

ON THE

LIBERTY OF MINISTRY

IN THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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BY A. N. GROVES

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“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.”—2 Cor. iv.13

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” — Gal. v.1

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## FORWARD

If you will allow me, I will first include a portion of our Forward from, *On the Nature of Christian Influence*, another book by Anthony Norris Groves—

“Anthony Norris Groves was a man of enduring stature (although he would be the first to deny such a claim). He was one of the original brothers used by God in the late 1820’s in that, which many later would identify as the “brethren movement.” He was a man who learned to take the words of Christ in their plain and simple sense and then apply them to every aspect of Christian living.

Because of that simplicity, it was he who early on suggested those important assembly principles to J. G. Bellett of Dublin that Christians should “come together in all simplicity as disciples not waiting on any pulpit or minister,” and “that believers, meeting together were free to break bread together as their Lord had admonished them; and that, in as far as the practice of the apostles could be a guide, every Lord’s day should be set aside for thus remembering the Lord’s death, and obeying his parting command.”<sup>1</sup>

Because of his simple devotion to Christ many other Christians were encouraged to also follow the Lord with that same simplicity. But, as was already mentioned, he was not one to claim such influence for himself. In fact, he even forgot that he was the first one to suggest another important assembly principle—that one’s love for the Saviour should be the basis for fellowship together, not agreement on a multitude of minor issues.

He records the following in his journals: “I was almost forgetting, till a letter from Mr. Bellett of Dublin reminded me, that I was the first to

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<sup>1</sup> Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren*, (Pickering & Inglis Ltd. London, 1967) pg. 40

propose that simple principle of union, the love of Jesus, instead of oneness of judgment in minor things.”<sup>2</sup>

His whole focus was on his Lord and not on himself. He firmly believed it was only when one was fully focused on the living Lord and willing to follow His precepts, that one was truly fulfilling the heartfelt desire of the Heavenly Father. He was a man of much spiritual insight, willing to step out in faith on the bold promises of God's Word.

As such, he became a well-known servant of God among the Christian circles of England and India in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. His influence extended to many Christians of his day, such ones as George Muller, Henry Craik, J. G. Bellett, Robert Chapman, Lord Congleton, the missionary Karl Rhenius of the Tinnevely District (Tirunelveli) in India, and Alexander Duff, a good friend and fellow missionary also in India, who, being sick with an illness, which some were afraid would lead to death, was nursed back to health by Anthony Groves, through God's gracious care, as they were both onboard a ship sailing back, to England in 1834, where brother Groves hoped to find more missionaries to help with the work in India. But he also, indirectly, influenced many other Christians that were associated with those early brethren. For example, through the ministry of George Muller, he greatly influenced Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission.

However, today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some minimize his influence, and others do not even remember his name. It is most unfortunate that this is even happening among many assemblies today. Many among the younger generation do not even know the name of Anthony Norris Groves, let alone his influence among those early brethren.

And yet this should not surprise us, for Anthony Norris Groves believed that one's influence in the things of God would only be made, known, or remembered, as it was deemed necessary by God. The carnal or soulical Christian, of course, will always desire to have one's influence known, but the spiritual man will always leave it in the hands of God.

Such was the case with Anthony Norris Groves. He was not

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<sup>2</sup> Anthony Norris Groves, Harriet Groves, ed., *Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves, Containing Extracts from His Letters and Journals*, Second Edition (J. Nisbet & Co., London, 1857) pg. 259

concerned for his own reputation. He left all things for his Lord, leaving a promising career in England to be a missionary, first in Baghdad and then in India from where he wrote this book.

It was inconsequential to him whether he was known or unknown, remembered or forgotten. He came to realize that true influence (even if it remains unknown) is found only in one who truly seeks the glory of God.”<sup>3</sup>

And now, as we continue, perhaps, it might also be helpful to provide some information regarding the character of Anthony Norris Groves, as well as some historical context for this book you are about to read, since as we said, many may have never even heard of A. N. Groves.

Hopefully sharing some things regarding his character will explain his love for the Lord and for fellow believers in India, and the historical context will explain why he was willing to boldly speak the truth in love in regard to those traditions of the Church of England that were making the Word of God of no effect, because they were teaching as doctrines the commandments of men (cf. Mark 7:7,13). I believe his life and ministry exemplified that *love never sacrifices truth, but equally truth never sacrifices love*.

Our brother relates for the reader that the reason for his writing this book, in part, was to fulfill a promise he made to an unnamed Christian brother in India who asked him about his views on Christian ministry. Presumably this was asked of him by one who was in the Church of England because even though brother Groves was a minister of Christ, he was not recognized as such by many in the Church of England because of their Church traditions regarding what constitutes a duly ordained minister of Christ Jesus. Consequently, this unnamed brother wished to know by whose authority brother Groves was functioning as a minister of Christ, and why he had departed “so widely from the rules and maxims laid down by a large portion of the Christian church.”

As was said, this questioning brother is unnamed, except that he was addressed as “Dear Friend.” But one thing we do know from the Journals and Letters of Anthony Norris Groves is that this dear friend

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<sup>3</sup> Anthony Norris Groves, *On the Nature of Christian Influence, An Abridgement* (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2008) pg. 3-5

was someone living in Madras. It could have been Joseph Clulow, not only because he belonged to the Church of England (as did most Englishmen in India at that time), but also because it was with his family that A. N. Groves stayed in those early days in Madras.

In his journal, which was written at some point in 1834, he speaks to this and also to some hesitancy made by Joseph Clulow regarding his views on ministry. So, perhaps, Joseph Clulow might be this "Dear Friend." But, of course, we can never say for sure, since the dear friend was never identified, as far as I know. But let me provide below what our brother wrote about his stay in Madras before he set forth for Calcutta and its surrounding area up to Patna and then back to Calcutta and also Serampore. He records the following in his journal.

"I found the dear family in which I resided for a time during my stay at Madras, very dear people. They had certain suspicions as to my views, which did not immediately give way; but step by step, the Lord gave me access to them, and allowed me to state what appears to me to be true Christian liberty, with regard to ministry, &c. A little tract of mine on this subject, is about to be published. I saw very few persons during my stay at Madras, partly from my engagement about my little tract, partly from disinclination for general society, but still more from a deep sense that the Lord has appointed me to speak to the heart alone, rather than to many. The dear Clulows, while I was with them, began to alter their expensive style of living; and a dear Independent minister and his wife parted with their superfluities in a very sweet spirit <sup>4</sup>

Then, after this entry, we find that he leaves Madras, sailing for Calcutta, where we find him meeting in Serampore with the aged missionary William Carey, who had but a couple of months to live. On April 16, 1834 he writes in his journal: "I have just seen poor old Dr. Carey, who is sinking into the grave, after more than forty years' service, leaving the world as poor, as to temporal things, as when he entered it. He leaves his widow and children without a shilling, to the loving care of their brethren. May the Lord give them grace to administer support to them, with such love, that it may be like a balm

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony Norris Groves, Harriet Groves, ed., *Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves, Containing Extracts from His Letters and Journals*, Second Edition (James Nisbet & Co., London, 1857) pg. 285

from the Lord's hands, making the broken heart to rejoice.”<sup>5</sup> This concern, apparently, arose from the fact in the latter years of his life this dear servant of Christ had withdrawn the Serampore Mission from the Missionary Society back in England over some difficulties, which difficulties were not resolved till after his death.

He admitted that he did not have full knowledge of the situation at the mission, yet because of his high regard for William Carey, and for his fellow labourers of long standing, Anthony Groves wrote in his private journal that, compared to those who were censuring him and those others with him, William Carey and his fellow labourers were: “as far above those who censure them, as the blue vault of heaven is above the clouds.”<sup>6</sup>

Just two months later, on June 9, 1834, this selfless missionary, William Carey, died, but the story of his life continued on after his death as a testimony of the great love of Christ, that show forth brightly through his selfless life.

Next we find him returning back south to Madras, and after a voyage of a few months because of contrary winds, we find Anthony Groves reaching Madras once more, still in the year 1834. In this journal entry, a day after his arrival, we find the following entry being written about this book, which, while he was away, had been published:

"August 26th. Yesterday we went on shore at Madras. I found there had been some changes since I went away, from death and departure. *I felt comforted that the little book I had published had not been able to alienate those I very truly loved in the Lord*, for the truth in them, they received me truly as a brother. Rhenius of Tinnevely has published two pamphlets, which I think are calculated to do much good. They are written in a nice spirit, exposing many objectionable things in the Church of England. I sometimes fear it may involve him in some difficulties, but the Lord will guide him; for I feel he is appointed of the Lord for the propagation and upholding the truth and liberty of the Church of Christ. The Bishop is expected in a few weeks, and when he comes, I know not how they will be able to arrange these matters; yet, I trust, he may be able to forbear, rather than to interfere.”<sup>7</sup> I do feel great thankfulness for

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pg. 295

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pg. 285

<sup>7</sup> This seems to be a reference to Daniel Wilson, who was Bishop of the Diocese of Calcutta, and who visited Madras in December of 1834.



having been the instrument of keeping Rhenius in his work, and may the Lord give him grace to glorify Him in all he does! I do hope the Lord will allow us to gather a holy little band, who will unite in defending the liberty of the Church of God, from the supremacy, pride, and control of man; and as we are advancing, I think, most happily, may the Lord so convince us of our nothingness, that we may never move but with Him.”<sup>8</sup>

And so, since it seems that almost immediately upon going ashore he learned that his book had not alienated those he “very truly loved in the Lord,” the “Dear Friend” must have been someone living in Madras, for how else could he have known so quickly that they had not been alienated by his book, if that dear friend was not living in Madras, but somewhere else in India?

Thus, it seems the Dear Friend to whom the book was addressed was someone who lived in Madras connected with the Church of England. And if it was not someone like Joseph Clulow, perhaps, it might have been Rev. John Tucker, who was the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England in Madras, with whom he also was in close contact, or it could have been one of the many other Christians in the Church of England that our brother Groves had been in fellowship with in regard to these matters.

But, as I already mentioned, we must admit the attempt to identify this Dear Friend must be left to the uncertainties of history. As far as I know this person has never been identified with absolute certainty. But I mention the different possibilities to show that despite his forthrightness to speak the truth in this book that he wrote regarding the departures of the Church of England from the principles of Christian ministry given to us in the New Testament, his love never “waned” for those fellow Christians who were still in the Church of England (from which Church he had grown up in, but who was led to depart from just a few years earlier). Instead, of excluding those in the Church in England, his love for them caused him to continue in fellowship with them, ever seeking to direct them back to the truth of the apostles’ teachings, regarding those most important Church principles of ministry that were left for us all in the New Testament for this dispensation of the Church.

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<sup>8</sup> Groves, op. cit., pg. 331-332

When he was once questioned about his relationship with the Church of England, after he had left to minister to other Christians, he wrote the following letter to one who was a close friend of his, a curate in the Church of England, a certain Rev. W. M. Caldecott of Claybrook. He wrote:

“You say I quit your communion; if you mean by that, that I do not now break bread with the Church of England, this is not true; but if you mean that I do not *exclusively* join you, it is quite true, feeling this spirit of exclusiveness to be of the very essence of schism, which the apostle so strongly reproves in the Corinthians. I therefore know no distinction, but am ready to break the bread and drink the cup of holy joy with all who love the Lord and will not lightly speak evil of His name. I feel every saint to be a holy person, because Christ dwells in him, and manifests Himself where he worships; and though his faults be as many as the hairs of his head, my duty still is, with my Lord, to join him as a member of the mystical body, and to hold communion and fellowship with him in any work of the Lord in which he may be engaged.”<sup>9</sup>

So we can see, with that being said, that even though this tract or book was addressed to an individual who was a member of the Church of England, obviously, that “individual” was meant to represent the “whole” Church, and/or any other Christian church or missionary organization in the world that was still sound in the essentials of the Faith, or, as he said, those who would “not lightly speak evil of His name,” but, nonetheless, were still bound by an exclusive spirit regarding ministry, reception, and open fellowship with other Christian churches or organizations.

But, even though this book was eventually meant for any exclusive system of Christians, because of the situation in India at that time, this book, for the most part, would have been immediately addressed to those in the Church of England. This is because after England’s Charter Act 1813, when the British Government encouraged greater missionary activity in India (which aforesaid it had tried to restrict), the Church of England took a greater role in seeking to extend her spiritual control throughout India. Even though this Act of 1813 allowed other missionaries from any other Church to now freely send missionaries

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<sup>9</sup> Groves, op. cit., pg. 48

into India, the primary goal of this Act, besides the desired goal of the Gospel being preached throughout India, was to now organize India into various parishes, all under an episcopal form of church government, based upon the Church of England's belief in the doctrine of apostolic succession, which basically asserted that Christ instituted a rite of ordination, wherein a minister in the Church had to have been ordained by a bishop in a line of apostolic succession, who was himself ordained by another bishop, also in a line of apostolic successions, which could be traced back to one of the original apostles of Christ. Apart from this succession, one was not allowed to minister in the Church. Our brother Groves does not use that exact phrase, but refers to the same doctrine sometimes under the name "apostolic appointment," "apostolic sanction," or he might refer to a transference of power and authority of from one of the original apostles, to a subsequent bishop, who is able transfer it to another bishop through ordination.

The first step the Church of England took in this direction in India was to establish the Diocese of Calcutta with Thomas Middleton as its first bishop, from whom other bishops could then be duly ordained and consecrated throughout India.

And so, with the establishment of a Diocese in Calcutta, this desired goal of consolidation began; they tried to bring under the overall umbrella of the Church of England any Christian ministry that they could. This was thought necessary because of their strong belief that "apostolic appointment" was an absolute prerequisite for ministry, and a necessary ingredient for spreading the Gospel. This is why the Church of England tried to bring those churches founded by the Lutheran missionary Karl Rhenius in South India (who, although he was a CMS missionary, he had the understanding that he did not need to agree with all the rites, regulations, rubrics and canons of the Church of England) under the control of the first bishop of Calcutta, Bishop Middleton. Bishop Middleton wrote the following in regard to these rites, regulations, rubrics and canons, which he refers to as the Church's Order and Discipline, in one of his first charges to the clergy.

"THESE then appear to have been the Missionary proceedings of the first ages; but all antiquity abounds with circumstances tending to show, that the Propagation of the Gospel was in close connexion with Order and Discipline. Churches were built under the Bishop's sanction, signified by his visiting the

spot, and fixing a cross; no Clergyman could be ordained but with a specific and local charge...Regulations such as these may be thought trivial in the laxity of modern times, still this was the system, under which our Faith was disseminated, and which had manifestly the blessing of God.”<sup>10</sup>

This vision of his for the Church of England in India after the Charter Act of 1813 was also referenced in the *Quarterly Magazine* published at that time. It also speaks of his charge to the clergy in India:

“In this Charge the Bishop opens to his Clergy the new relation, in which they were to stand, in consequence of the Episcopal superintendence, under which they were placed: he expresses his wish, that he could have seen ‘*them in all respects placed upon the footing of parochial incumbents*’ each ‘*with his parish Church,*’ to which he should be ‘*regularly instituted and inducted,*’ and ‘*assisted in the superintendence of his flock by Church wardens, and overseers, as the parochial Clergy are in England.*’...Next to the diffusion of the grand truths of Religion, the promotion of the interests, and respectability of the Church of England, was nearest to his heart; and we can overlook the exclusiveness of the claim for this Church, when the Bishop pronounces it the great depository of scriptural knowledge and sacred truth, and under Christ the main support of Christian piety throughout the world.”<sup>11</sup>

And then in *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India* we read:

“Bearing in his bosom a strong desire to lay the foundation of church discipline and order, of unity of faith and worship, in a vast region, where hitherto such blessing were almost unknown; anticipating with steady and tempered zeal, the extension of the world of God, and of the liturgy and articles, the rites and ordinances of that pure branch of Christ’s church established in his [Bishop Middleton’s] native land, this excellent man entered on his episcopal functions...The primary charge of this accomplished prelate is now before us. He commences with congratulating his clergy on the complete establishment of ‘the purest and most powerful of Protestant churches in a vast region of Asia.’ He points out to them the difference which exists in those

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<sup>10</sup> T. F. Middleton, *Two Charges Delivered to the Clergy in the Diocese of Calcutta* (Luke Hensard & Sons, London, 1822) pg. 21

<sup>11</sup> “Life of Bishop Middleton,” *The Quarterly Oriental Magazine, Review, and Register*, Vol. IV (Thacker & Co., Calcutta, 1922) pg. 54-55

regions between the condition of Christianity and the order and stability which it has long attained in England. He informs them in what light they are henceforth to consider themselves, and most judiciously lays before them pattern and imitation the office of a parochial incumbent in England.”

“My letters patent (he adds) direct me to administer the ecclesiastical laws as they are received in the realm of England: and they are evidently contemplate no other discipline than that under which our church has been favoured with such manifestations of the Divine blessing, and still continues, notwithstanding the cavils of bigoted or ignorant men, to be the great depository of scriptural knowledge and sacred truth, and, under Christ, the main support of Christian piety throughout the world... It is well known that the order and discipline, the foundation of which had been laid by the apostles, was a subject of unremitting attention in their immediate successors. Not only is this apparent from the writings of the apostolic fathers, but still more so, if possible, from the history of the early councils, and the care to provide for every emergency in the government of the rising church. Many of the canons decreed at these councils refer to doctrine, and scarcely fewer to discipline; and though it is admitted, that the work which has come down to us, under the name of ‘Apostolic Constitutions,’ did not actually proceed from the apostles, it has been shewn to be of an antiquity little posterior to the apostolic age, and, in the judgment of Bishop Beveridge, has merited the appellation of the ‘Code of the Primitive Church.’ The truth appears to be, that the zeal of the early Christians went hand in hand with order and submission to authority. ...it is certain that the jurisdiction of the Hierarchy had been fully recognized from the earliest times; and that the great body of Christians evinced a conscientious obedience to laws enforced under no other penalty than that of spiritual excommunication, and deriving no support from the state.”<sup>12</sup>

So in the years after 1813 this exclusive understanding of the role of the Church of England in the world, based upon its belief regarding the legitimacy of Church traditions, including, in part, the “hierarchy” of its clerical/laity system, based upon the “Apostolic Constitutions” of ages past, continued to spread in India, seeking to fulfill its vision of eventually organizing India into parishes, each with its own incumbent.

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<sup>12</sup> “A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Calcutta at the Primary Visitation by T. F. Middleton, D. D. F.R.S. Lord Bishop of Calcutta, 1817,” *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies*, Vol. III, from January to June 1817 (Black, Parbury & Allen, London, 1817) pg. 233-234

This vision of the Church of England will help explain why our brother Groves felt a need to write this tract for his fellow brethren in India, and for those back in England, to return to the Word of God, as seen in this book *On the Liberty of Ministry in the Church of Christ*. He speaks of this in the following quote from his journal while he was still residing in Madras.

“Never was there a more important moment than the present for India; up to this time everything in the Church has been as free as our hearts could wish. Persons have been converted, either by reading God's word, or through one another, and have drank the living waters wherever they could find them full and clear; but now the Church of England is seeking to extend its power, and the Independents and Methodists are seeking to enclose their little flocks. My object in India is two-fold, to try to check the operation of these exclusive systems, by showing in the Christian Church they are not necessary for all that is *holy* and *moral*; and to try and impress upon every member of Christ's body that he has some ministry given him for the body's edification, and instead of depressing, encouraging each one to come forward and serve the Lord. I have it much at heart, should the Lord spare me, to form a Church on these principles; and my earnest desire is to re-model the whole plan of Missionary operations, so as to bring them to the simple standard of God's Word.”<sup>13</sup>

And the most obvious way the Church of England would be able to assert its control throughout India was to propagate their exclusive system of “apostolic appointment.” This belief in the necessity of this type of appointment, which established a clerical order underneath a duly ordained bishop, who in turn had been duly ordained by another bishop in a long line of apostolic successions stretching all the way back to one of the original apostles was nothing new in the Church of England. It reached back to the time of King Henry the VIII, even before he had separated the churches in England from the Roman Catholic Church, reaching back then even further to the time of St. Augustine, from whom they then believed they could trace their line back to the apostles.

Apart from that line of ordination arising from another bishop in a line of apostolic succession, they firmly held that no one had the right to

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<sup>13</sup> Groves, op. cit., pg. 285-286

be considered a bishop (i.e. an elder, a pastor). This teaching is succinctly laid out in a tract entitled, *A Letter to the Laity of the Church of England*, written by Rev. Alexander Watson, who was a licentiate of theology from Durham University, and an assistant minister of St. John's, Cheltenham, who later was said to have become the vicar of St. Mary Church-with-Coffinswell, Devonshire. In his book we find the following said regarding the Church of England, as it stood not many years after our brother had first written this book in 1834.

"It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the congregation before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same... And in the Preface to the Ordinal we find, "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of Ministers in CHRIST'S Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, which offices were evermore held in such reverend estimation that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, and examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same: and also by Public Prayer with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore to the intent that these orders may be continued and reverently used and esteemed in the united Church of England and Ireland, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the united Church of England and Ireland, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal consecration or ordination..."<sup>14</sup>—[Then he makes more comments on the subject, finally, reaching this part of the ceremony of ordination, where he states the following regarding the man being ordained]—"Then the Archbishop and Bishops present shall lay their hands upon the head of the elected Bishop kneeling before them upon his knees, the Archbishop saying, 'Receive the HOLY GHOST, for the Office and work of a Bishop in the Church of GOD, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands; In the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. Amen'... When this Prayer is done, the Bishop with the Priests present shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the order of Priesthood: the Receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees, and the Bishop

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander Watson, *A Letter to the Laity of the Church of England on the Subject of Recent Misrepresentations of Church Principles* (J.G.F. & J. Rivington, London, 1842) pg. 106-107

saying, ‘Receive the HOLY GHOST for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of GOD, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of GOD, and of HIS Holy Sacraments; in the Name of the FATHER, and of the Son, and of the Holy GHOST. Amen.’” [Then he concludes this portion with these words]: “How can you suppose it possible that the Church would use such awful words [i.e., according to 19th century usage, such words of awe and reference] as these if she did not consider her chief Ministers empowered as ambassadors for CHRIST in succession from His Apostles? The grace of God is here expressly said to be given by the Imposition of episcopal hands, and the power of imparting the HOLY GHOST for the remission of sins is assumed. But more than this it is exercised, first in the Daily Service, then in the Order of the Holy Communion, and in an unequivocal form in the office for the Visitation of the Sick. It is, I am aware, distasteful to the disciples of modern theology to admit that a worm of earth can be invested with a power to absolve his fellow sinner; but that the Church of England exercises the power there can be no doubt. In Baptism she administers a Plenary Absolution, and in the Eucharist she absolves, and in the Exhortation giving notice of the administration of the Communion, she directs those troubled in conscience to come to a Minister to ‘receive Absolution.’”<sup>15</sup>

This exclusive doctrine of apostolic appointment, which would not recognize the Holy Spirit’s gifting and the making of bishops/elders/pastors<sup>16</sup> in the Church of Christ apart from these man-made lines of ordination, led some to leave the Church. In fact, this was the reason why many godly Christians back in England left the Church as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pg. 131-132

<sup>16</sup> I will use this format—bishop/elders/pastors—or the like, in a different order, throughout the forward and any footnotes, because they are titles given to one and the same person in Scripture. They are not offices belonging to different men. Quite literally, Acts 20:28—wherein we see Paul addressing the “**elders**” of the Church of Ephesus—could be translated as follows: “Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you “**bishops**,” to “**pastor**” the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The Greek word translated “to pastor” is the verbal infinitive ποιμαίνειν. Our brother Groves speaks to this issue on pages 25, 72, and 81-82.



