

The **Sword** AND **Staff**

"Preach the Word." (II Timothy 4:2)

•

"Feed the Flock." (I Peter 5:2)

"Earnestly Contending Against the Modern Trend toward Church Bureaucracy"

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IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE of this paper we dealt with the subject of "Earnestly Contending for the Simplicity of Church Government Found in the First Century Church" (January, 1971). It is not enough to present faithfully that which is right. We are commanded to rebuke the wrong way, exposing trends which are definitely wrong. The present message will be a negative approach to the subject, a follow-up of the previous one.

BUREAUCRACY is defined by Webster as: "A system of carrying on the business of government by means of bureaus, each controlled by a chief; also, government by bureau heads and their superior administrative officers." Also, let us notice that BUREAUCRACY has its roots in the word "bureau," which comes from the French, having reference to an "office, desk, cloth covering for desks or tables."

Therefore, as we now talk about BUREAUCRACY we have reference to ecclesiasticism, unauthorized religious offices and organizations; departures having to do with the organization of the church.

Paramount in the consideration of BUREAUCRACY is the question of whether men who have been delegated authority by ONE who has all authority can delegate authority to others. Does delegated authority give authority to delegate authority further to others? Do evangelists and elders have the authority to form other offices and crystalize organizations not found in the New Testament? It is not a question of guiding or governing the church. It is not even a question of assigning temporary jobs to individuals (which we can verify by the New Testament), but a question of forming definite offices with crystalized, continuing organizations besides the one the Lord has given to get the job done.

Again, it is well for us to keep in mind that the government of the church is a kingdom, with the king personally ruling in the hearts of the subjects, and that the tangible form of government is the local, autonomous church with its elders and deacons, and its evangelists serving as ambassadors at large in the world. That is all of the organization we find in the Scriptures. (It would be good at this point to review the January, 1971, article in this paper).

I. ANCIENT TRENDS TOWARD CHURCH BUREAUCRACY.

Some seem to think that the organization of the early church developed in an evolutionary way, that there were trends toward bureaucracy in the days of the apostles, and that really there is no divinely ordained pattern for the government of the church. Although there were drastic trends in the development of bureaucracy following the death of the apostles, there is no evidence that such was allowed or tolerated in the days of Scriptural record. A specific pattern for the organization and government of the church was given by the Holy Spirit as a permanent part of God's plan (II Timothy 3:16, 17; Acts 20:28; Philipians 1:1; I Timothy 3; Titus 1). However, inspired writers foretold of a departure from the simplicity of the early church, which we shall notice later.

Some have tried to make the "council" on circumcision in Acts 15 appear to be a general church council, involving more than one church (such as a regional gathering), but is this the truth? We think not.

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THE SWORD AND STAFF
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Proverbs of Today

No matter how much we may seem to succeed at what we are doing, if we don't have God in our lives we are a complete failure.

"There is no short cut to the heavenly kingdom—it is not the way across but the way of the cross that leads home."

To not make a decision at all in reference to Christ is to make a decision against Christ—you can't be neutral!

"One place where prayer fails is in expecting God to do things for us which He can only do through us."

In most cases there would have been no so-called "generation gap" if it had been spanned earlier in life by the correction rod.

"If you do not deliberately form good habits, then, unconsciously, you will form bad ones."

He who puts God first in his life need never worry about what happens to him in this life.

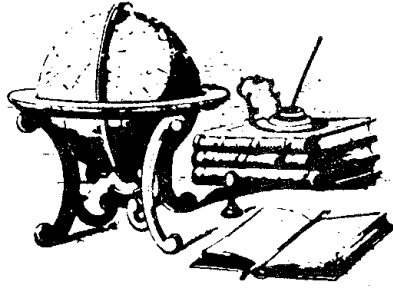
"There is no indigestion worse than that which comes from having to eat your own words."

The world will not hate you if you are part of it because the world does not hate itself.

"You can never do a deed of kindness too soon or too many times."

A man right with God is a man right with himself and his fellowman.

"He can who thinks he can."



EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

APPRECIATION EXPRESSED

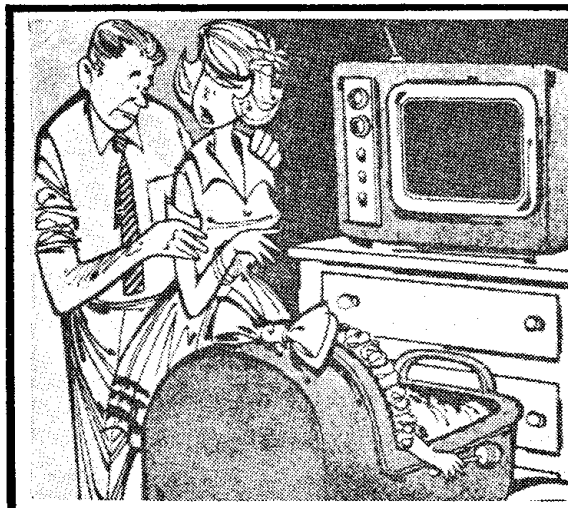
WE THANK ALL who have helped get this paper into the mail this past year. If for some reason our thanksgiving has not been satisfactorily expressed to all who have assisted, financially or otherwise, please understand that we appreciate everything very much. The Lord has blessed that we have continued until this hour in this printing project for His glory. With your help and prayers, we look forward to an expanded year in 1972. □

DATES AND DELAYS EXPLAINED

IF THE DATE on the front of this paper does not correspond to when you receive it, it is not a mistake. Second class mail moves rather slowly, taking sometimes up to three or four weeks to get to its destination in some cases, but that is not the problem this time. Some of our printing equipment has been broken down, and the repairman was several weeks in getting it fixed. We are sorry for delays. Please exercise patience with us. □

NO FAMILY CAMP GATHERING

WE ARE SORRY to make this announcement, but we need to make it now. Because of circumstances, among them the uncertainty of a camping place, there will be no family camp gathering in July, 1972, as we had last summer near Mt. Airy, North Carolina. A very spiritual camp was enjoyed by all last summer, and it is hoped that again in the future things will work out to continue this worthwhile endeavor. □



"TODAY
JUNIOR
SPOKE
HIS
FIRST
WORD!
... IT WAS
'KILL'!"

Earnestly Contending Against

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Let us get the over-all picture. Some teachers had come from Judah, giving the Gentiles the impression that the church at Jerusalem was behind them in what they were teaching. They were teaching the Gentile Christians, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Since Paul had not imposed such Old Testament regulations upon them, this greatly disturbed the Gentile churches. They "determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question"—they wanted to get to the heart of the matter. In Jerusalem, the apostles and elders came together to consider the problem of circumcision and the Judaizing teachers. "Then it pleased the apostles and elders, WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH, to send chosen men of their own company" to the Gentiles, bearing greetings and an epistle from the Jerusalem church. The letter made it clear that the local, Jerusalem church had not sent these men out to teach such things. Part of it read, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain WHICH WENT OUT FROM US have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: TO WHOM WE GAVE NO SUCH COMMANDMENT." (Read Acts 15: 1, 2, 4, 6, 22-24). Thus, the council on circumcision was the action of the local church in Jerusalem (which happened to have inspired apostles in its membership). It does not establish a case for the development of bureaucracy beyond the local church.

Nor does reference to the "messengers of the churches" in connection with the benevolent offering in II Corinthians 8 indicate a trend toward bureaucracy beyond the local church (II Cor. 8:16-19, 23). Literally speaking, these men were "apostles" (*apostolos*, Greek for word translated "messengers") of the churches. Of course "apostle" means "one sent out." Paul had earlier written these local churches, such as the one at Corinth, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem" (I Cor. 16:1-3). So each local church determined who would be its "messenger" ("one sent out") in carrying this special offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul had established these churches, and now from the position of a preacher working among them, he co-ordinates the taking up of this offering. Individual men were chosen by the local churches to have the responsibility of getting the benevolent offering to its destination. This was not a trend toward bureaucracy.

