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"Together With Him"

"We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." -- 2 Corinthians 5:20

This is a high and honorable commission. We do not wonder that Paul, writing to the Corinthians, declared himself and his co-laborers to be workers together with God and Christ. Nor is it surprising that he besought the Corinthians not to receive the reconciling grace of which they were the messengers in vain. Not only are ministers workers together with Christ, but every one who is called to life *"together with him"* is a worker with him.

It is with Christ as it is with a vine. The vine does not bear its own fruit, the fruit is borne by the branches. The believer is together with Christ like the branch is together with the vine. If we could lay hold fully on the importance of the word "together," how much more fruitful we might be. Consider how much effort we waste in our own pursuits would be conserved. Our labors would be lighter and more cheerfully entered into. Our fellowship with his power would make the heavy and wearisome burdens seem easier, aiding in the work of sanctification. Our union and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ are the secrets of the successful Christian life.

We need to study him if we are to be workers together with him. He should be the model craftsman after whom we pattern our lives: recognized as the Father's example to us all. But, what are some of the characteristics which have made him so pleasing to God?

"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7). This is the keynote of all acceptable service to and for God. The primary issue is not the "work" that we do for God but whether we are doing his "will." This work is not always according to our disposition or our ideas; but the will of God is always (as Faber has it) the "sweet will of God." The work may even be irritating or bothersome in its accomplishment, but the reaping is always with gladness even though the sowing and the cultivating may bring exertion and weariness. When we find ourselves tired and pressed by perplexity, bonds, or punishment we need to return to the spring of all service: *"I delight to do thy will, O my God."*

"For their sakes I sanctify myself." Here again, in the words of the Master, is another principle of action: "for the sake of others." Our work, our service, our sacrifices are for the benefit of other

men. Deep fellowship with Christ is necessary to accomplish this style of life. Oftentimes we may feel drained. Going empty-hearted to Christ, he is able to fill us with love divine.

We may love and care for those whom we greatly love. Yet, they may remain indifferent to- and ungrateful for our care for them. More frequently we may find ourselves called upon to minister to those for whom we have **no** natural attraction-or even for those whom we might personally find uninteresting or even repulsive. And if our loved ones can be indifferent towards us, how much the more will be these who have no natural regard for us? At such times we must rely upon the inspiration of the love of Christ. Moved thus by the will of God, we can do all things through the strengthening encouragement of Christ Jesus our Lord (cf. Phil. 4:13).

The principle of working together with him means a sense of utter consecration. Without self-denial -- the keystone of consecration to another -- we cannot look away from selfish interests and look out for the interests of another. What may we learn by such a new attitude towards men? We will learn to be a respecter of persons -- seeing each for what they are instead of what they appear to be. We will learn a deeper, more self-less love which extends beyond a person's clothing, culture, or circumstances. We may learn to see him as a dear heart, a broken image of God, which one day will be made whole again by God. By faith we may learn to see such in glory, just as Christ Jesus our Lord gives us an example when he spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well. He busied himself with the doing of the will of God while at the same time sanctifying or setting himself apart for the sake of others. *"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me"* (John 4:34).

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Walking Worthy Of Our Vocation

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." -- Ephesians 5:8

St. Paul's deeply spiritual epistle to the Ephesians has a special appeal for those who have most dedicated themselves to doing the will of God. Its deeply spiritual nature appeals to the most advanced of the Master's disciples.

The central theme of the letter deals with the church, the body of Christ. It is these, who have taken steps of faith, obedience, and devotion, who have been brought into relationship with Christ; and it is they who have been made partakers of the holy Spirit. It was of these that the Apostle wrote elsewhere, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Cor. 5:17). The old life embraces earthly hopes, aims, and ambitions. And such as are spirit begotten have relinquished their portion in this life, setting before their minds the heavenly inheritance as their goal, to be achieved only under the direction of the holy Spirit. By faith the spirit begotten look forward to, and wait for, the great deliverance with the expectation that it will be realized in the first resurrection.

The early portion of the Book of Ephesians presents to our view an intellectual view of the church's transformation from fleshly to spiritual; from humanity to membership in the new creation. The last chapters of this book point out the effect of this change, not only in the development of the character of the new creature, the new will, but also the effect of the change upon the mortal body, which the new mind, if sufficiently activated, will hold in check, govern, control with increasing decisiveness as it grows stronger in the Lord and the power of his might. The renewed will is to keep the body under subjection, along with all of those tendencies, desires,

and sympathies which are opposed to the mind of the spirit. Elsewhere the Apostle admonishes us to fight our fight of faith with vigor so that we might lay hold upon the promises: eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12). For the balance of our discussion we will consider only that phase of this subject which relates to the Christian's warfare -- the new creature's battle and its victory. Its preservation is wholly dependent upon its maintaining supremacy over the flesh.

Do Not Be Deceived

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6). Paul is not to be understood as meaning that God's wrath comes upon men because of vain words. The things which bring the wrath are mentioned in the preceding verses. They are fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, ribaldry. Anyone in sympathy with these characteristics can have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Do not let anyone deceive you with pleasant sounding words. Do not make excuses that such characteristics are natural and proper. They have, indeed, become second nature to many of the fallen race. But if any who have become new creatures in Christ love the unclean things, sympathize with them, desire them, or jest about them, they are far from the condition which is becoming to saints. Such an attitude would imply that they had either never been begotten of the spirit of holiness or else they were returning again like a sow which had been washed from its filth and returned to it again.

These are characteristics of the children of disobedience. They are not characteristics of the children of obedience. *"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Cor. 6:11). Here he reminds us: *"Be not ye therefore partakers with them"* (1 Cor. 5:7). You were once children of disobedience, walking in darkness, but now you ought to walk as children of light.

Delight in God's Will

Just as he described the walk of the children of disobedience, Paul now describes the walk of the children of light. Wherever one finds the fruit of the spirit its aspect is the same; it is goodness, righteousness, and truth. The holy Spirit never prompts one to badness, unrighteousness, and falsehood. Whoever receives the holy Spirit, whoever has been begotten of the Lord as his children will want to thoroughly prove, that is to demonstrate, God's acceptable will. God's "children" would, understandably, want to demonstrate to others what he is pleased with, what he delights in, not merely what would not get them into trouble with him, or what he might have to "wink" at so as not to take serious offense. A son of a man's spirit would naturally delight to do his father's will, how much the more the spiritual sons of the heavenly Father. That will is purity, goodness, righteousness, truth, and honesty. And the determination, the will, to please God will bring every thought, word, and act of a person's life into accord with the principles of righteousness which God represents-in accordance with truth.

Our responsibility does not end at our own fingertips. Our responsibility extends beyond ourselves to all those upon whom we have any influence. We cannot condone unclean or unholy humor. Rather we should be forthright in rebuking such ungodliness. Brethren and sisters, let us set our affections on heavenly things. Let us walk in the light. Let us think upon the pure, the lovely, the reputable in this world and above. Let us put away from our lips, and from our thoughts, everything that would defile, everything that would ensnare-ourselves or another. Failure to reprove wrong is a measurable endorsement of wrong. A word in season-how good it is, and how helpful! And it is equally important that words of reproof be wisely and lovingly administered lest what we had intended for good reap, in fact, harm. As the Scriptures say, speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

Holy Spirit Shining Forth

It is a shame to speak of the things done by men in secret, in privacy, in the dark (Eph. 5:12). The apostle intimates that the world lies in darkness, and in the wicked one, and in sin, but that the Lord's people have accepted his leadership taking them in the opposite direction. They are to be, and to behave as, children of the light. They are to uphold the light and to allow the spirit to shine forth in their manner of life so as to reprove the world of darkness and to demonstrate a standard of righteousness which is in harmony with the Master's example.

