

BAPTIST PREACHERS

SOME WORDS
OF ADVICE TO
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST
MINISTERS

Together With A Few Material Matters
Connected Therewith

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Preface To This Republication

It is hard to imagine a more valuable, concise, and honest writing on the subject of the ministry than this brief work, **Some Words Of Advice To Baptist Ministers**, by Elder W. S. Craig. This work is truly unique. Elder Craig speaks from his heart and counsels the ministry in a loving, fatherly way.

The original printing from which this republished edition is taken was found tattered and stained in our Library at Flint River Primitive Baptist Church. After reading the great words of wisdom contained in it and realizing that this booklet was out of print, relatively unheard of, and very difficult to find, I felt compelled to reproduce it so our people, and especially our ministry, could glean the knowledge which this dear brother shared a century ago.

I pray this finds a worthy place in your own personal library. More importantly, my prayer is that this dear Elder's recommendations help to sharpen our skills as ministers of the true gospel, so that we may more effectively feed God's children.

“Iron sharpeneth iron...” - Proverbs 27:17

Benjamin C Winslett

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The Call to the Ministry

“Let the ministers of churches faithfully devote themselves to the ministry of the word, and let them never adulterate the doctrine of salvation, but deliver it pure and uncontaminated to the people of God.” - Calvin, Institutes, 1-368.

“A man's gift maketh room for him.”-Proverbs xviii. 16.

“If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.” -1 Tim. iii 1.

The gospel ministry is of divine origin, and is the most solemn and blessed work to which a mortal man is called to engage. And what a wonder of the sovereign condescension of the gracious Lord to choose poor, weak, sinful men for this service, and give them messages for His people.

As it was with the priests, so it is with the true ministry, “No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron.” -Heb. v. 4. It is certainly a very serious offense in the sight of God, for anyone that He has not called, to attempt to force themselves into the gospel ministry. King Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21, was stricken with leprosy and lost his kingdom by his unlawful attempt to burn incense in the temple.

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The Minister's Responsibilities

My Dear Brethren In The Ministry: Will you, and especially you who are young in the service, please take kindly some few words of advice, counsel and instruction from one who feels to have the cause of Zion at heart, and desires that your ministry may indeed be profitable to her best interests? If so, carefully read the following pages from a fellow-servant who has saw, learned and experienced at least some things during his labors in the Master's kingdom. While you may know much more than I do, yet I trust that your perusal of these pages will not be altogether unprofitable. I desire to write and also compile some extracts on subjects that I hope will be for your good, and the cause in general. But should I err in anything, do not follow me into that error. Please be charitable in reading.

Remember that you are the called of God to stand upon Zion's walls, to feed and carefully watch for the good of God's people. Your life in the Lord's Vineyard is one of toil, exposure, and great and many responsibilities, and from which there will be no discharge or relief this side of the grave. May faithfulness to God in the discharge of your duties mark your every step.

The name minister is applied to those who are preachers of God's word. The glorious scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ should be well understood, with all the various things connected with it, so the Bible should be the most carefully and prayerfully studied.

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God calls men to preach His everlasting gospel. If He did not, none would do so, for the natural mind runs not in that direction unless for the sake of "filthy lucre," 1 Pet. v. 2. And it is just as true today as it ever was, that in the New Testament sense of the office, "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." So the true under-shepherd is chosen and called to that work. Jesus Christ said to His servants, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you." John xv. 16. Their calling is not from men, neither do they get their qualifications or ability from men. This sure is true, if we accept that teachings of the Bible as to the work of the Holy Spirit in their ministerial preparation for this important work.

"Aaron was specially called of God. And so much so, that the daring presumption of Korah, and his company, who sought the priesthood, uncalled, was punished with an awful death. -Num. xvi. 1-35. Reader! if such a tremendous judgment, under the law, followed the unhallowed attempt of men to minister in holy things before the Lord, what may be ultimately expected to follow those, who, under the gospel, run unsent, uncalled, and not only rush, like the unthinking horse to the battle, into the sacred department of the ministry, but profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost, albeit every thing seems to speak concerning them, as the Scripture: 'I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.' -Jer. xxiii. 21." Hawker, 9-233-4.

The office of the Christian ministry was created by God himself, and therefore its existense is to be defended

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by all the power of the churches. It is the work of the minister to feed the flock of Christ committed to his charge, preach the glorious gospel of the Son of God, to administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And to be a credit to the cause, he "must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" -1 Tim. iii. 2-5. Also, verses 6 and 7. The official authority of all ministers in good standing, is exactly equal; they are all bishops, and each bishop is an elder. (Bishop is a Greek word and elder is a Jewish word for the same office. But because of the common abuse of the word bishop, it seems that Primitive Baptists have generally abandoned the use of it.) God calls every true minister to His work, and the church simply recognizes this call by placing him as a watchman upon the walls of Zion, through her ordination.

The preaching of the blessed gospel is a ministry of the New Testament, and such ministers of experimental truth are indeed few. Jesus especially commissioned His apostles to preach: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 18-20. And this divine

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command they received directly from Him, and seems to be the institution of the gospel ministry (though not first beginnings of it), and they were fully equipped for its service by that wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. While gospel ministers today are called and qualified by the Lord to preach, yet they do not have the wonderful gifts given on Pentecost. The ministry did not die with the apostles, for it is still a service that God places upon those He chooses to this work. It is a service of divine appointment, and its true nature and character must be derived from the Bible. It seems that that commission which Jesus Christ gave directly to His apostles, even yet contains the authority for all those He calls and sends today. For it should be carefully noted that they are not called, commissioned nor sent of men, so the church has nothing to do with first selecting candidates for that work nor sending them first to preach. True ministers, in themselves, are always poor and weak spiritually, for they have nothing only what they receive of the gracious Lord.

The minister should study to shew himself a workman, that they may preach the gospel clearly, and defend it successfully, to the glory of God and the good of His people. The work of the ministry requires labor out of the pulpit, as well as in it. For the lambs on the outside are to be comforted and encouraged, and he should be always ready to so speak privately to those who give any evidence of the work of the Spirit in their hearts. Their duty to be baptized and come into the fold should be pointed out and explained to them.

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“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” -2 Tim. ii. 4. And therefore, he is to prayerfully meditate upon the things connected with the gospel ministry, and give himself wholly to them, that his profiting may appear to all. -1 Tim. iv. 15. If he neglects his gift he will be disobedient and unfruitful. So if the churches are to be greatly benefited, he must make the work of the ministry his main object in life. If he makes the accumulation of money his principle object in life, and the work of the ministry only a side issue, he can expect his mind will be unfruitful in spiritual things. While he should give attendance to reading, he should also earnestly pray unto God to give him that wisdom which will enable him to correctly understand what he reads. And far above all, the blessed Bible should be his principle book of study. Some commentaries may be helpful in some small measure, but do not read them to the neglect of the Scriptures, nor look to them for explanation of what divine inspiration teaches, as infallible, and forget or neglect to call upon the Lord. Never forget that “the Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” - 2 Tim. iii. 15. So be careful not to rely too much on the second-hand information of human authors. God can give wisdom to understand what the Bible teaches. James I. 5. These are very solemn things, and he should feel that he must give an account of his stewardship. Dear brother, may you do it with joy, instead of with sorrow.

“Like all the dear children of God, the minister should especially desire to 'grow in grace, and in the

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knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ;' and, as the Scriptures testify of Him, the true servant of God will delight to read the precious volume of inspiration, and will beseech the Lord Jesus by His Spirit to open his understanding that he may understand the Scriptures, even the deep things of God, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, thus comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and like a good householder brings out of his treasure things new and old, that he may properly feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.” -Hassell, page 313.