The apostle Paul had a deep concern for the well-being of the new churches. He wrote to the Corinthians: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3). He had warned the Ephesian elders that even from their own ELDERSHIP men would arise, "speaking perverse things" (Acts 20:28-30). In I Timothy 4 the Holy Spirit inspired the writer to foretell of a departure from the faith that was to come. Then, having corrected misunderstandings concerning the second coming of Christ, Paul declares in II Thessalonians 2:3 and 4, "for that day shall

not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." There would be such a falling away from the original church that not only would the doctrine be changed, but the form of church government would be changed. A human being would be finally elevated above the church, being over it as God—"so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Many see in this the pope of Rome and the Catholic system (and, we might add, all such systems which elevate man above God's simple plan).

The New Testament presents the local, autonomous church governed by elders (elders also being called "bishops," and "pastors" in the N. T.), but that picture was soon to be changed and distorted with the passing of the apostles. It is not without significance that Paul said the trouble would start within the ELDERSHIP.

As the years and centuries slipped by, according to history, in a "nutshell" here is what happened. In the beginning there was a plurality of elders, in equal standing over each local church. In time this was changed until there were elders and one selected as the permanent president, called the "bishop." After a while this single BISHOP was regarded as having authority over a certain territory. These so-called BISHOPS from various churches soon met to form SYNODS and COUNCILS, eventually becoming legislative bodies. Those who presided over the councils were called METROPOLITANS. Ecclesiastical rulers were finally placed over the larger districts called PATRIARCHS. There were FIVE large districts—Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome—having PATRIARCHS. The PATRIARCH at Rome finally won out over the others, claiming to be the "UNIVERSAL BISHOP" of the church on earth, and became the POPE. So, the POPE of Rome emerged in the sixth century, and the Roman Catholic Church became a definite, crystalized reality. II Thessalonians 2 was fulfilled with the "Lord God the Pope," head of the church, sitting in the "temple of God" as God (also with the use of other pretentious titles belonging only to God: "Holy Father," "Reverend," etc.). The organization of the church had undergone a drastic change from the local set-up at the beginning. It now took the form of the old Roman Empire—a pyramid-type thing (NOTE: it seems the so-called church has a tendency to take the form of the government of the country in which it is located; hence, democratic principles are associated more with the church in this country). The teaching of the apostate "heirs" of the early church had also changed. These changes did not happen overnight, but gradually over several centuries. Ancient trends toward bureaucracy finally climaxed in the ultimate form of bureaucracy as found in the Catholic system, with the Dark Ages setting in. Superstition ruled the day.

II. MODERN TRENDS TOWARD CHURCH BUREAUCRACY.

With the passing of time and with the "rebirth" of learning, men became disillusioned and greatly disturbed about the Catholic Church. After several abortive efforts toward reformation, and with the invention of the printing press, the Protestant Reformation gained momentum and came into its own. It opposed many evils of the superstitious Catholic system, but also proved reactionary in

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many ways. Men long engulfed in darkness and beclouded thinking could not be expected to see the light on all New Testament teachings at once. For example, God who had been dethroned was now elevated to so-called "divine sovereignty" (those using this expression mean *no free-will on the part of man, predestination, once-in-grace-always-in-grace*, etc.). Romanism had a system of salvation by humanly prescribed works; reformers reacted, coming forth with the doctrine of "faith only" (Read James 2:14-26). Then many Bible doctrines that were actually reclaimed by the Reformers have been carelessly forfeited by today's so-called "Protestants."

In coming out of the Catholic darkness, many Protestants have brought Catholic trappings with them. Hence, the wide-spread practice of sprinkling in the place of Bible baptism (and the Catholic practice of "baptizing" infants, too). Also, Catholic concepts of church government, undergoing varying degrees of modification, were carried over. Among Protestants we find the EPISCOPAL form of church government (governed by unscriptural bishops, like the Catholics), the PRESBYTERIAN form (governed by elders—a step somewhat in the right direction—but with a smack of Catholicism in having SYNODS), and the CONGREGATIONAL form of church government (right in returning to the local church, but reactionary in bypassing in varying degrees the God-ordained plan of elders over the local church). Thus, Protestantism presents a hodgepodge of different degrees of unscriptural bureaucracies, and the situation is not getting any better today. The trend is toward more bureaucracy. It seems men are headed back to "Rome."