For example, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was John Bunyan; he was led by the Holy Spirit to minister and to preach the Word apart from any line of apostolic appointment. And because he was never ordained by a bishop in the Church of England, it was made known to him that he did not have a license to preach at all; and so, because he chose to obey God in His Word, rather than man in their traditions, he was eventually imprisoned in 1660 for preaching without the Church of England's authorization. But their permission was not required, for his authority to preach came from the will of God, the call of the Lord, in the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

And, because of this exclusive spirit that demanded obedience from Christians to things that were not found in Scripture, the Holy Spirit led many other Christians in the 1600's to also depart from the Church of England. These Christians were given the label, Separatist Puritans in England, and then later in America they were known as the Pilgrims.

As the centuries passed, the Holy Spirit continued appointing godly men to the ministry apart from any rite of apostolic appointment, and in the early 1800's many were again led by the Lord to leave that exclusive system of the Church of England, in what would later become known as the brethren movement. Such men as our present author, Anthony Norris Groves, and such men as J. G. Bellett, Edward Cronin, J. N. Darby, John Parnell (Lord Congleton), and many other early brethren were led by the Lord to leave the Church of England in order to gather together in simplicity around the Table of the Lord, in the Name of the Lord, with any Christian who might name the Name of the Lord in both sincerity and truth, no matter what their denominational affiliation might be. Rather than meeting according to Church tradition *plus* Scripture, they met together only according to Scripture, apart from any of those traditions that were added to the Word of God over the centuries, which, as with all traditions made by men, made the Word of God of none effect, the same way it did in our Lord Jesus Christ's day (Mark 7: 7-13).

And so, now in India, after the Charter Act of 1813, this same exclusive spirit of the Church of England, which exclusivity had been restricting liberty of ministry in both England and Ireland for a very long time, was now beginning to spread in India.

But it is now important to mention, for contextual reasons, that this

was not the first time this had occurred in India. This same attempt to create exclusive systems of ministry in India had also been attempted by other outside Churches, wherein they also tried to institute a line of duly appointed bishops in apostolic succession.<sup>17</sup>

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, long before the Church of England's present attempt in India, the teaching of apostolic succession being that which is necessary for ministry in the Church had been introduced by the Portuguese, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church (which teaching continues to the present).

In the same way, it is also reported that there are certain Orthodox Christians in India today, who also lay claim to be the true Church of Christ in India, because of their belief in apostolic succession being a necessary ingredient for one to minister in the Church as a bishop. Some, it seems, either trace that line back to Thomas directly, or back to him through the Parthian episcopate. And they believe it was Thomas who instituted this rite, or practice of succession, in the first place. But such is not the case, for although history indicates he was in India, we know from Scripture that the Apostles, and so he, never practiced such a rite as being that which is necessary for ministry in the Church of Christ (as our brother Groves will amply show from Scripture in this book).

But many different Churches over the centuries kept claiming that it was necessary. In fact, we find a certain John the Persian from the

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<sup>17</sup> It is not that there is not a succession of bishops in churches; of course there are. Every church will have a succession of bishops, who were made so by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:17, 28 ERV1885), all in accordance with the gifting of Christ (Eph. 4:8-11), and by their placement in the body of Christ, by God the Father (I Cor. 12:18, 28). It is the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit who authorize men to minister as bishops/elders/pastors in a church, not man; the Church only recognizes, in accordance with the Scripture, what the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit have already done (I Tim. 3:1-7). It is wrong for a bishop to forbid one to minister in the Church of Christ because they are not in a line of apostolic succession, for there is ample evidence in Scripture that the Holy Spirit operated outside such parameters. There is no rite of apostolic succession in Scripture, but there is evidence where bishops will succeed other bishops who have died, apart from any rite of succession, or any impartation of apostolic authority through the laying on of the hands of a bishop (Acts 1:20-26). The only thing that was required was the choice of the Lord and the recognition and acceptance of that choice by the Church.

fourth century, who was present at the Council of Nicaea in 325, had the following written regarding him, concerning what he added to his signature to the Creed. A Catholic Encyclopedia says, "In his signature to the decrees of the council he styles himself John the Persian over the churches in all Persia and Great India."<sup>18</sup> But then, what is telling in this description of him, is that it also says, "His control of the Church in India could only have been exercised by his sending 'priests under his jurisdiction' to minister to those Christians. It is not known at what time India first commenced to have resident bishops; but between 530-35 Cosmas Indicopleustes in his 'Topographa' informs us of the presence of a bishop residing at Caliana, the modern Kalyan at a short distance from Bombay."<sup>19</sup>

The important thing to notice in this (as in other accounts even earlier than this) is that Christians were already present in India when John the Persian is said to have sent priests "under his jurisdiction" to minister to those Christians. The phrase "under his jurisdiction," of course, means that those priests were made priests by a bishop in apostolic succession.

And the fact that John the Persian believed he had to do this implies that in his mind there was not an existing clergy/laity system set in place in India, having its own bishops, in a long line of apostolic succession going back to one of the Twelve Apostles. Most assuredly, if there was already such a system in place at that time, I do not believe those individual bishops in India, who believed themselves to also be in a long line of apostolic succession, would have ever let a far distant bishop from another country exert control over their ministries and Churches.

But, and this is an important point! Just because there was not a "clergy/laity system" set in place at that time in India, does not mean there were not legitimate bishops, made so by the Holy Spirit, in those churches in India at that time! It only means those bishops (i.e. elders, pastors) in India, were not recognized as such by the outside Church in

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<sup>18</sup> Charles George Herbermann, Edward Aloysius Pace, eds., *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline and History of the Catholic Church*, Vol. XIV (Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912) pg. 681

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Parthia, because the Church in Parthia believed one could not be a bishop/elder/pastor apart from a duly recognized line of apostolic succession. Therefore they decided to impose it on the churches in India.

Most assuredly, there were duly appointed ministers of Christ in India at that time, because they were made so by the Holy Spirit Himself, just as He first made bishops in the Church in Ephesus in the early Church long ago (Acts 20: 17-28 ERV1885). I do not believe the Holy Spirit would leave the churches shepherdless for so many centuries. The only thing is, apparently, some became convinced that they needed to be in a duly recognized line of apostolic succession. Thus the Church in Parthia robbed them of their liberty in Christ. And, if for some external reason (perhaps because of persecution), those pastors, elders, bishops that were made so by Holy Spirit were not present in the churches at that time, the Chief Shepherd, and the Bishop of our souls was certainly present in each local Church, ever faithful to feed His sheep, and oversee His flock. A proper New Testament assembly will always look to Him first as their Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. He is not a mere figurehead, but a living reality that is ever present as we gather together in His Name (Matt. 18:20; 28:20; John 14:18). Many times in a persecuted Church He continues to guide His churches without any under-shepherds being present. Indeed, in some new churches this occurs for some time even without any intense persecution as the Lord Jesus did with the Church in Corinth for a time.

Moreover, the fact of the matter is, if John the Persian followed Scripture, he would not have thought there was a need to send “priests” into India for the purposes of establishing other priests, for he would have recognized that according to Scripture the mere presence of Christians in India, meant that there was already a presence of “priests” in India! The apostle Peter in his First Epistle made clear that we are all a “holy priesthood,” a “royal priesthood” (I Pet. 2:5,9), which means that our brother John the Persian was redefining the biblical definition of *priesthood*, different from the way it was defined by the apostle Peter, but rather as it was defined by their later man-made traditions. He was using “priests” as referring to a priesthood, a clerical order, that not only usurped the priesthood of all Christians, and thus their liberty to minister in accordance with their spiritual gifts, but also was lording

over that holy and royal priesthood of all Christians, by forbidding their observance of the Lord's Table without a priest in apostolic succession being present.

So, instead of following the apostolic instructions left for us in the Word of God, John the Persian in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, like the Church of England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, began to introduce those man-made distinctions of clergy and laity into the Church, wherein men in an approved line of apostolic succession, were transformed into an clerical order of priests, who not only lorded it over the other priests of God in the Church, those priests that Peter called a holy priesthood, they also began to reserve the title of priests for themselves, and began to refer to the rest of those in the Church as the "laity."

Thus, their liberty of ministry, as priests of God, called by the Holy Spirit a holy and royal priesthood in I Pet. 2:5-9; 5: 1-4, was now limited and kept in control by the so-called clergy in a stricter way, which later even resulted in the clergy restricting the laity access to the precious Word of God.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Peter exhorts the elders, in I Pet 5:1-4, to shepherd (to pastor) the flock (the Church) of God that he designates a being "among you." The phrase "among you" is the Greek phrase ἐν ὑμῖν, which literally carries the idea "with you," or "in the midst of you," meaning the sheep were moving not only with, but also within the circle of *elders*, or, if you will, the shepherds (*pastors*) who were walking in the midst of the sheep, as well as around the sheep. It also provides us with a picture of elders or shepherds on the outer edge of the flock, being overseers (*bishops*) of the sheep, who were watching over the flock, and/or as shepherds protecting the flock in their midst. In other words, the extent of their shepherding, and thus their authority, was limited to the flock that was ἐν ὑμῖν "with" them, "among them," being "within" their circle, wherein they walked. It was limited to the flock "in which" they functioned as elders, shepherds, bishops. Obviously shepherds in Ephesus could not shepherd the assembly in Thessalonica, for those sheep were not among them, or with them, so, obviously, Scripture was limiting shepherding to the sheep in which those shepherds were able to walk within them, and walk about them. (How interesting it is to realize the Lord, as the Chief Shepherd, "walks" in the midst of all the Churches, represented of course by the seven lampstands in Asia—Rev. 2:1. Thus, His authority, His overseeing, His shepherding extends beyond a local Church, for His presence is everywhere.) It would be wrong to have the authority of one Church, or the authority of one set of elders or bishops of one

This means that John the Persian in the 4<sup>th</sup> century simply did not recognize that all Christians were priests to God, who as a holy

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assembly, or, as in some churches, the authority of one man, called the Bishop or the Archbishop, or, indeed, the Pope, to ever extend their authority over a number of other Churches. That prerogative belongs to the LORD alone, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Nowhere, again, do we have a command for this to occur, nor do we have an example of such a thing left for us in Scripture. Peter also reinforces this truth by the use of the Greek word translated as “allotted to” in I Pet. 5:2-3 NASB77, which in the KJV is translated as “heritage.” It is the Greek word, κληρος, which sounds like “klā-rōs” (using Erasmusian pronunciation). And this is the Greek word from which we get “clergy.” And what is so ironic is that it is the flock, the Church, which is called the clergy (klārōs) of God. It is not restricted to elders (pastors, bishops). In other words, it is the “people” of God (I Pet. 2: 9-10—in Gr. λαός—where we get the English—*laity*) who are the “clergy” of God (i.e. the heritage of God). Conversely since the pastors/elders/bishops are also included in the people of God in I Pet 2:9-10, pastors/elders/bishops also are known in Scripture as the *laity*! So the laity and the clergy are not two distinct groups. We all are the *clergy*, and we all are the *laity*! So we see there is no clergy/laity system in Scripture. The clergy are not a distinct order from the laity. The word simply refers the fact that God has allotted certain sheep to certain shepherds. Restricting the name “clergy,” God’s heritage, to pastors/elders/bishops, was a later invention of men, having no support in the New Testament. The word only refers to the sheep who are allotted by God to one set of elders (i.e. bishops, shepherds), and this means, of course, those sheep cannot be taken over or shepherded by another set of elders, bishops, pastors, let alone by a bishop, who has been elevated above the other elders in the church, or by other Churches, or by an Archbishop who is elevated above those bishops who set themselves over other elders of other churches, or, most certainly, not by a Pope who has been elevated above them all. Thus, again, we see that God intended every flock (church) to be autonomous from other flocks (churches), each having its own elders, i.e. bishops, pastors, who were all under the one Chief Shepherd of us all and the one and only Bishop of our souls, who is the One who oversees all the local Churches throughout the world. No man can presume to oversee other Churches. To do so usurps the right of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd and sole Bishop, who is over every local Church throughout the world. Oh, the presumption of man that takes upon himself that which is not his, and claims for himself that which has never been given.

priesthood was to offer up together spiritual sacrifices to God, as they were led by the Holy Spirit, not by an imposed liturgy. The only distinction in this holy priesthood, was the difference of their spiritual gifts, and the difference of their callings (I Cor. 12: 28-31). The apostles did not create an order of priests, who in practice turned the holy ad royal priesthood into the “laity.” Those distinctions arose from the man-made clergy/laity system that was introduced after the last apostle died. Did not the apostle Paul tells us by the Holy Spirit: “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal...but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many?” (I Cor. 12:4-7, 11-14 ASV).

And so there was no need to send “priests” to establish a duly ordained clergy to enforce or establish an exclusive doctrine of apostolic succession,<sup>21</sup> for the Indian Churches already had legitimate

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<sup>21</sup> For those who may wonder, perhaps it should be mentioned that the phrase “apostolic appointment,” as used by our brother Groves is being used in its historic sense of referring to the doctrine of apostolic succession, wherein a bishop/elder/pastor is only recognized as being a legitimate bishop (i.e. elder, pastor), only if he has a legitimate apostolic appointment, made by a duly recognized bishop, who is himself in a legitimate line of bishops reaching back, one by one, to one of the original apostles—much like the succeeding Bishops of Rome, the Popes of the Catholic Church, claim for themselves, claiming that they are in a successive list of Popes reaching back to the apostle Peter. Their claim that Peter was the first Pope is what makes them legitimate in their own eyes. If Peter was not the first bishop of Rome, they lose all legitimacy in accordance with their doctrine of apostolic succession. As one will see later by the words of Anthony Norris Groves, he was not denying that the apostles in Scripture sometimes appointed elders (i.e. bishops, pastors—e.g. Acts 14:23). He is only saying that they were not establishing an exclusive system of apostolic appointment, which disallowed all other appointments that were not made by a bishop in an approved line of succession. Anthony Norris Groves

spiritual leaders duly made pastors (elders, bishops) by the Holy Spirit apart from any thought of a successive line of bishops in apostolic succession. The Indian Churches raised up by the Holy Spirit did not have a clerical order of *priests*, who were set over a class of Christians called the *laity*, wherein those who were made spiritual leaders by the Holy Spirit had their liberty of ministry restricted, and the rest of the saints had their liberty of exercising their spiritual gifts by the leading of the Holy Spirit in the meetings of the Church also restricted.

In fact, this witness to a lack of a developed clergy/laity system in India, under a sole bishop who is in apostolic succession, goes back even further. Eusebius, in writing of those in the second century who had gone forth with the Gospel, does not say that they went to establish a monarchical “bishop” in apostolic succession over the churches that would be founded by their subsequent preaching, but rather speaks of them of establishing “pastors,” ποιμένας, plural, (which in Scripture would be the same as saying bishops, or elders), over the churches they might found, just as Paul and Barnabas did in Acts 14:21-23; cf. Phil. 1:1).

Let me provide below what Eusebius wrote about those sent out in the Gospel in those days shortly after the death of the apostles:

“And there were many others besides these who were known in those days, and who occupied the first place among the successors of the apostles.<sup>22</sup> And they also being illustrious disciples of such great men, built up the foundations of the churches which had been laid by the apostles in every place, and preached the Gospel more and more widely and scattered the saving seeds of the

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addresses this very thing, with all the appropriate verses, when he discusses the subject in this book.

<sup>22</sup> His phrase “successors of the apostles” does not refer to the rite of *apostolic succession*, but is simply referring to those who succeeded them in evangelism, spreading the Gospel to other nations. Eusebius’ word translated *successors* is the Greek word διαδοχῆς, which is same word used in Acts 24:27 bespeaking Felix being *succeeded* by Porcius Festus, which had nothing to do with his being duly appointed by Felix, for Felix was removed from office by the emperor Nero, and Porcius Festus was not appointed by Felix, but was appointed by Nero himself to succeed him. So it had nothing to do with any transference of authority of one to the other, wherein Felix would be the one authorizing Porcius Festus to also function as a procurator.



kingdom of heaven far and near throughout the whole world...Then starting out upon long journeys they performed the office of evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those who had not yet heard the word of faith, and to deliver to them the divine Gospels. And when they had only laid the foundations of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors [ποιμένας], and entrusted them with the nurture of those that had recently been brought in, while they themselves went on again to other countries and nations, with the grace and the co-operation of God. For a great many wonderful works were done through them by the power of the divine Spirit, so that at the first hearing whole multitudes of men eagerly embraced the religion of the Creator of the universe.”<sup>23</sup>

F. F. Bruce also speaks of Christians existing in India in 180 A.D., and then goes back with a reference to the first century, and the labours of the apostle Thomas. He writes:

“But what do we know of Andrew and Thomas and Matthew, Philip and Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus and Judas son of James, Simon the Zealot and Matthias, the successor of Judas Iscariot? Legend is lavish in its willingness to tell us what became of them, but we have amazingly little historical knowledge. They do not appear to have remained in Jerusalem after the middle of the first century. Some of them may have evangelized parts of Asia Minor; other are said to have gone farther east, **Thomas and Bartholomew** in particular whom tradition **associates with India**...Eusebius tells us that when Pantænus, head of the catechetical school of Alexandria, went on a mission to India about 180, he found a Christian community, converted by the preaching of the apostle Bartholomew and possessing ‘Matthew’s writing in the script of the Hebrews.’”<sup>24</sup>

And regarding this Pantænus, Eusebius writes: “Pantænus was one of these, and is said to have gone to India. It is reported that among persons there who knew of Christ, he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had anticipated his own arrival. For Bartholomew, one

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<sup>23</sup> Henry Wace, Philip Schaff, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series, Volume 1* (Parker and Company, London, 1890) pg. 169

<sup>24</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame: The Rise and Progress of Christianity from its First Beginnings to the Conversion of the English* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1979) pg. 283-284

of the apostles, had preached to them, and left with them the writing of Matthew in the Hebrew language, which they had preserved till that time.”<sup>25</sup>

But, F. F. Bruce first mentions the apostle Thomas, mentioning that he was also associated with India, and with Thomas there is even more historical evidence of his preaching in India than there is of Bartholomew. Eusebius states that when the apostles went forth to make disciples of all nations, that “Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labour.”<sup>26</sup> Of course, we know from Acts 2:9 that one of the foreign tongues with which the apostles spoke on the Day of Pentecost was the Parthian tongue. Could it be that Thomas was the apostle that those Parthian Jews in Jerusalem heard speaking the wonderful works of God in their own tongue, and that some of those who believed among them were the first Christians present in that land, and so because God had given Thomas that miraculous tongue, he was later sent to them in Parthia?

So, if Thomas was sent east to Parthia, the border between Parthia and India was often viewed as the Indus River, and since throughout history that border was sometimes seen as part of Parthia and at other times as part of India, it may be that when Thomas reached Parthia, some may have considered him as preaching in Parthia and others as preaching in India. But even apart from that, if Thomas left Jerusalem for the East, travelling the roads eastward, he would first have to travel through Parthia to reach India. It would be only natural, if he had the Parthian gift of tongues, to then first preach the Gospel throughout Parthia, in those places where those Parthian Jews at Pentecost dwelt.

But, as with Paul, what would Thomas do that far in the East after he had proclaimed Christ in that land? It would be only natural that after he had first preached the Gospel in Parthia, he would have then traveled down, or sailed down, along the coast to the southern portion of India, to continue making disciples of all nations. Would he not have had the same apostolic aspirations that Paul had who said—

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<sup>25</sup> Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series*, Vol. I (The Christian Literature Company, New York, 1890) pg. 225

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 132

“In the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you whenever I go to Spain-- for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while.” (Romans 15:19-20, 23-24 NASB77)

So it would only make sense that Thomas, also being an apostle of Christ, sent out to make disciples of all nations, preaching Christ where Christ was had not been named, would have also aspired to travel deeper into India to bring the good news of salvation to those who had never heard the Gospel, just as many of our brethren in India have testified. And there are many historical documents to indicate this.

And, if I may say, before continuing, one need not rely on the heretical document known as *Acts of Thomas* as evidence for this. The *Acts of Thomas* is a heretical document that does much disservice to the character and life of the apostle Thomas. It presents him as disobedient, fearful, as well as deceptive, being one who misappropriates funds given to him for a specific purpose, and then using those funds in a way he knows the giver would never authorize. If such a situation was ever presented to an apostle of Christ, an apostle of Christ would never have used such dissimulation or guile to achieve a desired end! He would have been forthright and honest as one who walks in the light (Rom 12:9; I Pet. 2:1). And, not only that, the *Acts of Thomas* also shows the apostle Thomas invoking in prayer other gnostic beings or emanations from God the Father, with Jesus being just one of them! How horrible and denigrating to our LORD! Moreover, it also presents Jesus, which Scripture says heaven must receive “until” the times of restitution of all things (Acts 3:21), as, nevertheless, descending to earth (in contradiction to Scripture) to transact business with a travelling merchant, wherein he sells Thomas as a slave because he refused to go to India. That is not the picture of the Thomas of the New Testament, who waxed strong in faith after seeing Jesus! Moreover, one also finds indications of Manichaeism in the document, which is also terrible heresy.

So out of respect for Thomas and most importantly, out of respect

for the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the Only-Begotten of God the Father, meaning no others were begotten of God, the opposite of what the *Gnosticism* of the *Acts of Thomas* was teaching, I do not believe the *Acts of Thomas* should be referenced as a source for Thomas being in India; its story is an affront to the character of an apostle of Christ, and more importantly, an affront to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten of God.

So, as was already said, there are many other Christian documents that speak of the apostle Thomas being in India that one might refer to as historical evidence bespeaking his presence in India. These are found in the writings of those who are known as Church Fathers. And even though there would be much in their writings of which we would disagree, that is, in regard to those things not having to do with an essential of the Faith, for example, such things as their teaching regarding apostolic succession, as well as their teaching on clerical orders (and other like things), for the most part, they are true to the Faith, being respectful of the LORD Jesus Christ, and being ever so careful to always hold firmly to the Faith once and for all delivered to the saints, unlike the *Acts of Thomas*.

In that light, one can find ample witness to the apostle Thomas being both in Parthia and in India. This witness can be found in the writings of such ones as, Origen, Eusebius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, Ambrose, and also in certain early Syriac documents such as the “Doctrine of the Apostles,” as well in other Christian historical documents.

For example, in a letter of Jerome to Marcella, we see the following being discussed: “Was the risen Christ before His ascension present only with the disciples, or was He in heaven and elsewhere as well? The latter according to Jerome is the true doctrine. ‘*The Divine Nature*,’ he writes, ‘*exists everywhere in its entirety. Christ, therefore, was at one and the same time with the apostles and with the angels; in the Father and in the uttermost parts of the sea. So afterwards he was with Thomas in India, with Peter at Rome, with Paul in Illyricum, with Titus*

*in Crete, with Andrew in Achaia.*”<sup>27</sup>

As an aside regarding the character of Thomas, let me provide a comment from Chrysostom. Notice what he says regarding the character of the apostle Thomas compared with that which found in the *Acts of Thomas*. Rather than being shown as a fearful and disobedient apostle to the Lord Jesus, Thomas is said to be courageous and obedient apostle of Christ! Here is what Chrysostom wrote about Thomas:

“That S. Thomas, who at first was most weak and most incredulous of all the Apostles, became, through the condescension of Jesus Christ, to satisfy his scruples, and the strength of the divine Grace, the most ardent, powerful and invincible of them all, and went through all the world almost, and lived without fear in the midst of barbarous nations doing his duty, without any care of his own security or life!”<sup>28</sup> (Exclamation point was mine.)

Two of the earliest witnesses to Thomas being in India are as follows—we have from the West, Hippolytus of Rome, and we have from the East, Dorotheus of Tyre, who lived to be 107 years of age, and became a martyr for Christ, being put to death by the Emperor Julian the Apostate. As for Hippolytus (170-235AD), he wrote the following.