“The call to preach is proved by the ability to preach to the edification of God's people. The mind to make use of them in the service of God; for God never calls a man to any service but He gives him abilities for it; which, when a man is sensible of, and is satisfied God has bestowed a gift upon him, he cannot be easy to wrap up his talent in a napkin, but is desirous of making use of it in a public manner; not by mere impulse, through vanity of mind, and with ambitious views and sordid ends, but from a principle of love to the souls of men and the glory of God: of this internal call a man's gifts are an evidence to himself and others. We may be sure that God does not call a man to the ministry, and then leave his qualification to men. When a man is called to the ministry, he at the same time has the gift or qualification.” Hassell, page 313.

“While the Scriptures totally oppose the idea of men being made either Christians or ministers by human inventions and means, they equally and emphatically enjoin upon the minister to 'read, search, meditate upon

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the Scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works; to be earnest to shew himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, to give himself wholly to them, and to take heed to himself and the doctrine, and continue in them.' - 1 Tim. iv. 13-16; 2 Tim. ii. 15; iii. 14-17." -Hassell, page 313.

There is no grounds for believing, because there is no promise, that the world will ever love the true Church better than it loved Jesus Christ. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." - James i4. 4. 1 John ii. 15. The world hates the doctrine of the true gospel, and so must be expected to hate him who so preaches it. Therefore when anyone finds that the world admires him as a preacher, he surely has good reasons to tremble. When the dear Saviour taught the doctrine of election, Luke iv. 25-7, the people were so filled with wrath that they attempted His death. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." -Rom. viii. 7. So the preaching of the cross is always foolishness and a stumbling block to the unregenerate. The gospel minister is positively forbidden to engage in this service for filthy lucre's sake. 1 Pet. v. 2.

Moses felt his great unfitness (in and of himself), David his unworthiness, and Isaiah, Jeremiah and others their incompetency and unworthiness, but the gracious

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Lord encouraged them to look to Him for their ability.

I am confident that the word of God is true, and will stand for ever. Then woe be to those professors of religion who are all joy, and never know any sorrow; with whom there is all day, but who never know any night; all faith, but never any doubts; always full of peace, but never groaning under guilt; always strong, but never fainting; with plenty of salvation at their tongue's end, but never felt what damnation is in their souls; who are always extolling the form, but pouring contempt upon the power; always speaking in the highest terms of the letter of the word, but casting a sneer of contempt at the Spirit's application of the word to the soul; wonderfully zealous for attendance at ordinances, but never knowing what it is to groan to God that He will meet their poor cast down souls as their Comforter in the ordinances. Some of them will talk wonderfully about the doctrines of grace, but have never known to water the throne of Grace with their tears, that God the Holy Ghost would cause His doctrines to drop as the rain, and His still small voice to distil in their souls as the dew. Poor things! they know nothing about these things by soul experience, for they are hid from these wise and prudent professors, and only revealed unto babes; and the dear Savior thanked His Father that this was the case.” -Warburton, pages 124-5.

I do not wonder at so many ministers pouring contempt upon a feeling religion, for how is it possible for those that never were plunged into these depths of feeling the misery of their own foolishness, their own baseness, their own nothingness, and believing it was horrid

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presumption for such wretches to open their mouths in the name of a holy God, and who never knew what it was to have those pangs, sighs, and groans that cannot be uttered; how, I say, is it possible for these to tell anything about feeling either the one side or the other, when they are utter strangers to it. They cannot enter into it till it enters into them; but my poor soul has proved both side.” Page 148.

“God's sent servants, those whom He owns and blesses in the work of the ministry, are kept feelingly sensible from year to year that they have neither wisdom, nor light, nor life, nor love, nor faith, nor prayer, nor zeal, nor humility, nor usefulness, nor one good thing, but as God gives it and communicates it to their hearts; and they know well by soul experience that 'every good and perfect gift is from above.'” - Page 157. “I am a living witness that in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing, (Rom. vii. 18), and I am confident of it that every one that is taught of God is a living witness of its truth.” -Page 185. John Warburton, of Townbridge, England, was a very able and profitable Baptist minister. He was especially gifted in preaching along experimental lines; but he was kept humble under a deep feeling sense of his unfitness and unprofitableness. “One thing that troubles me, my unprofitableness in the things of God. What a worthless thing have I been all my life long.” -Page 202.

“When a preacher speaks in a style of studied elegance, high flown periods, and florid words which the hearer cannot understand; of what avail is the whole sum and substance of his sermon? And in like manner, when

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the discourse is directed to expiate upon the great excellency of virtue, and the happiness which will arise from a discharge of all the high duties of life; and when a poor sinner, with a sinful, sorrowful, broken heart, hears of this blessedness, but is conscious that he has done nothing to merit it, but his whole life meriting the reverse, in punishment, of what possible use can such preachers prove to a wounded soul like his? If indeed, preachers had to do with hearers not sinful, and polluted, who felt no concern for sin, because they had none to answer for; then, I confess, Moral Essays, as they are called, and harangues on the Loveliness of Virtue, might do very well to amuse and gratify the pride of human nature.” Hawker, 8-467.

“When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.” -Hos. xiii. 1. When he spake trembling with a holy fear of God, he was exalted in the eyes of his brethren. But he lost this through being proud and idolatrous. “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” -Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14; Matt. xxiii. 12. They will nor be exalted in the eyes of God's people. “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.” -Jer. xlv. 5.

Ministers should preach the truths of the Bible, whether men will hear or not. They cannot give the hearing ear nor love for the gospel, but in faithfulness to God they should declare what He says in the scriptures. The preaching of the corruption and depravity of the human heart, never has been and never will be, relished by the proud, vain and self-righteous of this world. But

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nevertheless this humbling truth should be plainly declared.

“In Adam was the first spring and fountain of evil. We are but filthy drops of the same filthy stream.” -Gadsby, 2-295.

“The transgression of Adam the sinner, would never have hurted you or me, had we not been born of him, and his blood ran through our veins.” -Hawker, 8-277.

“The whole human race perished in the person of Adam.” -Calvin, Inst., 1-305.

“The whole Adam-race are all alike involved in the ruin of the Fall; they all come forth from the womb in nature in the same natural bondage of sin; all alike serving divers lusts, and pleasures; all under the guilt of sin, the curse of sin, the dominion of sin, the punishment due to sin; the wrath of God, and the terrors of His justice.” -Hawker, 7-590.

“Adam's descendants are daily and hourly feeling the consequences of his Fall. He sinner not alone; he fell not as a solitary individual, for the whole human race was in his loins and fell with him.” -Philpot, 1-230.

Man is always more wicked in his heart than he is in his outward acts, for he is not capable of putting into execution, to the uttermost, the evil thoughts and intents of his corrupt and sinful heart. But it should always be

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remembered that all these wicked thoughts and desires are always very black with damning guilt in God's holy eyes.

“That Satan hath set up, and maintained an empire of sin, in the very heart of man, is a truth too certain to be questioned, and the awful effects of it, too well known to be denied. Holy Scripture gives many sad relations of it.”
-Hawker, 7-86.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” -Luke xix. 10. “With this pure doctrine of the gospel, the faithful servant in the ministry mingles nothing. He makes in his preaching, what Jehovah hath made for preaching, in His Covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one, sole Ordinance of salvation: the Alpha, the Omega; the First, and the Last: the Author, and Finisher of faith. And, with this blessed topic of all his discourse, he mixeth no human doctrines, nor philosophy of men. He walketh not in craftiness, nor handleth the word of God deceitfully.” -Hawker, 8-510.

“There are some that cry up the power of man's free-will, and plead for the strength and purity of human nature, and extol its excellencies and abilities; and it is no wonder that these see no need of Christ, either for themselves or others; hence preachers of this complexion leave Christ out of their ministry for the most part; and generally speaking, lessen the glory and dignity of His Person, depreciate His righteousness, and deny His satisfaction and atonement; and such reckon themselves the favorites of heaven, and are ready to say, whom shall God delight to honor, but us, who are so pure and holy?

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They therefore trust in their own righteousness, and despise others, and make their own works their saviours.”
-Gill, 7-392.