A noteworthy religious movement had its beginning about the first of the last century in young America and gained momentum as the decades moved on into the 1800's. This movement renounced and denounced the divisive creeds and denominational systems of men, seeking Christian unity among the factions that had come out of the Protestant Reformation. A brilliant young man, and former Presbyterian preacher, by the name of Alexander Campbell lashed out against the organizations and systems of men in his *Christian Baptist* publication. His influence can be seen when in 1830 the Mahoning Baptist Association was dissolved out of conviction that such associations were not Scriptural. The paths of several indigenous leaders, working independently of one another, finally connected. A tremendous thrust was made in trying to restore "New Testament Christianity" and accomplish Christian unity. Great success was witnessed in many ways. In later years Mr. Campbell edited the *Millennial Harbinger*. In this paper we get the impression that his criticism of human organizations and societies was more subdued—so subdued that it ceased. Then by 1849 it seems that Mr. Campbell's convictions were so rearranged in his latter years that, under the influence of D. S. Burnett and others, he was induced to become the first president of the American Christian Missionary Society (the "Trojan horse"). By the time Mr. Campbell died, the ground work had been laid for state, district, and county organizations generally about the country among the Disciples (now spelled with a capital "D" and signifying a denomination). Later as men more and more began to loose their zeal and convictions about New Testament Christianity, these organizations took on

more of a rigid, ecclesiastical character. In our day the Disciples' organization is thoroughly a denomination, and their "Restructure Program" is making sure they stay that way. Thus, the cycle has been completed for a major segment that came out of that original movement to go back to the New Testament church. They have officially returned to denominationalism. It is no longer a trend.

Discounting the tragedy of the Disciple movement, there are thousands of other churches about the land laying claim to the ideal of the New Testament church (some use mechanical music in public worship and others don't). These churches in theory are local, autonomous and independent. Each one, under its leadership, is personally responsible to God for what it stands for and what it does not stand for (Hebrews 13:17; Revelation 2 & 3). Don't "judge" all on the basis of one. Sometimes some (and many) fall short of their supposed ideal, degenerating into a denominational or sectarian stand. We can exhort one another while it is still called "today"—but each church, as well as each individual Christian, will have to give account to God personally in that Day. Since that is the purpose of this message, we now wish to be "earnestly contending against modern trends toward church bureaucracy" among some of these churches. This writer puts down these words in unworthiness and humility—not with a know-it-all attitude. So, kind reader, receive them in that spirit.

First, let us consider the one-man pastor system as an example of unscriptural bureaucracy. The New Testament teaches that the elder is pastor (not the preacher—read again the January, 1971, article for a treatment of this), and the early Restoration leaders believed that.

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"Know-your-Bible" BIBLE QUIZ



1. What occupation was an abomination to the ancient Egyptians?
2. Which king of Israel disguised himself as he went into battle in effort to avoid death which had been prophesied by Micaiah?
3. What happened to the dead man who was hurriedly thrown into the sepulchre of the prophet Elisha?
4. Of which king do the Scriptures say: "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him"?
5. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of _____ and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."
6. What king of Babylon, during a great feast, saw a mysterious hand writing on the wall?
7. Levi is another name for which disciple of Jesus?
8. How long had the woman had the issue of blood who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed?
9. What man served as Paul's scribe in writing the Roman epistle?
10. To whom does James address his epistle?

(Answers found elsewhere in this issue)

THE WORLD IS DEFEATED!



