 Peter 5: 3.)

I have copied these definitions direct from the seven Greek lexicons as I have them in my library. Take this essay on these words to a Greek scholar and ask him if we have not given a fair presentation of the words.

Now let us note some of the passages where the word "peitho" is used, and it will show us exactly how the elders are to cause members to "obey", "be persuaded by", them:

"Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God." (Acts 13: 43.) Did the apostles try to FORCE them to continue in the Grace of God?

"And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." (Acts 18: 4.) Did Paul here DICTATE to these Greeks and Jews as if he were a LORD over them?

"And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 19: 8.) Was Paul trying to COMPEL these people to obey him?

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26: 28.) Was not Paul REASONING with Agrippa instead of trying to coerce him?

"And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening." (Acts 28: 23.) Did

Paul say, I am a messenger from heaven, and you MUST obey me?

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. 5: 11.) Was not Paul using words to try to show these people their danger, rather than using AUTHORITY to browbeat them?

Reader, consider carefully all these passages where the same Greek word is used that is translated "obey" in Heb. 13: 17, and you will see how elders are to reason with, persuade, exhort, plead with, and be an ensample to, in order to get them to "obey" them in the sense that word is used there.

From these words, what must be the attitude and work of elders who would have Christians "obey" them? The elders are not to boss, dictate, command blind obedience, demand submission whether right or wrong; but these Greek words show the elders are "to lead the way," "go before," "show the way," "persuade," "guide," "conduct," "lead as respects influence." As Peter says, be "ensamples to the flock," "not lords over God's heritage."

A General View

Elders should be heeded in incidental and unimportant things so long as not contrary to the Scriptures. In fact, elders and "all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." (1 Peter 5:5.) And in vital things elders should be heeded, so long as they teach the Word of God. But when an elder commands anything contrary to the Word of God on vital matters, "we ought to obey God rather than men." (Peter in Acts 5: 29.)

It is true that an elder will have to answer for his guidance of members under him; and likewise a preacher will not be free from the blood of men if he fails to declare the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20.)

But when an elder is about to exclude a member and says publicly that regardless of how unreasonable or what poor judgment the members think the elders are using, it is the duty of the members to obey the elders, and they are the ones who will have to answer to God—he is using exactly the doctrine of the Church of Rome.

The Pope says, "We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." (Leo XIII.) And when such an elder commands a member to "place the unity of the Cause of Christ above all else," (as he interprets it), and bow to him, he contradicts the scripture, "first pure, then peaceable," and the member "ought to obey God rather than men."

If these lordly elders say their victims will be saved if they follow them when they are wrong, then they have the essence of the Roman Catholic clergy; but if these lordly elders say their victims will be lost if they follow them when they are wrong, then you victims would better bestir yourselves AT ONCE. God has warned you over and over again against false teachers among preachers and even in the eldership. The doctrine which says in substance, Obey the elders right or wrong, is a heresy, and will damn your souls if you follow it.

SACREDNESS OF WORK OF EVANGELISTS IF SCRIPTURAL

The work of prophets under the Old Covenant was much like that of evangelists under the New. Hear Ezekiel:

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the

wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezekiel 3: 17-21.)

Here we see the prophet who taught wrong, or failed to warn, will have to answer, and the one misled will have to answer, too.

Paul said, "I am pure from the blood of all men, FOR I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20: 26, 27.) This shows that if he had failed to declare the whole counsel of God, he would NOT have been free from the blood of all men. The preacher's word is to be obeyed, too, if it is the word of God, but if not he is to be rejected, just as the unscriptural words of elders and all others are to be rejected.

Paul commands a young preacher, "Preach the word . . . reprove, rebuke, exhort." (2 Tim. 4: 2.) If the preacher does this, the people will be lost if they do not obey; but if the preacher fails to do it, he will be lost and will have to answer for the souls led astray; and those led astray will be lost for not proving all things and holding fast that which is good.

When the preacher preaches the truth, scripturally, no elders have the right to say, Nay. To stop reproving and rebuking is to stop all means of reformation. The New Testament is made up very much of reproving and warning.