Some there are, indeed, that are mightily fond of this general address, of exhortations to good, and invitations to come to Christ, and offers to take Christ, being made to the carnal world, to allure them, as they call it, to faith, and repentance. But this they do, because they know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God. They are ignorant of the plague of their own hearts, or they would not so reason. They place more stress upon the power, and ability of the creature, to turn himself to God, than either the word of God, (or their own experience, if they attended to it more,) warrants. Hence, they call upon the world at large, and exhort them to good works. They make offers of Christ to such, in direct contradiction to Scripture: and instead of inviting, as Jesus did, the weary and heavy laden only, and as His servants were commanded to do, the thirsty; they invite all. Reader! I beseech you for a moment to consider this subject, and, if the Lord be your teacher, you will soon discover the fallacy of it; and learn, that such men are guided by the pride and vanity of their own heart, (as if they possessed the power of persuasion) and are nor taught of God.”
-Hawker, 9-30.

“A full, free, and finished gospel, is as much despised now, by mere nominal professors, as it ever was, in the days of the apostle Paul.” -Hawker, 8-393.

“The masses of men hate the doctrine of the

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gospel, and he that preaches the gospel may confidently expect the hatred of the world. If one finds the masses admire him as a preacher he has just reasons to tremble.”
-J.H. Oliphant, Prin. and Practices, pages 226-7.

“It were earnestly to be wished, that Paul's faithfulness and zeal, were more followed than it is. When we look around, and behold, in the present awful day, what a mixture of law and gospel, grace and works, make up for the most part, what is called evangelical preaching; how the creature is cried up, and the Person, glory, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, put down; how men are taught to live upon themselves, and their attainments, instead of living upon the Lord Jesus Christ; we have cause to tremble for the eventual consequences.”
-Hawker, 8-581.

The work of the minister is compared to that of a shepherd. He is to feed the sheep of Christ, watch over them for good, and should have a special care for the weak lambs, for they need his aid. Then there are many enemies on the outside that must not be overlooked. So the shepherd should not be so much interested in other duties as to forget or neglect to watch. Neither should he be so interested in watching outside enemies, as to let the flock starve. So he needs to be wise as well as valient.

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Foolish Jesting

I wish to call attention to a very shameful practice that sometimes preachers fall into; the telling of smutty stories to the amusement of others. The preacher who engages in such filthiness may draw a crowd around him who will laugh at what he says, and may draw considerable attention in this way, but he always lowers himself as a minister and gentleman, even in their estimation. And my dear brother, I earnestly beg you to carefully avoid such hurtful things. Because they are positively harmful to your ministry, and disgraceful to you as a Christian, and the preacher who follows in this line will always lower himself by it. Even the world will form a very poor opinion of you and the cause you represent, though they may loudly laugh at your filthy jokes. The commands to “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,” -Eph. iv. 29, and to “Abstain from all appearance of evil,” 1 Thess. v. 22. are just as positively binding to you as any other of Paul's injunctions. Paul positively forbids “profane and vain babblings,” (2 Tim. ii. 16) filthiness, foolish talking and jesting. -Eph. v. 4.

“When we follow the world into all their vanities, and engage in all their filthy conversation, we are saying to the world 'This is what the grace of God has done for me.' Well they may turn upon us and say 'If this is all that the grace of God does for a man, we don't want the grace of God!'” -Eld. J.J. Gilbert.

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Counsel on Preaching

“I always shall think of old Elder A. Marshall, who is my spiritual father in the gospel, if I have any. He said an empty barrel sounds the loudest, and too many leaves hide the fruit.” Elisha McCord, Georgia, 1841; as given in *The Primitive Pathway*, page 47, Elder G.W. Stewart.

“The minister of the gospel certainly has a great responsibility on him. How he trembles at heart, when he considers that he is required to be an example of believers, in his words, conversation, charity, spirit, faith, and purity! How careful, then, he must be that his words be sober and correct; that his conversation be becoming and useful; that he be charitable and loving in his manner; that he be in a spirit of meekness, gentleness, humility, and kindness; that he may be sound and firm in faith; and that he be pure in his life. And Paul instructed Timothy to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. This shows that it is the duty of the gospel minister to inform himself by reading; that he ought to exhort others to do right; and that he may understand it, and be able to teach others. Paul also told Timothy to neglect not the gift that was in him. This shows that one can neglect the gift that God gives him; but should not do so. And Paul told Timothy to meditate upon these things; and to give himself wholly to them, that his profiting might appear to all. This shows that it is good for a minister to meditate upon Scriptural things, and that this is the way to show himself useful. Let us remember that not only our own happiness as children of God and ministers of the gospel, depend on our diligence as gospel ministers and teachers, but the

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happiness of those that God hath made it our duty to teach and comfort. Oh how much we need the help of God every way! I know our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. The ministers of the gospel have much to do in shapening the doctrinal sentiments, as well as the conduct of those they preach to, those among whom they labor in their ministry. In view of this truth, how important it is that the ministers of the gospel be sound in the doctrine, themselves, as well as correct in their lives! Even God's dear children may be taught false doctrine, to some extent, to the confusing of their minds, and to the disturbing of their peace. In this way, divisions are brought about among God's children, for error has a tendency to confuse and divide God's people, while truth has a tendency to unite them. I am satisfied that the desire that a true minister of the gospel has for the office of a bishop or elder, is not a natural desire, but a desire begotten in his mind of God. This must be so; for, according to his natural desire, he does not want the office, but shrinks from it." -Eld. T.J. Bazemore, Words of Comfort, abridged from pages 146-156.

“Never make an apology for yourself because you have but little education: people will find that out without you telling. Study the meaning of words, and use the best language you can; but never try to make a display. Use the simplest language, and never use any words that you do not know the meaning of. Don't consider that you are obliged to remain ignorant because you are not educated. Learn all you can in every way. The apostle Peter exhorted his brethren to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue

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knowledge. God had given them faith; but it was their work and duty to add to it virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. 'For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' So we see that none of us are to be excused because of our ignorance; for it we are ignorant, it is an evidence that we are slothful, and are not as diligent and studious and earnest in our religion as we should be; especially if we are ministers of the gospel. It is all right for you to meditate on the Scriptures, and to study any particular text that may be on your mind, comparing Scripture with Scripture, that you may arrive at the true meaning of the text, by the help of God's Spirit. God has given us the Holy Scriptures for our instruction, guidance, and comfort; and we can not profit by them unless we read, search, and study them. And I am sure we cannot explain them unless we know them. It is presumptuous in any to claim that they do not read the Scriptures, but get all they know by revelation. It is true that it will not do to undertake to prepare a sermon to preach, memorizing the words we want to say. It is all right to have ideas, and to present them when the opportunity is presented, but it will not do to have a sermon 'cut and dried.' It will have no moisture, nor sweetness, nor power, nor life about it. It will not be the gospel." -Bazemore, abridged, pages 159-160.

“Never, never commence your sermon by making an apology of any kind. You will get in the habit of doing

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so, if you commence it. Read your text, and explain it in the simplest way you can; and be as brief as you can without treating your subject lightly. Do not imagine that you must preach a long time in order to preach well. Short sermons, generally speaking, are to be preferred. If there is nothing else to commend them, their shortness will be greatly appreciated by the hearers. If they are full of truth, power, comfort, and sweetness, still, they will be better by not being too lengthy. They will then be short and sweet. Long, tedious, uninteresting, cold, dead sermons are not only useless, but are hurtful to the cause of truth, and are very painful to the hearers.” -Bazemore, pages 160-1.