• By ROGER DEYS, LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33801

MANY GREAT WARS have reached the pages of history. Some are well known today while others are of less fame. We can read of the war in 790 B.C. when Ethiopia conquered Egypt, or 745 B.C. when Assyria was at war with Babylon. Maybe you have heard of the Punic Wars of the 200's. These may seem as insignificant happenings recorded in the pages of history, but to those of that day and to those who were involved with their homes, families and friends, these wars were important. Several incidents in history were enacted almost unnoticed to a great majority of the populace, yet these incidents had some of the greatest effects on the history of the world. Such occurrences as the permission given to the barbarian tribe of Goths in 337 A.D. to enter the northern boundaries of the Roman Empire seemed to be a harmless decision. The fierce tribe of the Huns had driven the Goths from their location so the Roman Empire allowed them to come south to settle. Today we can see that this move opened the door that later brought the downfall of the Roman Empire. This small, almost unnoticed decree has had its effect through the centuries to come and can even be seen today. The consequences of World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the notorious Vietnam War are readily felt in each of our lives. Some day, if the Lord wills the earth to stand, these wars will become forgotten facts to some history student, even though they are so important to us today. There was one war that is different from all others. This skirmish was a small incident, yet it has had more consequences than all the others together—the time when the world was defeated. This is recorded for us in the pages of the greatest history book known to man, the Bible. In Genesis 3:6,7, we have recorded the greatest conflict ever to take place in the pages of history.

We find that there were no armies, no sound of the military machinery moving through the streets; no rumble of distant explosions or screams of jet aircraft whistling through the air carrying their devastating cargo with dead-

ly accuracy. As we peruse through the records, we find that there was not even any blood shed. As the forces met that day in the garden under the shade of the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they did not even have a conference table. The short exchange of a few words, the partaking of the forbidden fruit, and the given consequence fulfilled, the world found itself completely defeated.

The world, in total, with all that it stands for, was defeated. Satan became the victor over mankind and placed it under military dictatorship. It was here that Satan qualified for the titles, "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4); "the prince of the power of the air," (Eph. 2:2) and "ruler of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12).

Let's notice the great losses that the world sustained in this defeat.

I. THE LOSS OF LIFE

Man had many great possessions in the Garden of Eden. As we look at the surrounding beauty that Adam and Eve had, we can easily see that they had everything that was needed to make one happy. Just the simple fact that there were no weeds in the garden was a wonderful blessing. There was no "chopping" the garden, weeding the flower bed, picking off burrs from their feet or out of the animal's fur. They also had the fruits, the animals, their health, and many, many other blessings; but the greatest of all was the fact that they could enjoy all these other blessings for eternity. They had no worry about death, sorrow, pain, and sickness that comes with having a corruptible body.

This was the stronghold of mankind, the strategic position, the capital city, and Satan attacked this area and won. It was now out of the reach of the world and mankind. Romans 5:12 tells us, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

In place of the glorious possession of life stood the dreaded idea and subject of death. This fact has a very definite effect on each man living today. THE WORLD CAN OFFER NOTHING THAT DOES NOT END AT DEATH!!! I Peter 1:24 pictures mankind as a plant and the glory of man as the flower of this plant. Year after year, decade after decade, century after century we see men rise to the pinnacle of prestige, to the apex of greatness only to face the grave and have to leave it all behind. It is said of Elizabeth I, the gifted but vain Queen of England, that on her deathbed she was in great distress. The doctors could do nothing for her, but she continued to cry piteously, "I will give millions for another inch of time!" Poor, unhappy woman! Reportedly with 10,000 dresses in her wardrobe, a kingdom on which the sun never set, and with servants to do her every bidding, she had to leave them all, frantically crying for just another "inch of time." May I ask you the question: "What are you spending your life to achieve?" Are you after the treasures of this world that moth and rust can destroy and of which thieves break through and steal, or are you abound-

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NOVEMBER ANSWERS:

ANSWERS TO "KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE" BIBLE QUIZ

1. Genesis 49:3, 4;
2. Genesis 49:22;
3. I Kings 6:1;
4. I Kings 6:37-7:1;
5. I Kings 8:63;
6. Psalms 119;
7. Matthew 2:19-23;
8. Matthew 3:7;
9. Matthew 24:1, 2;
10. Jude 12.

THE WORLD IS DEFEATED!