“And Thomas preached to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and Margians, and was thrust through in the four members of his body with a pine spear at Calamene, **the city of India**, and was buried there.”<sup>29</sup>

And then Dorotheus of Tyre (255-362 AD) wrote:

“Thomas, as it hath been delivered unto us, preached the Gospel of our Saviour Christ Jefus unto the *Parthians, Medes and Perfians*. He preached also unto the

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<sup>27</sup> Henry Wace, Philip Schaff, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Volume VI* (Parker and Company, London, 1893) pg. 123

<sup>28</sup> Louis Ellies Du Pin, *Evangelical History, Part the Second, Being the Lives and Acts of the Holy Apostles* (A. Swall and T. Child, London, 1696) pg. 276-277

<sup>29</sup> Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. V (The Christian Literature Company, New York, 1896) pg. 255

*Caramans, Hircans, Bactrians and Magicians* [Magi-cians] He rested at *Calamina* a City in *India*, being slain with a dart, which they call a spear or javelin, where he was also honourably buried.”<sup>30</sup>

And then we also have one of the earliest testimonies of Thomas being in India in Syriac document known as the *Doctrine of the Apostles* (c. 250 AD), which declares:

“And after the death of the Apostles there were Guides and Rulers in the churches, and whatsoever...the Apostles had committed to them, and they had received from them, they taught to the multitudes all the time of their lives. They again, at their deaths also committed and delivered to their disciples after them everything which they had received from the Apostles; also what James had written from Jerusalem, and Simon from the city of Rome, and John from Ephesus, and Mark from the great Alexandria, and Andrew from Phrygia, and Luke from Macedonia, and Judas **Thomas from India**; that the epistles of an Apostle might be received and read in the Churches, in every place, like the Triumphs of their Acts, which Luke wrote, [i.e. Acts of the Apostles], that by this the Apostles might be known, and the Prophets, and the Old Testament and the New; that one truth was preached by them all, that one Spirit spake in them all from one God, whom they had all worshipped and had all preached. And the countries received their doctrine.”<sup>31</sup>

And so we see that many bear witness throughout Church History of

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<sup>30</sup> Meridith Hanmer, *The AVNCIENT ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORIES OF THE FIRST SIX HVNDRED YEARES AFTER CHRIST*, written in the Greeke Tongue by Three Hiftoriographers, Eusebisu, Sacrates, and Euagirus: Eusebius: EVSEBIVS PAMPHILVS Bishop of Cafarea in Palestina wrote 10 bookes. SOCRATES SCHOLASTI CVS of Conftantinople wrote 7 bookes. EVAGRIVS SCHOLASTICVS of Antioch wrote 6. bookes. whereunto is annexed DOROTH EVS Bishop of Tyrus, of the lines and ends of the Prophets, Apofles, and 70. Difciples. All which Authors are faithfully tranflated out of the Greeke tongue by MEREDITH HANMER Doctor of Diuinitie. Laft of all, herein is contained a briefe CHRONOGRAPHIE collected by the faid Tranflator, with a copious INDEX of the principall matters throughout all the Hiftories (Printed by Richard Field, London, 1619) pg. 534

<sup>31</sup> W. Cureton, tr., ed., *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the Neighbouring Countries from the Year after our Lord's Ascension to the Beginning of the Fourth Century* (Williams and Norgate, London, 1864) pg. 32

Thomas being both in Parthia and India, and, just because it is history, does not mean it is not factual. It is a tradition that does not contradict anything written in Scripture.

Do we not have in the West our own traditions found in historical documents regarding the apostle Paul, that he was beheaded in Rome by Nero, and before that, those historical traditions declare that he did in fact reach Spain to preach the Gospel? Many accept those traditions as being true, even though Scripture is silent on those two assertions of history. But, like with Thomas reaching India, it does not contradict anything written in Scripture.

Now if many Christians in the West will accept the historical accuracy of those historical documents bearing witness correctly to those two things regarding the apostle Paul, then why is it difficult to believe that the many historical documents equally bear witness correctly to Thomas being in Parthia and in India?

Moreover do we not accept the traditions found in the Church Fathers that Matthew was the author of the first gospel, and Mark was the author of the second Gospel, and Luke the third, and John the fourth, even though Scripture is silent on who wrote the Four Gospels? So why is it so hard to accept their testimony about Thomas reaching India? So, while such traditions should never be considered inspired, or be thought to be on the same level of Scripture, they do provide us some information which at times could be factual and reliable.

The point to remember, though, is that Scripture must always take precedence over tradition. Any tradition which does not agree with the Word of God must be seen as false, and so should not be accepted. Unlike the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and other churches like her, secondary documents like Traditions, Canon Law, etc., should never be seen as an additional source of authority and Divine revelation for the Church. However, as long as it bears witness to things that do not contradict Scripture, it can sometimes be a source of information that might help us understand certain things revealed in Scripture; but again, even if some things are found to be true in those documents, they can never be considered to be on the same level as Scripture, for if we allow one thing from those historical documents of the Church Fathers to carry the same weight as Scripture, then we must be open to other things from those same writings to have equal weight with Scripture.

And if that is done, it simply becomes a subjective picking and choosing as to what we accept or what we do not accept, and we become hopelessly lost in a maze of varying opinions.

For example, perhaps, some may not realize that in the same historical document quoted above, the *Doctrine of the Apostles*, which gives forth the account of Thomas being in India, it also says in the very beginning of that same document that the apostles were given by Christ the Old Testament priesthood, declaring that the priesthood of Moses and Aaron was transferred to, and bestowed upon, them! It states the following in the beginning portion of the document: “And at the time of the great morning our Lord lifted up his hands, and laid them upon the heads of the Eleven Disciples, and gave to them the gift of the Priesthood...and they were rejoicing because they had received the Right Hand of Priesthood of the house of Moses and Aaron.”<sup>32</sup>

Now, obviously, though this is part of the same tradition having to do with Thomas, this part of the tradition is false, for it contradicts Scripture! Nowhere does it say our Lord laid His hands upon the Eleven after he rose from the dead, bestowing upon them the Levitical priesthood of Moses and Aaron! We are a new priesthood under a New Covenant, not a transferred Aaronic priesthood from the Old Covenant (Heb. 7:11-29; 8:13). Scripture says the Old Covenant passed away (Heb. 8:13; 9:10; II Cor. 3:11) and that Christ, as our High Priest, was of a “different” order, the order of Melchisedec (the Levitical priesthood of the house of Moses and Aaron, if you will, being an order of priesthood that ended—Heb. 6:20; 7:11-28). So we see that traditions should never be given equal weight to Scripture. The Word of God is true, and all things in it are true, being inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. Such is not the case with tradition, even if it does contain some factual statements.

I think Andrew Miller said it best, giving a balanced view on the subject of Scripture and tradition. He wrote:

“At the same time, with regard to the apostles, we have to bear in mind, that beyond the sacred narrative, there is very little known that can be relied upon. The traditional and the scriptural, the certain and the uncertain, are almost hopelessly blended together in the writings of the Fathers. **Every distinct ray**

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pg. 24



**of historical light we greatly value**, but it is only to the scriptures that we can turn with certainty. **Still, the few scattered notices which we have there, of some of the apostles, with what may be gather elsewhere, when brought together may give the reader a view of the person and individuality of the apostle, which he never had before.**"<sup>33</sup> [Continuing, he then refers to the apostle Thomas in India.] "The future apostolic labours of Thomas, and the end of his life, are so filled with traditions or legends, that we know nothing certainly. Some say he laboured in India and some in Persia. His martyrdom, it is said, was occasioned by a lance, and is still commemorated by the Latin church on December 21, by the Greek church on October 6, and by the Indians on July 1."<sup>34</sup> (Please see footnote below)<sup>35</sup>

So even though tradition must never be given equal weight as Scripture, it is able to give a reader "a view of the person and individuality" of an apostle, "which he never had before," as our brother Miller wrote above. But it is also able to provide information regarding the subsequent history of certain Churches. And it is in that that we find, unfortunately, that some of these same writings of the Church Fathers, which tell us of Thomas being in India, also reveal to us that Churches outside of India from other countries would not respect the autonomy of those Indian Churches, not necessarily out of malice, but from their misguided adherence to their "traditions" over Scripture.

One account, about by a Church lying outside of India, that shows

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<sup>33</sup> Andrew Miller, *Miller's Church History, Including the Original "Last Chapter" written by Andrew Miller* (Bible Truth Publishers, Addison, IL, 1980) pg. 48

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pg. 69

<sup>35</sup> Many celebrate this feast on July 3, so I am not sure why our brother listed it as July 1. But there is a document from four hundred years ago, which does declare the date was, indeed, July 1. It is found Sir Thomas Herbert's record of his own voyages to the Meliapore area, first published in 1634. In his account of his visit to Meliapore, he writes regarding the death of Thomas in India: "...*Meliapore* after that, and now *S. Thomas*, for that in this place he suffered martyrdom...This hapned about thirty years after our Saviours passion; and in memory thereof, a commemorative Feast is yearly celebrated **the first of July by the Native Chriftians through India.**" S. Tho. Herbert, *Some Years Travels Into Divers Parts of Africa, & Asia the Great: Describing More Particularly the Empires of Persia ...and... Kingdoms in the Oriental India, with the Isles Adjacent*, Third Edition (Printed by R. Everingham, London, 1677) pg. 345

this lack of respect for our brethren in India, says: “[For] a long period when there was neither bishop nor priest surviving in the land, for they had all died out; the only clerical survival was a deacon far advanced in age. The ignorant Christians, finding themselves without prelates, made him say Mass and even ordain others, but as soon as prelates came from Babylon they put a stop to this disorder.”<sup>36</sup>

Now, it is hard to believe that the Holy Spirit left the churches in India without overseers at that time. But even if it was true, and there was only this lone surviving deacon (leaving aside the whole issue regarding the idea of a “Mass”). Why, did the “prelates” from Babylon not say something to this effect?

“According to Peter the apostle, you are all priests of God, a holy priesthood, and so you all have the liberty as priests to observe and partake of the Lord’s Table, giving thanks to Him, as we were commanded by Paul the apostle in I Cor. 11:18-34. Remember, the Corinthian church had no bishops/pastors/elders at that time, and yet they had the liberty to partake of the Bread and the Cup, albeit to never do so in an unworthy manner? So you are not being disorderly by partaking of the Lord’s Table because there are no bishops present. And, as for your lack of bishops, let us ask the Lord to raise up bishops in your midst in accordance with the instructions left us by the apostle Paul, as given to us in Scripture through his first epistle to Timothy (I Tim. 3: 1-7). Perhaps, your deacon longs to impart gracious care of the saints, if so he desires a good work (3:1), and it may be the Holy Spirit has already made him a bishop. So let us pray to the Lord and follow the Holy Spirit’s instructions left for us in Paul’s First Epistle to Timothy to see if this is so, and if so, we will rejoice in the Lord that he has granted you another elder, a bishop, a pastor.”

The reason I am afraid they did not give this type of advice is because those prelates from Babylon were bound by the traditions of men, rather than Scripture. Because of that, they did not recognize the legitimacy of elders/pastors/bishops made so by the Holy Spirit apart from their doctrine of apostolic succession. So rather than respecting the

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<sup>36</sup> Charles George Herbermann, Edward Aloysius Pace, eds., *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline and History of the Catholic Church*, Vol. XIV (Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912) pg. 681

autonomy of each Indian church, and the right of the Holy Spirit to make new elders/bishops/pastors in every church, they tried to restrict their “liberty of ministry” in their churches, and sought to put them under their control and authority of a prelate from Babylon.

And, even if we allow that there truly were no elders/pastors/bishops present in India (which seems unlikely), they still did not believe that the “laity” (as they would call them) had any right to partake of the Table of the Lord apart from a duly ordained priest in apostolic succession being present. So, in this too they were restricting their liberty in Christ.

And we find in another account, similar things happening later, as can be seen below.

“In 1490 the Christians of Malabar dispatched three messengers to ask the Nestorian Patriarch to send out bishops; one died on the journey, the other two presented themselves before the patriarch and delivered their message; two monks were selected and the Patriarch consecrated them bishops, assigning to one the name of Thomas and to the other that of John. The two bishops started on their journey to India accompanied by the two messengers. On arrival they were received with great joy by the people and the bishops consecrated altars and ordaining a large number of priests ‘as they had been for a long time deprived of bishops.’”<sup>37</sup>

Now whether the above account is true or not in all its particulars, or whether there were, indeed, no elders/bishops/pastors present in the churches of that area of India, or whether they really sent a request to a Nestorian prelate, I do not know. But that is the problem with historical traditions; one does not know what is true and what is false, but that is not the case with Scripture, for in Scripture we know that everything within it is true!

It is hard to believe that the Holy Spirit did not have any bishops, elders, pastors present at that time in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as it was also claimed so long before during the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but E. H. Broadbent claims the opposite about those churches in the first and second century, leading up to the time of the third century. He writes:

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pg. 681-682

"That new power which has arisen from the works wrought by the Lord and His Apostles has subdued the flame of human passions and brought into the hearty acceptance of one faith a vast variety of races and nations the most different in their manners. For we can count up in our reckoning things achieved **in India**, among the Seres, Persians and Medes; in Arabia, Egypt, Asia and Syria; among the Galatians, the Parthians and the Phrygians; in Achaia, Macedonia and Epirus; in all the islands and provinces which the rising or the setting sun looks down upon...The Eastern churches kept their simple and Scriptural character longer than those of the West.<sup>38</sup> Even in the third century there was no definite organization of the separate churches into one system, the country was not divided into dioceses (there might be several bishops in one church at the same time), and the churches were active and successful in spreading the testimony continually into new regions."<sup>39</sup>

Now, our brother gave no references regarding the "simple and Scriptural character" of the eastern churches, with their several bishops in each church, so I cannot confirm his statement with a reference, but I would not doubt that what he said was true in regard to any Churches that were established by Thomas in India, for like Paul the apostle, the apostle Thomas followed the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, being full of the Holy Spirit. And since the Holy Spirit guided the Eleven Apostles into all truth (John 16:13), and since truth never changes, and since Paul the apostle also spoke the truth (Gal. 4:16; I Tim. 2:7), we certainly know Paul could never do anything against the truth (II Cor. 13:8). This means that the commands that Paul gave to the Church, were the commands of the Lord Jesus to His Church (I Cor. 14:35). And since Paul says that if one is spiritual, such a one would recognize it as so, and since he declared in truth that the Holy Spirit makes a plurality of elders, i.e. bishops, pastors, in the Church (Acts 20:28; cf. Phil. 1:1), and since the Holy Spirit would make such men known to each Church, then the form of Church government set up by Thomas

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<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately I was not able to confirm this reference as I do not speak French, but his source is listed for this as—Le Christianisme dans l'Empire Perse sous la Dynastie Sassanide (224-632). J. Labourt.

<sup>39</sup> E H Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church Being Some Account of the Continuance through Succeeding Centuries of Churches Practising the Principles Taught and Exemplified in the New Testament* (Pickering & Inglis Ltd., London, 1931) pg. 68

would be the same type of Church government set up by Paul, and vice versa, for they were both guided into truth and both spoke the truth and declared the commandments of the Lord.

And so, that form of Church government set up by Thomas in India, could not have been an episcopal form of Church government, where one man, named a bishop, would establish parishes throughout India, all with an episcopal form of church government, for Paul never did such a thing, and they both abided by the same truth.

So this means, as our brother Broadbent shared, “the Eastern churches kept their simple and Scriptural character longer than those of the West (at least, I should say until the early part of the second century). And this also means this clerical/laity form of Church government, based upon the doctrine of apostolic succession, was not apostolic at all. That system did not respect the autonomy of each church, nor did it respect the priesthood of all believers; it was a system that greatly hindered their liberty of ministry in their own churches, contrary to the teaching of the Word of God.

And that now brings us full circle back to our brother Groves and back to the Church of England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and back to this book *On the Liberty of Ministry in the Church of Christ*. Hopefully, this will now explain why I took this long circuitous journey through Church tradition, which not only clearly provided for us the historical witness of Thomas being in India, but also showed us that since that time, outside Churches, over and over, all possessing an exclusive spirit that arose from their clergy/laity system which was bolstered by their man-made tradition of apostolic succession, intruded so many times upon the liberty of the saints in India. It sought to restrict their liberty of ministry and their liberty in the Spirit to examine, prove, and recognize their own elders/bishops/pastors, who had been made so by the Holy Spirit apart from any line of apostolic succession. And in the process it also showed us how outside Churches tried to rob the many local Indian churches of their autonomy before the LORD, who is their only Chief Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

I hope this comparison of what occurred by other Churches outside of India, which did not respect those Churches in India, which Churches saw themselves as being the fruit of the apostle Thomas’s labour, with what was then occurring once more in our brother Groves day in the

19<sup>th</sup> century, will give the reader a greater context to understand everything our brother Groves is about to share in this book regarding the primacy of Scripture over Tradition, which tradition, in the Roman Catholic Church was integrated into what they called the *Magisterium*, and which, in the Church of England, was integrated into their *Canons, Rubrics, Order and Discipline*.

I hope it shows why our brother Groves wrote this book on the *liberty of ministry*, for he was trying to encourage all the brethren in India to stand fast in their liberty which was theirs in Christ Jesus, and to not be entangled again, or subjected again to such things that are not found in the New Testament Scriptures (Gal. 5:1; Col. 2:6-9).

The whole idea of apostolic “succession,” which is held by so many, has caused all kinds of problems throughout Church History, and it would not surprise me if its exclusive spirit is still causing problems for the saints in India today, or in any other place it might exist today, just as it was doing in our brother Groves day.

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Finally, for those again who may have never heard of Anthony Norris Groves, and so had never heard either of his labour of love in India, I think it would be appropriate to close this Forward with the testimony of one of his early co-workers in the Lord in India, John Christian Aroolappen. And then also, let me provide a letter written by Anthony Norris Groves to the brethren in England in 1840.

First, let me provide the testimony of J.C. Aroolappen, who was a young Indian evangelist, who early on, at the age of about twenty-three, first traveled with Anthony Norris Groves in the later part of 1833 in South India, acting as his interpreter. I would dare say that our brother Groves loved him as a co-labourer in the Lord, much like Paul so loved Timothy as his co-labourer in the Lord. And in return I would say our brother Aroolappen loved Anthony Norris Groves, with a love that equaled Timothy’s love for Paul.

I am sure that as Paul felt a deep need for Timothy, our brother Groves felt a deep need and respect for John Aroolappen, not only as a fellow minister of Christ, but also as a man of faith, and a gifted evangelist full of the Holy Spirit. He is often mentioned together in Anthony Norris Groves’ journals and letters, in the same breath with

two other young men, whom he also loved dearly, William Bowden and George Beers, who were also about 23 years of age when they came back with our brother Groves to India in 1835 (after he had returned to England to seek more missionaries to labour in the fields white for harvest). They laboured in the Godavari region of India, and eventually formed what became known as the Godavari Delta Mission.

And so let me now provide a portion of our brother John Christian Aroolappen's testimony regarding our brother Anthony Norris Groves, whom he loved so deeply, in a letter he wrote at the time of brother Groves passing on to the Lord.

"I am thankful to the Lord, who helped me to receive your kind note, after our dear Mrs. Groves arrived there safely, who embarked to England without knowing the sad news of our dear and beloved Mr. Groves, who departed from us to his eternal home. I feel very sorry about his death, because he loved me sincerely as his dear child in Christ Jesus. I never knew anyone who loved me so for the sake of the Lord Jesus; and I am obliged to cry out, as Elisha did, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, (of Christ,) and the horsemen thereof. But the word of God itself comforts me in my sorrow and distress: however, we know that the Lord never does anything contrary to our good. He is the Lord; His will be done as is pleasing in His sight. When I heard about his last word, 'precious Jesus,' from Mr. Henry Groves, I thanked the Lord that He gave him His grace, to serve Him freely and faithfully until his death. I remembered him to the congregation, as St. Paul did in Heb. xiii, 7."

"Truly all who knew him can say, in the language of one whose words, in their last interview on earth, have been already quoted.—The remembrance of him is at all times sweet to us; he had so much of his Master's spirit, that he was truly a savor of Christ in every place, and his "absence from the body" is a great loss to the Church; it leaves a void which no one fills—as in the natural body, a member lost is never supplied; so in the spiritual body. But we shall see him again...and in that blessed day, the heart's desire will be accomplished, "that they all may be one," and the glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, will be presented to Christ, to be His, and with Him forever. May the Lord keep us in the hope of that day, unto the end."<sup>40</sup>

And now, let me provide a brief portion of that letter Anthony Norris

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<sup>40</sup> Anthony Norris Groves, Harriet Groves, ed., *Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves, Containing Extracts from His Letters and Journals*, Second Edition (James Nisbet & Co., London, 1857) pg. 517-518

Groves had written back to the brethren in England after many years of labour in India. It sums up his love for the Lord, his love for the brethren, and his recognition of Christ within the heart of every man, woman, or child who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, regardless of their status, class, or country of their birth. If he were alive today, I am sure it would be a letter written to us as well.

“BELOVED BRETHREN—That which renders your bounty doubly precious is, that it proves the continuance of your love to us individually, but, above all, to the work of the Lord in these desolate and neglected lands. I think we all feel an increasing interest in that plan of missions which we are now pursuing; either labouring ourselves, or being associated with those who profess some 'honest trade,' that we may have 'lack of no man;' (Tit. iii. [13]-14); and also set an example to others, that, by so doing, they may support the weak. We have lately heard from several missionaries, who express the deepest interest in the prospect of our success.”

“That dear young native, by name Aroolappen, who went from us some months since, has, amidst many discouragements and many allurements, remained faithful to his purpose. He has determined to commence his labours in a populous neighbourhood, near the Pilney Hills, in the Madura district, a little south of Trichinopoly; and he has the prospect of being joined by a native brother, who is prepared to go forth to build, with the spade in the one hand and the sword in the other—the way in which the wall will, I believe, be built in these troublous times.

“Dear Aroolappen has declined any *form* of salary, because the people, he says, would not cease to tell him that he preached because he was hired. When he left me, I wished to settle something upon him monthly, as a remuneration for his labour in translating for us; but...he refused any stipulated sum...”

“I think, therefore, we may consider that, under God, our residence in India has been the means of setting up this mode of ministry among the native Christians and the heathen, and our continuance will be, I trust, by the grace of God, the means of establishing and extending it.”

“Those who know the natives will, I am sure, feel with me, that this plan of missions, whereby the native himself is thrown *on God*, is



calculated to develop that *individuality of character*... The European, on the other hand, loves to keep the native in subjection, and himself in the place of rule. But, it must be obvious to all, if the native Churches be not strengthened by learning to lean on the Lord instead of man, the political changes of an hour may sweep away the present form of things, so far as it depends on Europeans, and leave not a trace behind.

“The late visit of Aroolappen to his family in Tinnevely has led to the discussion of these principles among the immense body of labourers there; and though he has not taken up his residence among them, he is sufficiently near for them to observe both himself and the principles on which he is acting. Indeed we would commend these early buddings of the Spirit's power—for we trust they are such-to your very fervent prayers, that our brethren may be carried on in the spirit of real humility and dependence upon God.”

“The fact that our position here puts pastoral work and fellowship on a simple Christian footing among the natives, is by no means the least important feature of our work. Until we came, no one but an ordained native <sup>41</sup> was allowed to celebrate the Lord's Supper or to baptize;—and when our Christian brethren, Aroolappen and Andrew, partook of the Lord's Supper with the native Christians, it caused more stir and enquiry than you can imagine. The constant reference to *God's Word* has brought, and is bringing, the questions connected with ministry and Church government into a perfectly new position in the minds of many.<sup>42</sup>

“It would be difficult for me to say much of my late journey. Having passed, in about three months, over eight or nine hundred miles, and so seldom being able to remain sufficiently long in any place to know much of results; yet, in two or three places which I visited, there has since been a regular assembly of two or three for worship and the Lord's Supper; and I have heard also of one or two who were brought to the knowledge of the truth, by the ministry of the word. On the Nilgherry Hills, we met every Lord's day from twenty to twenty-five.”