We are reminded by Paul of the prophetic statement, *"Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."* What an admirable, if not easy, course this is! The world lies in the wicked one, in sin, and in darkness. Instead of having fellowship with them in their works of darkness and instead of sharing in their ungodly conversations, we are to reprove these as the works of darkness -- not stopping here, but encouraging such to turn to the Scriptures for guidance--for the shaking that will awaken them from the stupor of sin. In the Word of God they will recognize themselves as sinners and that the end of their course in life is death. They should arise from the dead and should separate themselves from the world. This separation is to be one of conduct, of conversation, and of sympathy. All of their resources and energies are to be turned to the service of righteousness, of truth, of the light. It is to those who thus fully consecrate themselves to him that he has promised to give light, a little at a time, for a path. The path is the same as Jesus their forerunner trod, and that pathway will shine in their lives more and more unto the perfect day.

Seven-fold Description Of the Christian's Walk

What is meant by the Christian's "walk?" Their manner of conduct. That includes their thoughts, their words, and their acts. The Apostle indicates very clearly what this work or "course" of the Christian should be. He provides us with a sevenfold description:

(1) The new creature should not walk according to the course of this world. That is, they are not to walk "according to" or "under the direction of" the prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit that is now active in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:3). This is the course of the world, it is the walk of evil doers, the pathway of the children of wrath. This course is the opposite of the walk of the children of the light.

(2) The new creature should walk in good works -- *"For we are [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Eph. 2:10).

(3) The new creation should walk worthy of the vocation with which they are called (Eph. 4:10). Their calling is the highest of all, for they are called to represent the Lord and Master whose name they bear. They should seek to glorify and honor him in all of their activities and never to dishonor it. What we do, think, and say all reflects upon him. Moreover, our general appearance and demeanor also reflect upon him whose ambassadors we are. Our vocation is to be servants of God and no earthly avocation should hinder that service or influence to him if we are sincere in our desire to be joint-heirs with Christ Jesus our Lord, prospective members of his bride class.

(4) The new creation are not to behave like other gentiles (Eph. 4:17). We are not to be satisfied with mere avoidance of gross sin and immorality. We are to nurture the spirit of the Lord and of a sound mind so that they may direct our joys and sorrows. Whether we are at a wedding or a funeral we should always act to the glory of God and to put aside the influences of the world. The

world teaches nothing of gentleness, kindness, patience, and faithfulness to the Lord, which is our duty. The world's course is along that "broad" road which the Scriptures say leads to destruction. The path of the Christian is to be on the "narrow" way that leads to life. And the further we travel along this path the further we find ourselves diverging from the hopes and ambitions of the world. Contrariwise, whoever attempts to keep up with this world's pace will find themselves out of the way of righteousness and doing his new mind harm.

(5) The new creation is to make love the characteristic of their lives (Eph. 5:2). Love must come to control our lives: our words, our actions, everything that we do or think. *"Love is the fulfilling of the law"* (Rom. 13:10). *"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you"* (John 13:34). It is the Apostle's point that we so love one another, in obedience to the Master's command and example, that we would be willing to surrender everything, even our lives, for one another. We should be ready to sacrifice choices, assets, preferences for a few days or a few months, for a few years-whatever may be needed by our brethren as we find opportunity. These sacrifices should be especially along the lines of their spiritual interests, but should not stop at that line.

With the spirit of love controlling us we should extend our love also to our neighbors. To love them means to seek ways to serve them. *"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor"* (Rom. 13:10). Love will not take advantage of a neighbor, love will not cheat them, love will not injure them in any manner. Love would not prompt us to tell stories about our neighbor showing him in an unpleasant light. Love reminds us to *"speak evil of no man."*

Love has this power to control our actions because if we love another we would not want to do anything to harm them. Love is not pretending. Love should prompt us to take a certain action because we truly care about another person's welfare, not merely because it is the right thing to do: because we wish to bless and honor them, because we do not want to harm them. Love grows in us as we walk in love. Love ultimately brings us to the point at which we can love even those who would do us harm, even our enemies. Love makes us glad to do good to those who persecute us and spitefully use us.

(6) The new creation is instructed to walk as enlightened children (Eph. 5:8). Their course is to take into account all that is just, pure, noble, kind, and all that is in harmony with Jehovah's character and Word. These are the things that will be the greatest benefit to the neighbors and friends of the new creation. As children of the light, passing time will see development in their characters, and this light will shine more and more clearly upon the paths of their associates, neighbors, and friends. The children of the light will not hide their light, but rather allow it to be displayed: enlightening, and enriching all those with whom they come in contact. *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16).

(7) The new creation's walk should be circumspect (Eph. 5:15). "Circumspect" means "to look carefully all around at every step." As such, the Christian cannot live carelessly. As he looks around and recognizes various pitfalls he will not only seek to hedge in his own path, lest he go out of the way, but also he will seek God's wisdom and counsel so as to make firm and sure progress in the way which will bring glory and honor to God" and our blessed Savior.

This circumspect style of life is essential because of the activity -- the unceasing activity -- of Satan against the followers of the Master. His snares are both gross and subtle as suits his purposes, but they are permitted by God to come upon the new creation. As one nears the goal of Christlikeness in his character, the tests seem to come the more steadily and the more vigorously

because the Adversary grows the more diligent in his efforts to discourage and stumble the true wheat of this Gospel Age. Our circumspection is demanded because we claim to be the offspring of God, a new creation, begotten of the holy Spirit, and our lives should shine as a reproof to this world.

To walk circumspectly is to note various hindrances, to listen to the instructions of the holy Spirit, and to walk carefully. In doing so those of the new creation also develop in character as they bring their lives into agreement with God's will for them. In doing so they are also the most pleasing to God. Why does the Apostle raise this characteristic so prominently to our attention? Because it is essential to our walking *"not as unwise but as wise."* There is a wisdom in this world which is foolishness to God. And there is a wisdom in God which is foolishness to the world. We are to seek the wisdom of God and exemplify it in our lives. Faithful new creatures in Christ are therefore to attempt to be the most exemplary and wonderful people in the world, the wisest in the management of their affairs, the most prudent in the government of their children, and most moderate in their eating, drinking, and dress. The world will not always approve, but the end of glory will justify the righteous course which the Lord's word directs. This is the course which the circumspect new mind will choose.

Wise Children

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16). The Apostle is encouraging us to buy back our time, as it were, as though it were already under a mortgage. This is in fact true. We are already mortgaged. Life has its necessary cares, its needs, its customs. In addition our fallen and sinful natures have their tendencies which, added to all the preceding, would absorb every hour of our time, were we to allow this to happen. Our hopes and aims must be centered upon Christ, upon heavenly things, upon the Kingdom and the King's business.

Where do we find the time to study and refresh our minds with the blessings of the Word of God? Where do we obtain the time to tell to others the story of the love of God? If the spirit of the world rules in our minds, then we will never find time! If the spirit of the world rules in us, we are sure to fail. We will not fail as wise children of God but as foolish children of God, for we shall have failed to appreciate the greater importance of heavenly things and the greater importance of sacrificing this life's interests in favor of our heavenly interest.