“Do not speak in a sing-song tone, nor grunt in your preaching, nor speak too fast, imagining that you must do this for your effort to be called preaching. Speak in a natural, quiet way; not too loud, nor too low; not too fast, nor too slow. Be temperate in your manner, not boisterous. Speak to be heard, and understood, and profited by your hearers. Preaching is teaching; therefore you should never try to explain anything in your preaching that you do not have a clear understanding of yourself. Avoid presenting speculative ideas; they confuse the hearers. Do not repeat what the preacher has said, that you follow in preaching, and do not speak at length after a sermon has already been preached. If you desire to present something that you have in mind after another preacher has preached, present it promptly, but be reasonably brief. Remember that a good sermon does not consist in loud and fast preaching, but in the matter presented, and in the manner it is presented, and in the power and comfort of the Spirit of God that attend it.” -Bazemore, pages 161,2.

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“Never ride any hobbies. It is wrong to dwell or refer to anything too much, even if it is a right thing. Such a course will lessen your influence for good. Never refer to controverted points in a carnal or conceited way, as though you were wiser and better than those who differ from you. It is all right to refer to controverted points if you refer to them at a proper time, and in a becoming way, and give good reasons for your own position in regard to them. Never refer to those who differ from you, in an unbecoming way. The spirit of the gospel is a spirit of love, and peace, and good will towards men. Harshness and unkindness betrays a carnal spirit and place us in a very inconsistent attitude, that of trying to teach and correct others, when we are wrong ourselves; trying to get the mote, a very small atom, out of the eye of another, when we have the beam, a large substance, in our own eye. It matters not how sound we may be in our letter of what we present in our preaching, if the spirit of it is not right, it is sadly wanting, and we are sadly in error. It is true, gospel ministers are to reprove, rebuke and exhort, as well as preach the Word, but it must be done with all longsuffering and doctrine; that is, in the right spirit and with the scriptural proof. Mere assertions or declarations amount to but little. We should be courteous to all men; but this does not mean that we are to flatter anyone by causing him to believe that we agree with him in his views or conduct, when we do not. This would be hypocrisy in us.” -Bazemore, page 162.

“Always show respect to the aged ministers. If they are right, we should honor them, and sustain them. If

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they are wrong, we should still be kind and considerate towards them, and entreat them as fathers, to leave off their wrong ideas or conduct. Never claim that you are compelled to do anything that is unseemly or inappropriate, such as preaching too long, or saying hard things about anyone, using as a plea that you are under the control of the Spirit of God, and have the burden of the Lord on you, and thus lay the blame of your mistakes on the Lord. This would not only be presumptuous of you, but would be blasphemous. Always dress in a decent, becoming way when you are to appear before the people to preach; nor in a gaudy, foppish way, nor in a slouchy, careless way. Never try to appear odd by attracting undue attention to your dress or person in any way. Avoid covetousness, and even the appearance of being covetous. Let your conversation be without covetousness. It is all right to teach the Lord's people their duty to you as a minister, but you must do it in a way to show to them that you are not eager for their money. You should labor with your own hands as you have opportunity, and as necessity is upon you; but your main work of life should be the ministry of the word, and other duties belonging to the sphere of the gospel minister.” -Bazemore, pages 162-4, abridged.

“Be cautious about your remarks concerning other preachers. Do not criticize them to others. What you have to say, say it to them, and say it in a becoming way, and in a way to help them, and not in a way to cause them pain, nor to cause them to dislike you. Remember that there is something else for you to do, besides preaching. You must behave yourself out of the pulpit, by walking uprightly,

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and conducting yourself properly in every way. If you live a correct life, your preaching will have a greater weight on the minds and hearts of men. Study the Scriptures, that you may be well acquainted with their teaching, for your own edification and that of others through your preaching. But, above all, study to please the Lord, rightly dividing the word of truth. Do not be careless in quoting texts of Scripture. If you find that you have a use for certain proof texts, study them.” -Bazemore, page 164, abridged.

“Be prompt in attending your appointments, and in commencing the services at the appointed hour. Never wait after the appointed time, for people to arrive. If you wait for the people one time, they will expect you to do so another time. If you want them to be prompt in being at the meeting on time, you must be prompt yourself, and begin the services at the appointed hour. Do not be hasty or harsh in reproofing anyone. If you will be gentle and respectful, and manifest the spirit of your high calling as a minister of the gospel, you will command the respect and attention of other people, whether they believe your doctrine or not. Be careful how you behave yourself with the sisters and the ladies generally, that you may live a pure life, and that the enemy may have no occasion to speak evil of you. You are not only to be chaste and pure in your life, but you are to show yourself to be so, by shunning the very appearance of evil. We should visit the widows and orphans; but we should do so in purity, and in a way to not cause any reproach. Remember that it devolves on you through your teaching and example, to a large extent, to shape the doctrinal sentiments and the conduct of the brotherhood; and that it is therefore

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important that you be sound in doctrine and correct in practice, yourself; that you be governed by the teaching of the scriptures, in doctrine and practice, and not by tradition. It is a fearful thing to lead God's dear children in a wrong course, through false teaching, and through our influence by our own improper conduct. Pray to the Lord for wisdom and guidance, and for spirit of your calling.”
-Bazemore, pages 164-5, abridged.

“The Levites were priests, to offer for all Israel. The Levite is a type of the gospel minister. As God appointed the Levite to offer for all Israel, and made provisions by law for his support through the offerings of all Israel, 'Even so hat the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' -1 Cor. ix. 14. But to the young minister I desire to say, you must provide things honest in the sight of all men, for yourself, and for your family if you have one, even if the church should neglect you. If you should fail here, you would be worse than an infidel, as well as deny the faith. The minister of the gospel should be industrious, and economical, and prudent, and try to have a competency. He should not be extravagant in his manner of living, nor suffer his family to be so. I believe that it would be best for all of our ministers to have homes of their own. For this to be so, they must either have their homes given them, or they must work, and save, and accumulate, and buy their homes for themselves. I think it would be well for our ministers to have this view while they are young, and try to accomplish it when they are able to do so; before they get old, and cannot. But I am aware that all cannot do this, because of hindering causes over which they have no

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control.” -Bazemore, pages 166-7, abridged.

“Covetousness makes a minister smell bad and look more like a greedy dog than a minister.” -John Bunyan.

“A minister should never preach for a stipulated consideration, but for Christ's sake. It is his business to preach whether men will withhold or whether they will contribute. Of course he cannot spare so much so much of his time from caring for his family if he is not helped, but he can preach all the time he can spare. * * * The Primitive Baptists can never resort to paying salaries to get pastors, nor should our ministers ever stoop to selling the word at so much a sermon or by the year. * * * Some ministers make a practice of traveling from one church to another and depend upon the churches to support them, having no work by which to earn anything. This is living off the labors of others and taking what justly belongs to the pastors of churches. It is no doubt beneficial for able and faithful ministers to visit churches, but for a minister to aim to live off churches which have pastors they should assist, is certainly an unwarranted practice, and should be discountenanced.” -Elder Walter Cash, Practical Suggestions, pages 40-3. And surely the practice of visiting churches without any solicitation from them should never be abused, for the churches have rights which should be respected.

“In calling a man to the care of your church, you should remember that you are asking him to perform a very considerable task. Some three of four days out of

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each month of his time will be required at the same with other churches, which (sometimes may) amount to over one-half of his time spent among the churches, beside his clothing, his horse, or conveyance, etc. All this is actual expense that must be met, and he must also give some time to reading and investigating to prepare himself to serve you. Have you performed your duty to him? Have you visited his house and inquired after his wants? Have you aided in bearing his expense? If not, you have no right to ask him to take the care of your church. The Bible does not sustain you in enjoying his labor from year to year for nothing. It is morally unfair and unjust for you to ask him to leave his home and family, and equip himself all at his own expense just to serve you, and you be at no expense. If you have thus 'despised' him and his office he will ultimately become discouraged with it, and seek another field of labor. If you are in lower circumstances than he is, it may be a good reason why you should give him less, but is it a good reason why you should give him nothing? Is it just to ask him to make all the sacrifice in supplying the churches with preaching on this account? Surely not. He should not be enriched by the churches, nor should they suffer him to be reduced to poverty. The truth is, God does not call men to work in the ministry that they may be enslaved to the churches, and for churches to thus treat their ministers, is to enslave them, to 'despise' them and their office. You should not, by any means, vote for a man to serve your church without being willing to do your duty. These lines may be criticized, but I am sure they are scriptural, and I feel God approbates these sentiments.”
-Elder J. H. Oliphant, Principles and Practices, pages 265-6.