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ing in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain? This may not seem like a very important question now if you are young or still have your health and strength, but it will become the major issue on your mind when you stand face to face with death and must leave behind the things of this world. For you see, the WORLD CAN OFFER NOTHING THAT DOES NOT END AT DEATH!!!

I Timothy 6:7 words it this way, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." It is said that Alexander the Great left orders that when he was carried to the grave, his hands should not be wrapped in the specially treated cloths used by the embalmers of that day, but rather be exposed to view so all men might see that they were empty! Friend, I plead with you to give close consideration to this fact and then take a good, scrutinizing look at the goals and aims of your life. The fact stands whether you want to accept it or not, if the world offers you anything, it will not last. This is not only true of prestige and possessions, but also of happiness, joy and peace. The world offers short spans of happiness, but there always comes something to bring it to an end. Youth and adults are searching for peace and continue to make the mistake of looking through the realms of the world, not knowing that the world has lost its hold on eternal life and so only has temporary items to offer. This world and its possessions (including your body) are constantly decaying, deteriorating, and dying! Your only hope of finding true, lasting peace and happiness is in Christ Jesus who has been victorious over Satan and death.

II. THE LOSS OF FREEDOM

Man went into slavery to sin, and Satan became the ruling force. One of Satan's greatest feats has been the ability to put man into bondage without man realizing that he is a slave.

We can see death (and the average person tries to keep this subject from bothering him), but you can talk to just about anyone and try to show him that he is enslaved to sin and he won't be able to see it.

A great number of articles are written in newspapers and magazines and heard over the air about jealousy and hatred among people. We hear of the pride and selfishness that causes so much heartache within families, communities, and even on the national level. Why? What is the cause?

The basic answer to the question is the fact that man years ago became enslaved to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. People ridicule the Bible as being antiquated and out of date, but remember one fact, the Bible was written to reveal to mankind how to escape the bondage of sin and as long as man continues to live this way, he will need the Bible.

You hear people say, "I'm not going to have anybody tell me how to run my life!" This in itself shows that the individual does not understand that he is already in bondage to the sinful things of this world and doesn't want anybody to show him how to get out of the pig pen of sin into the glorious realm of the Lord.

Romans 8:21 tells us we are under the bondage of corruption. This we covered in the foregoing part.

Titus 3:3 pictures man "serving divers lust." The word "serving" in the original language means "enslaved."

a one word picture of the world today. The two sides of the picture are given in Romans 6:16, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servant ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

Read Titus 3:3 in its fulness, and you will see the world in each word. Such subjects as disobedient, deceived (wandering after false hopes), sensual pleasures, malice, hate are all mentioned and how the only way to escape is through the "kindness and love of God our Saviour." May the Lord open your eyes to see the hopeless, wretched outlook the world has to offer. Everywhere we look all we can see is a crumbling, deteriorating environment that offers no true hope, peace, or love but is filled with hatred, envy, and guilt. Satan has control of your life if you are outside of Christ and is leading you into pleasures that are destroying your mind, soul, body and conscience.

I pray to God that each of you who read these words will awake from your indifference or ignorance and set to work to free yourself from the bondage of sin and enter into the glorious liberty of Jesus Christ. Remember, the world has been defeated by sin and evil and is in the bondage of wickedness. It is infiltrated and controlled by the enemies of God, but praise God we can have the victory through Jesus Christ over sin, temptation, condemnation and all the other chains of sin! "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). □

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EARNESTLY CONTENDING...