This is how we redeem, or buy back, our time. Previously our entire lives were spent in the pursuit of life's interests. We begin finding ways to minimize the time formerly spent in such pursuits. We begin to find ways to spend such time in the interest of the new creation and in the service of the Master to whom we have consecrated our all, which we often find to be so little after we have taken care of all the so-called "necessities" of the life that now is.

How many of the Lord's people are unwise? How many allow the spirit of the world to control them, to hinder them from appreciating the Lord's wisdom and the preferred course of action? It is not our place to answer that question, one which can only be answered by the individual and Jehovah. But isn't it time for us to determine, once and for all, that we will stop trying to do everything that the world approves! It is time for us to make up our mind that by God's grace we will be popular with him, whether or not we are popular with the people of this world-or even those who call themselves the Lord's people. It will be far sweeter to hear his voice saying, *"well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,"* than to have the "well done" of the world, its applause, and to have come short of the glorious blessing which Jehovah has promised to those who are faithful to him.

Present Heritage

The spirit of the world is intoxicating. It is crazed for money. It longs for outward displays. It exalts in fancy adornment. The chiefest joy of the follower of the Lord will be in giving thanks to the Lord for his goodness and in maintaining a fellowship of heart with him and in having fellowship with others who are in accord with him. Together we can speak (whether figuratively or literally) in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making a heartfelt melody to God. There is no place among the mature of the Lord's people for the morose, the sullen, the unhappy, the habitual crier. These characteristics are not the will of God concerning man. A true "walk" with the Lord will cause these characteristics to melt away over time because the Lord's own have every cause for rejoicing and for gladness. The basis for these is found in the Word of God, and from it they are nourished daily. This, added to the fellowship with the Lord, becomes the fountain of continual praise and thanksgiving. And having come to this fount with other brethren, their fellowship will be sweeter than any sensual relationship, for it is the exhilaration of the new mind growing ever more godlike, a new mind seeking expression in the goodness it can do to others: to the household of faith, in building them up in faith, and to their neighbors and friends in any way at their disposal.

One of the Apostle's points is that we are to give to God, even the Father, thanks at all times, for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can give thanks for our trials, for the clouds over our lives, for the blessings, and for the sunshine; we can give thanks for our adversity knowing that God is able to make all things work together for good to those that love him and to whom he has promised to do so. The matter of our needs and our welfare is in the hands of our Redeemer, who is too wise to err and too loving to be unkind, and who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. We, consequently, have much in which to rejoice.

We are exhorted to submit to each other. Doing so is to be in the spirit of reverence to the Lord, lest we be too dictatorial, too self-assertive, or too determined to have our will done on this earth. We need to learn, however difficult it may be, to have the will of the Lord done in our lives. We should look for his leadings, for his providence as it comes to us through the means of others, or through his Word.

The Question Box

A bishop (or elder) must be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2).
Does this refer to what is taught, how one teaches, or both?

Can what is being taught and how one teaches be separated? It would appear that these are inseparable. -- Francis Earl

Dean Alford, in commenting upon this verse, points out that all Christians to whom the Spirit imparted the gift of teaching MAY teach. It is important to note that we begin by speaking (1) of those that have received a gift not every Christian -- and (2) those that are skilled in the gift they possess-not every one that possesses the gift. It was a manifest part of the commission to spread the gospel. Therefore, any special exhortation in regard to teaching (here to the office of a minister of the gospel) should be understood as applying to SKILL in teaching. The context defends this interpretation: the qualification is aimed at those who would be charged with instructing others and in defending the gospel from gainsayers (Titus 1:9). These would need the skill to do the job entrusted to them by the assembly of believers-and ultimately by God.

This expression, "apt to teach," appears a second time in Timothy (2 Tim. 2:24,25), but in a different context. Timothy is instructed about how to behave in what might be called "mixed company": when confronted by disputes; by those who oppose the truth of God. The issue here seems to be one of patience towards wrong: "gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient..." The end of this admonition -- not towards Timothy to whom it is given but towards those with whom Timothy would have contact is to bring about their repentance, as a result of their contact with Timothy and all such as are like him, by their finally understanding the error of their ways or behavior. Once again the germ of the issue is the skill which the minister of God must exercise in dealing with others, whether they be believers in need of instruction, believers in error, or unbelievers.

- P J. Pazucha

Apt = able. Earlier Paul says to Timothy, "teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3); "neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than Godly edifying which is in faith (1 Tim. 1:4); faith unfeigned (1 Tim. v.5); "vain janglings have turned some aside -- from such, turn away(1 Tim. 1:6). - 1 Tim. 6:1-7; 2 Tim. 2:21-23.

- Loyal Petran

The Greek word DIDAKITOS used here and in 2 Timothy 2:24 refers to the "capability of teaching." It implies both an understanding of doctrine and an ability to communicate. The Apostle suggests that an elder must be wise, but also he must be able to make others understand him. Early church bishops wrote and preached much. They were not only learned in the Scriptures but also were powerful advocates of the Christian system.

Many teachers today are good "salesmen," but lack of study in the word has left them unable to guide the flock in the doctrines of God. This is similar to one who has good persuasive powers but lacks knowledge of the law necessary to be an effective advocate. Likewise, others may have deep knowledge of the divine plan but lack the ability to help others understand it. Knowledge and ability are necessary.

- Len Griehs

This criteria established by the Apostle Paul in the third chapter of First Timothy needs to be balanced by the example of Jesus and Peter and Paul as leaders of God's people. Much more than the auditory teaching is implied. Each instructor conveys lessons in many ways: by their deportment, encouragement, and character, by their personal application of Scripture lessons to their own life; by the invigoration of God's working power in their own lives; by a faith in fellow believers to succeed. These qualities properly balanced and coupled with a message built upon true repentance and the immersion of our will into God's will by submission to him in faith will make a truly valuable bishop or elder.

- Brian Kuehmichel

It is very obvious by the context of the Pastoral letters that the answer is "both." St. Paul emphasized the point that correct (sound) teachings are a definite must. See 1 Timothy 1:10; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1.

- Andrew Jarmola

To be "apt to teach" means to be able to teach [Grk. fit to teach]. To be able [fit] to teach requires both the ability to impart knowledge to another and also the knowledge that is to be taught. Teachers in our schools have the ability to teach, but only in the subject for which they are trained. It takes a special teacher to have both the ability and the knowledge to be apt to teach the Lord's people.

- Tom A. Herz

The primary emphasis of the word is on the manner of teaching. From the Greek word translated by this entire expression, we derive the English word "didactic," having the inclination toward teaching.

However, Paul is probably including somewhat the subject matter as well. In his other catalog of qualifications for church servants, found in Titus 1:7-10, we do not find this expression; but we do find one that is missing in the Timothy listing: *"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."*

Similarly, in the only other use of the Greek word (2 Tim. 2:24), while joining it to three character traits -- gentility, patience, and meekness -- he adds *"instructing those that oppose themselves."* It is axiomatic that a good teacher cannot teach what he does not know. It is equally obvious the curriculum for the Christian church is spiritual and doctrinal; therefore the "apt teacher" must be proficient in these subjects.

Finally, the fact that "aptness" to teach is not meant to emphasize oratorical skills lies in the fact that one of the greatest Christian teachers, the Apostle Paul, refers to himself as having a weak bodily appearance and contemptible speech (2 Cor. 10:10).