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I think that a church's obligations to her pastor surely bears some proportion to both his and their financial condition. If he is a poor man their obligations are greater, and if he has plenty of this world's goods, their obligations certainly are far less. Also, if the church is poor, their ability is so greatly lessened and therefore is to be considered. And the distance he may have to come and the expense of travel, are also determining factors. A poor man with a large family surely must receive help if he is to give any of his time to the care of the churches.

It seems to me that if some churches (say one to four; although I think four churches is surely too many for one man to pastor rightly) be situated reasonable near together, and are financially able to so help their pastors that he could give all (or nearly all) his time to labor for them, that it would be the best for both he and them. But then one of two (or more) poor churches cannot do this, only in part. Circumstances and conditions of both pastors and churches are so various that what would seem advisable in one case would have to be greatly modified for others. It seems to me that two churches is about all that one man can rightly serve, and especially if they be large churches.

I think a rich preacher should be willing, not only to freely give considerable of his time, but freely give some of his money also to aid the cause of Zion. He should not expect the churches to help him the same as if he was a poor man, and of course they should not do so. But then I seriously doubt whether an immensely rich man

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would make a good Primitive Baptist preacher, though I suppose there may be some exceptions. Most of the best preachers come from the poor class of people.

(What I have written on the support of the ministry is not for the benefit of myself, but is intended especially for the good of preachers who do not have much of this world's goods.)

I feel sure that it is best for all the members to do something and contribute something towards the church, and this should always be done freely and cheerfully. If the members do nothing they cannot expect their church to prosper, and should be afraid that their course will end in the death of the church. The expenses of the church should be borne by all, not by just a few, and while the giving should be voluntary, yet it should bear a reasonable relation to “as the Lord has prospered them,” that it be not burdensome on any.

Elder W. T. Brown once told me about a Baptist preacher who did everything for his church. Without any help or aid whatever from them, he served as pastor, swept the house, cut and carried the in all the wood, built all the fires, etc. All they did was to fill their seats and go home after the services. But he by doing everything so completely nursed them into feeling that awful condition of helplessness, that after his death they only assembled once, and that was to take steps to sell their church house and disband their organization.

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Jealousy

Jealousy is always a very bad thing for the peace and fellowship of the brethren. Satan sometimes sows the cruel seeds in the hearts of ministers, and which so often bear fruit to the injury of the church and themselves. “Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.” -Song, viii. 6. Surely all should prayerfully fight against this green monster. For it is almost certain to work the ministerial death, or nearly so, of all preachers whose hearts are animated by this evil spirit.

“Jealousy is that particular uneasiness which arises from the fear that some rival may rob us of the affection of one whom we greatly love, or suspicion that he has already done it.” -Henderson-Buck, page 392. It seems that jealousy often comes from pride. “Against the proud are hurled all the curses of the bible.” -Edward Carr, Musings, page 101.

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Secret Orders

Primitive Baptists as a denomination, generally do not favor their members belonging to secret orders, and especially such as Masons and Odd-fellows. While they do not in anyway interfere with the privilege of others in doing as they may please about joining these lodges, but as regards their own body as Primitive Baptists, it is held by very many of them that such affiliations are inconsistent with what they conscientiously consider as being their strict principles and orderly practice. For the sake of full Baptist fellowship generally, it seems necessary not to join them. They will not help your influence for good among the Baptists. But then it seems to me that each church (as a sovereign body) should be allowed at least a considerable measure of liberty in deciding this question for themselves. I feel to kindly beg that a course be followed that will draw the Baptists together, and allay strife and friction between them.

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Losing One's Influence

“Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.” -1 Cor. ix. 27. I do not understand that Paul is speaking of the fear of his being eternally lost, but his fear of the possibility of his falling as a gospel preacher, and bringing reproach upon himself and his ministry of the gospel, and thereby he be so blamed and reproached by the true followers of Christ, as to be disapproved by them and become useless to them in his ministry. Sometimes a preacher becomes a castaway after this manner, and such cases should always be a pointed lesson to every minister to earnestly try to live and conduct themselves so that their lives would be above reproach, not only before the world, but in the ministry. For when a preacher loses his good standing, with it he also loses the good influence of his ministry.

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When and What

When to preach, what to preach, and when to quit, surely are always important things to consider. And the true minister will always feel to seek the aid of the Lord along these lines.

“How much to go and how much to stay is a question preachers should think about. Such a thing as a man taking his suitcase and starting out among the churches without any solicitations is not to be looked upon as very commendable. It is a poor recommendation for a preacher when he has nothing to do at home and must seek a field of labor among churches already supplied with pastors. It has been said by some such jobless men that they are impressed to travel and do not need to wait for an invitation to come and go. Well, when a preacher depends entirely upon his impressions he takes too much upon himself. We have known a good many preachers who have impressions to run when they have no tidings to bear. Such men are to be pitied as well as to be dreaded. * * * It has been the case sometimes that preachers in their zeal have allowed themselves to go beyond the bounds of propriety.” -Elder Geo. A. Bretz, Advocate and Messenger, June, 1923. Surely a preacher has a mistaken view of what a church servant should be, if he assumed that the churches are under obligations to have him preach for them, simply for his own benefit and at his own convenience.

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Treatment of Younger Ministers

Elder Lemuel Potter writes that when he was a young man in the ministry, and one time had an appointment at a certain place, that an old minister followed him to church, went into the stand and preached, and then dismissed without paying any attention to him. He said that he thought this was rather cool treatment, and very unbecoming in any old minister to treat a young minister after such a manner. "It was embarrassing to me, as I think it certainly would be to any young man just starting out in the ministry. I give this incident in order to show old ministers may make some very great mistakes. It is very unbecoming in an old minister, or an old man otherwise, to be over-bearing with the young. * * * I have heard remarks from old brethren before now, that made me think that they thought the more severe they could be on a young brother the more godly they would be. However, I think that is a grand mistake, and that no man, because he is old, let him be a minister or anything else, has a right to hide behind old age to abuse younger people. While I would impress the minds of people everywhere, to respect old age and gray hairs, I would also give a hint to old ones to keep in their places." Autobiography, pages 28-9.

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Preaching Funerals

You will be called upon to preach funerals, and while this is not a Bible practice and without scriptural authority, yet it seems to be a custom generally adopted. But your preaching at such times should not be different from that on other occasions, except the few brief references to the dead. As to choice of subject, the resurrection is quit appropriate, though need not be confined to exclusively. The resurrection is indeed a glorious subject.

It seems to me that it would be well for our preachers to occasionally say a few words in reference to funerals and the arrangements for same, and suggest the advisability of themselves being consulted as to the time, so as not to interfere with their appointments. Sometimes a whole appointment is spoiled for a funeral that might just as well have been postponed a day or two.

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Ordination and Church Authority

I would rather our churches would discontinue the practice, as followed in some places, of giving “license to preach.” This is a practice for which I think we have no Scriptural authority, and I feel to be entirely unnecessary, and in a few cases I have known trouble to grow out of it, when not followed by ordination. While I think all gifts should be encouraged, and all those who give any promise of any gift, whatever the gift may be (for there are many gifts), should be requested to exercise it for the benefit of the church. And sometimes I fear an excellent deacon has been ordained to make a very poor preacher, and their gift spoiled to its real benefit to the church. So I think haste should be carefully avoided. After a gift has exercised for at least a reasonable length of time, the church can better judge of its worth and its proper place. And when the church is well satisfied that the brother has a call to preach, and they are edified by his efforts, and there is a need for his services as an Elder, then I think is the proper time to confer church authority of that office by ordination. True, a church can rescind her act of giving a “license,” but this is such a delicate matter that it is very rarely done. And if for any cause the church does not see fit to ordain, things stand in an awkward and sometimes painful condition.