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<sup>41</sup> This most certainly was referring to one ordained by the Church of England.

<sup>42</sup> This most certainly was referring to those points from God's Word he brought out in this his book, *On the Liberty of Ministry in the Church of Christ*, as this book was written many years before this letter, which was written in 1840.

“Nothing could exceed the expressions of gratitude I met with from many to whom the Lord allowed me to minister, not only with acceptance, but I think with profit.”

“Now, farewell, beloved in the Lord. May His arm ever encircle you, and may a present Jesus in the midst of you ever infuse a spirit of life into all your assemblies. Our beloved Walhouse and Frank, we commend to your especial love and care, as bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. From them you may perhaps hear so much as to render this letter apparently out of place, but I felt we could not but acknowledge your love, and send you these few remarks.”

“I remain, beloved in the Lord,

“In the joint names of my dear brethren,

“Baynes and Walhouse, Henry and myself,

“Your affectionate brother,

A. N. GROVES.”<sup>43</sup>

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And so, we are now blessed to freely offer his book *On the Liberty of Ministry in the Church of Christ* that was first published in India nearly 200 years ago in 1834 Neyoor, India. We pray that Christians will be blessed by his appeal for liberty of ministry in the Church of Christ so that the work of the Lord on earth will go on in the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the Living and Written Word of God, unto the everlasting Glory of God our Father in heaven.

B. P. Harris

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pg. 391-394

## Note from the Editor

For an English reader of 21<sup>st</sup> century, the syntax of 19<sup>th</sup> century England might sometimes appear a little difficult to understand upon the first reading. Because of this, although we never deleted a single word he penned, in some cases, we added words in [brackets] to facilitate ease of understanding, and/or in some places to explain terms and/or archaic words that are no longer in common use. Therefore, the reader should know that all words in brackets are ours and not his. In a handful of places we have reworked the syntax of a sentence in order to give the modern reader better ease of understanding, but in each case no words have been changed or deleted, and we have noted the change in a footnote, providing for the reader his original sentence, in the exact order he wrote it, so the reader is able to judge for themselves, if our reworking of the sentence did not alter anything of his original meaning.

All *numbered* footnotes in this edition were not penned by A. N. Groves, but were added annotations of our own to help explain difficult passages, and, in some cases, to explain certain terminologies and historical contexts. Some footnotes were also included for the purposes of present day application.

As for the author's footnotes, since he indicated them all with an asterisk (\*), we have retained them as marked throughout. In cases where his footnote appears on the same page where we have added our own numbered footnote, his asterisked footnote will appear first, above our numbered footnote.

We have also maintained throughout his British spelling of words, except in a few places. For example, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century "everything" was spelled as two words, "every" "thing;" and "anybody" was spelled as two words, "any" "body." Such words as these we have changed into single compound words following the modern spelling. Also, in most, but not all cases, we have changed Holy Ghost to the Holy Spirit, except if it was a verse quoted from the KJV, in which case we kept it as translated. Additionally, as some English words have now changed meaning since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in order that a statement of his might not be misunderstood by readers today, in a few places we substituted an equivalent synonym for the original meaning of the word

penned by our brother. However, please note, again, whenever this was done, his original word was still given in our *numerical* footnotes for the reader to see, along a brief explanation for the change. In this way, one can always reconstruct his wording as it was originally penned.

Also for the most part, we have maintained all his original punctuation marks, even though some punctuation marks are rarely used today, if at all. For example, many times he would use commas followed by a dash (,—), semi-colons followed by a dash (;— ), as well as colons followed by a dash (:—). These three punctuation marks combined with a dash apparently were quite common in England during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. More than likely they were used to slow the reader down just a bit more, or, perhaps to provide more emphasis to that which followed. So because of this, we decided to maintain these marks for the most part. Only in a few places did we change them to a simple dash, as it seemed to read a little more smoothly. Moreover, we did not alter any fragment sentences in the original and decided not to use [sic] in those places where it would apply, except in one case, which was footnoted.

One change we did make was in regard to commas used with parentheses. He would commonly use commas before parentheses and then also within the parentheses at the final word. As this is no longer the usual format, we have changed them all, placing one comma just outside the parentheses as is commonly done today.

One other thing we should mention, as it is not noted in footnotes, is that some of his paragraphs were quite long, which sometimes made it difficult to follow his line of thinking. So in those cases, wherever it was feasible, we divided those long paragraphs into two or three paragraphs, hopefully to make it easier for the reader. But nowhere did we ever change the order of his words, except, in a very few places, as we already mentioned above, which we then noted in a footnote with the original ordering of his words, so the reader would know exactly how it was written.

In many places he would follow the original King James Version's practice of using an upper case letter to begin a quote, without utilizing any quotation marks. We have maintained this practice throughout, except in a few places where it became very confusing. In those places we went ahead and included quotation marks for the reader's sake. It

should also be noted that in quoting verses from the King James Version he did not include their use of italics, or a smaller type or a different font to indicate words not in the original. So if the reader wishes to inquire whether a word is added for clarity sake, they must consult the King James Version of the Bible itself. Moreover, sometimes he, himself, would use italics in quoted verses, but not to indicate that the word was not found in the original Greek, but rather he would put a word into italics because he wished to make his own emphasis within that verse. He also would emphasize words with italics in his own writing, and sometimes he would write a word in uppercase letters for emphasis. Consequently, throughout his book, all italicized words, and all words in uppercase are his and not ours.

Finally, as he wrote this book as if it was a long letter, new chapters would begin in a middle of a page, as if they were sub-chapters. We did not follow this format, but gave all his chapters a new page from which to begin.

And so it is with heartfelt desire that we offer this little book by Anthony Norris Groves first written from India in 1834. Perhaps again, the Lord will use the spiritual discernment of this godly man to admonish us to hold fast to that which was delivered to us in the beginning—to hold fast to the traditions from God (I Cor. 11:2 NKJV), if you will, inscripturated for us in the Word of God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and not to the traditions of man, which always make the Word of God of none effect (Mark 7: 8,13), and also to always hold fast to the example of our Lord—to see things with eyes of faith—to realize that we are pilgrims on this earth, and that God in His wisdom left for us in Scriptures all that is necessary for life and godliness, both for our spiritual well-being and for our spiritual growth—unto “the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint

supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:12-16 KJV).

And so, again, it is with this heartfelt desire that we offer the republication of this book, *On the Liberty of Ministry in the Church of Christ*, as we did with his other book *On the Nature of Christian Influence*, also written in India.

B. P. Harris  
*Sacramento, California*

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ON THE  
LIBERTY OF MINISTRY  
IN  
**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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My Dear Friend,

As I am required by the Apostle to give an answer to every man that asks me a reason of the hope that is in me, with meekness and fear; so also I feel bound to give an answer to a Christian brother who asks me my reason for departing so widely from the rules and maxims laid down by a large portion of the Christian church. I proceed therefore to fulfil the promise I made to you at parting, of stating to you as distinctly as I can, by what authority I minister. Certainly no inquiry can be more worth our holy and dispassionate consideration, than that which is involved in the question, whence comes the authority to minister in the church of Christ? is it of God, or of man? and how those who are authorized to minister are to be known?

I have long felt that the time would come, when the following explanation of the grounds of my liberty would be necessary, as a duty I owed to those whom I loved and valued in the Lord; and I should perhaps have given the answer earlier, only that I dreaded even to seem to encourage the spirit of insubordination which I lament to see is so prevalent, and from which the saints of the Most High have by no means kept themselves free. I dare not join the bands of those who by political efforts would strip the church establishment of her wealth and temporal dignity; but I would rather assume to myself the task of comforting such as fear that Christ's church is herself in danger, if the enemy rob her of these things. I desire to show such persons, that as she approaches poverty, shame and contempt, she approaches that apostolic position, from which, in this dispensation of humiliation, she ought never to have departed; that when she is a contented sufferer with her



Lord, her false ministers will fly<sup>44</sup> [from] her, who care only to bask in the sunshine of her temporal glory; and that then her true episcopacy, instead of being lords over God's heritage, will delight to remember their Lord's precept, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and willingly working with their own hands, will learn to support the weak, and be ensamples to the flock.

Now after seven years anxious consideration of the question, I have been enabled to contemplate the subject in such a point of view, as to encourage me to bring it before you and the Christian church, not only, I trust, without endangering, but so as to ensure due subordination, by placing it on a basis from which nothing can shake it, viz. unlimited submission and allegiance to him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. On him let all eyes rest,—to him let all knees bow, for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. Sit at his feet, and pick up the very gleanings of his wisdom, for his word giveth light to the eyes, and maketh wised the simple. What he commands, do; whom he sends, obey what he forbids, fly [flee from]; where he leads, follow,—whether it be to poverty, shame, or death; knowing that if you suffer with him, you shall also reign with him. But let him be Alpha and Omega, the all and in all. Let the eyes dwell only on him, till by the Holy Spirit proceeding from glory to glory, you reflect the image of your Lord.

This then appears to me the immovable basis, on which true loyalty, true subordination and unlimited and child-like obedience can repose, whether it be for life or death; and though some of the principles advanced in this letter may perhaps appear at first startling, and rather tending to promote than quench that disobedient spirit which I so deeply regret has gone abroad; yet I trust, a deeper view and more mature deliberation will convince you that the principle herein developed are scriptural, practical and safe, because they simply lead you to be and do all that Christ was and did.

Feeling that the traditionary history of the church is only valuable to prove what *was* done, not what *ought* to be done; and above all, feeling neither from direct precept, nor from the way in which our blessed Lord

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<sup>44</sup> In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century "fly" carried the meaning of "flee from" so the phrase should be understood as, "flee from her."

treated the traditions of the Jewish church,<sup>45</sup> that it is his pleasure I should pay any regard to tradition, *I refer only to Scripture*<sup>46</sup> as at once the basis and superstructure of the Christian edifice [i.e. the Church]. For although any form of church government were proved to me to have been in use up to the day subsequent to the completion of the canon of Scripture,—nay, though practices could be proved to have been in existence in the churches of Jerusalem, Galatia, Corinth, or in any other, during the lifetime of the apostles,—yet if they agreed not with the doctrine of the Spirit and the general analogy of the faith, I should no more feel constrained to follow them, than to follow the disorders of the Corinthian church, the Judaizing tendencies of the Galatian or Jerusalem churches, or the weakness of Peter at Antioch.

On the subject of tradition let us for a moment dwell on our Lord's remarks in Mark 7:3-13: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the traditions of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not; and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, braze vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He

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<sup>45</sup> It should be noted, for sake of clarity, that I do not believe that A. N. Groves meant to confuse Israel and the Church by his use of the term "Jewish church" in this sentence. From his other writings, as well as what he will shortly write in this book, I believe he is using the word "church" in this sentence in the same way it is used by Stephen in Acts 7:38, wherein "church" (ἐκκλησία in the Greek) was simply being used in its generic sense to refer to any type of "gathering or assembly of people" (cf. also Acts 19:32, 39-40). In Stephen's case, he was using it of the "gathering," or "congregation" of the children of Israel in the wilderness. In that light, Stephen was not using it as a reference to the Church, which is the body of Christ, but rather he was simply using it of the nation of Israel as a congregation; and so, in that light, neither was Anthony Groves confusing the nation of Israel with the Church of the New Testament.

<sup>46</sup> Sometimes the syntax of 19<sup>th</sup> century English, at first is difficult to follow. What he is saying is that since tradition is not valuable for proving what *should be* done, but it is only valuable for knowing what *was* done, and also because it is only valuable for knowing how the Lord treated the traditions of the Pharisees, he knows that it is not the Lord's pleasure that he should pay an regard to the traditions of man, but that he should only pay regard to Scripture.

answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you, hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; *howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, it is corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother; making the work [sic]<sup>47</sup> of God of no effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”

Here you see the charge is, that they render God’s word nugatory by their traditions; and the Lord alludes to it as an evil and weak thing; a thing not to be followed, but resisted. Now, in connexion with this remark of our Lord, consider the Holy Ghost’s declaration in I Cor. 1:17-31: “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? for after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and

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<sup>47</sup> The phrase in Mark 7:13 in the King James Version is not “making the work of God of no effect” but rather, “making the **word** of God of no effect.” Therefore, it seems the most likely reason for the use of “work” rather than “word,” is that it was simply a printing mistake; this becomes all the more the most likely reason because in the next sentence he says, “they render God’s **word** nugatory.”

the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the *weak* things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and *base* things of the world, and things which are *despised*, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: *that no flesh should glory in his presence*. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” And [1 Cor.] 2:1-8, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing (or persuasible) <sup>48</sup> words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

God therefore, in calling to the ministry, calls not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but chooses the *foolish* things to confound the wise, *weak* things to confound the mighty, base things and things *that are not* to bring to nought the things that are, *in order that no flesh may glory in his presence*. But in most of the established churches of Europe, and it is to be feared in many not established, these decisions of God's Holy Spirit are despised. Nay, it is

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<sup>48</sup> Sometimes in quoted verses, our brother Groves will add his understanding of a Greek word by including it in parentheses; but since the King James translators would also use parentheses in their translations, to avoid confusion when a parenthesis is his, and is not that of the King James translators, we will include a footnote to let the reader known.

said, but we will have a genteel, literate, collegiate, gentlemanly, endowed order of men, and none other. Is this obedience and submission, or is it rebellion against the letter and spirit of the word of God?

Man, when he sets up a claim to obedience, thinks it very proud in those who will not obey:<sup>49</sup> is it nothing that he sets the example of rebellion by treating with contempt the commands of his heavenly Prince, and He so gracious, so loving and so humble? Are not men ashamed to ask so much obedience from their fellows, when they yield so little to Him who is the head of all principality and power? Not as though the apostle excluded wisdom, but *the wisdom of this world*. We are to be full of the hidden wisdom, which God has ordained for our glory.

The opposition of our mind to the mind of God consists in this: that we regard certain natural disadvantages as disqualifying for profitable ministry,<sup>50</sup> while God regards them as ordinarily facilitating his purpose, of edifying the church without leading it to glory in man. There may be a sort of casuistry<sup>51</sup> that will gloss this over as, I dare say, there were some among the Jews, who would have found a way of proving that their traditions did not invalidate God's word! But those children of the kingdom who have not taken a bribe of any kind to blind their eyes, will see how far these things agree at once; for others, we

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<sup>49</sup> It seems that A. N. Groves was accused of being proud for not submitting to those man-made traditions that were set up in the Church of Christ, by proud men who, in turn, would not submit to the commands that Christ and His apostles left for us in Scripture. And in that light, the question he poses, that runs throughout this entire book, is the same question asked by the apostles of Christ so long ago: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." (Acts 4:19b KJV)

<sup>50</sup> I think what he means is that a man thinks that a lack of natural talent will hinder ministry, whereas to God such a lack makes no difference at all.

<sup>51</sup> *Casuistry* is the subtle reasoning of the human mind that justifies a course of action that one knows to be contrary to the truth. It is a specious form of reasoning that not only rationalizes away the truth for one's self, but will also lead others to rationalize away the truth for themselves, by using clever and persuasive arguments.

must wait patiently, under the humbling recollections of our unnumbered acts of disobedience, to work their way our more slowly<sup>52</sup>.

The apostles says in I Cor. 4:6, “These things have I in a figure transferred to *myself* and Apollos for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not *to think of men above that which is WRITTEN*, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” This is a text of considerable importance, and on which I shall a little dwell. In remarking that our translation does not perfectly convey its force, it is not that I conceive the general sense to be thereby altered, nor its application to my present purpose affected. Paul had been laying down at large, in the first three chapters, the vanity of all human distinctions or accomplishments *to make a valuable minister*; [first] that he himself would not make use of the earthly wisdom or eloquence which he actually possessed; [second] that God throws contempt on all such advantages; [and third] that while *faithfulness* in ministers and stewards is to be expected, we must not look to the accomplishments of individuals, as though these had been productive of the success they had met in their ministry; but look to God, who had given the increase.

Now, says he, all these principles I apply to the case of Apollos and myself, that you may learn not to have higher thoughts and ambition after such accomplishments that I have been writing you above; and that you may not think any inherent dignity vested in us as individuals, nor be disposed to anticipate the Lord’s judgment of us, by undertaking to settle whether Paul or Apollos be greater.

I see then WRITTEN [in God’s Word], that no stress is to be laid on human wisdom, talent, eloquence, wealth, rank; and, if it is handed down by TRADITION that these things are important for a minister of Christ, which am I to believe [God’s Word or tradition]?

The apostle admonishes me, Col. 2:8, “Beware lest *any man spoil* you through philosophy or vain deceit, after the *traditions* of men, after

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<sup>52</sup> I believe what our brother is saying is that believers who have not accepted such *casuistry* will be able at once see the truth of the matter; but for those who do not, we must be patient and should never act self-righteously against those brethren, who by *casuistry* have been led astray from the truth, because we must not forget we have our own foibles in the things of God; therefore, we should humbly realize that our brethren may not be able see the truth all “at once,” but will need time to slowly work it out for themselves.

the rudiments (or *elements*)<sup>53</sup> of the world, and not after Christ.” I appeal to you again, solemnly, to consider, whether those things against which I have objected as the test of a man’s fitness for the ministry of Jesus, be elements of the world or after Christ: if you will still say, “After Christ,” I then ask, How is it that I see thronging the same path, those who are seeking this world’s glory,—the soldier, the statesman, the lawyer; men of every class and every calling?”

Again the apostle says, Col. 2:2-23, “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using) after the *commandments and doctrines of men*? Which things have indeed a *show of wisdom* in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”

Here I apprehend that the apostle, as our Lord, in reprobating the commandments and doctrines of men, warns me, not against any special class of traditions, but against tradition, as such. This, then my dear friend, is my earnest prayer, and this my solemn purpose; the Lord helping me:

1st. Not to think of the natural qualifications of men, as the apostle says, above what is *written*.

2dly. To disregard all ordinances built upon man’s *commands and doctrines*.

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<sup>53</sup> Please note again that whenever one sees parentheses in a verse of Scripture, if the parentheses are made by A. N. Groves for purposes of explanation or to further elucidate the meaning of the underlying Greek word, which in this case is the underlying Greek word rendered “rudiments,” we will include a footnote to let the reader know. But we should note that this time he did not use parentheses, but simply included the phrase “or *elements*” as is, without letting the reader know that was not part of the verse. So in this case, we added the parentheses for clarification. (Maybe it was a printing error.) Also it should be mentioned once again that when he quotes Scripture he never uses those italics, smaller type, or different fonts that were used by the King James translators to indicate words that were not in the original text. So whenever one sees italics used in a Bible verse, one should realize it is our brother Groves’ italics being used for emphasis, and not to indicate words not present in the original text. As far as I have been able to determine he is consistent throughout in this practice.

3rdly. To hold fast the *Head* in holy, humble, prostrate adoration, without a desire to do my own will or think my own thoughts.

And do not think this [is] self-willed and proud; but rather consider that as the word of God says, submission to these assumptions of man in the things of God, would have but a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility.

Remember what the Lord says in Isaiah 29:13-14, “Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, *and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men*: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.”

After this then, let us determine to come to the law and the testimony: and if they speak not according to this word let us feel assured it is because there is not light in them.



## ON THE APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS

Understand then that I shall not meddle with that which mere tradition has declared about the apostles; I shall confine myself to that record of them which God has been pleased to indite [i.e. write down] by his Spirit for our use. I say then that *herein* you will never find the apostles pretending to any peculiar power of appointing to the ministry in Christ's church at large, nor to any power at all of excluding: you will find that they never assumed nor exercise this power themselves; nor every transmitted it to any: that the only method for distinguishing a true from a false teacher, recommended in Scripture or used by the apostles, is, *by inspecting his life and doctrine*: and that the idea of apostolic appointment or any other, is never alluded to even as *conjointly* required. Thus it stands, as far as what is *written*, to this day. The minister of Christ presents himself before the church, as moved by the Holy Spirit to take on himself any ministry in her [meaning, in the church], *on his own responsibility*; and the church, after trying him by the rules laid down in God's word, and by those *alone*, receives him or rejects him on *hers*.

It is important that I should not be misunderstood here as to the apostles not appointing to a general ministry in Christ's church. I do not mean to imply, but that in new churches which Paul had gathered from among the heathen, Paul did himself, or Titus in his stead, appoint men to *particular* ministries; nay, but hence I judge, that should the Lord allow any one the honour of becoming a spiritual father to a church from among the heathen, he would be at liberty to do the same *during their infancy*:<sup>54</sup> but the thought that he had any exclusive right

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<sup>54</sup> In this portion it seems our brother is trying to make known that he is not denying that the apostles might not appoint men to ministry. What he is denying is that such appointments were the only means to ministry. He is not denying they appointed; he is denying that they had the "sole" power and authority to appoint, or to limit one's ministry in the Church. In other words, nowhere does Scripture intimate that an apostolic appointment is an exclusive rite that continues for all time, for the Church itself has the right to recognize any bishop/elder/pastor the Holy Spirit might make in the future (1Tim. 3:1-7).

or power of *limiting others* never would enter my mind, not did it, as I believe, the minds of the apostles.

These then are the three distinct propositions that I deny can be shown either from the writings or from the actions of the apostles:

1st. THAT THEY EVER ASSUMED ANY ESPECIAL RIGHT OF APPOINTING.

2dly. THAT THEY EVER ASSUMED ANY RIGHT OF EXCLUDING AT ALL, OR LIMITING OTHERS IN APPOINTING.

3rdly. THAT THEY EVER PREVENTED ANY FROM GOING ON THEIR OWN ACCORD, WITHOUT ANY APPOINTMENT AT ALL BUT OF GOD; EXCEPT ON THE GROUND OF FALSE DOCTRINE OR SCANDALOUS LIVING.

And even though it could be proved, as I conceive it cannot, that the apostles ever set up such a claim, either in whole or in part, as that their approval or appointment was necessary to minister, still, unless the Holy Spirit gave them instructions to delegate this power to others, it would prove nothing for the pretensions of their supposed successors. For granting that men who were *inspired*, and by the laying on of whose hands *miraculous powers* were imparted, possessed an exclusive right of delegating the power of preaching, and this, at a time when *the Scriptures of the New Testament* were incomplete, this gives not one feather's weight towards a similar claim on the part of men who are not thus inspired, the laying on of whose hands no manifest power follows, and at a time when the canon of the New Testament is *complete*: a time, when we must not go to the rulers of the church, but to the written record of the Spirit, for pure truth, so that without the intervention of such rulers, the preacher may be taught how to preach, and the babe in Christ how to judge.

But if I see no such claim set up, when there was the greatest necessity, by those apostles and prophets on whom the church was built; the pretensions of other men are to me at once sad and wonderful. O that there were more of Moses' spirit among us! For when they would grieve his heart by telling him there were some entrenching on his prophetic dignity, this good man's reply simply was, *I would to God all*

*the Lord's people were prophets.*[Num. 11:24-30] <sup>55</sup> How easily then would all these questions be settled!

To exercise the power of appointing to minister in congregations where you have been acknowledged by the Holy Ghost as a spiritual father in leading them from the bondage of Satan in to the liberty of God's dear children, is a totally different thing from assuming to be the exclusive fountains of appointment to all lawful ministry in the church of Christ.

For instance, if it now became a question on what footing Dr. Bell's schools<sup>56</sup> were left at his death, and by referring to his papers it could be proved that after having made an extensive tour for the purpose of extending his school-system, he appointed schoolmasters over every school; if letters were found, where on another occasion he gave directions to two of his friends to place schoolmasters over some other schools he had collected, giving them a description what kind of men they should select; would anyone ever suppose that he meant to set up the pretension that his appointment was necessary for any man to become a schoolmaster at all, irrespective of similarity of circumstances?— and that no one else who had raised a school might appoint schoolmasters or become schoolmaster without his sanction?— and that he arrogated this power, not to himself only, but to his heirs forever; when not one word appeared to show the necessity of his own appointment during his life, or his intention to delegate the power after his death? It would not even prove that every one of them were not

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<sup>55</sup> In other words, he is saying if the so-called clergy of his day had but a little of the meekness of Moses, they would not take umbrage to find fellow believers serving Christ without their authorization, or without the "laying on of their hands." He is saying they should be glad like Moses to find fellow believers, sound in doctrine and sound in morals, serving Christ apart from their own involvement (Num. 11:29).