- Carl Hagensick

I believe that the Apostle Paul is referring to a brother's character qualification for eldership. There is no reference as to the elder's doctrinal belief. This same thought is expressed in Paul's letter in 2 Timothy 2:24, where the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle unto all and apt to teach and patient.

However, Paul turns around in Titus 1:7-9, where he emphasizes a sterling character, and adds that he must also be doctrinally sound (Titus 1:9). He should be able to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

There seems to be the attitude among the Lord's people today that all elders must be teachers. Some brethren struggle to put a discourse together and then are doubly pressed in presenting it. Some training in diction, composition, and public speaking would be very helpful to most of our brethren. 1 Corinthians 1:28-31 tells us that there are different duties assigned in the church according to the ability of those assigned and not necessarily taking on all the duties of an elder if one has been elected to be an elder.

- Chester A. Czohara

Vine's Expository Dictionary defines the Greek word DIDAKTIKOS, used here, as "skilled in teaching." Strong # SG1317 says "instructive (didactive)." Hence, the primary application seems to be to the art or manner of teaching and the ability to instruct the listener.

Nevertheless, since the teaching function of a church elder is to effectively communicate doctrinal truths, it is evident that first he himself must be knowledgeable and well grounded in the fundamentals of the faith. One who believes and teaches error would not be qualified as an elder regardless of how favorable an impression as a teacher he might make. Already in the early church many false teachers had arisen and Christians had to be warned about them (2 Tim. 4:3).

We should also note that in the fairly comprehensive listing of qualifications for elders in the church, which is given in this passage (1 Tim. 3:1-7), there is no other specific mention of soundness of doctrine. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that Paul's expression "apt to teach" was meant to include this aspect-instruction based upon truth -- as well.

- Charles F Redeker

To be "apt to teach" the elder should know both what to teach and how to teach it. Else, how will others learn from him? "Apt to teach" may include the eloquence of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28), or it may be more by way of example and through personal discussion (2 Cor. 3:2-3; Col. 3:16).

Not all good Christian men are suited to be public teachers (James 3: 1). But some are. For the horrible example, the Dark-Age "Jezebel" was an outstanding teacher, but of error and is thus disqualified (Rev. 2:20).

- J. B. Parkinson

The Greek word DIDAKTIKOS here translated "apt to teach" is translated "fit to teach" by the *Diaglott*. In 2 Timothy 2:24, the only other place this word appears, Paul says the servant of the Lord must "*be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.*"

The word translated "instructing" comes from a Greek word meaning "to train a child." Both texts describe fitness as a teacher. Of course it is understood that bishops must teach the truth. Although he did not specifically say it in either of these citations, Paul did not condone the appointment of those who were excellent teachers but who taught error (cp. 2 Tim. 4:3,4).

- Anonymous

In Evening Shadows

"They constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." - Luke 24:29

The experience of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus holds many blessings for our study. We find in their reactions a mirror to our own perplexities and disappointments.

Like they, we often go on our way rehearsing our troubles and bemoaning the temporary shadows which cross our paths. We too walk with sad and heavy hearts, little expecting Jesus to join us in our journey, lifting the burden from our hearts. We too may be surprised by what we take as the seeming ignorance on the part of our Lord of the situations which may give us cause to worry. We may think that the Lord has appeared to others whom we know who may also have had difficulties and that he has comforted their afflictions; and we may ask ourselves why he has not done so for us?

Are we quick to receive their testimony, or do we, like these two disciples, rise no higher than being "astonished" at their words? Has not every child of God at one time or another merited the loving rebuke from the lips of our Master: ". . . *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken...*" (Luke 24:25).

For our benefit under similar circumstances, let us look at the way that our Master dealt with these individuals whose hearts were heavy and full of grief. Recall the story of that evening hour, filled with the sublimest of consolations for those who lived then as well as for those who live today. If Jesus could say to one -- or to all eleven -- who walked with him in that day, "*Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known 'me...*" (John 14:9), we need not feel that we are better than they. They were slow to believe the treasury of inspired testimony and as a result they were slow to overcome a temporary trial. How much more responsible are we, today, to whom such a great unfolding of the Word has been granted?

Christ's Gentleness

How beautifully the Apostle Paul addressed his brethren when he wanted to offer them his assistance.

Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you (2 Cor. 10:1).

Surely, in these words we find that Paul was imitating the example of Jesus' correction of the two men on the road to Emmaus. We note the gentleness in his corrections and the means that he used to inform them, "*In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*" (2 Tim. 2:25). When we attempt to instruct people we often find that we hinder those whom we would help.

What method did Jesus use? Jesus directed the attention of these two men to the true work of the Messiah. They could not reconcile the seemingly conflicting Scriptures which described on the one side a suffering and humiliated Messiah and on the other a glorious and powerful ruler. Such men did not need to be criticized about their lack of understanding. No, he immediately "*...explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures*" (Luke 24:27, NAS). He

unfolded the Scriptures as could no one else. They saw for the first time the meaning of the prophecies concerning his prior sufferings and the future triumphs. His words -- and manner -- cleared away the clouds of fear and doubt. Soon, their hearts were on fire with new hopes.' We can understand why they said, when his sermon on the messianic prophecies had ended, *"Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while he was explaining the Scriptures to us"* (Luke 24:32)? They had reason to be so urgent in their invitation for him to remain with them, *"Stay with us, for evening draws on, and the day is almost over"* (Luke 24:29). And how important to them were the results of that invitation. Both to them and to us when we too plead with the Master to become our intimate companion. Their hearts knew the burning joy his explanation of the -prophetic Scriptures had brought. But it was not until they invited him to remain the night with them that *"...their eyes were opened, and they recognized him..."* (Luke 24:31). This condition continues to this day. If we could comprehend all prophecies, understand all mysteries, possess all knowledge, and have faith supreme but have no passionate desire to have Christ fill our heart, we could have no vision of his all encompassing loveliness. This is the knowledge which is needed today. To this point another has aptly said: "The teacher with the keys in our day, is the man who is in personal touch with reality, and who is interpreting life in the light of a living experience of Christ."

Evening: Matured Vision and Rest

Our Christian lives are cyclical. There are spiritual mornings and evening shadows. We begin with a conviction of work to be done, and we end with retrospection and the sober act of taking stock of our own actions. Our Christian armor is put on with confidence -- perhaps with too great a self-assurance -- and we need the voice of inspired warning: *"...let not him who girds on his armor boast like him who takes it off"* (1 Kings 20:11, NAS). Our early days of following in the Master's footsteps are likely to be characterized by a lot of impulsive activity-a need to be "doing" something for the Lord. But our later days are more likely to see us habitually confessing ourselves to be unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10). In this condition we may humbly look up to our Master, saying with the poet,

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling.

How easily and unconsciously the spirit which we displayed earlier in our lives seems to say how much the Lord has need of us. But when the evening of our day of toil draws near maturing saints become increasingly humbled as they realize how much mending and patchwork appears in even the best of their works for the Lord.

In the early days of Christian life it is easy to conclude that with a general understanding there is little more to be known of God's Word. But "when grace has well refined the heart" and the sacred pages are kept open for deeper study, then in our advancing years we realize that we have only been looking through a darkened glass and our knowledge has been only partial.