No brother has the least right whatever to take any offense if his church does not see fit to ordain him, for he should always be submissive to the church. And after a brother has been trying to talk for such a length of time as would give the church a fair and sufficient opportunity to

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judge his gift, it would seem advisable for the members to take the matter up (either by private conference or before the church), and express their minds as to his call to preach. And they should treat him with all prayerful fairness and honesty. If they believe and agree in their minds that he has a call to preach, they should further encourage him; and if they do not plainly and really believe that he has a call, why not kindly tell him so? The best evidence that anyone is called to preach, is that they do preach, and that to the edification and comfort of the church. For it may be possible for him to get up and talk more or less fluently, and which may even seem to satisfy himself, but at the same time there be no real preaching for others. So unless the members feel satisfied that a brother has some promise of having ministerial gift, they should not continue to encourage him to talk to them, because it would not be honest with him nor fair to themselves; and of course he should not want them to do so. While this is a delicate matter, but it is too gravely important to the church for them to act otherwise. And while he possibly may strongly want to preach (or thinks he does), and may feel no doubts as to his call and qualifications, yet he should remember that it is possible for him to be sadly mistaken in this important matter. It would indeed be a serious thing for him to run when he had no gospel tidings, and would surely be hurtful to the church for him to persist in trying to preach. The church is the rightful judge, and he should not try to set up his judgment against theirs, but be submissive if they conclude that he has no ministerial gift. For neither his best endeavors nor the church's willingness, can make a true preacher out of him without this gift. The Lord alone

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calls men to preach. And therefore, in any conference, it seems to me that no member should hesitate to state if they do not feel satisfied with a brother's efforts at trying to preach, that so far as they are able to judge, they fail to see sufficient evidence leading them to believe that the brother has a ministerial gift. It cannot but be hurtful to the church for them to carry along a brother from year to year in his continued efforts to preach, when they feel that he has no gift in that way.

Dear brother preacher, you may often be mistreated and you should expect this more or less. But in all such trials, though it may often be a very hard thing to do, I earnestly beg you to be patient and always show a spirit of kindness and leniency towards all others. Read and remember 1 Pet. ii. 20.

It is my opinion that no men with an ungovernable temper should ever be ordained to the solemn work of the gospel ministry. To be "not soon angry," Tit. i. 7, is one of the plainly required qualifications of a New Testament preacher. For a bad temper will certainly ruin much of his usefulness and influence for good, and may cause him to become a "castaway," 1 Cor. ix. 27, to such an extent in the minds and affections of the Baptists, as to practically destroy all the real value of his labors among them.

Dear brother, when you are acting as Moderator, as this is such a very responsible position, and which often so seriously effects the peace of not only that individual church, but sometimes the peace of the Baptists at large, always carefully try to act impartially and with due regard

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to gospel order and the church's rules. Remember that you are a servant, and that the church is the highest ecclesiastical authority on earth. Therefore do not attempt to be a dictator, but kindly point out what you believe to be the scriptural course. While a church may do wrong, may even greatly abuse her authority by going contrary to the Scriptures, and sometimes may do some of her members a great injustice, yet she should not be mistreated by showing disrespect or contempt for her body. But honor her by showing all respect and kindly treating all her members in a brotherly way. Remember that the church is above the servant in authority, and that you should not try to set yourself up as some kind of higher court or judge, and lord it over her in any manner. It is possible for a church to do several wrong things, and yet not really be entitled to be declared in disorder. So be very careful about making assertions of this kind, for you may do much harm and no good whatever. If you feel that the church has erred, always keep your temper and kindly try with patience to show them wherein they have made a mistake, and in love beg them to correct their errors. Act kindly and respectfully, although you fail to get them to do what you think is right. The power of kindness is a most important factor in smoothing our difficulties; do not fail to use it.

“Each church should bear in mind that every other gospel church is, like itself, a little republic or state, within itself, and not amenable for its acts to any other church, or to any association, council convention, or other ecclesiastical power, but to Christ, the great Head of the church. A church may be guilty of an error, or of some

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gross inconsistency; still that does not justify any other church, or churches, in rising up and arbitrarily ignoring her as a church. Until such erring church has been regularly or gospelly labored with and withdrawn from by her sister churches, she should be honored by them as a church, though she be guilty of some irregularity, or of something which they very much disapprove. The Galatian churches got into gross disorder, and yet they were still recognized by an inspired apostle as gospel churches, and of some of the churches addressed in Revelation.” -Elder G. W. Stewart, Order and Disorder, page 37.

“If one church thinks a sister church has erred in the exclusion of a member, and the error is so grave that she cannot bear it, it then becomes her duty to labor with the erring sister church. If this fails to effect the desired reconciliation, let her call on sister churches to aid in the matter, and if after due process of gospel labor, the erring church persists in her error, let all the churches so laboring withdraw fellowship from her.” - Eld. Stewart, page 33.

Since nearly all offenses are of a personal nature or some personal element enters into them, it seems to me that gospel steps should be taken in nearly all cases effecting the peace and fellowship of the church, even though the offense be of a public nature or an offense against the church. I think the only exceptions to this that would really justify the laying side of all gospel steps, and placing a case directly before the church, would be where an act of gross disrespect and intentional contempt of the church was plainly committed, or for some immoral act or

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crime that was well known. In either of these cases it would seem that the honor and good name of the church would demand an exclusion without gospel labor, or taking the steps that Jesus Christ has commanded in the 18th chapter of Matthew.

So when a case is brought before the church, the Moderator should first inquire if such steps have been taken, and unless it plainly be one of the exceptional cases just mentioned, he should kindly, plainly and firmly state that scriptural order and practice requires that gospel steps be taken prior to placing the matter before the church. Also, at such times, I think it may be well to say a few words on the important point of secrecy while taking those steps, and request the members to refrain from talking about the matter, or inquisitively interesting themselves in it. (Though in cases of public offense, it seems to me that this point of secrecy is not so rigidly required, and should be given some reasonable latitude, for the members, (or some of them) may possibly need to confer with each other in that which effects the whole church.) And their attention should also be plainly called to the first New Testament object in taking gospel steps, which is to gain the offender, if possible, and not to satisfy a revengeful spirit.

With kindness use all your influence in trying to prevent the church from using “mob law,” or what others might consider as such, in disciplining her members. Our law courts do not condemn without trial, and shall our churches be less lenient in dealing with erring members? So always insist (unless it plainly be one of the flagrant

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and exceptional cases before mentioned) that gospel steps be first taken and then a fair trial be given, and that a spirit of kindness and all reasonable forbearance be manifested. For it is better to err on the side of leniency, than on the other side. It seems to me that in all important matters (and surely a case that effects the peace and fellowship of the church is of this kind) it is not best to lay it before the church when only a few members are present, but defer action until next meeting. Then notify and request all members to attend the next business meeting, as an important matter may come up for their consideration. Fairness and justice is surely required that the right may prevail. Should the case be satisfactorily settled privately and secretly, before the next meeting, all the better, and all the members should greatly rejoice. They can rejoice because a trouble is settled, and yet nearly all or many of them not know what the trouble was about. Secrecy is a most wise and wonderful injunction of our blessed Redeemer, to help heal troubles and keep them from spreading, and the Moderator should insist upon a strict scriptural observance of it.

“We never should bring a case up for the church to hear unless it is a very plain one; it is a burning shame to go before the church with a mere trifling case; all such you should bear and say nothing about. This spirit of forbearance among brethren is the safeguard of the church, where 'each can his brother's failings hide and show a brother's love.'” -Elder J. H. Oliphant, Principles and Practices, page 209.