THE SACREDNESS OF THE WORK OF ELDERS, IF THEY ARE SCRIPTURAL, AND NOT SCRIPTURALLY

When elders, or bishops, are scripturally qualified and act scripturally, they certainly are to be heeded, just as the evangelist is to be heeded if he preaches the truth. But it is the truth which counts and not the person. But when elders teach error, they are no more to be obeyed than evangelists when THEY teach error. Paul warned the Ephesian elders night and day with tears against all evil evangelists who would come into the church, and against evil elders who would arise among them.

BRINGING CHARGES AGAINST ELDERS

Under normal conditions, and with men in the eldership who are reasonable, charges can be brought against elders, but there are conditions when this would be almost impossible. When preacher-elders "pack" an eldership and put in only those they can manipulate, and put them in themselves even over protest, what confidence can one have in trying to do anything with such an eldership, in an orderly way? Such men cow the members so that they fear they will be immediately cast out of the church if they should even talk of bringing charges against them. In church difficulties the members are Commanded to talk with no one but the elders.

Some people have a nice theory that elders who are prominent and shrewd and self-willed, should have charges brought against them, if they do what is unscriptural. Such theory looks nice on paper but I have seen the results of too many trials at it.

There is generally no use to try to bring charges against such elders (When they have packed the eldership), for they will manipulate things to suit themselves, and there will be charges, counter-charges, and counter-counter-charges, and the one who gets his in first, considers

himself the more scriptural, but the other one probably pays no attention. Nothing but confusion and strife, and possibly physical violence follow. Witness an attempt to try prominent elders in a far-western city of a couple of decades ago, reaching the climax when two preachers were preaching in the same meeting house at the same time, to the disgrace of the Cause of Christ, spread in the newspapers from coast to coast. Paul prayed that he might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; and he also commanded, "Come out from among them," and "Turn away from them."

WE ARE FOLLOWERS OF MEN

A sister recently wrote me, "Bro. Sommer, we have been followers of men too much." Is not this the truth? A brother said, "Brethren are not thinking for themselves, but letting others think for them." Was he not right? Paul says that when we are divided over men, we are "carnal" and hence sinful; which shows that many are sinful today when they think more of a man than they do of the truth. He that loveth father, or mother, or son, or daughter, and we might add husband, or wife, or preacher, or elder, more than me, "is not worthy of men." "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man." (Psalm 118: 8.)

GRANT UNTO THY SERVANTS BOLDNESS

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word." (Acts 4: 29.)

This needs to be the prayer of every Christian today, for we are living in an age when men and women lack conviction. They see the truth and approve it, but have not the courage to stand for it when it brings them a little persecution or sacrifice. There were such people in Jesus' day, for it is said, "Among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees (bishops) they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue (meeting house); for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12: 42, 43.)

If we think that by standing for the truth, we will be isolated, or despised, or persecuted, or excluded from the church, or lose our job, or be out of grace with the chief moguls, and we fail to obey God, we are secretarians in the fullest sense, and have no promise of acceptance with God.

"If a man come to me, and hate not (love less) his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14: 26.)

We know we ought to stand up for the truth and against evil and injustice, and "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.)

Remember that when we appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and the books are opened, one of the books will be the New Testament, and our lives will be compared with it. And if we have followed men rather than God, it surely will go ill with us, for "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12: 48.) Brethren, it will pay to be honest.

THE BLESSINGS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN AND A CHRISTIAN ONLY—No. 1

We Have Fellowship One with Another

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.—1 John 1:3.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.—1 John 4:7, 8.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in ever prayer of mine for you all making request with joy. For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.—Phil. 1:3-5.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—1 John 1:6, 7.

—Virgil Stephens, 4015 Birchwood, LeMay 23, Mo.

NOTE—Bro. Stephens gave only the references, but we have quoted the passages in full, and will continue the same subject two more issues. Why not the PARENTS of MANY young disciples TAKE the time to help them to look up references on some devotional subject of about the length above, and write out in full the passage like we have put them above? It will help the young people learn important scriptures, and may help the boys to arrange subjects for public work in the future.
—Editor M. C.

NOTES AND NEWS

MARCH 14—The past 5 weeks I have been advertising the church in Pomona, Calif., and the meeting now in progress. I met dozens of different faiths; when one has to swim against the stream there is all the force of the current driving him back. People are confused and know not what to believe. There are many beliefs that the mind has no right to entertain!