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However, it seems that in their zeal to, technically, follow the Scriptures in effort to restore the original pattern of things, they hastened to ordain elders, but many times failed to teach and train them. Consequently the work God intended for the elders to do was not done. D. S. Burnett, who introduced the missionary society and a lot of other innovations, as we are made to believe, is also given "credit" for being the father of the one-man pastor system among Restoration churches. His conviction about the elders is spoken of in a book edited by W. T. Moore called *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* (published by R. W. Carroll and Co., Cincinnati—1868) on pages 39 and 40. It reads: "He did not argue that the pastoral office is a distinct office from the eldership, but that it is a part of the work of the eldership. But as the elders selected by the churches are generally not competent, or else will not perform this work, such men should be provided as conscientiously feel it to be their duty to 'feed the flock of God.' This course would alone give such prosperity to the churches as would make them the 'pillar and support of the truth.'" Thus, he justifies the preacher in becoming the pastor by saying the elders are not doing the job. (Had he never thought of getting qualified men and training them for this God-given office of the church, not sidestepping it for the one-man pastor set-up, putting the unqualified, figurehead men on the bench, the "Board"?) In our day the denominational, one-man, pastor system is pretty well entrenched among most churches of a Restoration background (yes, even among the non-instrument ones who speak against using the term "pastor" for "THE preacher"). Then in an article in the *Christian Standard*, July 18, 1959, on page 397, Elbert T. Moreland writes:

“The modern minister is not found in exact replica in the Bible. Because of changes in our way of life, because of development in church and society, and partly because elders and deacons have not functioned as they ought, we have developed a professional ministry... The modern ministry combines function of the N. T. evangelist and elder.” (Thus, seemingly with the wave of his hand he does away with the New Testament office for all practical purposes, and puts the one-man-pastor in his place). Then, to further emphasize this point, a preacher having moved to Virginia, received this letter from STANDARD PUBLISHING (*Christian Standard*), “Brother minister: accept our best wishes as you start your new *pastorate*.” In all honesty and humility, are not these words strange coming from a journal which claims to be “Devoted to the restoration of New Testament Christianity, its doctrines, its ordinances, and its fruits”?

Next, in passing let us mention the Sunday School movement. In the early days of the church there was no such thing as a Sunday School organization separate from the church. The church performed its own mission of teaching. There was no such thing as a Superintendent apart from the eldership. Paul admonished the elders in Acts 20:28, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to *all the flock*, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (BISHOPS, SUPERINTENDENTS), *to feed the church of God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” We are not opposing Bible classes in the church, but we are opposing an organization set up and functioning separately (and many times independently) from the eldership called the “Sunday School.” We believe to have an organization set up separately from the elders, with its treasury and business meetings, is definitely in conflict with God’s plan. Yes, others may teach besides the elders in the classes, but it is under the elders as superintendents (bishops) of the local church that they do this. We should not by-pass God’s set-up and make a church within the church (so to speak). Actually the Sunday School movement in its inception started independently of the church in England. We can get God’s job done best by using God’s plan.

In our day we hear all kinds of perverted uses of Scriptural terms in reference to offices in the church, and what-have-you. Modern concepts of evangelists, ministers, and missionaries have no Scriptural foundation. The terms “pastor” and “bishop” are abused. Then we have all kinds of “Ministers” today, one being Minister of Education. We suppose he co-ordinates the educational program of the church—has he not taken the job of the elders? What about women “Ministers of Education”? (I Timothy 2:11-14). Some churches have “professional callers,” reserving the gifted speaker and administrator as “the minister”; the pulpit man; the performer of weddings and funerals.

What about organizations that claim to speak for churches? Then what about these new trends toward state organizations? What about these evangelistic and missionary societies (can’t the church get its own job done)? What about these pressure groups separate from the local church, such as Men’s Fellowship Groups? What about colleges, conventions, lectureships, and religious journals that hold a quasi-official standing in the eyes of the brethren? (regardless of whether within themselves they are right or wrong). The local church is the only thing that’s official by the Word of God. Are we seeing, or have we seen, a new denomination being born?

The trend today in the government of this country is more bureaucracy. We are fearful that the same is true in certain segments that have come out of the Restoration Movement. Strong people need very little government, because they are governed within. Weak people feel that they must have more government. This is bad when weak Christians give way to denominational feeling and yearnings. We pray that trends toward bureaucracy and the formation of a new denomination will be averted.