“The Bible sovereignty of each individual church,

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to attend to her own business, and discipline her own members, (though she may sometimes err and make mistakes therein), must not be surrendered to other parties or bodies, but should be carefully respected by all others. This is true, because the church alone, is and therefore must be considered and recognized, as the highest ecclesiastical authority on earth.

“And because of this high authority, all individual Baptist members (wherever their membership may be) should be quite slow to find fault with the actions of any church, and therefore whenever they may think that any church has acted improperly, it is generally far the best for them to only say, that in their opinion, such a church has erred, rather than to declare that it is in disorder or has acted disorderly. For individual members should always try to keep in their proper places, and not be too hasty to judge wherein they have no authority. Sometimes they hastily set up their judgment and with respect to matters they know but little or nothing about. Their disparaging criticisms sometimes does much harm, and very rarely ever does any good whatever. Individual members sometimes manifest gross disrespect (and also actual contempt) for the authority of churches that may not have acted according to their wishes or nothing.” -Notes on Discipline, Etc., pages 29-30.

In order to preserve greater harmony in the church and prevent divisions of sentiment among the members, I wish to repeat, that as a general thing with regard to any very important business, unless immediate action be demanded, that the members be notified of such

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contemplated business in advance, or final action be deferred until another meeting; and especially is such previous notice advisable if there should be only a few members when the matter first comes up. While church action binds all the members, yet absent ones may not always feel very strongly bound when only a few have transacted some important business that might almost as well have been postponed until the next meeting. I fear churches make most of their mistakes through hasty action, so if reasonable time be taken to carefully consider any important business, there is but little danger of making mistakes.

It seems to me that in cases of personal offenses between brethren of different churches, if they cannot settle their differences between themselves, that it would be best for them to agree to call upon one or more disinterested brethren to help them arrive at a settlement. Lawsuits between brethren are generally a very bad thing, and Paul forbids such. -1 Cor. vi. 1. Their differences should never be broadcasted.

Visiting preachers should always be very careful about taking sides in church troubles, for they may make a bad matter much worse, and not do the least good whatever. So they should be careful to keep in their proper places, and never be a party to stirring up strife between brethren. If they listen to one side of any trouble, they may be drawn into the quarrel.

Also, members should be very careful about telling a visiting preacher their grievances, or try to poison his

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mind against other. For this is calculated to unfit his mind, more or less, for preaching when he goes into the pulpit; and he is apt to conclude that those who do the most talking are the most to blame.

“Expelled by one church and received by another on confession of faith! How does that sound for Primitive Baptists? That is jail delivery and the church that receives a member under such circumstances, utterly repudiates her own principles, and she is guilty of encouraging lawlessness and disobedience among the children of God, and of inaugurating a policy which, if generally adopted, would result in a general disorganization and the ultimate extinction of the church. If one church thinks a sister church has erred in the exclusion of a member, and the error is so grave that she cannot bear it, it then becomes her duty to labor with her erring sister church. If this fails to effect the desired reconciliation, let her call on sister churches to aid in the matter, and if, after due process of gospel labor, the erring church persists in her error, let all the churches so laboring withdraw fellowship from her, and after that is done it would be in order to receive on confession of faith the member that has been expelled erroneously; but until all that has been done, it would be disorder for any of the churches to receive the one excluded.” -Elder G. W. Stewart, *Order and Disorder*, page 33.

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Pastoral Care

Taking the pastoral care of churches is a very important matter for both churches and ministers, and therefore should always be prayerfully considered. Neither one should ever be influenced in this, by fleshly motives or worldly considerations. And I think it best, as a general rule, for a church to unitedly agree in calling a minister to this very important place. For very often it is not altogether advisable for a preacher to take the care of a church where there is a division of sentiment in their choice. Because this division of sentiment may grow more pronounced, and if he agrees to serve a church where there are some of the members who are not in favor of calling him, things may not work as smoothly as they should, and possibly result in injury to both church and him. And especially is there danger of this, if the previous pastor lives near. So it rather seems to me in some cases at least, it would probably be better for all concerned, for the church to retain their pastor and moderator, and simply call another minister to work with and assist him in preaching for them. But then of course, I do not suggest this as a rule, for conditions and circumstances are often so various that what may be advisable for one church would not be for another. So I only mention the above course as a way which may often be well calculated to work for greater harmony, peace and fellowship. Sometimes where a new pastor is chosen with a plain disregard to a previous pastor living near the church, and especially by only a part of the members, the results are hurtful all around. So all sides of the question should be carefully considered. But I would say to preachers, Never

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seek the care of any church; let the church seek you for that important place.

It seems to me that, if for any reason, a church (or some of the members) becomes dissatisfied with their pastor, or he with the church, that they should in all honest faithfulness to each other, kindly and plainly tell each other so. And if the pastor saw there was dissatisfaction with his ministry, I believe it would often be best for him to kindly and willingly put his resignation in the hands of the church; and not hold on to his pastorship to the probable injury of both church and himself. A little cowardice on either side may sometimes let matters drift into serious consequences.

Ministers should never be offended if the church calls another pastor, for they have the right and authority to do so, and sometimes it may really be advisable. Preachers should not forget that they are servants. Neither should they ever be offended, feel envious or jealous when another minister is asked to baptize, marry, or preach funerals. Because people have some rights and preferences in these things which should always be respected.

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Following a Biblical Pattern

Very often you may be censured for the Primitive Baptist stand against Sunday Schools, and other man-made institutions. Because they do not have them in their own churches, it is often supposed that they object to other denominations having them. While Baptists believe in religious liberty, and are therefore willing for others to have these things, yet it must be plainly remembered that none can have the least scriptural right whatever to call anything a true religious institution that neither Christ nor His apostles set up. What use should any church or people have for the Bible only to be governed and directed by it in all matters of faith and practice? Most surely they prove their fidelity to the Lord by their fidelity to the Bible. Says Elder R. H. Pittman, concerning the modern Sunday Schools, in *Zion's Advocate*, May, 1902: "Why do you oppose such a worthy cause?" if often asked. Sometimes the best way to answer question is to ask them. Why, then, do you advocate them? Jesus never did. Why do you call them 'a good work?' The Bible does not. Why do you think they are useful to the church? The Master did not think so. Why do you have women as religious teachers in the church? 'It is a shame for a woman to speak in the church,' and 'I suffer not a woman to teach,' says Paul. (1 Cor. xiv. 35; 1 Tim. ii. 12.) And as a matter of history, who was the founder of the Sunday School – Christ Jesus of Nazareth, or Robert Raikes of England?" Parents cannot remove the great responsibility which rests upon them, to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. vi. 4), by sending them to Sunday School for an hour each Sunday. It is a great mistake to suppose

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that this short hour of instruction once a week, can take the place of every day home training and instruction. The home and the church are the Bible places for the religious instruction of either young or old.

“When Moses delivered his last address to the children of Israel, he warned them of the dangers that would surround them when they entered the promised land; that the country was filled with idolatrous worshipers, and by them they would be led from their God, and bring upon themselves His divine wrath. One little deviation from the law of the Lord, that might be thought very small and unimportant, brought upon them His wrath and correcting rod. The word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; and you will not escape if you neglect the word spoken by the Lord, and confirmed unto us by them that heard Him. Every thing not commanded by our Lord, and taught and practiced by His apostles, is forbidden, and classed with idolatry. It leads our minds away from Christ, and changes the order He has established in His Kingdom, which is diverse from all other kingdoms, and is not to be numbered with the nations of the earth. An entire separation from all human and worldly institutions, and a strict observance of the commands of Christ, have been the infallible mark of His church in all ages of the world.