Mature vision brings rest, the rest suggested in the words of Isaiah, *"In stillness and in staying quiet, there lies your strength"* (Isa. 30:15, NEB). As the fever of activity subsides, one's thoughts draw away from controversial subjects and slip into the restful attitude of the disciples request, *"abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."* As evening falls upon the earth the cooling dews fall upon leaf and flower. Just so does the heavenly grace fall as refreshment upon the heart of the believer. The Christian learns to place his hopes in Christ alone. And as he does he enters an ever dearer fellowship with him. Upon such the heavenly dew falls, and from the lips of such are heard the ardent words of prayer:

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me!
I need thy presence every passing hour,
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.

How will he abide with us? What is the token of his presence with us in the closing hours of life? His ways are unlimited. His spirit may bear witness with ours in many ways during our life. But the dew only falls to earth when all is still, and so it is with the peace of Christ. We must learn to say "*Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you*" (Psa. 116:7, NAS) and then to be quiet and rest in his love.

I Will Manifest Myself to Him

It is evident from Jesus' words that he intended us to understand that his presence would be more than a theoretical thing. "...I will love him, and will disclose myself to him" (John 14:21). Jesus wants us to believe his promise. He wants us to believe that when we ask him to abide with us that he will surely come and abide with us. In doing so he gives us an experiential assurance of the reality of his presence. Our words are vain worship if we mouth the words,

Lord Jesus, make thyself to me,
A living bright reality,

if there is no faith in the possibility of such a bright reality within the realm of actual experience.
It is mere mockery to plead,

I need thee every hour, most precious Lord!
No tender voice like thine can peace afford.
I need thee, O! I need thee;
Ev'ry hour I need thee;
O bless me now my Savior!
I come to thee.

if there is no "yea and amen" promise upon which firmly to believe that we will hear his voice speaking peace. And so through his Word, by his spirit bearing witness with our spirit, he truly comes to abide with us. Let us consider, a *few* of the ways in which we may know his abiding presence.

Love and Sufferings

We know that he is near when thoughts of his love for us and the degree of his sufferings on our behalf causes our heart to "burn within us" (Luke 24:27). When the Scriptures speak to us of his sacrificial love, he is near, manifesting himself to us. When the wounds and stripes which he bore for us come to mind with a freshness that leaves us saying "*My Lord and my God*" (John 20:28), we can know that we are within the circle of his abiding presence.

Joyful Oneness

If he is abiding with us, we will begin to recognize a sense of oneness with him and our sense of delight in the Father's will. His presence in our heart will give us, increasingly, the joy that was his in drinking from the cup which the Father had poured for him. As we appreciate him more we will learn to affirm the truth voiced by the poet,

"Gladly will I toil and suffer,
Only let me walk with thee."

When we contemplate his devotion we are drawn nearer to him. He was so devoted that all he asked in return for his obedience was a return to his former glory (John 17:5). Such unselfishness and delight in the will of God causes us to yearn,

Just to be there
And to look on his face,
That will be glory for me.

That very yearning is a testimony to our fellowship and companionship with Jesus. How so? Because the fellowship we have when he abides with us causes his character to grow in our eyes until it is the sum of all our joy and hope. The purpose of our life can then be to place God first in all our thoughts. It is he who has opened his Word concerning himself. It is he who has accepted our fervent invitation, "*Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.*"

Joyful Meditation

Our meditation upon Jesus is, in itself, an encouragement. By considering him who "*went about doing good*" (Acts 10:38) the boundaries of our sympathy grow wider. It becomes habit to be "*moved with compassion*" (Matt. 9:36) toward the men around us who are suffering under the reign of sin and death. Such meditation is a token of our fellowship with Jesus. When we reflect upon the *other* hands around the world, besides our own, which are extended to hold cups of cold water to the lips of some who suffer, when we thankfully think of those who are not of our fellowship but who are casting out veritable demons in the name of Jesus, when we rejoice before God for the Jericho roads of today where tender hearted "Samaritans" and the "publicans and sinners" of today have tended to the needs of travelers beset by modern-day thieves and robbers, ah, then, he has been abiding with us and sharing his benevolent spirit with us.

Joy-Filled Hearts

We own yet another witness of our abiding in Christ. Merely considering the possibilities which his abiding with us can produce, the real power and transformation which can occur in us, that consuming desire to approximate divine love and grace in our lives is another testimony. Just as Jesus expounded the Scriptures concerning himself, so it is with us. If our understanding is being opened to the truths of the life which has been opened to us by our Lord, we have evidence that Jesus has heard our prayer and is abiding with us.

When our meditation upon his holiness results in our betterment, increasing our admiration for the breadth and unselfishness of his vision, we have the testimony of his presence with us. It is by growing in our appreciation of him that the longing for him to live, to dwell, to abide in us grows.

And the real blessings which he imparts will be our testimony that he keeps his promises, that he has entered our lives, supped with us, and we with him.

Evening Shadows

The shadows of our human life begin to descend and our life draws nearer its end. Looking around us we think, with increasing surety, that the completion of the church is near. And we ask, What greater joys may we yet anticipate? It is important that we have experiences to prove that we have not received the favor of God in vain. But however much he may have assured us of his favor, the fervency of our requests for him to abide with us should increase as the evening shadows of our life lengthen.

Who but Jesus can help us to improve our remaining days? Where can we find safety in perilous times? Where can we find spiritual quietness in God's overruling providence? Only in fellowship with Jesus. In nature it is evening which has such a mellowing, calming effect upon our lives. The discord which filled the day gradually diminishes as evening advances, and soon a stillness fills the air. May it be so in the evening of our life-day. He is our peace and he imparts his own sweet peace to us.

There is a real need for this intimacy with Jesus. We need the harshness of our characters to be replaced by the gentleness of Christ. We need the disposition of Jesus to replace our own mindedness (Phil. 2:5). We need to be emptied of self so that we can be filled with the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). And just as his disciples needed to walk with him so that he could clarify their misconceptions and open their eyes, so too do we.

Brethren, let us bring joy to the heart of our Lord just as did those two disciples that evening. As he opens our eyes and inflames our heart let us invite him to abide longer with us. *"We must work the works of him who sent [us], as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work"* (John 9:4). We face a paradox. On one hand the powers of darkness are trying harder than ever to deceive the elect of God. On the other hand we see the glory and possibility of being gathered home with the elect. But should not both of these prospects be an encouragement to us? The one assures us of the power to be found in the abiding presence of Jesus. The other reminds us of our need for sustaining grace. Both will lead us to repeat those words with feeling, *"Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."*

Jesus will do much to mature our characters if we ask him into our hearts. Evil desires will fade. We will learn the principles of righteousness. Our generosity will expand toward all men and we will grow in love toward his children. He who loved the outcasts of God will increase in our pity for the degraded, the sunken race of which we are part. He will lift us above ourselves -- his love shed abroad in our hearts will teach us to embrace others with our love.

We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and glorious time,
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime.

Yes, to the maturing follower of Jesus it is sublime to be living today. Soon his chosen will hear their invitation home, to be with him forever. Prepare us, dear Lord, for the consummation of our hopes. Teach us to gladden your heart by abiding with you -- just as you have rejoiced our hearts by abiding with us!

- J.J. Blackburn

One Jerusalem **The Eternal City Reunited**

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, Oh Jerusalem!" - Psalms 122:2

On May 28, 1948 the Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem was taken by the Jordanian Arab Legion. In berserk wantonness an Arab mob burst in and wrecked shrines and synagogues without restraint. Abdallah El Tal, commander of the Arab Legion wrote in his memoirs, "The operations of calculated destruction were set in motion." Fifty eight synagogues and Jewish schools were pulverized and obliterated. Scrolls of the law were defiled and desecrated. Ritual appurtenances and prayer books were pillaged or devoured in the flames of Arab bonfires. Jewish tombstones on the Mount of Olives were deliberately destroyed and desecrated. Graves were ripped open and bones scattered. Thousands of tombstones were smashed or removed to build fortifications, foot paths, and latrines or were sold to building contractors. For 19 years following, from 1948 to 1967, Jews and Israeli Muslims were denied access to their holy places in the Old City of Jerusalem.