Long ago God called a man whom we know as Abraham, and to him He made a great promise (Genesis 12). If he would leave his homeland, make a move to Canaan and serve God, God would bless him with a son and of his descendants make a great nation. Abraham did what God said. He lived his life under the shadow of this promise. The years came and the years went. Still he and his wife Sarah had no son. Thinking they would “speed up” things a little, they took things into their own hands. Believing she was barren, Sarah followed the custom of her day and had Abraham go in to her servant girl, Hagar, in effort to beget a child. Ishmael was born to Abraham and Hagar, and Sarah accepted the child as the child of promise made by God. Now God’s promise of a great nation would be accomplished. But did God recognize this? No! We know that Isaac was finally born to become the promised child. Ishmael was not recognized by God as the true heir—Isaac was. Finally Ishmael and his mother were driven out. We may think that we are speeding God’s plan along by our man-made organizations in the realm of religion, but God has His plan—the church. May we follow God’s plan for church government and getting the job done.

The faithful evangelist is many times disturbed by what he sees about him. He speaks out against the trends that are in the wrong direction. He is not alone. Samuel was greatly disturbed long ago. Israel wanted a king like the heathen nations about her. God alone was to be their king, and they were to trust Him for leadership. But, no, they wanted an earthly king. “The thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel, prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them” (I Samuel 8:6,7). Many times the gospel preacher is rejected because of his stand on such subjects as treated in this message, but in reality God’s plan has been rejected, not the preacher. □

IF I HAD KNOWN

If I had known what trouble you were bearing;
What griefs were in the silence of your face;
I would have been more gentle, and more caring,
And tried to give you gladness for a space;
I would have brought more warmth into the place,
If I had known.

If I had known what thoughts despairing drew you;
(Why do we never try to understand?)
I would have lent a little friendship to you.
And slipped my hand within your hand.
And made your stay more pleasant in the land,
If I had known.

By M. C. DAVIES

“When You Are Through
Changing, You Are Through!”

When you’ve made a mistake admit you were wrong!
That’s the honest way to get along.
Don’t think your admission will make you look small;
It’s doing the right thing that counts, first of all.
We know it takes courage to admit one’s mistakes,
But then folks discover you’ve got what it takes!

—Selected.

FOLLOWING is a list of books, booklets, and tracts we have on hand which may be ordered from us at the stated amount.

- ☐ *Barnes’ Notes on Job* (2 books)—normally \$7.90 buy one at \$3.95, and get the second book free (just a few sets left; order right away!)
- ☐ *Evolution and the Modern Christian* by Henry M. Morris—\$1.00.
- ☐ *Mormon Claims Examined* by Larry Jonas— \$1.00.
- ☐ *Feminine Adornment as Taught in the New Testament* by William E. Paul—25¢.

OUR OWN MATERIALS:

- ☐ *The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple*—25¢ each; 5 for \$1.00.
- ☐ *The Bible and Archaeology*—25¢.
- ☐ *Objections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered*—6¢.
- ☐ *Are Visions, Dreams and Religious Experiences Proof of Salvation?*—6¢.
- ☐ *His Church is Marching On* (Song on gummed paper for hymnbooks)—5¢.
- ☐ *Every Sunday?* (Concerns weekly observance of the Lord Supper)—3¢ each; 100 for \$2.50.

FREE MATERIALS:

- ☐ *In Style With the World, But Out of Style With God.*
- ☐ *Lessons in Happiness From the Garden of Eden.*
- ☐ *Why I Do Not Have a T.V. Set in My Home.*
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- ☐ *I Saw Him Standing There* (Or, *The Old Gospel Preacher*).

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A LITTLE GIRL once said to her mother who was dusting some books on the library table, pointing to the Bible, “Is that God’s Book?”

Her mother replied, “Yes, dear, it is.”

“Well, why don’t we send it back to Him then, we never use it?” said the daughter with a serious look on her face. —Selected ☐

ANSWERS TO “Know-Your-Bible” BIBLE QUIZ

1. Genesis 46:34; 2. I Kings 22:14, 17, 30, 34-40;
3. II Kings 13:21; 4. II Kings 18:1-6; 5. Proverbs 9:10; 6. Daniel 5; 7. Mark 2:14; Matthew 9:9; 8. Matthew 9:20-22; 9. Romans 16:22; 10. James 1:1, 2.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



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