<sup>56</sup> This is a reference to Andrew Bell (1753-1832), a Scottish minister in the Church of England who, in 1787, left England for India, taking up residence in Madras. While there, he developed an educational school system for children called the Madras System of Education. He left India to return to England in 1796, and by the time of his death it is said that thousands of schools followed his system of education not only in England, but in many other areas of the world connected with England.

schoolmasters before, and that therefore his appointment was not in *consequence* of their being schoolmasters, rather than to make them so. It is one thing my assuming a right to *appoint my own* servants, and another to assume the right of making a *class of men called servants* for myself and for *everybody else*, so that no one could be a servant without my sanction.<sup>57</sup>

And supposing you heard it *reported* of him that he possessed this power of exclusion as well as the sole power of admission, and you yet found that his schools were continually troubled by persons teaching on other principles than those he laid down; and that in all his correspondence on the subject of receiving or rejecting schoolmasters (especially those disturbers of his plans), while he continually refers to their qualifications and character, he never refers to his authority, as the ground of their admission or exclusion: would you not say that the pretension was never set up, and the report must be unfounded?<sup>58</sup> At all

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<sup>57</sup> Here, just as the Lord would use examples of servants in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, he is using an example of servants in the 1800's to demonstrate the untenable nature of the clergy's belief that only one duly ordained from one in an apostolic succession has the authority to appoint others to the clergy, and that without that sanction, no one could ever serve as a minister of Christ in any church. He shows that such a belief would never be tolerated in England, if an order of servants, set up by our brother, controlled the appointments of any subsequent servant in England. He makes this analogy to try to show untenable nature of such a practice in the spiritual life of the Church, as it would in natural life of England. It is not that the natural determines the spiritual, but that sometimes the natural helps explain the spiritual, as Paul did with hair (1Cor. 11:14-15)

<sup>58</sup> It seems the comparison our brother is making is this. 1) After the death of Dr. Bell, a report is made that Dr. Bell held the sole power of exclusion and admission of schoolmasters, which meant that one was not a schoolmaster, if that one was not appointed and sanctioned by Dr. Bell; this made it easy to tell who was a true schoolmaster and who was not. However, history reveals there was one, who pretended to be in inventor of his system of education, which I presume would explain our brother's designation of "disturber." Yet, when one read all of Dr. Bell's letters and correspondences dealing with that subject and the subject of receiving or rejecting a schoolmaster into one of his schools, one finds that "while he continually refers" to the "qualifications and character," for a schoolmaster, "he never refers to his authority, as the ground of their admission or exclusion." In other words, he never tells the schools to ask a

events, since his letters showed that if he had such power, he still

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potential schoolmaster by whom they were made or authorized to be schoolmasters, nor did he ever say, “They are not a real schoolmaster, for I never appointed them.” Rather Dr. Bell says they were to be judged not by any so-called authority of succession, but rather by their qualifications and conduct. On that basis were they to be excluded, or admitted, not on any pedagogic succession, or clerical type appointment. Thus, in this comparison, Dr. Bell would represent the apostle. Paul. The “disturbers” would be those of the circumcision, the false teachers that trouble the churches in Galatia, Corinth, and Ephesus (Acts 15:1; Gal. 1:7; 2:4; 3:1; 5:7-12; Phil. 3:2; I Tim. 1:3-7). Dr. Bell’s letters and correspondences would represent such letters of Paul as his Epistle to the Galatians, or to the Corinthians. And in those Epistles of Paul would be the evidence that there was no such theory of apostolic succession, or a clergy/laity system where the clergy controlled all appointments, wherein appointments were judged by one’s ability to prove they were in a line of apostolic of succession or not. This would compare to the fact that in Dr. Bell’s letters and correspondences, there was no evidence to suggest he was exercising over all schools his sole power to appoint or exclude a schoolmaster as a means to test the validity of one who was acting as a schoolmaster. Rather his letters reveal that he speaks of qualifications and character as being a means whereby to test a schoolmaster, which when applied to those false teachers that Paul was dealing with, would be their false doctrine and carnal characters as a means of testing. Finally, our brother Groves’ comparison culminated in the fact, that since Dr. Bell never exercised such an absolute power to admit or exclude, as was “reported” by some, and because there was no evidence of such a thing ever found in his writings, it led some to realize that “the report must be unfounded,” and that he never exercised such power, otherwise out of the concern for the children in his schools, he would have exercised it immediately to protect the children from false schoolmasters. In the same way, if Paul the apostle ever had the power to admit or exclude based upon apostolic succession, out of the concern for the children of the Lord, he would have exercised it immediately to protect the children from false teachers. How?—by simply showing that they were not legitimately ordained ministers of Christ through one of the apostles. So the fact that he did not use such a power, demonstrated, like with Dr. Bell, that he (nor any other apostle) ever possessed such sole authority from Christ to appoint, or to exclude one from the ministry, but he did have the authority from Christ to teach that every Christian was responsible to test & examine the fruit of one who might claim to be a minister of Christ, because Jesus taught that a corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit.

steadily declined to employ it, in circumstances where, if it existed, it seemed to be urgently called for; you would confidently infer that he could never mean to transmit that which he would not himself exercise.

If this would be a natural inference in considering the conduct of *a man*, where weakness and oversight might have had much to do; how infinitely powerful does the conclusion become, when the omission, if it be such, is that of One, whose arm established the universe, and whose eye at a glance scans the extremes of eternity; who cannot be deceived, nor overlook the minutest tendency of the most complicated events: of One, who in his holy, humble life put to everlasting shame priestly supremacy by his example, and in the perceptive record of his will by the doctrine he has transmitted to us.

O let us rally again round our King, and his principles of loyalty;—our great Melchisedec;—the *only Priest*, the *only King* of his family; in both offices alike, without predecessor and without successor. Let us humbly, reverently drink in all his words, follow all his ways, and be engaged in all his works. If there are difficulties in his words, do as Mary did, treasure them up in your hearts; but wherever you see the print of his holy footsteps, there tread fearlessly and act boldly.

Christ, I say, exercised not jealous exclusion, such as men have since claimed for themselves. He appointed indeed twelve, and he appointed seventy; but when one went casting out devils in his name, but followed not with the apostles, and when the zealous John wished to forbid him because not ordained to this work, the Lord rebuked him: “Forbid him not,” says he, “for he that is not against us is on our side.”

Here there is not jealousy; no command to come and receive official sanction. It is enough for Christ that man is on his side; shall it not be enough for us? “Yea,” says the apostle of the Gentiles, “if Christ be but preached, though of envy and strife, I therein do rejoice, and will rejoice.”

Should you ask whether the apostles assumed an exclusive right of appointing teachers, so as that none could become teachers lawfully and fitly, except by authority flowing from Christ *through the channel of the apostles*,—my answer, fearless of contradiction, is, NEVER. No; not even when great trouble had arisen from false teachers, never did Paul object to their want [i.e. lack] of official right to teach. Never did he warn his converts to inquire by whom these teachers had been ordained,

and whether they had proper testimonials of their lawful ordination. Never did he allude to appointment by himself, or by any one of the apostles, or by anybody else, as an *element* in the question—much less as *the whole* question, as it is with those who say a man is to be received for his office, though to be detested and abhorred for his character.

How different this from the apostle's rule, to be applied to *himself and to all the brethren who were with them!* Gal. 1:8, 9. "Though we," says he, "or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you," (does he say, Let us be received still for our apostolic office' sake? nay, but) "let him be accursed: as we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach unto you any other gospel than that you have received, let him be *accursed*." I Cor. 10:15, "I speak," he says, "as to wise men: *judge ye what I say*." Again, 2 Cor. 7:2, "*Receive us*; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man."

They were to judge with whose authority he came, by what he said and what he did. So in ch. 11:23, in contrasting his apostleship with that of false apostles: "Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Had Paul been unable *thus* to vindicate his apostolic mission by his apostolic labours, he would have been put to shame in his own church, and could never have stood up for his authority, undoubtedly divine as his mission was. But such being his character and work, he claimed to be received and honoured and *esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake*; according to his own instructions to the Thessalonians. (1 Thess. 5:13.)

Again, when James, Peter and John met Paul at Jerusalem, (Gal. 2.) and were desirous of investigating his claims to be regarded as an

apostle, they did not inquire into his miracles, his visions, his trances. To them it was immaterial how he got his knowledge or his grace; they sought only to know what grace and what gifts for the ministry he had.

First we learn *Paul communicated to them the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles*; then, *they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to him*; and finally, *perceiving the grace given to him, they gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship*.

And this very same apostle, when called by the Spirit to a particular service, submitted most humbly to receive a brotherly and holy dismissal to this work from those who were in *spiritual dignity below him* [Acts 13:1-3]. Yes, my brother, when the question was about authority to minister, he denied any regard or respect to Peter or all the apostles, and opens his epistle to the Galatians with these emphatic words, “An apostle *not of man* nor *by men*, but by Jesus Christ and God.” Yet when it was a brotherly commendation to his Lord’s gracious keeping, he submits to those who were no apostles at all.

If now an apostle of Christ, taught through no human channels, gifted with miracles and tongues and prophecy; after he had by apostles been acknowledged an apostle; after he had been set aside at the voice of the Spirit and by the hands of the church to preach to the Gentiles;—if such a one bids these very Gentiles, his own converts, [to] reject him, and count him accursed, should he preach to them a false gospel;—are we not much more bound to try and reject those who have no such pre-eminent and miraculous claims?

And if this same Paul *never* frees his converts from the responsibility of judging *the fruits* of their teachers, as he might do by taking the responsibility on his own single shoulders, what am I to think of the assurance of those who in modern days would so ease [i.e. relieve of all responsibility] the disciples?<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> I think “ease the disciples” means that ministers were teaching that they, not the disciples, were the ones responsible for determining truth. But he is saying that if Paul never claimed such a preeminence in the things of God, so that his converts were freed from all responsibility to *test* the spirits, and in his case, to even *try* him, and even to count him *accursed* (if he preached another Gospel—Gal. 1:8-9), what should one’s attitude be to a clergy, which does demand such absolute preeminence. His point is that that such a claim is contrary to Scripture and the will of God, for even Paul never claimed such absoluteness.



Do not let it be thought [it is] pride in us to reject man's jurisdiction in the things of God, unless he can show a divine warrant [i.e. divine authorization] for the assumption of a divine power. If he shows it, I promise, the Lord enabling me, not to be rebellious, but submit, thankful indeed to be freed in the matter from care and responsibility. For as I gladly, at the Lord's bidding, submit to the rulers of this world, without reference to their moral characters as individuals [in accordance with Rom. 13:1-5 and 1 Pet. 2:13-15]; so am I willing to submit in spiritual matters to spiritual rulers, if they show me a like warrant [from Scripture].<sup>60</sup> But if he [i.e. the Lord] commands me to *try* and *examine* all who say they come from him, claiming my obedience in spiritual matters; the same submission to his will which compels me in the one case to suffer [i.e. in the case of earthly rulers], in the other [i.e. in the case of spiritual rulers], compels me to *act* [i.e. to *try* them and their claim to a divine warrant—in accordance with I John 1:4].

In allegiance to my Lord, I desire unhesitatingly to acknowledge His appointments, whether I discern them under the garb of a poor itinerant preacher, or the mistaken minister of a popish hierarchy;<sup>61</sup> and I cannot see that there is manifested a greater humility of mind in submitting to men who assume the state and power of princes, than when those who are in external circumstance inferior to ourselves, receive our recognition, merely because we feel they bear the credentials of our heavenly king. To submit to be taught by a poor carpenter or sail-

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<sup>60</sup> His point in this, though, is that unlike with earthly rulers, there is no such divine warrant or command in Scripture in regard to spiritual rulers as there is in regard to earthly rulers, so he is not freed from care and responsibility in the things of God in regard to them; but if there was such a divine warrant in Scriptures, he is saying he would submit, for it is not pride that keeps him from submitting, but rather the primacy of God's Word over the traditions of man, in the life of every believer, by which the believer discerns God's will.

<sup>61</sup> The syntax of this paragraph is difficult to understand, but I believe what he was saying is that he acknowledges there are godly ministers in the Church of England, some whom he even admired. And, even though those same ministers operated in a clergy/laity system inherited from Rome, for which reason he calls it a "popish hierarchy," he still would recognize those men as ministers if he discerned the appointment by the Lord Jesus Christ of them to be ministers in His flock, despite the unbiblical nature of the system in which they served (e.g. J. N. Darby was still a priest in the Church of England a few years earlier).

maker,<sup>62</sup> or by a fisherman so vulgar in his habits, that like the poor Indians he would go to his work naked, believe me, would be harder to our proud hearts, than to attend to a well-educated and polished modern preacher.<sup>63</sup> If I see the Lord's commission, I will acknowledge it, reverence it, and bend my ear to their instruction or reproof; but I will only take the leaf of the book that has received the stamp of the royal signet, and not all that may be bound up with it.<sup>64</sup> I would desire to

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<sup>62</sup> It seems this referred to Paul, as in the 19th century some believed the Greek word translated as *tentmakers* in the KJV (Acts 18:3), also included within the meaning of the word the art of sail-making. And so, it seems a poor carpenter would refer to the Lord Jesus, and a naked fisherman to Peter (Jn. 21:7).

<sup>63</sup> One must remember that some in the Church of England thought that our brother was being proud in rejecting their claim to have absolute authority to ordain or to not ordain a Christian to ministry. At the time of the writing of this book, he was happily recognizing the appointments of Indian Christians to the ministry by the missionary Karl Rhenius in South India, which the Church of England refused to acknowledge, because they did not duly appoint them! So it seems as if he is asking, "Who is really being proud?" In essence, it seems he is saying something like this—if I am reading him aright: "You accuse me of being proud. But to submit to be taught by a poor carpenter or sail-maker, or by a fisherman so vulgar in his habits, would be harder to our proud hearts [as you falsely view my heart] than to attend to a well-educated and polished modern preacher. And yet it is I, and not you, who will gladly submit to a poor carpenter, or sail-maker, or a fisherman "if they have the Lord's commission." It is I who will "bend my ear to their instruction or reproof." But you will not! So who is really being proud in this matter?"

<sup>64</sup> It seems our brother may be indirectly referring to the practice of the Roman Catholic Church, wherein a book receives a clerical *nihil obstat* (Lat. for "nothing stands in the way," meaning nothing contained within is opposed to truth, faith, or morals), along with an *imprimatur* (Lat. for "stamp," meaning it has the clergy's stamp of approval), which informs the so-called laity that all that is in this book is sound and has received the approval of the clergy. This stamp of approval tells the so-called laity, that they have no need to *try* and *examine* the things written in the book—it says that we give you "assurance" that all that is said in this book is correct, and so we "ease," that is, "we relieve you," of all responsibility to *try* and *examine* anything written within. But our brother Groves is saying that is not a Scriptural admonition. He is saying Scripture commands every disciple of Christ to "prove all things and hold to that which is good"—to be like those Bereans of old who would "search the

prove all things, and hold fast only that which is good; to follow all, as far as they follow Christ.

I may here conclude with this remark, as to the appointment of ministers. Whatever questions there might be [as to] *who* should appoint bishops or elders—there can be none from Scripture whom *they* [i.e. the clergy] are to appoint, since [i.e. because] there is no instance of their [i.e. the clergy] exercising, nor intimation of their possessing, the power of appointing<sup>65</sup> so much as the lowest officer of the church.

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Scriptures daily,” to see whether these things were so” (I Thess. 5: 21; Acts 17:11) . Therefore, if a book ever had a *nihil obstat* of man upon it, he would never blindly accept the book; but if he found but one page in it, which had, instead, an *imprimatur* of “Scripture,” if you will, rather than the *imprimatur* of a clerical order that assures everyone all is fine, he would then receive that one page that agrees with Scripture, but not any of the other pages that do not!

<sup>65</sup> I believe he is using “appointing” *only* in that sense of their possessing an exclusive power to *appoint* a minister by the laying on of their hands (as taught by the Church of England). Our brother Groves is saying men do not possess such *power* or *authority* to *make* ministers. **Men can only appoint those whom the Holy Spirit has already appointed** to be a bishop/elder/ pastor. Paul revealed this truth when he called the **elders** of the church in Ephesus together, and said to them (Acts 20:17,28)—“Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit hath **made** you **bishops**, to **pastor** the church of God...” (Acts 20:28). So it seems he is saying that all men can do is to *recognize* or make known to the Church those whom the Holy Spirit has already *appointed*. In other words, all they can do is to *discern* who has already been *made* bishops by the Holy Spirit, and then appoint them, making them known to the Church as such, then, encouraging the Church to *prove* and *recognize* them in accordance with I Tim. 3:1-10 & I Thess. 5:12-13. So those who call themselves clergymen cannot appoint other so-called clergymen, in the sense that they can *make* a clergyman by a supposed *authority* inherent within themselves, in total disregard of the appointments already made by the Holy Spirit. Even in the case of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14:23, theirs was an appointment or choosing made by discerning the ones whom the Holy Spirit had already made and so had appointed to be bishops, so there was no thought of a bestowal of power that *made* one a bishop, rather a bestowal of recognition that *acknowledges* one having already been so appointed and made by the Holy Spirit. So what I think our brother is saying is that a clergyman cannot *appoint* “so much as the lowest officer of the church,” if it has this thought of *making*; he can only appoint, if it has the thought of *recognizing* or *acknowledging*.

## ORDINATION

But some may be disposed, and naturally, to inquire, “What, then, is the meaning of the term *ordination*, so frequently recurring in our Bible?” I can more easily say what it does not mean.

1st. It does not mean anything about laying on of hands.

2ndly. It does not mean that a man then *first* began to preach, or to pray, or to administer the bread and wine at the Lord’s table, or to baptize.

3rdly. It does not mean that a man was brought into a situation which he was *always* to retain [meaning with no regard to his character].

In fact, I think you will see by the evidence which I shall immediately adduce, that this pompous term has just as much real meaning, as though you were determined to use the same term *ordained*, where other persons use *placed*, or *put*, or *made*; for example, in Mark 3:14, “And he *ordained* [ἐποίησεν] twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.” The Greek is simply ἐποίησε, *made*, as in Matt. 21:13, “...Ye have made (ἐποιήσατε) it a den of thieves.”<sup>66</sup>

Again, in John 15:16, it is written, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and *ordained* you;” the original is simply, ἔθηκα, *placed* you. Again, Acts 1:22, it is written, “...Must one (*be ordained*

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<sup>66</sup> For those who may wonder how certain Greek verbs are said to be the same, even though they are spelled differently, the answer is because Greek is a highly inflected language. Therefore, a same verb may appear in different forms depending on its voice, mood, tense, person and number. The same thing occurs in English, e.g. the verb “*to be*” appears as I *am*, you *are*, or he *is*. The verb “*to go*,” depending on its tense and number, appears as I *go*, I *went*, or as I have *gone*, or, the regular verb “walk,” with its inflected endings of –s, –ed, and –ing, appears as I *walk*, he/she/it *walks*, he/she/it *walked*, or I am *walking*. Thus, in the same way, the augmented Greek verbs ἐποίησε and ἐποιήσατε are simply two different forms of the same Greek verb ποιέω, inflected according to its voice, mood, tense, person and number. (Also, ἐποίησε (ἐποίησεν) are the same; the [v] is added under certain situations, in part, for the same reason in English we add our letter [n] to our indefinite article “a” before vowels.)

to) be a witness with us of his resurrection.”<sup>67</sup> The Greek has simply γένεσθαι, *become*, or *be*, with us, a witness. Here we see the word *ordained* is actually inserted into the passage, without the least shadow of pretence from the original, and is not even printed in italics.

When again the apostle Paul writes to Titus [in Titus 1:5], he says, according to our translation, “...Ordain elders in every city.” Here again the Greek has simply καταστήσης, *place over*, as in Luke 12:14, “...Man, who made κατέστησε me a judge or a divider over you?” Again, in Acts 14:23: “And when they had *ordained* them elders in every church;” here it should be *chosen* as it is translated [in] 2 Cor. 8:18-19, “And not that only, but who was also *chosen*, χειροτονηθείς, of the churches to travel with us.” See also Acts 10:41; “...Witnesses *chosen* (προκεχειροτονημένοις) before of God.”

Now it is worthy of remark, that while they have translated [into English] five different Greek words by one word *ordained*, a word to which have been attached the ideas of laying on of hands, separating from secular callings, commencement of lawful preaching, baptizing, and administering the Lord’s supper; yet, in not one of those five Greek words, is any one of all these ideas really contained;<sup>68</sup> neither is any

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<sup>67</sup> Our brother, using parentheses, originally wrote “Must one (*be ordained to*) be a witness with us of his resurrection.” But we added ellipsis marks to clarify he is only quoting the last part Acts 1:22. Also please note we also used ellipsis marks (...) with his previous quote taken from Matt. 21:13, as well as in some of the verses following, all for the same reasons. Additionally, please note that in this verse he was not using parentheses to clarify the meaning of a Greek word, but rather to emphasize the fact that in the KJV the Greek verb is completely mistranslated, it having no thought of “be ordained.”

<sup>68</sup> An example of this is our inflected verb ἐποίησεν in Mk. 3:14. This form occurs about 75 times in the New Testament, and yet Mk. 3:14 is the only place where it is rendered by the English word *ordain*, commonly understood at that time as—to *put one into holy orders*. It seems our brother is asking, “What other reason could there be for translating ἐποίησεν, which has no such ecclesiastical connotation, by a word, having exactly such an ecclesiastical connotation, except for a wish to justify a clergy system that is never found in the New Testament!” The same thing occurs with the Greek verb τίθημι that was used nearly 100 times, yet only in Jn. 15:16 and I Tim. 2:7 was it ever rendered “ordained.” In all the other places that Greek verb was translated by such words as *put*, *make* or *appoint*, none of which carried an idea of *ordain*.

one of them rendered by these very same translators by that term anywhere else, though many of them occur, such as ποιέω, to make, γίνομαι, to become, and τίθημι, to place, in passages too numerous to be capable of reference here.

All this effort to fix one definite and complex idea on such a variety of the most general and simple terms in the language, shows how much we must be on our guard on subjects of such inveterate prejudice,<sup>69</sup> in admitting the accuracy of the most able translators.