On June 7, 1967 an Israeli paratroop unit broke through the Lions gate and took the old city by hand to hand fighting with no damage to the holy places. Israeli Defense Minister, Moshe Dayan, entered the old city and declared "We have unified Jerusalem, the divided capital of Israel, we have returned to the holiest of our holy places, never to depart from it again." During subsequent Israeli archaeological exploration a prophetic verse from Isaiah 66:14 was found engraved in one of the stones of the Western Wall by an anonymous Jew, perhaps a thousand years ago; "And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like young grass." Those who remember the sight of Jerusalem during those tragic 19 years when it was divided cannot help but rejoice to see the reborn city. In place of the ugly concrete wall that cut through the heart of it a garden now blooms. Yellow signs no longer block every east-west road with their skull and cross bones and their black letters "Halt" "Danger" "Frontier Ahead." New residences, gardens, and newly paved roads have been constructed. At night, lights decorate the ancient walls of the old city from which Arab Legion soldiers formerly trained gun sights on passing citizens. Arabs and Jews of Jerusalem mingle freely, pursuing their personal lives in a spirit of coexistence. Ever since the reunification of the city by Israel, access has been opened to all holy places for all religions and sects. Christians administer Christian holy places and Muslims administer their holy places. The Temple Mount, site of Solomon's Temple, is now occupied by the Muslim Dome of the Rock and the El Aksa Mosque. The police unit guarding the Temple Mount is commanded by a Muslim officer and manned by a mixed force of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian policemen. Pilgrims of all faiths visit the site freely.

Since June 7, 1967, Jewry's holiest site, the Western Wall of the temple compound, has not been deserted for a single moment, by day or by night, in striking contrast to Ottoman or British Mandate days, when the Jew approached it furtively in fear of his life or when under Jordanian rule access to it was completely denied him.

After re-unification, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel went to the Western Wall for the first time. He expressed his thoughts and feelings in his book, "Israel: An Echo of Eternity."

July 1967 -- I have discovered a new land, Israel is not the same as before. There is great astonishment. It is as if the prophets had risen from their graves. Their words ring in a new way. Jerusalem is everywhere; she hovers over the whole country.

There is a new radiance, a new awe-I did not enter on my own the city of Jerusalem. Streams of endless craving, clinging, dreaming, flowing day and night. Mid nights, years, decades, centuries, millenia, streams of tears, pledging, waiting from all over the world, from all the corners of the earth, carried us of this generation to the Wall. My ancestors could only dream of you. To my people in Auschwitz you were more remote than the moon, but I can touch your stones! Am I worthy? How shall I ever repay for these moments? -- Jerusalem, I always try to see the inner force that emanates from you, enveloping and transcending all weariness and travail. In Jerusalem, past is present and heaven is almost here. All of our history is within reach -- Jerusalem is a witness, an echo of eternity. Stand still and listen: Jerusalem was stopped in the middle of her speech. She is a voice interrupted. Let Jerusalem speak again to our people, to all people. She is the city where waiting for God was born, where the anticipation of everlasting peace came into being. Jerusalem is waiting for the prologue of redemption, for new beginning-It may happen any moment; a shoot may come forth out of the stock of Jesse, a twig may grow forth out of his roots. God has chosen Jerusalem and endowed her with the mystery of His presence; prophets, kings, sages, priests made her a place where God's calling was heard and accepted. Here lived the people who listened and preserved events in words, the scribes, the copyists. It was in Jerusalem where the prophet proclaimed:

And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken (Isaiah 25:7-8).

- H. Dart

The Sum Is This

Man fell by disobedience, and thereafter all his progeny have been sinners. Different dispensations, while on the one hand revealing God, were also the trial whether under any circumstances man could recover himself. God first tried man without law; the end of that was the flood, *"for the earth was filled with violence"* (Gen. 6:11). God then committed power to Noah, trying man under the restraints of human authority, saying, *"he that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"* (Gen. 9:6), to see, whether with help man could recover himself. The end of that, and this within no long period, was open and wide-spread idolatry. The other dispensations are specially his. He chose one family, the family of Abraham; and to give fleshly man every assistance in recovering himself, he gave him a perfect law, to see whether by this law he could improve or restore himself. This was the dispensation of the law. I need not tell you the end of this. God sent his servants seeking fruit of the husbandmen to whom he had let out his vineyard. And some they beat, and some they stoned, and all they treated shamefully. Last of all he sent his Son, and him they cast out and crucified (Matt. 21:33-39).

- A. Jukes

The Pre-eminence of Christ and his Word

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." - John 12:48

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." - Colossians 2:18,19

Spiritual progress cannot take place without recognizing the authority of Christ and the Word of God to the church. It may be said that the primary causes of spiritual leanness and lack of progress are chargeable to failures of individual Christians to properly hold the "head" and to exalt the word of God to its place of supremacy in the church. The apostles warn us against this attitude, which has stood as a constant peril to the spiritual life of the body members of Christ. This has been true when they assembled in large bodies. It has been true, too, when they assembled in ones and twos. This is a warning against looking too much at ourselves (or to other men in the church) and too little toward the Lord, who is indeed the head of the church, which is his body. The apostles picture some members as assuming offices and prerogatives which belonged to the head. Such ignore the fact that there is only one head of the church. He is the Christ. In improperly regarding Christ they regard themselves too highly, imagining that the weight of the Lord's cause rests upon their shoulders. They assume too much leadership and responsibility.

Two Classes Reproved

The Apostles' warnings are also written for others less prominent in the church. These are warned against supporting those who assume such wrongful and unscriptural positions. For any to condone such errors, to condescend to them, is an extreme course of action, one prejudicial to themselves and to the very interests they think to preserve. Angels, that is messengers, representatives to the church (Rev. 1:20; Rev. 2:1) are not to be worshiped. They are to be regarded highly, of course. They have been used by God for the benefit of their fellows, and insofar as they have been faithful, dedicated, and humble they deserve a portion of honor.

The apostles' warning is against an undue reverence for messengers. It is possible to be too humble, placing too great a weight upon the shoulders of others for responsibilities which fall to the individual. For *us* to burden the messengers of God with our own responsibility would be in violation of the Lord's will and his expressed instruction. Such violations would indicate an UN-faithfulness to Christ rather than a proper appreciation of his arrangements.

Two classes are thus criticized equally. They take opposite courses, but their error is the same. The Apostle explains that the error is in failing to "*hold the head*" in proper esteem. We can usurp the place of our head in two ways: We can allow pride to puff us up and teach us to exalt ourselves; or we can quietly submit to others who do such things in erroneous reverence to those whom we think to represent the Lord but who are, themselves, usurping the Lord's place in the body. The failure is the same in either case. Only by rightly regarding Christ Jesus the Head, and the Word of God can the failure be prevented or corrected.

Latter Day Perils

Paul warns us directly about special trials in the "last days." He says that those would be "perilous times" and that men would love themselves and money, that they would be boastful, proud, bitter complainers, disobedient to their parents and other authorities, unthankful, unholy, evil speakers, rash, proud minded, and possessed of the appearance of godliness but without the power of godliness in their lives (2 Tim. 3).