“Worldly churches may practice the ordinances of the gospel as commanded; they may teach a great deal of truth, but let them withdraw from their worldly institutions and their humanly devised systems, and they are dissolved

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and killed at once. The very thing that maintains the distinct visibility and identity of Christ's Church, and insures her final triumph over all her enemies, is the certain destruction of all false churches. I therefore charge you before God, to watch this point, and guard it well. False churches will hate and abuse you, and call you hard names, but let none of these things move you; a faithful discharge of duty, and the comfort and peace of Zion are worth more to you than life, and all the honors earth can give. God never promised you worldly honors, or wealth, or a smooth sea to sail over; your reward here is found in suffering persecutions, and bearing reproaches with His poor and afflicted people; for, 'They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' Your reward is in heaven, and your crown is waiting for you when you shall have fought your last battle. Be the servant of the Church; not for filthy lucre, but because you love her, and are willing to suffer for her, and with her. Be careful to feed lambs and sheep, to nurse the little ones, to strengthen the weak knees, encourage the feeble-hearted, and speak comfortable things to God's people. I shall never meet you in this world; I shall soon drop into the grave, and be forgotten by the world; but my last words to you are: Be careful to maintain the purity of the Church, and her entire separation from all the institutions of men. If men tempt you to the least deviation from the path marked out in the gospel, by the syren song of 'No danger;' be not deceived; it leads to destruction. Again, I say, Remember the distinct mark that has in all ages identified Christ's Church, and preserved it; and at the end of your warfare and stewardship here, your Lord and Master will say, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the

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joy of the Lord.' God bless you! and so preserve you that you may keep your garments unspotted from the world. Amen." -Elder G. M. Thompson, Primitive Preacher, pages 525-8.

“Paul's place in the church, and his office was one of the highest honors possible, yet it was attended with ceaseless toil and sacrifice, as well as the gravest responsibility, and the most pressing anxiety.

“Indeed, he who fills a place of honor must needs feel the pressing burden of care. The minister who feels no burden of soul for the churches will prove a dry breast to the children of God. 'As the suffering of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' If we know nothing of the suffering of our Saviour; if we have no tears for the sorrows and sins of the churches; and if we have no groaned for our own sins, we are not qualified to perform the duties of a true minister. He that proclaims the grace of God to others in words of eloquence, must know of his own experience the need of grace. If we would speak words of comfort to those who weep for sin, we too must groan under its damning power.

“No school on earth can train men in this matter; and men not so trained will never feed the flock of God to profit. 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.' Paul saw himself as nothing. When others complained of sin, ignorance, and hardness of heart, he could witness with them. Those who wept for sin, and who groaned over their own imperfections, found in Paul one that could feel for them, describe their case,

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and enter fully into all their experience.

“No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' Aaron's rod budded and bloomed and brought forth fruit, while all the other rods were dry and barren; so a true minister will, by the same power that caused Aaron's rod to bloom, be qualified to serve to advantage of the Lord's dear children. The Holy Ghost makes him overseer of all the flock, and enables him to feed the church of God with the sincere milk of the word.

“Let us pause and reflect on the solemnity and awful importance of the work of the ministry. What a high claim one makes who pretends to this calling! For one to pretend that the great God has called him to go among men and speak of the way of life, to mention the name of Jesus to those who know the ruin of sin; I say this is a high pretention. Paul said, 'I was with you all in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.' Those who understand and rightly fill this office will tremble at times, as they consider their own imperfections and the infinite perfections of the Almighty. Moses, who had been in the felt and conscious presence of God for eighty days, was the humblest man. To know much of God is destructive to all pride and self-importance. Moses complained that he was incompetent, and so will any man who sees the matter as it is. A just conception of God will ever be attended with humiliating views of ones self. We can not see God aright and esteem ourselves as great. Moses was unwilling to go unless the Lord would bear him company. And the duties, toils, trials, temptations, and sacrifices of a true

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minister are such that without the Lord we can do nothing. To go to an appointment, and into the pulpit, and go through the form of service without Him is of no more importance that a 'sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.'

“We may well beg our Master not to forsake us in this prayer, or song, or sermon, knowing that our time, and the time of our brethren, and the opportunity itself, will all be wasted unless the Lord sustain us. It is sad to leave the pulpit, conscious that the Lord's people have been disappointed, and that we have been denied the presence and grace of God.

“The minister is liable to grow proud, vain, or covetous; to lose interest in the cause; to yield to a vain-glorious, self-important temper; to grow jealous-hearted or envious of others. What sickening views of self are sometimes given us, so that we loathe ourselves, and wonder how we can have the love and fellowship of the faithful followers of God. We fear our time of usefulness is done; that the people of God can no longer endure our imperfections.

“I am sure a minister can not lay aside the burden of the churches. Year after year he carries the Lord and finds no place of rest till death brings relief. As the 'milch kine' went with their loads they thought of the little ones left behind, so the true minister remembers his wife and children. Paul complained of perils by waters, and of robbers; of perils in the city and wilderness, and often fasting. All these trials come more or less to the minister, but none of these things should move him from his

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purpose.

“The hardest trial Paul names is to be betrayed by the brethren. Nothing crushes the heart so effectually as to serve brethren truly and faithfully, and in turn receive evil, ungrateful treatment at their hands. The wounds of the enemy does not reach the heart and souls as that of a brother of whom and from whom we expected strength. But so it was with Paul, and will be with those who labor in the ministry to times end. He can not lay by the task because the way is rough, nor because the burden grows heavy, nor because some of those whom he has served become foes. 'Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead, he must follow where he goes.'

“Brethren and sisters, remember that your minister is 'but dust;' that he is not perfect, and if his preaching does not at all times come up to your desires, do not lose interest in him; still encourage him and pray the Lord to restore to him his wonted zeal and power, and still enable him to hold aloft the torch of truth till all is over with him here. It is important for a minister to know how to behave so as to bring no reproach, and it is also important for a church to know how to treat the minister. Remember he is a gift to the church; his time and talent belongs to the people of God. If you could follow him and know his inward cries for help, his sense of his own sins, hear him lament his failures and imperfections, read his concern of soul for the welfare of the church, its peace and prosperity, you would perhaps feel differently to him; beside all this he has his frailties, his sins and flesh to encounter as others. Behold him with this load so fastened upon him

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that nought but death shall bring relief, and in the name of the Lord I beseech you not to increase his burden unjustly, nor withhold your love and moral support from him.

“The church may grow cold, and it is certain to do so. Its members will grow less zealous, and their seats will be empty at times. Some evil spirit will draw them from their first love, and some will go into open sin, but amid all this the minister must still press on in his duties; he must still (whether men will hear, or forbear) cry aloud and spare not. Let friends forsake, and foes unite, his duty is still the same. Well may we appeal to the almighty for grace to bear up and endure, for who, without the Lord, is sufficient for these things? The throne of grace is his refuge; here he must make his plea. Friends may forsake and brethren untrue, but Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Under His loving smile we may forget all the frowns of men; with His approval we may exclaim triumphantly, 'Who can be against us'”

“In conclusion, dear brethren, let me beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you have been called. Give no occasion for evil report. Remember the example of our Saviour and His faithful apostles. Behold their meekness, their gentleness, their faithfulness even unto death. How incompatible with the duty of the ministry is undue levity and vanity; and how unseemly is covetousness and greedy manners. Let us love and pity one another, and pray for one another, and watch over each other for good. Let us not be lords, one over another, but let us be brethren. Let us lay by all strife, and envy, and evil speaking, and be ensamples to our several flocks

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in word, in conversation, in charity, till our race is run * *
* Let us beg our Saviour to keep us from falling; to keep us back from sin that will destroy our influence for good, and enable us to live in the hearts of God's dear children after we are gone.” -Elder J. H. Oliphant, Primitive Monitor, 1902.

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Concluding Remarks

Dear brother preacher, possibly you may feel to criticize some things in the foregoing pages.

If so, please remember that I do not claim to be wiser than others, nor to set myself up as a dictator in any way. Because of my felt weakness and imperfections, I kindly beg for the most charitable reading of all that comes from my feeble and unworthy hand; and wherein I may have erred, do not follow me. May the gracious Lord be pleased to add His blessings upon my labors to your ministerial good, and the good of Baptists in general.

W. S. Craig