I think not one can fail to feel, that if, in writing a letter relative to the appointment of schoolmasters, in some places I were to say I had *appointed*, in another, *placed*, in another, *put*, in another, I had *made* such an one a schoolmaster, in another, I had *placed him over*, in another, I had *committed* the school *to his charge*;—if any man translating this, were to use a word equivalent to our word *INSTALL* in every case, it would convey an idea of pomp and circumstance and peculiar mode of appointment, which the original [word *appoint*, or the words *placed*, or *put*, or *made*, or the word *committed*] did not [convey],

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<sup>69</sup> Because of syntactical structures in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps, if we slightly alter the sentence structure of this paragraph it might more easily be understood. If we take the prepositional phrase at the end of the sentence, insert it instead after the word “guard,” it might help us better understand what is said. It would then read: “All this effort to fix one definite and complex idea on such a variety of the most general and simple terms in the language, shows how much we must be on our guard *in admitting the accuracy of the most able translators*, on subjects of such inveterate prejudice.” It seems what he is saying is that the idea that one must be *ordained* into a clerical order as a prerequisite for ministry had become so entrenched in the mind of Christians that it became an inveterate (*inveterate*, which dictionaries define as, “a habit or practice that has been established for such a long period of time that it is very unlikely to ever change”) prejudice, so much so, that one must be on guard in accepting the translations of certain verses made by such translators having such a prejudice (who otherwise are very able translators) because that prejudice has caused them to see the idea of ecclesiastical ordination in Greek verbs which never carried such an idea or connotation. In other words, he is saying that translators who are most often very objective in their translations, have, unfortunately, in these few verses, let entrenched ideas regarding an *ordained* clergy enter into their thought processes to such a degree that it has produced an interpretive translation, which cannot be supported by the context.

and never was intended to convey.<sup>70</sup> This is precisely the way in which the translation of the above various and general terms has been executed

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<sup>70</sup> This is such an important point our brother is making that we used additional words in brackets to fully convey the thought we believe he was trying to express, at least as we understood him. Without the bracketed words, I was at first, a little confused as to what he was actually saying, but after further reflection I am quite sure the added words in brackets help convey his thought for a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader. I should first note that the word “**INSTAL**” is the British spelling for *install*; in the 1800’s it conveyed the idea of “inducting” into a rank or office with “customary ceremonies,” as defined by Webster in 1857, with *The Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, edited by Isaac Funk (1894), adding the thought of a “formal ceremony.” Next, in regard to our brother’s thought that “if any man translating this, were to use a word equivalent to our word **INSTAL**, in every case, it would convey an idea of pomp and circumstance and peculiar mode of appointment, which the original did not and never was intended convey,” we find Funk’s Standard Dictionary listing the following equivalent words for **instal** (install): *inaugurate, induct, initiate, and ordain*, which words, as our brother says, would not convey the original meaning of such words as *appoint, made, or put* either. Notice the synonyms for *install* also contained the word *ordain* as conveying the same thought of installing one by a formal ceremony. Moreover, those two dictionaries also used such words as “instate” and “invest” to define *install*, also conveying a formality not contained in the original words *place, appoint, made* etc., along with an idea of being clothed with a special garment reserved for one being inducted into a special order, which, in our brother Groves thoughts, would refer to the special garments reserved for the clergy, as opposed to the laity, once they are ordained. All this, of course, was foreign to a New Testament pastor/elder/bishop, as it was foreign to the garment dress of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, Jesus of Nazareth, who wore the simple garments of a poor Galilean. His Royal robes and High Priestly garments, or vestments, if you will, were given to Him by God the Father in His resurrection and exaltation, not in His incarnation. In that light, we should ask ourselves, “If Jesus had to wait until His work was done, before the Father bestowed upon Him in His resurrection and exaltation those outward symbols of His office and glory, who are we to ever presume to now wear an outward symbol of our inward glory in Christ, before we ever complete our work on earth, before we are resurrected and glorified?” That day will come when we will be clothed by God with garments of white and crowns of gold (cf. Rev. 3:5; 4:4; II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4), but until that day comes, we should walk as Jesus walked, as a pilgrim upon this earth, bearing our cross daily, having the mind of Christ, in

in the English translation: and there are but too many indications that prejudice, and not honest simplicity, dictated all this.

In Acts 20:28, a simple-minded person would have stated, that the *Holy Ghost ordained them bishops*. If such rendering of ἔθετο and ἐπισκόπους was elsewhere natural, equally so was it here. But here it would have offended a yet stronger prejudice, by showing that the elders named in ver. 17, whom Paul was exhorting, were all of them bishops. Here then they translate ἔθετο, *made*, and ἐπισκόπους, *overseers*; a humble and expressive term, instead of the more pompous one of bishops. So, in 1 Pet. 5:2 ἐπισκοποῦντες is rendered by them, *taking the oversight*; lest, again, the elders be thought bishops: while, in Acts 1:20, they give Judas a *bishopric*. I do not complain that “made overseers,” and “taking the oversight,” have been used, but only that these simple and adequate renderings have been elsewhere displaced by others, and have been thus allowed to throw dust into our eyes.\*

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\*This desire, again, is shown in the apocryphal appendages to Timothy and Titus, “ordained first bishop of Crete and of Ephesus;” though Whitby confesses that, for three centuries, he cannot find the slightest trace of any such pretension for them.

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humility and obedience, with an inward beauty, awaiting that day when God in Christ will also exalt us in the first resurrection (Phil. 2:5-8; 3:21)! So, is it not presumptuous for some to wear such vestments now, when the LORD Himself, having emptied Himself, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, had to wait until after His resurrection and glorification to receive His outward robes of a King, and the sacred vestments of a High Priest? Finally, in regards to our Lord’s garments that He wore while on earth, let me mention something that William Kelly once related. Regarding what Jesus wore in the days of His flesh, he provided a quote by Samuel Schor, who was a Hebrew Christian born in Jerusalem in 1859. In his book, *Palestine and the Bible, Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People in the Bible Lands*, he wrote the following regarding the coat of Jesus mentioned in John 19:28: “A coat without a seam is a mantle of the same material, shape and colour, but consists of one piece only. They are still worn by the peasant [i.e. the poor] classes in the North. Remember that Christ came from the North [i.e. Galilee] John xix. 28.”—Samuel Schor, *Palestine and the Bible, Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People in the Bible Lands*, (James Nisbet & Co., London, 1900) pg. 48.



## LAYING ON OF HANDS

Next, with regard to laying on of hands, what did it mean? And what was it a sign of?

—1st. Of benediction; as, when Jacob dying blessed the sons of Joseph, he laid his hands on them (Gen. 48). Also when our Lord blessed the little children Matt. 19:15, “he laid his hands on them.”

—2ndly. When confession was made by the priests over the victims, their hands were laid on them. Lev. 3:2—“And he shall lay his hands upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron’s sons the priests, shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.” Lev. 8:14—“And he brought the bullock for the sin offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin offering.”

—3rdly. Hands were laid by our Lord on sick people; as in Luke 4:40, “Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.” Mark 6:5, “And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.” And Paul laid hands on Publius’ father, Acts 28:8; “And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of fever, and of a bloody flux; to whom Paul entered in and prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him.”

—4thly. When entering on an important work. As when Joshua was taking the generalship of Israel. Deut. 34:9—“And Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom: for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.” When the seven took charge of the charity of the church, the apostles laid their hands on them [Acts 6:6]. [And] when Paul and Barnabas went on a missionary tour, [hands were laid on

them]—Acts 13:3 “And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”

—5thly. When imparting the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Acts 8:17; 19:16— “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

—6thly. Another object was that the church might hereby identify themselves with the person and work of him, whom they thus not only commended to God, but recommended to all men. The thus testified to his character and doctrine, and became fellow-workers with him; so that, while they had a sort of fatherly interest and authority over his work, if the Lord prospered him, they also ran a risk of “becoming partakers of another man’s sins, if they laid hands suddenly” upon any: see 1 Tim. 5:22.

But that it ever was REQUIRED previous to preaching the gospel or baptizing or administering the Lord’s supper, is never mentioned in Scripture; nor does Scripture present one instance of it in these connexions. Nor does it appear that when done, it had abiding consequences on the history or character of him who submitted to it (except when the gifts of the Holy Ghost were communicated), any more than now, when a man is commended at a prayer-meeting to any work of the Lord on which he is entering.

Modes of commendation differ;—laying of hands was a Jewish mode on all interesting occasions; prayer-meetings are ours; so they were commanded to kiss, where we shake hands—and as it may be done (as in Paul and Barnabas’s case) to those who have been years in the ministry before; so, for aught that appears to the contrary, it may apparently be repeated, as often as an individual should undertake important missions or offices. Indeed the apostle seems to have received imposition of hands the *second* time he left Antioch, as well as the *first*; for he is said to have been “recommended to the grace of God” (Acts 15:40), which is the very phrase used in Acts 14:26, of his dismissal with the laying on of hands upon the former occasion.

It also appears that it may be done by inferior to superiors, as by the prophets and teachers of the church of Antioch to the apostles, while never in any single instance is it alluded to as conferring *authority* though in some cases *power*, as in giving the Holy Spirit, or in commendation to the Lord's care, as in the case of Barnabas and Paul.

But it is never in one single instance appointed or alluded to as the ordinance of God that stood at the ENTRANCE *into the Christian ministry*: no one was ever required to submit to it, nor blamed for not, nor were any individuals appointed to do it.

When the apostles laid on hands, and men received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, *the gifts*, not the apostles, determined what the man was to be. If he had the gift of prophecy, he prophesied; if of healing, he healed; if of tongues, he spoke; the Holy Ghost dividing unto every man severally as he would. Paul, in 2 Tim. 1:4-6, [says,] "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the *gift* of God, which is in thee by putting on of my hands." Again, 1 Tim. 4:14, he says, "Neglect not the *gift* that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." The particular *gift* is not mentioned, whether of tongues, or prophecy, or exhortation; but it probably related to that of an evangelist, which, 2 Tim. 4:5, he is commanded to make full proof of.

Observe then distinctly, what I am urging. I do not deny that hands were sometimes laid on; but I do deny that such a ceremony was more appropriate to those ENTERING on the work of teaching and ministering, than to those who had long been teachers, preachers, and ministers of the sacraments. I say, there is no instance in Scripture, where any one *waits for this*, as requisite to authorize him in ministering; while in the case of Paul and Barnabas, it is incontestable that they had been eminent preachers long before hands were laid upon them. This leads me to think that it is as necessary to be thus commended to God at the commencement of *every* important work, as at the very commencement of ministry; and while I do not think the *form* of commendation to be of any essential importance (else it would have been enjoined), I believe that the commendation itself is of value, just in proportion to the holiness and truth of the saints from whose hearts and hands it proceeds, and in proportion to the power of their faith to prevail with God.

I have not yet named the case of the appointment of the seven to take charge of the charity purse of the church (Acts 6). We here read that the multitude chose out seven men, full of the Holy Ghost and of good report; and then the apostles laid their hands on them, and instituted them to the office. But that this was not to give them *authority* to preach, is manifest in the narration itself; for it is expressly declared to be a mere *service of tables*, to which the apostles will not give themselves, when it is their place to attend to the ministry of the word and to prayer. Thus, as Joshua, so did Stephen and the rest, receive appointment to an especial *secular* charge by the laying of hands.

And whereas some lay great stress on Paul's words to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:22), "Lay hand suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure;" as though it proved some exclusive prerogative in Timothy; nothing can be more unfounded than such a deduction. Out of the words themselves, nothing can be extracted that might not equally be said to every individual, elder or prophet or simple disciple, who might under any circumstances be invited to lay on hands. That at least, all the elders laid on hands, is manifest from 1 Tim. 4:14; and in the Church of England it is both professed and practiced at every ordination of a priest. How then can we found [i.e. to lay a foundation, or to establish] any exclusive right for Timothy on such a charge? "Lay hands suddenly on no man," says the apostle; *therefore* (says the episcopalian) *it is evident that Timothy had a peculiar right and duty to lay on hands*. As justly, if I entreat a friend not to send out men with his sanction or support before he knows them, I may be supposed to recognize some divine authority in him.<sup>71</sup> But of the meaning of the

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<sup>71</sup> It is well-known that A. N. Groves hoped that more missionaries might be sent out from England to India. So I think what our brother is saying in this sentence is that if he was to write to a friend in England to help him find more missionaries for the work in India, and if he asked that friend to be careful to not send out anyone having his commendation, or sanction, etc., without first being sure of the spiritual character of that person, that would not mean that our brother Groves was bestowing on that person back in England some type of divine authority to appoint men to the ministry (as some applied to Timothy because of Paul's words to him in this verse). All it meant was that he was asking that friend to be careful to only send out those whom were known to be faithful and full of the Holy Spirit, and nothing more.

text none need doubt, who study the connexion of the words, “Do not send him forth so commended suddenly, lest he should walk disorderly, and you share his guilt, by having added your sanction to him.”

And that this is the meaning, I think we shall see pretty clearly by a reference to 2 John 9-11, where he is saying, “If any man transgress, and bring not the doctrine of Christ, do not receive him into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.” Now here I think both the apostles, Paul and John, are referring to the same custom of commending the saints to the care of God; but Paul alludes to it by the *form* in which it was done, and John\* refers to the *sentiment* conveyed by it; and both draw a common conclusion, that should he turn out ill, they would be partakers of his evil deeds.

Much stress is laid by many on 2 Tim. 2:2: “*And the things* thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be *able to teach* others also.” Men refer to this passage, as if it contained within it the embryo of transmitted apostolic *authority*. Yet the idea of *authority* is not found there at all. He bids him only look out for men who are apt to teach, and seek to instruct them with more than usual care, in order that a supply of teachers in the church might not be wanted.

The very same advice he would have given, had he been showing him how he was to provide a race of schoolmasters, carpenters or tent-makers, and perfectly parallel to the principle developed in the Hebrews, where the apostle says, “When for *the time ye ought to be teachers*, ye have need that one *teach* you *again* which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” In the very spirit of this blessed apostle’s words, 2 Cor. 4:13, “We, have the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I *believed* and *therefore* have I *spoken*, we also *believe*, and *therefore speak*.”

Thus, after all the search I can make in God’s word, a divine authoritative right residing in any man or men, apostles or others, of

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\*But it may be that the difference merely arose from the circumstance that John was writing to a lady, with who it might not be the custom to lay on hands.

appointing to the ministry in Christ's church, I find nowhere assumed, or so much as hinted at; but [rather I find] whosoever believes let him speak, and whosoever knows let him teach; and if there are any who, after having had much teaching bestowed upon them, are not able to teach others, let them be sharply reproved, after the example of Paul to the inattentive Hebrew converts.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Contextually, because our brother just said a few paragraphs before to “look out for men who are apt to teach,” I do not think he is saying from this passage that all believers should be teachers. Being a teacher is a gift from God (I Cor. 12: 28; Eph. 4:11). It is a spiritual gift, not a natural talent (Rom. 12:6-7); therefore since all do not have the spiritual gift of teaching, he is not implying that all should be teachers (I Cor. 12:29). So, contextually, it seems he is only referring to those who ought to be teachers, because they were so gifted by God to be teachers, and yet because of their dullness of hearing they are not! For this reason, in I Tim. 3:2, the adjective διδακτικός, translated as “apt to teach” (i.e. characterized by teaching), is a better translation than “*able to teach*,” for today in Evangelicalism *able to teach* is often taken as referring to one who is, or who should be, trained in speaking, skilled in teaching, or having a natural charisma, or talent for teaching. In fact, Paul makes known in II Cor. 11:6 the opposite was true; he was *untrained* in speech (NKJV), *unskilled* in speech (NASB77), *rude* in speech (KJV), although he could have sought training in oratory in the Greek schools, if he thought that was an advantage for preaching or teaching. But he did not, for it was not; just as it was not for Moses before him (Ex.4:10). Paul learned it was not by eloquence that he spoke, but by the fullness and power of the Spirit (I Cor. 2:4). So I believe the King James Version's use of “apt to teach” is much better. “Apt” is a word that means “being ready or predisposed,” whereas “able” is a word that means “being capable,” or “having the skill.” There is no thought in the word of one's skill or talent for teaching, for it does not depend on the natural talent or skill of the man, but rather on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the man. Spiritual gifts are manifestations of the Holy Spirit; thus, an elder who teaches by the spiritual gift of teaching is manifesting the power of Holy Spirit in the words he speaks, whether he speaks well or not. Whereas one who speaks by natural talent, manifests the power of his own charisma in the words he speaks. This is why it mattered not to Paul if he was unskilled in speaking. A teacher should not be one who teaches by learned skills, but, rather one who is trained in denying his natural self or talent, so as to be teaching, to be preaching by a burden placed upon his heart by the Holy Spirit, to speak in spirit the very message God wishes him to speak, to teach, or to preach (I Cor. 2:13).

## LIMITATION OF MINISTRY

I proceed to adduce scripture evidence, that there was positively no limitation whatever on the right of every individual brother teaching, preaching and administering the sacraments, without asking leave either of the apostles or anyone else. I know things were different; there was no wealth to be attained, no worldly honours to be shared, few things that could be a temptation to carnal and unholy men, and therefore greater freedom might be allowed than now. Yet the ill effects of this change are not beyond the hope of cure, while we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

Take away the wealth, trample the worldly distinctions connected with the present system in the dust, leave the Spirit's work free, and see who will open God's doors for nought, or for nought kindle fire on his altar, as the Lord says by the prophet (Mal. 1:10) [i.e. meaning see which ministers will serve for nothing, freely giving as they freely received];—and such [men who will serve for nought] esteem [them] very highly in love for their works' sake; yea, nourish and cherish them as the jewels of the kingdom; but if you want to allure doves to your windows, do not hang carrion on the bars [i.e. worldly allurements, such as reputation, rank and prestige], which is the vulture's food.

Do you not feel we have doubly sinned against our Lords precept, "Give not that which is holy unto dogs?" We have not only given our holy ministries to ungodly men; but as if that were not enough, we have enticed them by sweet morsels from the flesh-pot of Egypt, by surrounding our holy ministries with the riches, rank and respectability of this world.<sup>73</sup> My prayer is then—preserve the liberty of ministry in

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<sup>73</sup> It may be that our brother is referring to the worldly status of bishops in 19<sup>th</sup> century England. For example, during debate in Parliament in 1836 regarding a Church Reform Bill (which a periodical indicated that it was known as, Established Church Bill HC Deb 08 July 1836 vol. 35 cc13-60), Lord John Russell discussed the bill's provision of reducing the Archbishop of Canterbury's income per year from 18,000£ to 15,000£ a year. If online calculations which convert the purchasing power of pounds of yesteryears into today's purchasing power are accurate, the annual purchasing power of the

the church of God, and as for all the earthliness that the devil has attached to her, throw it back to those who are gaping for it. They may then perhaps leave us in quiet possession of our true riches, as the vulture, gorged with his foul fare [an archaic word for *food*], leave the

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Archbishop of Canterbury's income in 1836 would be in today's money approximately 1,000,000£, which in US dollars would be roughly \$1,200,000! And when this amount was considered by some other Members of the House of Commons to be excessive, even being more than the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, or a First Lord of the Treasury received in annual income, Lord John Russel responded that the Archbishop of Canterbury required such an income, because (according to the minutes of Parliament), he is "placed, according to the constitution of the Church...among persons having a large revenue derived from the property of the country." This referred in part to the fact that he and other bishops (twenty-six in number), by virtue of their bishopric, became members of Parliament, being known in England as "Lords Spiritual" in the House of Lords. In addition, the dwelling provided to the Archbishop of Canterbury, whoever, he might be, was (and still is) a magnificent palace called Lambeth Palace in London. Consequently, this long standing tradition of integrating the clergy into the secular State, wherein certain clerics were given wealth, rank, and, what they believed was, a respectability in the world, receiving large incomes and titles of "lord," may be what our brother Groves was referencing. Of course, such a mindset is exposed as being carnal and most soulical (consider I Cor. 1:25-29) when one simply looks to Jesus who though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor, yet He still ministered to those who were rich, e.g. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. And, of course, Paul the apostle was another biblical example which showed that God uses the poor to minister to the rich (e.g. Paul's witness to Sergius Paulus, and his witness to Felix, Porcius Festus, and, indeed, to Caesar himself)! Unfortunately, this same mindset of the Church in England, is present in many Evangelical churches of today, where it has been taught that a "pastor" should receive an annual salary commensurate with the economic status of those in his flock, which some teach is a necessary thing in order for him to relate to those in his flock, and therefore to become an effective minister of Christ to the flock. In some cases, it has been reported that some pastors here in America earn an annual salary well into six figures many times over, and in some cases approaching half a million dollars a year. And, although it is true that some pastors forgo such a large salary, it is reported that they do so because they have, instead, earned such a very large income from the sales of their books written about Christ and His Word! Can one imagine Paul becoming wealthy by such means?



harmless dove to pick up its wholesome grains in peace.<sup>74</sup> The world will never envy your enjoyment of anything a saint should care about—holiness, love, self-denial, devotedness, fasting, and prayer; and Christ, in whom you have all things present and to come, because you are his, and he is God's. Who [in the world], [but] the most hostile to church endowments, would envy you these? He may hate you, but he can

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<sup>74</sup> I would be amiss to not also mention that Anthony Norris Groves did not assign such earthliness and worldliness, automatically, to all who were ordained as ministers in the Church of England. There were even those in England, at the time of the debate on the Church Reform Bill, who were complaining about the wealth, rank, and so-called respectability given to those bishops. They mentioned that there were many ministers of Christ in the Church of England (at least in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century), who served Christ not for rank and wealth, but rather, served Christ in lowliness and poverty. In fact, in that same periodical referenced in the previous footnote (no. 73), it spoke how in some places of the British Empire that “three hundred clergymen, professing, and indefatigably teaching, the same faith as the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London...[did] not share among them, with equal abilities, equal virtues, so large a sum of money as these two prelates!” (Exclamation point is mine.) So we see that not all ministers of Christ in the clergy of the Church of England were considered to be worldly and compromised. It must be remembered that once J. N. Darby and A. N. Groves and many other early brethren were once in the Church of England. Darby himself was a priest, a curate. Who could deny that at that time before they left they the Church of England they were godly brothers in Christ, faithful up to the light Christ had given them. Also after our brother Groves left the Church of England, he remained in close fellowship with godly brothers who were still in the Church of England, one being Sir John Kennaway, whose daughter Frances married one of the early brethren who first met together in Dublin, Mr. Edward Cronin, and then there was his very close friend W. M. Caldecott, who was a priest, a curate in Claybrook, and also in India there was Sir Arthur Cotton, a very close friend, who remained in the Church of England. However, today, it is recognized that such a thing can no longer be so quickly said. I would dare say that today so many in the Church of England are completely compromised, not necessarily by money, but by the philosophies, psychologies, and social norms of the world, to the point that some are Christian in name only, being, instead, wolves in sheep's clothing, men who deny the Faith, and those who tolerate things that are an affront to the very Person of our LORD Jesus Christ and to the Sacredness of His Word.

neither covet your riches, nor with biting irony expose your ill-disguised love of the world [simply because there is nothing to be exposed!].<sup>75</sup>

Hear then what our Lord says, “He that is not against us is for us; therefore let him minister.” Here is neither the principle of *follow us* nor *submit to us* acknowledged, nor any principle of limitation at all. It is not that Christ did not appoint whom he liked, but he *excluded* none, *nor made either his own or the apostles’ appointment necessary*. Nay, he prohibited such a requirement; so that any one now has liberty to minister from his Lord’s recorded sentence, *if he be on the Lord’s side*, without seeking or receiving the sanction of any man or men living; yea, though there may be many occasions where this might be both lovely and right, yet never necessary.

Observe now the language of the sacred historian in Acts 8:1-4; here it is stated, that they who were scattered by the persecution that arose about Stephen, went about preaching the gospel. That only the “ordained” were thus scattered, it is ridiculous to suppose; it was a [diverse]<sup>76</sup> multitude of believers fleeing from the sanguinary [i.e. murderous] fury of Saul and the chief priests [cf. Acts 8:1-4 & 9:1].

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<sup>75</sup> This statement is made, I believe, because, unfortunately, with the Church of England there was, indeed, something to be exposed by the world. At the time of the debate on the Church Reform Bill, a worldly periodical wrote an opinion piece, which in part said: “It would seem that the Dignitaries of the Church are the only men in our state of society unable to maintain respect without ‘the pomps and vanities of this wicked world,’ and [are] obliged to borrow dignity from Mammon. The rich do not refuse to let the physician cure their ailments unless he lives in a palace and spends 15,000£ a year. The man of science and the man of letters may, without wealth, hold their respect among the rich and great, but the heads of the church make proclamation that they have no qualities, no functions, the moral worth of which may invest them with dignity, and that they must be trampled on and despised unless they are set upon lofty pedestals of gold.” (The Examiner, The English Church Reform, No. 1485, Sun., July 17, 1836 p. 1).