This picture fits ranks of Christendom in our days very well. It is not to be surprising then if the same attitudes seek to invade the communion of the saints-the little companies of the Lord's truly consecrated followers who are striving to overcome the world and its spirit.

The fact that the Apostle writes with such force on this issue does not mean that he was without sympathy. Nor should our references to this subject be so considered. But this is a trouble which has grievously afflicted the church all during the age. It is especially injurious to those who yield to the spirit of headiness. Nothing is surer to sap spiritual vitality and to lead into darkness-natural and spiritual.

The Apostle James solemnly warns the more talented among the Lord's people, for they are especially at risk. He says that teachers need to give the greater heed to the spirit for they would receive the more severe testings. Because the Apostle loved the brethren and esteemed them highly for their services and their desire to please God, he wrote thus harshly to them. He hoped to encourage them to remain in the grace and favor of the Lord, now and in the everlasting future. And so he pressed this point, not particularly in an individual way but in a general way.

Reject Human Authority

In recent years the lesson of considering the Lord's viewpoint in matters has again been raised to the fore. We need to be convinced, by our own experiences if need be, that he places little regard in the arm of flesh or the word of man. Throughout the Bible we read of the supremacy of the Word of God. Throughout the New Testament a similar emphasis is placed upon Christ as the supreme authority in the church. We are cautioned against heeding the words of others-except as they speak in full harmony with the divine message.

Israel had to learn to listen to the laws and judgments of Jehovah and to none else. Not to commandments, traditions, or doctrines of men were they to listen, but only to the words of the living God who had redeemed and delivered them from the land of Egypt their place of bondage, darkness, and death.

As Christians, we would do well to remember this lesson. It will preserve many from the snare of the Adversary and from many a self-imposed difficulty. Much is said about obedience and about the need for morally surrendering our own will to authority. This sounds religious enough, and many people pay great heed to such words. But when men speak thus to other men about obedience we must ask ourselves to what purpose are they speaking? To whom would they have men surrender? To whose authority would they have us consent.

Not one member of the household of faith is unaffected by such appeals. Many sincere believers would be saved the trouble of doing their own thinking; these would delight to have their course of action and service laid out by wiser minds than their own. Indeed, it's a pleasant prospect to have one's daily activities laid out by some master-hand. It relieves one of a great deal of responsibility, and in unthinking obedience the impression is given that one is humble and meek.

But we are bound, before God, to look well to the basis of the authority to which we surrender, lest we find ourselves giving service to the wrong master.

Fabric of Superstition

We remind the reader of the apostolic example. Consider also the degree to which they kept the true headship of Christ in their teachings. Remember their teachings concerning the diverse ministrations of the spirit. Then compare all of these to the authority created by the papacy for itself. A diligent student is compelled to ask, "Where, in the New Testament, is there anything in even the remotest degree which suggests the coming of such offices of power and headship in the church? Where is there scriptural authority for such a supreme power and headship over brethren?"

The answer is simple. There are none. Nor is there authority for any other supreme organization to follow after the great papal apostasy. Where is the scriptural authority for any that have arisen to call themselves the "channel" of God, or God's organization? But such have arisen who claim to be inspired with power and authority to control and direct the church with respect to all matters of doctrine and service!

A student of the Word of God need not fear. We can speak of any organization today with the authority of Scripture. Any such system-from foundation to topstone-are the fabrics of superstition and stand opposed to the voice of nature and the voice of God.

Those Who Rule Over You

It is true that the spirit placed some in positions to teach the primitive church. There are, in fact, exhortations that the brethren:

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

Such scripturally authorized teachers are also referred to by Paul and Peter (1 Cor. 16:15,16; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Do these passages not set forth the principle of obeying certain men in the church? And if so, how can we object to forms of human authority?

When Christ imparts a spiritual gift, whether it be the gift of teaching, the gift of rule, or the gift of pastorship, it is the duty of Christians to recognize and appreciate such gifts. Not to do so would be to neglect our own mercies. But we must remember that in all cases the gift must be a reality-a plain, bona-fide, divinely given thing. It is not a man assuming a certain office or position, or being appointed by his fellows to a so-called "ministry." All this is perfectly worthless, and worse than worthless. Such actions are a daring intrusion upon a sacred domain which must, sooner or later, bring the judgment of God upon them.

True ministry derives from God. True ministry is founded upon the possession of the Spirit of God, a gift from the head of the church. It is not inappropriate, then, to say, "No gift, No Ministry." In all the passages referred to above there is evidenced the possession of the holy Spirit and its work in the hearts and lives of men. Moreover, we see hearts endeared to the lambs and the sheep of the flock of Christ. We see above all divine grace and power.

Earmarks Of the True Teacher

What foundation exists for the admonition to the Thessalonian church that they "know" and "esteem" certain persons? Is the basis that such persons had assumed a title or office? Not in the least. Paul's appeal is based upon the well known fact that these persons had been "*over them, in the Lord,*" and that they had admonished them. Why were they to "*esteem them very highly in love?*" Was it for their office or their title? NO! It was for their work's sake. And why were the Corinthians exhorted to submit themselves to the household of Stephanas? Was it because of an empty title or assumed office? By no means. These had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. They were actually in the world. They had received gift and grace from Christ, and they had a heart for his people. They did not boast of their office or insist upon their title. Instead, they devoted themselves to the service of Christ in the person of his dear people.

This is the principle of ministry. Nor is there any human authority at issue here at all. This is a divine gift and spiritual power communicated by Christ to his servants, exercised by them, in responsibility to him and recognized by his saints, their brethren. A man may be set up as a pastor. He may be appointed by his fellows as a teacher. But unless he possesses a positive gift from the head of the church it is all a sham, a hollow assumption, an empty conceit. His voice will be the voice of a stranger which the true sheep of Christ do not know and ought not to recognize.

But oh how blessed is the contrary incident. Where there is the divinely gifted teacher, filled with true love for the Master's flock, faithfully ministering with wisdom and labor, weeping over them, waiting upon them, there will not be much difficulty in recognizing and appreciating such as these. How do we know a good dentist? Is it by seeing his name on a brass plate?

No, it is by his work. A man may call himself a dentist, but if his work is unskilled and clumsy who would think of consulting him?

False Ministry Relies Upon Human Authority

These facts are true in all human activity; they are true also in matters of ministry. If a man has a gift he will minister if no one acknowledges him. If he has no gift all the appointments and authority in the world will not make him a minister of Christ. Such may be a minister of some religion. But a minister in Christendom is not the same as a minister in the church of the living God. A minister of religion is not the same as a minister of Christ.

False ministries have their source in men. All true ministry has as its source God. True ministry rests upon the Word of God, it has its basis in divine authority; and its object is to bring the heart into the presence of God himself, and to link man to his creator. False ministries center in men, rest in human authority, and exist to link the intellect to itself. And there is a great gulf between the two. The true leads man to God; the false leads away from him. One feeds and nurtures and strengthens the new life, the other hinders its progress and plunges it into doubt and darkness. True ministry is of God, through God, and to God. False ministry is of man, through man, and to man. The former we prize more than life; the latter we reject with all the energy of our life.

Who Would Steady the Ark?