I enjoy the first 6 sermons by Bro. Weems and was greatly encouraged to see 20 outsiders attend the first week from where I had made personal contact. Two more weeks there by Weems and Duncan together with what advertising Pomona has done in months past may bring good reports. I hope so.

I never advertised any meeting more nor enjoyed any work better than this one.

Bro. Hall, Lovell, Okla., writes me to cooperate with Bro. Hubert James in a meeting starting there March 16th.

If God and our mediator are pleased with all our work, all will be well.—R. O. Webb, Secor, Illinois.

IN HARMONY WITH THIS ISSUE of the paper on causes of the trouble in the world, we mention that in their church affairs the New Castle elders sent out a "file" of letters pertaining to their troubles, which they said is a full account. But the letter to D. Austin Sommer, dated Nov. 13, 1947, from the St. Louis elders, is NOT in several files we have examined, and thus obviously is NOT in any. This is the most important letter in the whole series. Is this the real reason one of the elders did not wish D. A. S. to see it? In legal affairs of our land a transcript of a case is null, if it does not contain ALL the testimony when it boasts of being a full account. And the same applies here.

STOCKTON, CALIF.—Bro. Sommer, about 40 years ago in the state of W. Va., a certain old brother decided to form a kind of synod, wanted to set himself up as the big boss. He had a special meeting for the occasion to put the wheel to rolling. A number of preachers were invited. (I was quite young.) His plan was for all the churches to turn the money and business over to him; he would select the preacher for a certain place, and do the paying of the preachers. So far as I know every preacher there was in favor of the plan, except myself. All of us were asked to make a talk; and when my turn came, I exploded the plan. And the arch-bishop arose and preached my funeral. (I am still living.) "But the plague was stayed," and I never heard of it being attempted again.—J. D. Powers.

"APOSTLE PAUL AND EMILY POST"—A sister writes for several copies of the March issue which contains that article, so that her group of girls may put the article in their scrap book. Good idea! We have several left over—send for as many as you need. And we ask our readers to send us any good devotional spiritual article which they think may help others.

too, for henceforth we wish to make the Macedonian Call a really spiritual paper, to try to overcome the great weakness among all professed Christians. And of course we will have short articles on the Apostolic Church. So the paper will be an ideal one to hand to wordly people or denominational people who are disgusted with the hypocrisy among professed Christians. It is too bad that even in the "Church of Christ" there are those who resent reproving and rebuking against their reproachful ways or unholy ambitions. But so it has always been. And the wordly-minded or careless ones in the Church may be helped by the paper. Why not send a club real soon?

SELF-GOVERNMENT

Self Control.—Do you know that if Christians had always done what God commanded, there would have been no need for church government. If all of us had exercised self government over our lives as He intended, it could have well been an omitted subject. But in view of our weakness, we must have it. If we won't bring our bodies under and hold them in subjection, then God has to protect his Church from us. Did you ever note that all the evils in the world are simply uncontrolled goods? Self-control, then, becomes probably the greatest of virtues. Old Socrates, the Greek philosopher who lived about four hundred years before Christ, so considered it. He thought so much of self-control that in order to develop himself in it he married a woman with a very irascible temper.

Hold Your Temper.—It is a good servant but a bad master. I would not give the snap of my finger for a person who had none, nor the snap of my finger for a person who had one which is uncontrolled. The no-temper man will never get anywhere in the world, and the too-much-temper man will tear the world to pieces. Can't we strike a happy medium? Anger gets individuals into trouble, families into trouble, nations into trouble. It is a cause of many troubles in the church. I think we ought to memorize this from Solomon: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.)

Don't Be So Touchy.—It unnerves one to be around a person who is extremely sensitive. One never knows when one might drop an incidental remark at which he or she becomes offended. Such people keep their feelings on the outside of their skin. Some one may have casually said something about you which you do not like, but remember that you have probably said something casually about some others which THEY did not like. We may think that someone refused to speak to us, or turned up their nose at us, but do we KNOW that such (as we thought it) was done intentionally? Life is too short to pay attention to every little thing which comes up. Keep your eyes on the fundamentals of life and do not make mountains out of mole hills. Again we call the wise man of Israel to tell us something worth while: "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." (Prov. 19:11.) It is indeed well that we consider what other people think about us, yet when we KNOW they are wrong why worry? Pass it off, forget it, and go on.