<sup>76</sup> I changed his phrase “a promiscuous multitude of believers” to “a [diverse] multitude of believers,” because the word “promiscuous” means something different today than it did in the early 1800’s. Today it primarily bespeaks an immoral person, but in the early 19th century, “promiscuous” simply meant anything that was *mingled, undistinguished or mixed together*.

Yet this mixed multitude went about preaching the gospel.<sup>77</sup> How striking a comment this on the principles above adduced from the Scripture; and how encouraging the result! “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.”—Acts 11:19-21.

But there are some other passages to which I must refer, and first to 1 Cor. 12:14. You will perceive that even where the apostle is engaged in reproving disorder, he yet lays no stricter injunction upon them, than that those who were teachers in the church should be of the male sex; and that those who spoke (whether they had a prophecy, or a psalm, or an exhortation) should speak one at a time, should wait for each other, and pay that courteous deference which love and humility will suggest. And the apostle, in arguing the question of the constitution of the church at Corinth, tells them that they are a body; that one man is a foot, another a hand, another an eye, &c. &c., and that God had set them in the body as it hath pleased him; and (12:19) that if they were all one member, there would be no body. In fact, neither here nor in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter, nor in Eph. 4:4-14, is any idea of human limitation or human appointment, but simply the Lord’s appointment, and every man’s duty is to minister according to the ability that God giveth.

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<sup>77</sup> Because of his previous reference to a diverse multitude, and here a mixed multitude, all A. N. Groves is saying is that every kind of believer was scattered, and not just those who were *ordained* to preach. Thus all believers had the liberty to preach the Gospel without any restrictions. It might help to remember, that up to and even after the days of John Wesley, many in the Church of England believed that the Gospel should only be preached in a Church building, only by those who were solemnly ordained to preach the Gospel.—For more on this see: John Lewis, *An Apology for the Clergy of the Church of England, in a particular examination of a book entituled ‘The Rights of the Christian Church and its second Defence’* (Richard Wilkin, London, 1711) pg. 227

But while I hold it is by Christ's appointment alone that any one becomes a minister of Christ, absolutely, or an apostle, or a prophet, yet I fully admit that to constitute a man *bishop* (a word which implies union with a *special flock*) human authority is needed; that is, no man can, with good sense, assume to be bishop over a particular flock, if he have not, at least, the good-will and consent of that flock: and similarly, the deacon's office can be assumed by none, without the approbation of those whose money he is about to dispose of. But this leaves my assertion untouched, that no human authority is needed to confer the abstract right to teach and preach or administer the sacraments.<sup>78</sup> If anyone choose to designate apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, as so many *orders*, I have no objection to this. But I contend

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<sup>78</sup> Perhaps it should be noted here that even though our brother Groves is using the word "sacrament" in this place and in other places, he is *not* using the word in the same sense as that of the Roman Catholic Church, which holds to seven sacraments, nor even in the same sense as that of the Church of England, which holds to two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He is only using it in the sense of a *divine institution* or *ordinance* established by our LORD Jesus Christ, which in the New Testament is revealed to be two—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Many early brethren sometimes would use "sacrament" in place of the word "ordinance," not because it was considered to be anything more than a divine institution left for the Church to follow, but simply (or so it seems) because in England that was the "term" by which most understood the institution of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. J. N. Darby, Andrew Miller, C. H. Mackintosh, William Kelly, C. F. Hogg (co-author with W. E. Vine of the Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words), and other Evangelicals such as C. H. Spurgeon all had used the term in place of "ordinance," at one time or the other. But, obviously, it is important to note that none believed that the "sacrament" was a *means of grace* brought about by a *consecrated act* done by an *ordained* minister, wherein the rite of baptism and the emblems of the Lord's Table became a vehicle by which God imparted a special grace to His people as taught by the Church of England. Today, because current historical contexts are no longer the same, I, myself, believe it would be better to simply use *divine institution*, or simply *ordinance*, and not the word *sacrament*, which word might be misunderstood by some to imply a means of obtaining special grace from God, when done by a priest. Most certainly a believer gladdens the heart of God above when they obey Him by keeping these two ordinances given to us in His Word, but there is no thought of a special grace reserved for, and thus only obtainable through, the observance of these two ordinances.

these *orders* come not of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but entirely of God; and contrariwise, that bishops and deacons had *offices*, just like our churchwardens or overseers of the poor.<sup>79</sup>

To suppose that a deacon chosen to administer the alms of the Jerusalem church, could go to Corinth, and claim a control over the funds of the church there, would argue a want [lack] of common sense; and equally ridiculous would it be for one of the bishops of the church at Philippi to seek to exercise an official character [i.e. office]<sup>80</sup> at Corinth. The office *is made for the work*; and it is only in reference to the special work that an officer is officer at all. And these officers might be chosen out of any spiritual order, as far as we know; but the right of speaking, in the church or out of the church, was not confined to the officers.

It may be well here to notice an objection which one class of readers may found [i.e. meaning to establish] on the fact, that in Acts 20 the overseers or bishops are said to have been appointed by the Holy Ghost. They may interpret this to mean, that they were called to the work by the voice of a prophet; and hence infer that no one is a true and lawful overseer, who is not thus peculiarly appointed. Accepting the interpretation,<sup>81</sup> I reply, that though *these* elders were thus called to the work, it is not to be inferred that *all other* elders were similarly called.

Paul and Barnabas were called by the Spirit to preach to the heathen; those scattered by Saul the persecutor, went of themselves as the result of their circumstances and the dictate of their hearts. While we would not exclude the Spirit's miraculous agency, we must exceedingly beware of making it essential to profitable and lawful ministry.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor were parish officers in the Church of England. They were constituted as officers to deal with parish property, parish financial matters, and in the case of the Overseers of the Poor, various matters dealing with the poor who were within that parish.

<sup>80</sup> At that time the word "character" was also defined as an *office* or *authority*.

<sup>81</sup> As far as I can tell our brother is using the phrase, "accepting the interpretation," to mean, "accepting *this* interpretation *for the sake of argument*." But the reader will have to decide for themselves, if this is so.

<sup>82</sup> I do not believe, from everything else our brother has written, that he is agreeing that a believer's appointment by the Holy Spirit to be an elder, as revealed in Acts 20, was done in a miraculous manner. Rather, I think he is still

If I be asked, how it came to pass that church officers so soon gained *rank*, and were constituted into an order? I reply, *first*, because the respect which is natural and fitly given to elders, especially those who rule well, soon accumulates, until an inherent dignity is vested in the individuals, and a hierarchy results, which is to the church what an aristocracy is in a nation: *next*, I should say, through the same source of corruption that destroyed her simplicity on every other subject, *by looking to Moses instead of Christ*. They saw that in his [i.e. Moses'] dispensation the priesthood was an order, as well as officers and rulers; and soon, becoming weary of the subordinate and dependent situation in which their Lord had left them, they assumed the same high ground [i.e. of a clerical order over the people], without reflecting that they were no priests at all [in that Old Testament clerical sense], nor are even once alluded to as such, apart from the whole church; in which sense we are all priests to God [in contradiction to their desired clergy/laity system].

In fact there is no act of ministry to be performed in the Christian church that was not common to all tribes of Israel. *Preaching in the synagogues and temple* [was one such example in Scripture.] This our Lord and all the apostles did; and not only were [they] never accused by the Jews for so doing, but [they] were invited so to do. "If thou hast any word of exhortation, say on," was the invitation to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13: 15). Nay, when the Sanhedrim were seeking an accusation against the poor ignorant fishermen, they never by one word intimated that by *preaching in the temple* they had invaded the priest's office; an offence which would have been punished with death.

As to *the Lord's supper*, its counterpart is found in that of the *paschal lamb*. But the administration of the paschal supper was not only common to all the tribes, but was to be performed in every family in

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speaking with the qualification, "accepting the interpretation" discussed in the previous footnote, which, as I mentioned, I think it is the same as our phrase "for the sake of argument." So I think our brother Groves is saying that even if we accept that in Acts 20 those elders' appointment was miraculous, that still does not mean it was miraculous for all elders (or even that he himself believed it was so in Acts 20). I think he is only saying that though he would not disallow that the Holy Spirit might utilize a miraculous manner in appointing an elder (e.g. doing so through a prophet), he does not believe it is necessary, or even a normal, means of appointment of an elder by the Holy Spirit.

Israel, and therefore was no part of the priest's office. As to *circumcision*, which was the initiatory rite into the natural church,<sup>83</sup> as our baptism is unto the spiritual, we see that Zipporah circumcised Moses' children, and Paul, who was not priest, circumcised Timothy.

Shall we then be bound with more than judaical bondage? If it be contended that this freedom would lead to disorder, how was it then that our Lord and his apostles set such an example, by giving their sanction in the synagogue to the very same principles of disorder? Every argument that applies against this freedom for the Christian church, tells with the same or greater force against the Jewish.<sup>84</sup>

The apostle, in I Cor. 16:15, says, "I beseech you, brethren—ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Archaia, and they have appointed themselves, ἑταξαν ἑαυτούς, to the ministry of the saints—that ye *submit yourselves to such*, and to every fellow-worker and labourer. Here, then, we see men appointing themselves to the ministry, and the apostle commanding the Corinthians to submit to all such. It plainly shows the ministry was one of *rule*, that it involved *subjection*; and was not, as some would make it appear, a ministry of *pecuniary* or other *similar service*.

In our translation [meaning the King James Version], the word *addicted* has been chosen, as if to render the original as indefinite in its

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<sup>83</sup> Natural church is being used in the same way he used Jewish church as we discussed in footnote number 45 on page 3.

<sup>84</sup> Again, A. N. Groves is not confusing Israel and the Church by his phrase Jewish [church], as he held to a dispensational view of Israel and the Church. He is using the KJV's translation of "church" for the Greek word ἐκκλησία in its general sense as used by Luke in Acts 7:38, wherein Stephen used it to bespeak the nation of Israel as God's people, i.e. the gathering together of God's people in the Old Testament. It is not to be confused with the Church, the body of Christ, which is made up of both Jew and Gentile together as God's people, i.e. the gathering together of God's people in the New Testament, the one New Man (Eph. 2:15). J. N. Darby also used the same term for the nation of Israel in some of his earlier writings, writing in one place—"First, in prophecy, when the Jewish church or nation (exclusive of the Gentile parenthesis in their history) is concerned..."—John Nelson Darby, *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* (BibleTruthPublishers.com, Addison, IL, 2019) pg. 53.

meaning as possible.<sup>85</sup> I need only add, that though used in all forms in innumerable places, it is never rendered anywhere else by this word, but

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<sup>85</sup> Of course, he is intimating the reason for this is because most of the translators of the King James Version, if not all, believed that only the clergy could *appoint* others to the ministry, and so the meaning of this verse was obscured by translating this Greek word as “addicted,” rather than translating it as they did in the seven other places where this Greek word occurred in the New Testament. They could have translated it as “appointed,” as they did in Matt. 28:16; Acts 22:10; 28:23; or as *ordain*, as they did in Acts 13:48 and Rom. 13:1, or even as *set*, as they did in Luke 7:8. (There choice of *determined* in Acts 15:2 would not apply.) But if they had done that, it would have contradicted their belief that only the clergy can *appoint* one into the ministry. What is interesting is that Tyndale had no problem accurately translating the Greek word—Brethren (ye knowe the housse of Stephana how that they are the fyrst frutes of Archaia and that they have appoynted them selves to minister vnto the saynctes). Now, I do not think our brother Groves would think this meant the household of Stephanas (which may have included Fortunatus and Achaicus—1Cor. 16:17) did so against God’s will from a presumptuous heart, as did, for example, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in Numbers 16:1-33, and/or as was the case with Diotrophes in III John 1:9. Rather, I would think they did so because they were the first converts in Archaia, and because no other believers were filling that need among the saints after Paul left for Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila, they appointed themselves to that ministry, believing they were being moved by the Holy Spirit to do so. Also it seems this verse implies they were doing the work of the ministry without any formal recognition from the Church, but simply from a desire to impart gracious care, for, otherwise, why would Paul have to beseech them to submit to them? So this indicates they were serving freely, lovingly, never demanding submission, without the least desire to lord it over the saints. In other words, they had a true servant’s heart. Obviously, we know that Paul recognized the appointment of themselves as God’s will, since the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write that the Corinthians should submit to them. So it is unfortunate the KJV did not translate this word as they did elsewhere, for it teaches us much truth. Unfortunately this may have been another example of *inveterate prejudice* that our brother mentioned before, which, if the truth be told, might plague us all, unless, by God’s grace, we discipline ourselves to study aright, wherein truth guides us, not opinions jealously guarded, and wherein we are always careful to be filled with the Spirit of Truth, as we remember we are called Christians, after Him, who is the Truth, so that we should always be careful to follow Truth, even if it might contradict long standing opinions. Why should a Christian ever fear the Truth?



as you will see it rendered in Matt. 28:16, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain ‘where Jesus had appointed, ἐτάξατο, them;” also Acts 22:10, “And there it shall be told thee of all it is appointed, τέτακται, thee to do;” Rom. 13:1, “The powers that be, are ordained, τεταγμένοι, of God.”<sup>86</sup>

I think this will be enough, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, to establish the two following points:—

1st. That, from the Lord or the apostles, there is no limitation to ministry left in the power of man, but such [a limitation] as an ungodly life or false doctrine establishes.

And 2ndly, that the whole church at Jerusalem, the household of Stephanas, and I may add Apollos, exercised the liberty of ministering on their own responsibility, and were blessed by God, and commended by the apostle Paul in the exercise of it. And *to all* such fellow-workers and labourers, he *commanded* men to submit.

Being then thus made free by the Lord, let us give utterance to our exhortation and thanksgiving in the words of 1Pet. 2:1-19, addressed to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye

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<sup>86</sup> As we mentioned before regarding inflection in Greek, these Greek verbs, ἐτάξατο, τέτακται, along with ἔταξαν in I Cor. 16:15, are inflected differently for voice, mood, tense, person and number, but they are all inflections of the same Greek verb τάσσω. The third, τεταγμένοι, is also from τάσσω, being a perfect passive plural verbal participle.

are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;" and conclude with Rev. 1:5-6: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen:" because He has kept the keys of admission into his own church, in His own hands, with whom is the residue of the Spirit—who has ascended on high and received gifts for men, and given every one his place in the body, as it hath pleased Him.

But perhaps you will say, "If all may minister, how are the hearers to judge?" I would say, as the Jews judged those who spoke in their synagogues and temple; by referring, as they are commanded to do, to the law and to the testimony, and by knowing, if they spoke not according to this, it was because there was no light in them. Or, as the Bereans received Paul, proving whether the things he said were verily so, or not. Yet perhaps you will say, "If he who has received man's ordination, has no greater *authority*, as an ambassador for Christ, than he who has not received such ordination, how is any one to know—1st. His own call. 2nd. The call of another man whom he is to receive. 3rd. The falsehood of the claims of those whom he is to reject?"

1st. As to his own call to minister, it rests alone on his own conviction, that he is "inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit." Be of this fully persuaded in your own mind. Contemplate your call, as leading to suffering, privation and holy service. Embrace it in this spirit; and then, should you be rejected, like your Lord and the apostles, you will not be discouraged that a man is without honour in his own country; and you will be ready to reply to those who would hinder you, though it be the Sanhedrim and rulers of your people, "Whether it would be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we *cannot but speak* the *things* which we have *seen and heard*." Yea, must not we all judge with Peter and the apostles, "We ought to obey God rather than man?"

Should you ask, "May not people be greatly deceived about being inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit?" Certainly; yet I think it must be allowed, fewer will be deceived (on any known principles of human nature) who have no hope of rank among men, or of respectability in the

world, or of any settled provision [i.e. salary], to be attained [i.e. obtained]<sup>87</sup> by such self-deceit, than when there are rank and respectability to all—wealth to many—and a princely pre-eminence to a few.<sup>88</sup> If they should mistake their call, it would much more easily and simply get corrected; and if they dared to offend the decencies of their holy calling, they would starve, or give themselves simply to those occupations which alone suit their characters or tastes, and which they never ought to have left. Yet while every man is the sole responsible judge of his own gifts and calling of the Holy Spirit, the individual, or the church, on *their own* responsibility, receive him, or reject him. Yet, in forming their decision, *God's rules*, and not *man's* must be regarded. To these none can add;—from these none can take away.

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<sup>87</sup> Today, we might more likely use the word “obtained.” Thus he is saying fewer would be deceived into thinking that they are being moved by the Holy Spirit, when they realize there is no rank, respectability, or guaranteed salary to be *obtained* or expected by their ministry.

<sup>88</sup> I believe he is referring to the princely pre-eminence seen in such titles conferred on those who are ordained in accordance with the prevailing practices of the Church of England, such as “Lords Spiritual,” and, perhaps, also included in his thoughts, all the pomp associated with those equally ordained and given princely titles as “Cardinal” in the Roman Catholic Church.

## WHOM WE ARE TO RECEIVE

How are we to know whom we are to receive? The Lord says, “He that receiveth whomsoever *I send*, receiveth me.” Does he send false teachers, and ungodly livers?<sup>89</sup> No—for he warns us in Matt. 7:15, to beware of false prophets, and tells us how we are to know them,—by their fruits. In Rev. 2:2, also, he commends the church of Ephesus, for trying those who said they were apostles, and were not, and finding them liars? The apostle Paul says, that Stephanas (who had appointed himself to minister), and all similar fellow-labourers, were to be submitted to, if they preached the truth; otherwise, accursed.

And that you may not doubt that it was the Lord’s intention to help you in your judgment, he says, “My sheep hear my voice, and a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.” And in perfect accordance with this recognized principle of internal consciousness, enabling us to decide on what to receive and what to reject, is the Lord’s condemnation of the Jews, relative to himself.<sup>90</sup> They received him not, because they were not God’s children; but while they rejected Him who was the image of God, and spoke the truth of God, yet if another came in his own name, whom the Father had not sent, him they would receive.

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\*Some make a distinction between the angel and the church, as though he were made exclusively responsible. But to whom is the Spirit’s voice addressed in inviting the attention of those who have ears? Not to the *angel*, but to the *churches*. And the charges are evidently not personal. It was not the *angel* of the church of Ephesus, who is specially charged with having left his first love, who was to remember from whence *he* had fallen, and repent, and do his first works, but the church; and therefore the threat was not personal, but against the church, to take away their candlestick. And [it is] the same with the other churches; the angel appears nothing more than the vehicle of communication the church.

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<sup>89</sup> A “liver” was an 18<sup>th</sup> century word that referred to a living person; often it was used in regard to the manner in which one lived—e.g. if in virtue, then a virtuous liver, or in our case above, if in ungodliness, then an ungodly liver.

<sup>90</sup> In other words, if it was not their responsibility to act and judge (e.g. like the Bereans in Acts 17: 11), why would Jesus condemn them? (Jn. 5: 43-47).

But John tells us more simply by what power we are to judge aright; the *anointing we have received* teacheth us all things, and is truth, and no lie. And Paul says the *spiritual* man judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. It is then, by the Holy Spirit, indwelling in the children of God, that they are enabled to discern those things which the natural man perceiveth not, and therefore esteems foolish.

Wherever then you see the question of judgment referred to, it has reference to the spirituality and anointing of the person judging, as applied to the character and doctrine of the person judged. On this ground the Lord stood with the Jews, and to this ordeal he has submitted every minister in the church; demanding of his people to try the spirits.

It may not be irrelevant here to refer to the case of Apollos, in Acts 18. He is there represented as a zealous Jew, knowing only the baptism of John. From the case in Acts 19, where Paul has the disciples re-baptized, who had been baptized only with John's baptism, and who consequently had neither received nor heard of the Holy Spirit, it is manifest that Apollos was at this time, in the eye of Paul, an unbaptized person, and therefore also unordained [that is, dear reader, if one is applying the standards of the Church of England].<sup>91</sup> For it will not be

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<sup>91</sup> It should be noted—because of the context of this chapter and other chapters, I do not believe our brother is saying that Paul believed that Apollos needed ordination in the sense that the Church of England understood the word ordination. This is why I added the bracketed words to help clarify what I think he is saying (even though I admit, as it is written, one might take it the other way, but, if so, it would then contradict all he has so far written). Thus when he says, “and therefore also unordained,” I believe he is telling his reader, *unordained* in the way the Church of England understands it, where one is made a minister by the laying on of the hands, by one in apostolic succession, who, with great pomp and ceremony, inducts the candidate into a clerical order of priests. His next sentence seems to confirm this because the next sentence reminds the reader that Scripture never says Apollos was a *disciple* of Christ, but, rather, *of John*, so that Christ did not ordain him, and the Twelve could not have already ordained him because Scripture says he only knew the *baptism of John*. So an honest reader must admit that Apollos was *unordained* according to the standards of the Church of England by one in apostolic succession, and yet he was allowed to minister in the Church of Corinth, and in other Churches without that ordination that the Church of England thought was so essential.

pretended, that Apollos, a disciple of John only, had been ordained immediately by Christ; nor yet that the hands of any of the twelve had been laid upon him, while he was not yet baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Yet this man has no sooner learned the way of the Lord more fully from Aquila and Priscilla, than, in the absence of Paul (who was in the upper provinces of Asia) he is received by the churches of Ephesus, and immediately afterwards in Corinth; where he preaches boldly the things of the Lord, helping the saints, and convincing the gainsayers.

As he came preaching without ordination, so he departed preaching without ordination, as far as we see to the contrary; and this unordained disciple is acknowledge by the apostle Paul as a brother minster;<sup>92</sup> nay, he is content to leave it quite doubtful, whether Paul or Apollos be the greater. For when there arose a division in the church of Corinth, through some saying, *I am of Paul*; others, *I of Apollos*; and others, *I of Cephas*; does Paul question the MINISTERIAL AUTHORITY of Apollos, or assume any control over him? Not at all; but humbly and simply says, "Who is Paul, or who [is] Apollos, but ministers by whom you believe? Therefore, let no man glory in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "For," says Paul, "I have transferred these things to myself and Apollos, that ye might learn in us, not to *think of men* above what is *written*." He says, Paul may plant, Apollos water, but God gives the increase; for says the apostle, he that planteth, and he that watereth are one." How unlike [is Paul's language to] the language that would be thought to suit a modern bishop's dignity, to an unordained interloper [like Apollos], according to all the rules of traditionary Christianity!

Unless then there be some precepts to the contrary, which I do not know, I am required to submit to all who minister in holy things (without considering whether they take it on themselves, or are chosen by others), providing they minister in truth and righteousness, according

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<sup>92</sup> Presumably, as we will see in the next paragraph, in the eyes of our brother Groves, Apollos would fall into the same category as that of the household of Stephanas in I Corinthians 16:15, and, therefore, would be another example where we see men appointing themselves to ministry, as he shared before on page 40ff. above.

to the gospel of Jesus. And as we shall now see by a further consideration of the subject, if he do not, or when he cease to do it—though he were an angel from heaven, or the most blessed and distinguished apostle of the Lord—should he ever change the gospel of Jesus, and preach another, he is only to be doubly accursed; as to the apostle himself most solemnly assures us, when he says in Gal. 1:8,9, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

Finally, the apostle says, Phil. 3:17, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.” The above, then, will show us the kind of men we are to follow, come how or from whence they may; and the subsequent verses will serve as a general introduction to the second part of this inquiry, how false teachers are to be known.

## HOW ARE FALSE TEACHERS TO BE KNOWN?

“They are such,” says the apostle, “of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the *enemies* of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY, WHOSE GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME; WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS; whereas we,” says the apostle, “have our conversation in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

If you find men whose conversation is in heaven, follow them:—but if you find men, who prove themselves enemies of the cross of Christ, and who are to be destroyed, because their God is their belly, their glory their shame, and their care after earthly things; fly [from] them, as you would the desolating vengeance that swept away Sodom; give them no countenance, lest ye be partakers of their evil deeds. “Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision, for we are the circumcision; which worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” [Phil. 3:2-3].