When the question is raised of how to regard human authority and self made authorities, the true follower of Jesus Christ cannot help but flee to the true fountain and source of light and wisdom. The Scriptures affirm, repeatedly, that Christ is the head of the church. Every argument concerning authority must rest upon this one point. It cannot be avoided. And let no one ever fear that all will go to pieces if they don't lift their hands to steady the "ark" of God. Let no one ever consider that they are the main spoke in the divine program in any little quarter of Zion. All such ideas are traitorous. They are disrespectful of the captain of our salvation, for he has told us that without him we can do nothing.

Every prospective member of the Body of Christ whom the Lord has set in the church to serve his cause should realize that he is not essential to the development of the divine plan. It has only been the favor of God which has even granted us a share in the blessed work we enjoy in his name. Actually, rather than feeling proud or boastful, we should be humbled by that thought that we have been permitted, in even the least of means, to have a part in the great plan of God as a servant of others. The recognition of the headship should be so firm that we would also realize the result of a failure to fulfill the privilege of office. Any who lose their humility in service will be debased, will lose their privilege and their opportunities, perhaps at the cost of injury to themselves and to others.

Again, there comes the twoedged nature of the apostolic warning. Meek and humble brothers and sisters should also take heed, resisting any of their number who would exalt themselves and assume a position or office among them as the "channel" of divine blessing. Any who yield in such a circumstance do harm to themselves and encourage those who would act improperly in their erroneous course. They are, in short, encouraging disloyalty to Christ Jesus their Lord, who is the head of the church. To submit to such conditions is to demonstrate that one does not appreciate the liberty which Christ purchased for us at the cost of his own blood. To submit is to demonstrate that one is a babe in Christ, or else that they have gone to sleep as respecting the honor of the church and her head, Christ Jesus the Lord.

The poorest, weakest, and most insignificant prospective member of the body is better qualified to teach others than is one who elevates himself and assumes the position of teacher in the church. Mark the Apostle's words,

Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding firmly the head, from whom the whole body, being supplied and compacted together by means of joints and ligaments, grows with the increase of God.

True Ministers Do Not Parade Their Authority

It is increasingly more important that the disciple of Christ become familiar with the marks of a true teacher, a spiritual guide in Israel! Where there is a real spiritual gift and grace is manifest, then it is a privilege to obey and submit ourselves, for here we discern Christ in the person and ministry of his beloved servant.

The spiritual mind has no problem accepting real grace and power. We can tell whether a man is truly seeking to feed our hearts with the love of God and the bread of life. We can see when one would lead us on in the ways of God, or when they would seek to exalt themselves and promote their own interests. A close walk with the Lord will disclose the difference between true power and hollow assumption.

Moreover, we never find the minister of Christ parading his own authority, or showing off their high office. They work and allow the work to speak for itself, just as the Apostle Paul referred to the plain proofs of his ministry: the unquestionable evidence of the conversion and blessing of lives. He could say to the poor misguided Corinthians, when they were under the influence of a self-exalting pretender, when they foolishly called his apostleship into question *"since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me ... examine yourselves."*

Paul dealt pointedly with these dear brethren. They were the living proofs of his ministry. If his ministry was not of God what were they? But it was of God and this was his joy, comfort and strength. He was *"...an Apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead."* He gloried in the source of his ministry, that is its character, but he had to appeal to the body of evidence quite incontrovertible to their minds. In this case it was not his words which convinced, it was the power. Thus it must be in some measure in every case. We must look for the power of God, we must have the reality.

Emptied of Self: the Servant of Christ

"Shall we be told, We must not judge?" We are bound to judge. *"Beware of false prophets."* How can we beware if we are not to judge? But how are we to judge? *"By their fruits ye shall know them."* Can the Lord's people not tell the difference between a man who comes to them in the power of the spirit, gifted by the head of the church, full of love to their hearts, earnestly desiring their blessing, seeking not theirs but them—a holy, gracious, humble, self-emptied servant of Christ? How different is the true from him who comes with self-assumed or human conferred title, without a trace of divine sanction in ministry of life! Of course the believer can tell the difference. No one in his senses would think of calling in question a fact so obvious.

But we find in Revelation (Rev. 2) that the church at Ephesus is commended for having tried those who said they were Apostles and were not. Could this commendation have had any truth had they not judged? And it is an utterly ungodly spirit which twists the meaning of the Lord's words, *"Judge not, that ye be not judged"* (Matt. 7:1), and those of the Apostle, *"Therefore judge nothing before the time"* (1 Cor. 4:5). It is self-evident that the Scripture does not contradict itself. Hence, whatever the true meaning of these two verses they cannot contradict the solemn responsibility of all Christians to judge the gift, the doctrine, and the life of all who take the place of preachers, teachers, and pastors in the church.

Those who are true ministers to the flock must always work to lead those to whom they minister in the true path of obedience to the Word of God. Moses shows plainly (Deut. 5) the course of diligence necessary to impress upon the flock of God the implicit obedience to the statutes and judgments of God. He did not seek a place of authority for himself, above the law. He did not lord it over God's heritage. His one theme, from beginning to end, was obedience. This was the burden of all his teachings -- obedience, not to him, but to his and their lord.

The Pathway of Humility

Our Lord humbled himself, and God ultimately exalted him. What ever our position among the believers today, we all do well to remember this little reminder from the Apostle's pen. It is a thumbnail sketch of the principles at work in the Father's plan. Those who must be a part of the royal priesthood, who would share in the work of rulership, must first be under the discipline of humility. *"Humble yourselves, therefore, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time"*

This present day, the present age, these are not the times for exaltation. If I would elevate myself during this day, I would place myself in danger of a great fall-from grace. All who are earnest and humble of heart should guard against this temptation, which has been with us from the earliest days of this age. The argument was present among the disciples themselves when they argued who would be the greatest among them. And if the Lord warned them, does he not also warn us when he said, *"Except ye humble yourselves and become as little children, ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom."* Our Lord himself marks humility as an essential to obtaining a place in the kingdom.

Only those who have learned this lesson now will be qualified to discharge the responsibilities associated with those future glorious of fices that will be theirs when they are seated with Christ in his throne.

Highest Place Is Lying Low

Wait for the Lord's time to bestow his true honors and exaltation upon you with faith and patience. Many of the efforts to exercise authority in the church are undertaken with good intentions, to do what would be in the best interests of the church. But in such cases a lack of faith is evident. Such are not strong enough to realize how unnecessary we are to the divine plan and how able the Lord is to overrule every incident and circumstance according to his will. More faith in the Lord's power to regulate the affairs of the church will counteract the efforts of some of his people to run the church's interests along the lines of their own wisdom and ability. We need to remember that he is able, he is willing to work all things according to the counsel of his own will; and we will do well to remember also that our highest place is lying low, that the greatest mastery is self-mastery, and that whatever success we might have in usurping the place and authority of our Lord and his word would react unfavorably in the end. Hence, we must learn to control self, in the interests of the church and also in the interests of self-preservation.

O! to be nothing, nothing,
Painful the humbling may be;
Yet low in the dust I'd lay me
That the world my Savior might see.
Rather to be nothing, nothing
To him let their voices be raised;
He is the fountain of blessing,
Yes, worthy is he to be praised.

The Apostle's example and words should ever be borne in mind: *"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake"* (2 Cor. 4:5).

Avoid Type Making

"We should carefully avoid the *error* of many well-meaning people who run to the extreme of treating every Bible character and incident as typical and are thus led into error by mere curiosity and ingenuity -- unsafe ground -- speculating -- building on mere conjecture"

- The Time Is At Hand, pg. B173.

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