Hear the Other Side.—It would seem unnecessary to make such a statement, yet when we think of the untold trouble in the world because so many people decide a matter when they have heard only one side, we deem it important to emphasize this neglect. Your little boy comes home from school and tells how mean Johnnie Jones is; and you are almost on the point of going to see the parents of Johnnie Jones. You have not yet heard what Johnnie had to say. Maybe YOUR boy threw the first stone. The trials in our courts are for the purpose of

hearing BOTH sides of a matter. Church troubles have two sides. An old preaching brother once listened attentively to a man tell his tale of woe against another brother, and when asked, "Now who do you think was wrong?" answered quickly, "Oh, I couldn't tell you that till I heard what the other fellow had to say." Yet too many of us trust the witnesses who tell us, and we decide without hearing both sides. That has gotten nearly every one of us into trouble some time (possibly many times) in life. Many a church trouble has been made worse because some who listen to one side, will not dispassionately learn what the other fellow has to say. Again we call on Solomon's wisdom: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." (Prov. 18:13.) It is well to have confidence in people but we should not have such confidence that we will shut our eyes to what others may have to say. We must follow truth not man, for it is truth which will judge us in the Last Day.

Who Shall Be Greatest?—This is, perhaps, the biggest cause of trouble among Christians, and in fact in the world. Ambition for power! Strong desire to be great! Determination to be "boss." "By that sin fell the angels, how can man, then, the image of his Maker hope to win by it?" That's not a Bible quotation, but the sentiment is there. Families are torn asunder by this sin. Churches are divided over it. Communities are thrown into confusion. The state is forever boiling in it. And another world war was brought because one man, and one nation, wished to dominate all the others and make them bow to the swastika.

But it is the churches we are interested in now. Some brethren are offended because they are not made song leaders; others, Bible class teachers. Some grouch because they are not made elders, when, as one old preacher described them, the only qualification they have is that they desire the office. One elder tries to rule the others, and when he fails he seeks to draw away disciples after him. Some preachers envy others if they feel they have not received as much distinction as they. Many apostasies and factions have been made by one man trying to exalt himself. There are too many Johns and Jameses in the Church, encouraged by their mothers or wives or others, who desire to sit on the right hand of the Throne. But through two thousand years Jesus has been thundering into deaf ears of his followers: "Whosoever shall be great among you, shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:35-45.) Christ does not take out of our hearts the desire to be great, but shows how to be great in God's sight. Trouble-making ambition is only an uncontrolled or misdirected good.

Put a Bridle on Your Tongue.—For if you don't guide it in the right way, it will force you in the wrong way. Do you know that the Greek word "diabolos" translated "slanderer" in 1 Tim. 3:11, and "false accuser" in 2 Tim. 3:3; Titus 2:3, is translated "devil" more than thirty times in the New Testament? Thus false accusations against people come as near being devilish as anything. When we are about to say some evil regarding someone, we should first ask: Is this true? Do I know what I am talking about? If we don't know, then we should certainly leave it unsaid. And if we know it is true, we should ask, What is to be gained by passing this on? If there is no good to be accomplished, but it is only the

satisfaction we have of scattering a scandal, then we are unnecessarily doing harm, and will have to answer to God. Leaders of the church should often know of reports that they may investigate, or may learn upon whom to depend, and to whom they need to do a little exhorting. Though one cannot act decisively against another because of hearsay, yet when accusations are continually arising against a man from different quarters, there is generally something wrong. "Where there's so much smoke, there's generally a fire." Again we call Solomon to help keep us out of trouble: "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; therefore **meddle not with him that flattereth (openeth wide—revised) his lips.**" (Prov. 20:19.) Again the Wise Man says: "Where no wood is there the fire goeth out, and where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." (Prov. 26:20.) And Brother James throws some scathing remarks at our unbridled mouths, when he says, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and **it is set on fire of hell.**" Read all James says in his third chapter. If we exercised a little more self-government and followed James instead of Diabolos—the slanderer, the devil—we Christians would get along better and save the name of Christ from being dragged in the dust because of our evil talk.

If It's None of Your Business.—Let it alone. All of us have gotten into messes because we mixed in something which did not pertain to us. Of course, we may have desired to do good, but we should be wary of mixing in something which will turn on us. This is often true of becoming entangled in family affairs of someone else. Let them settle it among themselves, unless it becomes a reproach to the Church. Of course, we may feel sure that we can do some good, or even settle it, which might make a difference; but oftentimes both sides will turn on you before it is through with. The same is true of church affairs. Stay out unless you are invited in by both sides, and then only with the understanding that they will abide what you decide. Of course, I am here speaking of only local and personal affairs, not matters of doctrine. If a sister church leaves the faith on doctrine or practice we need to know it that we may know what attitude to assume in the future. But when we become messed in something which does not pertain to us, we get our picture taken by Solomon on this film: "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, **is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.**" (Prov. 26:17.) Ever try that? Well, do it once, and I fancy you will never forget it. But better have gloves on, for of all the barking and biting and snapping and yelping, that will be your honor day of it! And you will sit down and say, "Never again!—will I meddle in something which does not pertain to me."—Clipped from an old Macedonian Call.

What the Macedonian Call Stands For

For twenty years now, we have been trying to help restore the Apostolic Church, in the M. C., and to stimulate disciples so that they could and would heed the Macedonian call to come over and help. Churches have done a good work in standing for the doctrine of the Church of the New Testament.

For fifteen years we have contended strongly for zeal, and more zeal, and I consider that great good has been

done. Young men and women in the Church have heard much of that. But have we contended just as strongly for the LIFE of the Apostolic Church? I fear that we have not. Though our readers know that we have said much about Christian living in this paper, yet we have not said as much as we intend to say in the future.

It is not enough that we are opposed to sectarianism, and instrumental music in Christian worship, and the societies, and Bible colleges, and the Rough Draft. Do we have the Apostolic life? Are we keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, as they did? We are not wise to compare ourselves with other religious people about us, though we would compare favorably with them. But the New Testament is our standard. We are coming short of its standard of devotion and purity of life.

Not only are we to preach the word, and exhort, but we are to reprove and rebuke. This is not so pleasant, but Paul said he was pure from the blood of all men because he had not failed to preach the full gospel. If we shun to warn the people, we are not free from the blood of those who may be led astray.

The publisher of the Macedonian Call is not a sectarian, saying that our group is O. K. with the Lord, and that all others are going to perdition. We shall continue to preach the word, and rebuke sin among us just the same as others. We shall not be saved because we are identified with a certain group of people, but because we obey the commandments. We believe the paper will appeal to non-members of the Church of Christ who are seeking the truth, for it will let them know that we are not sectarians. We believe it will help much in coming years to keep the members from dropping into apostasy and immorality. The past few months we have been striking at sin pretty strongly, and we have had more favorable comments than ever before. If, indeed, we are hewing to the gospel line, we hope our readers will do much to procure more readers for us that they, too, may be benefited. Our one aim is to glorify God regardless of what it may bring to us as the publisher of this journal.—D. A. Sommer, Publisher and Editor.

Simple Rules for Study—IV.

RULE 3: Study systematically and regularly.

If you have applied our two previous rules, your taste for the Word of God is increasing and you have already chosen the proper place to begin. You are now ready to study.

Please realize that to study one must read, read again; analyze, and meditate until he either has thoroughly understood that which he is reading or exhausted his efforts.

Your easiest mistake will be to study just "whenever you take a notion." Such efforts, if they could be called that, are practically worthless. Study regularly.

Determine that you are going to study at a given time each day for a period of ten or fifteen minutes. Then do it! Miss this period only because of necessity. In order that the whole family might gain a better knowledge of the Bible, a family study should be arranged every day. Children, especially, need regular systematic help from their parents.

If you hesitate to begin such a course of study, just remember that, if you are the average person, you spend more time every day reading the newspapers than we are asking of you. Is the Bible any less important than the newspaper? Begin your study today and you will soon be well pleased with your progress.