Again, our Lord shows us of whom we are to *beware*. He says, “Beware of false prophets, which come you in sheep’s clothing” (in the external dress of ministers of righteousness), “but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” And see Matt. 7:15-21: “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Here, then, is another most important test—establishing by our Lord’s testimony, the same principle of judging of teachers, as Paul laid down. Paul specifies one or two fruits of the flesh, and the Lord states the question broadly. You shall know of whom you are to beware, by their fruits; if then you see the fruits of the flesh, though they may cry *Lord, Lord*, ever so loud, prophesy, cast out devils, do even wonderful works; reject them as the Lord says he will do in *that day*, declaring he *never* knew them.



Consider, again 2 Cor. 11:13-15—"For such are false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And so marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is not great thing if his ministers also be transformed, as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

Now just for one moment consider the position of the apostle. He was writing to a church over which he had every claim that could well centre in one man; he had been the instrument in the hand of the Lord of founding their church, of imparting to them most especial spiritual gifts, in evidence of his apostolic mission; and had laboured most zealously among them. In this his own little flock, evil men had transformed themselves into apostles and ministers of Christ.

Now if these were orders which none could assume without the apostolic appointment, the apostle's path was clear; simply to tell the Corinthian church, that those who came without apostolic sanction, were not to be received. This would have effectually excluded these, and been a simple guide to the church on all similar occasions. But since the apostle did not assume this authority (which if any man living, in any period of the church, had a right to assume, he had;—their father—their apostle—their minister;—one in whose hand it would be so safely and so naturally lodged, however dangerous in the hands of those would be his successors), I say, if under all these circumstances the apostle did not assume it, we may conclude it was the Spirit's intension it never should be assumed at all. For if it seemed not good to the Holy Ghost to give such power to such a man, and at such a time, who can claim it now?

The apostle, in defending his own pretensions, shows that in judging who are true and to be received, who are false and to be rejected, the church has to do with their respective *works* and *doctrine*, and with nothing else. "Are they ministers of Christ?" say he, "I am more; in labours more abundant," &c.

But those who now claim apostolic power [i.e. bishops who hold to apostolic succession], not only think their appointment necessary to *make*, but that their suspension is enough to *silence* a minister. How strange, then, that the apostle never got himself out of his troubles in this easy way! for if their coming in was disorderly, nothing could

excuse his not dismissing or suspending them from their functions forthwith, seeing how they were using their usurped authority; yet he lets not a hint fall that he possessed such a power.

We can only, then, conclude that the sin of those teachers did not consist in wanting [i.e. lacking] the apostle's appointment to the ministry, but in wanting [lacking] truth and integrity before God in their ministry; and that the apostle's power did not extend to suspending them officially, but to exposing them on the principles which he, as well as our Lord, gives for others' guidance, viz. by reference to their *fruits*, &c., and leaving the church to decide.<sup>93</sup> See also Acts 20: 29-30: "For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Now as the preceding passage referred to teachers, who had assembled to themselves wickedly the functions of the ministry; so this is a prophetic warning that such should arise in the Ephesian Church, both from without and from within. Yet in the exhortation to these bishops by the apostle, there is not one word of exhortation to them to prevent this evil by taking care whom they *ordain*. And yet, if the exclusive right of appointing or suspending teachers was with *them*, it was the most natural and necessary injunction. But the fact is, as he never assumed to himself the power of exclusive or authoritative appointment to or suspension from the ministry, so he never transferred these powers to any, for he did not possess them.

In his second epistle to Timothy 2:2-4, while contemplating the same class of teachers as he had been guarding the bishops of Ephesus against, does the apostle, in order to obviate these evils, charge Timothy to exclude all irregular and non-official teachers? Nay, but he bids him preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

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<sup>93</sup> I think what he means by this paragraph and the paragraph before is this; if apostolic succession was a fact and a requirement for ministry in the early church, then all Paul had to do to stop those who were troubling the saints in Corinth was to expose the fact that they were not duly *ordained* by one in a line of apostolic succession, and so they had no right, power, or authority to minister in the Church. Therefore, since Paul never resorted to such a thing, it demonstrated that there was no such a doctrine of apostolic succession in the early Church that was established by Christ for the Church in this dispensation.

exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of his ministry. This was the apostolic way of stopping false teachers—by being themselves true; dispelling darkness by light. See also Titus 1:9-11. Here it is by holding fast the faithful word, that the bishop is to stop the mouths of gainsayers and unsound teachers; not by his own exclusive authority to appoint or suspend, or by alleging that they are not ordained or apostolically sanctioned.

Peter again alludes to the same false teachers who were to arise, 2 Pet. 2:1-3, and strikingly portrays various features by which they were to be detected and known. One feature was that they were to make merchandize of God's people; the care of their souls was to be put up to auction, and sold like meat in the shambles [i.e. a butcher's market], without reference to the wants of the people, or the fitness of the buyer.

Let us see what John also in his first epistles says, [I John] 2: 19-27, relative to these seducers. He shows the doctrines for which they are to be condemned, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit on those to whom he writes, enabling them to judge; by which they knew all things, and needed not man's teaching; and concludes by saying, "Abide in Christ; for if ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him;" whereas "he that committeth sin is of the devil." Here, then, the whole determination rests; not on human commission, but on the question whether the teacher be sound or not in doctrine—holy or not in life; and of this question the apostle constitutes not *himself* a judge, to determine by apostolic power, but simply refers to the Holy Ghost's teaching within those to whom this general epistle is addressed.

Nevertheless, to avoid the danger of that presumptuous enthusiasm which pretends a teaching of the Holy Spirit separate from and (practically) superior to that of the apostles, John explicitly lays down, [I John] 4:6, "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us: hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Yet even while he thus so signally makes a conformity to apostolic *doctrine* the test of a true spirit, it does not drop from him that an apostolic or any *commission* was of importance. "Try the spirits," says he, "whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." See [I John] 4: 1-6.

The apostle refers precisely to the same principle in his second epistle, [2 John 1:]7-11: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Here, referring to the deceivers that were gone out into the world, he tells those to whom the epistle is addressed, that if any one *transgresseth* and *abideth not in the doctrine of Christ*, they were neither to be received or bid God speed at parting, on pain of participating in their evil deeds. Now, my brother, I would ask, who is it that is called upon, under such a penalty, to exercise this high office, of sitting in judgment on the soundness or error of those who come as God's ministers? Not learned men—not a convocation of clergy or bishops—but *a lady and her children*. Here then I take my stand; that we are all responsible—men, women, and children—for the exercise of our judgment; and though we are none *infallible*, we are *responsible* judges, according to our ability.

It is then at our peril that we receive a false teacher, or wish him God speed. If we countenance him as a minister of Christ, when in our own judgments we are convinced he is not, we sin against Christ; and whatever evil he may do in beguiling and misleading souls, we are partakers in his guilt! Neither is it a singular requirement of God, for it is precisely analogous to what was required by Him of his Jewish people in the reception of a Jewish prophet. That which was to accredit the prophet to them was, *what God had made him*. Man had no power to add one whit to his authority. And with whom are the *teachers* in the New Testament compared? with these very prophets; *never with the priests*. See 2 Pet. 2:1: "But there were false *prophets* also among the people, even as there shall be false *teachers* among you; and many shall follow their pernicious ways, who shall with feigned words make merchandise of you."

Read the full-length portrait of these teachers, as given there, and by Jude. Their peculiar iniquity is, that, first, like Cain, they reject and slay the man owned and accepted of God; secondly, like Balaam, they act the prophet for hire; thirdly, like the sons of Core, with priestly ambition they thrust themselves into an office belonging to another. Again, our Lord says, “Beware of false prophets.” And again, “Many false prophets shall arise:” using the terms as synonymous with teachers. Again, John says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit: but try the spirits; because many false *prophets* are gone out into the world.”

Now you may say that God would not expose the weak ones of his people to so heavy a responsibility, as that of judging between true and false teachers. But I reply, that you, being a protestant, do fully admit that each of us is responsible to God for discerning, loving and receiving *the true doctrine*. The state of the case is this:—The Romanist says that you and I must receive from “the church,” (and not from Christ and the apostles directly) both our doctrine and our teachers: I am urging that we are responsible to God for choosing both the one and the other, and that no dictation of man will free us.<sup>94</sup> Will you now say, “True, I must take my doctrine from Christ, but [I must take] my teacher from the Church, because it is too heavy a responsibility to have to judge of my teacher? Again, I repeat, Paul threw on his converts the responsibility which you consider so grievous. Christ threw the same on the Jews, in the case of John the Baptist, though he wrought no sensible miracles. And mark the result: the publicans and harlots (little as you might think them qualified to judge) *justified God*, being baptized with the baptism of John; while the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him, Luke 7:29-30. Neither did Isaiah nor Jeremiah come with miracles to accredit their ministry, yet the Jews were made responsible for receiving them. Harken to what the Lord says by Jeremiah—ch. 14:14-16: “The

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<sup>94</sup> The primary definition of “dictation,” according to dictionaries from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, was this: “that which is delivered with authority.” Therefore, he is referring, I believe, to that which the Roman Catholic Church calls the *Magisterium* of the Church, which dictates that only the Church, through her *clerical* orders, can rightly interpret true doctrine; the people, whom they (and other Churches like her) have labeled the *laity*, cannot rightly interpret true doctrine. This, of course, contradicts the apostles, as our brother points out.

prophets prophesy lies in my name...Therefore thus saith the LORD, by sword and famine shall those *prophets be consumed*, And THE PEOPLE to whom they prophesy shall be *cast out in the streets of Jerusalem*, because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, *their wives*, nor *their sons*, nor *their daughters*: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.”<sup>95</sup>

As, then, the prophets of the Old Testament are placed in a point of view analogous to the teachers in the New, and the same kind of cautions against being deceived are applied by our Lord and his apostles to both, I do not see how we, more than they, can escape our responsibilities.<sup>96</sup> Indeed our Lord’s words are very distinct: “If the blind lead the blind, *both* shall fall into the ditch.”

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<sup>95</sup> I believe he is saying that even without miracles, the children of Israel should have had enough spiritual discernment to receive Isaiah and Jeremiah, and their words as from God; but we know they did not receive them, and so the people were held accountable by God for their lack of spiritual discernment. This is the responsibility that our brother says should never be given to someone else. The Lord says it belongs to every believer, but the Roman Catholic Church and other Churches like her have taught otherwise, making the Word of God, and the desire of the Lord, of none effect by their tradition.

<sup>96</sup> This one sentence is so important. Our brother shows that not only will Christian Teachers who teach that which is false in regard to the Faith be held accountable by Lord (in the same way He held the false prophets of the Old Testament accountable for teaching that which was false about God), the Lord will also hold every Christian accountable, for not obeying the Word of God to try the spirits, and also for not searching the Scriptures (like the Bereans of old) to see if what those Christian leaders were teaching were, indeed, things that were found in Scripture! The blind (false teachers in the Church) will not be able to lead the blind (those saints who will not try the spirits and search the Scriptures), if the saints make sure in the first place that they do not go blind! How?—by always *trying* the spirits, and by *proving* all things in the light of Scripture, which things God gave to us in the beginning: “Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father” (1Jn. 2:24 KJV). “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1Jn. 4:1 NKJV). So this is just as much our responsibility before God, as a teacher’s responsibility before God is to always be careful to hold to sound doctrine, and to never teach false doctrine (Titus 1:9).

Neither, when we have the book of Scripture complete, does it appear at all so hard to be made responsible for [the] judging of those who are called prophets, as for the Jews to have to receive or reject them, whose communications in so great a measure referred to things as yet and long after unfulfilled. But those who are spiritual judge all things, though they are judged of no man: and God knows what measure of help and of the spirit of judgment he had imparted to each, and whether they have power to discriminate, and to what extent.

Therefore his demanding this exercise of judgment from them is better evidence to me of their possessing the power, if they would exercise it, than ten thousand arguments that man might adduce to prove their incapability. And I feel assured that God will prove to all our satisfaction, in the great day, that the inability has arisen out of this, that “men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

I do therefore earnestly entreat you, as many as say that men are to be received for their office, regardless of their doctrine and life, hear what you Lord says:—“Beware of false prophets.” Hear what his apostles say:—“Though we, or an angel from heaven, come preaching any other gospel, let him be accursed.” “Yea, let him be accursed,” says Paul. “If any come unto you transgressing, or abiding not in the doctrine of Christ, receive him not, bid him not God speed: that ye be not partakers of his evil deeds,” says John.

Again, Jude tells us in his epistle, that men, corrupt men, seeking *after reward*, had crept into the church unawares; and how does he contend against them? By charging them not with want of ordination, but with their personal wickedness; and above all, by exhorting the church to contend for the faith *once* delivered to the saints.

If in Jude’s time, things were so fast hastening to corruption, that the pure times of the faith were looked back upon as past (which we see also so affectingly manifested in our Lord’s addresses to the seven churches; and, as Paul was constrained to say when he said, “All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ), who would take either the faith or the practice of the church fifty years later, as a model? <sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> In other words, Scriptures is our depository of truth, not man-made traditions, which have been slowly introduced into the Church after the death

Our Lord commends the Ephesian church, Rev. 2:2, for not bearing those which were evil, who said they were *apostles* and were not; but found them liars. Would not the Lord equally commend any congregation now, who should try those who call themselves *successors to the apostles*; and if they found them minding earthly things in their conversation, and abiding not in the doctrine of Christ in their teaching, forsake them as liars? There is in this no idea of respecting a man for his office; but, if he prove (as John says) by his unrighteousness, that he is of the devil, he must be esteemed (as Jude says) a spot, a cloud without water, a tree without fruit, twice dead: dead in themselves, and killing all who hear them.

The sum of the whole matter, then, is this—"If any man be unholy in life—unsound in doctrine—or wishes to be considered above what is written—both he and his claims are to be rejected, though an apostle or an angel; whereas those, who, like the apostle, have their conversation in heaven, are to be received. And of this fitness or unfitness, congruity or incongruity, every man, woman and child, to the utmost of its capacity of judging, is responsible. If they commend an evil man, they share his guilt; if they support a good man, they share his blessings.

For aught that Scripture shows to the contrary,<sup>98</sup> a man is not one whit the more *entitled* to minister, for anything man can do; nor less, for anything he can withhold; though he would be more *enabled*,<sup>99</sup> if there

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of the apostles, by a Church which had begun to lose her way in the things of God.

<sup>98</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, "for aught" was understood as "notwithstanding anything." So our brother is saying, "Notwithstanding anything that Scripture might show to the contrary," meaning, "Unless it can be shown otherwise from Scripture."

<sup>99</sup> As for the this phrase, "for anything man can do; nor less, for anything he can withhold," I believe he is referring to that belief of the Church of England, which stipulated that the bishop in apostolic succession had the exclusive power *to ordain*, and the exclusive power *to withhold* ordination. It is somewhat similar to what he said on page 50, "But those who now claim apostolic power, not only think their appointment necessary to make, but that their suspension is enough to silence a minister." He also refers to much the same on page 10, when he makes known that such a power cannot be found in Scripture: "I say then that herein you will never find the apostles pretending to any peculiar power of appointing [i.e. that which "a man can do"]...nor to any



were *apostles* now sent us of the Lord, to communicate again those blessed gifts of the Spirit,<sup>100</sup> the visible glory of the church (in the absence of which she ought to mourn, just as the Jews who saw the second temple, wept when they remembered the departed glory of the first).<sup>101</sup> It was our shechinah; the visible sign of God's presence."

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power at all of excluding [i.e. that which "he can withhold]." So I believe when all this is considered, that what our brother is saying is that just because a man claims that he has received the power to appoint, or to not appoint, does give him anymore right to continue to minister in the things of God; it is not one's "office" that determines whether one is a true or a false minister; rather, it is one's *life* and *doctrine*.

<sup>100</sup> But, with that being said, he does admit one would have more credibility as a minister, if there were now apostles sent by the Lord (which there are not in the sense of the original apostles) who could confirm, by their communication of spiritual gifts, whether one was a true or false minister (cf. II Tim. 1:6); yet even in that, Scripture would still be the final arbitrator, for as he said above, if one "wishes to be considered above what is written—both he and his claims are to be rejected, though an apostle or an angel" (Gal. 1:6-9—also see pages 7ff. & 16).

<sup>101</sup> These parenthesis markers are ours. We believed the difficult wording of this last part of the paragraph would be easier understood by removing the semi-colon and adding the parentheses. We did not change any of his original wording at all, nor did we alter the order of his words; we just re-arranged the punctuation marks, for ease of understanding. But because that is our opinion we have included this footnote to let the reader be able to read it as it was originally written with the exact punctuation markers that he used so the reader can decide for themselves. It was originally written exactly as follows, beginning after the phrase, "though he would be more *enabled*," which we will add for continuity—"though he would be more *enabled*, if there were apostles now sent us of the Lord, to communicate again those blessed gifts of the Spirit, the visible glory of the church; in the absence of which she ought to mourn, just as the Jews who saw the second temple, wept when they remembered the departed glory of the first. It was our shechinah; the visible sign of God's presence."

## SETTING APART FROM SECULAR PURSUITS

Nothing, I think, can be clearer, than that the apostle Paul never designed to constitute separation from worldly callings and hard labour, either as essential or desirable for the bishops. For he says distinctly to those of Ephesus: “These hands have ministered to my necessities, and to those that are with me. I have showed you all things, how *that so labouring ye ought to support the weak*; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” These then are his commands to the bishops at Ephesus. But that we may not think it a mere passing remark, he refers to this subject again, [in] 1 Thess. 2:9, where he says: “Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail; for, labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.” And for fear they should be disposed to think this was very well for him, but not intended for them, he concludes his 2nd epis.[2 Thess.] 3:7-9, thus: “For yourselves know how ye *ought to imitate* (μιμεῖσθαι) *us*: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; *but wrought with labour and travail night and day*, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves *an ensample unto you* to imitate us.” The apostle saw that there was more moral power in manifesting, thus evidently, his disinterestedness [in financial gain], in [i.e. by] supporting himself by his hands,<sup>102</sup> than in accepting from them their bounty; as he wished them to imitate *him*.

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<sup>102</sup> Two things might help us understand this sentence. He originally wrote, “The apostle saw that there was more moral power in manifesting thus evidently his disinterestedness in supporting himself by his hands, than in accepting from them their bounty; as he wished them to imitate *him*.” As one can see, we added three commas to set off the word “disinterestedness,” for without them one might think he was saying he was disinterested in supporting himself by working with his own hands. But rather he was saying the opposite; he was interested in supporting himself by his own hands, for their sake, for he wished to teach them that it was more blessed to give than to receive, and, I am sure, that he also wished to freely give, as he had freely received. But this

This ability and willingness at least, to live by our hands, seem the only hope of escaping the two evils, of seeking the ministerial offices for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread on the one hand, or on the other, of giving up our independence into the hands of those who voluntarily feed us. Thus also we take away occasion, as the apostle says, from those who desire an occasion to accuse us as mercenaries and not volunteers. While the church seeks our labours, and demands our service, and feeds us lovingly<sup>103</sup> with things convenient for us, we willingly work for her and live by her; but if the heart cools, we, like our Lord, love not that which is given grudgingly or of necessity; [and if] should this ever become the case, we will work for them, and live, like the apostle, by our own hands.

On the other occasions also we might feel it our privilege; as,—if the poor be in great distress, or the church in great need; but if for the support of the weak or to adorn the gospel, it can never be contrary to the Scripture.

Remember, I do not say a labourer is not worthy of his hire. He is most richly worthy; and woe be to that church which disregards the claim. If also a pastor be worth having, he is worth paying; and

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intention of his might be missed by modern day readers because the word “disinterested” had a different primary meaning in our brother’s day than it does today. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century the primary meaning of “disinterested” dealt with pecuniary matters. One dictionary near the time that he wrote gave its primary meaning as: “not influenced by any views of private lucre, or advantage,” meaning one was *not interested in financial gain*. However, today the primary meaning given by most dictionaries is one of who has *no interest in something*. Thus, with that primary meaning, and without the added commas and bracketed clarifications, one might interpret our brother’s words as saying Paul had no interest in supporting himself, but that he had to support himself, because they were not willing to support him. But our brother was actually saying the complete opposite! He was saying Paul would have supported himself, even if they had offered him support, because he wanted to teach them the importance of “giving,” rather than “receiving,” just as Paul also made known to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:34-35.

<sup>103</sup> In this sentence Anthony Norris Groves used “loving.” But we have changed it to “lovingly,” since he was using the word as an adverb. More than likely this was a simple printing error, and the word “lovingly” was the word that was really intended.

wherever there is much spiritual work to be done, it is bad economy to let much of his valuable time be employed in mere labouring for his earthly sustenance. But these considerations are not such as *he* is to urge on *them*, but which *they* are to urge on *him*; and I would have the minister of Christ infinitely above a thought about it; nay, selfish and indolent as our nature is, I would delight in seeing the sheep of his flock encouraged to labour hard<sup>104</sup> and give freely, by seeing him who preached the precept, manifest the example, like the apostle Paul. Nor must he count his time badly spent thus; for God can cause it to impart a ten-fold power to all his teaching.<sup>105</sup>

I am fully convinced that the church has been an infinite loser by dividing the labouring *hands* into one class and the preaching *mouths* into the other, instead of allowing them to remain as they were intended, and as they were in exercise among the Jews, united in service, for the mutual exhibition and illustration of each other. If we lived more in the moral power of the gospel, and were in our daily converse more intelligible epistles, “known and read of all men,” short sermons would

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<sup>104</sup> Our brother used the adverb “hardly” in this place, but we changed it to “hard” for ease of reading. In the context he was using the adverb with its primary meaning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century of, in a *hard manner*, with *great labour*. The secondary meaning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was, *barely*, or *infrequently*, *almost never*. Today, however, order is reversed, and in some dictionaries the meaning of in a *hard manner* and with *great labour* has disappeared completely.

<sup>105</sup> In other words, he is saying a pastor should be supported by the flock, but also the flock should be encouraged to labour hard by seeing him labouring hard with his own hands. So by this twofold labouring a pastor is free to work with his own hands while ministering, or to not work with his own hands while ministering. But if God does order him to do the former, and he fears that in so doing he is wasting his time, thinking it could be better spent ministering full time, he should realize that God knows what is best for His kingdom, so if God orders a servant to minister and to also work with his hands, God is able give him ten-fold more power and fruit in his shorter time of ministering, so that his time is not being wasted! In the end what matters is God’s will. If He wishes one to work with his own hands, he should work. If He wishes one to refrain from so working, he should refrain. Often God ordered Paul to work with His own hands, yet we know that *time* was never wasted; it never hindered God’s kingdom, rather it advanced God’s kingdom, all in accordance with God’s will.

go a great way. For instance, if Christ bids us love our neighbour as ourselves, love our brethren unto death, what a sufficient sermon from Christ! Yet what a long sermon it would take to prove *it did not* mean what was said; but that it meant and was quite consistent with your wallowing in luxury and profusion, while your brethren and sisters are houseless and their children uncared for!

When will the day come, that the church will be persuaded that her Lord is wiser than she? He sends an apostle to teach her bishops to work with their own hands and set them *an example*; this they declare cannot be. He sends the same apostle to point out those by whom he chooses to overcome the world; and those she determines she cannot receive.<sup>106</sup>

I cannot tell how, nor where, from the New Testament, arose this idea that manual labour is not only inexpedient, but unseemly and unlawful, to bishops [pastors, elders]. Who are we that we decide not only against the apostle's conduct, but against his inspired instructions? For I contend the apostle worked with his own hands, not because he *could not* get support without it, but because he *would not*. It was a principle which he wished to manifest for the edification of others; not an accident peculiar to himself. And this way of teaching the church is rendered only the more remarkable by his so fully knowing his own right to demand support (See 1 Cor. 9:6-18.)—where, on the one hand the *lawfulness* of *receiving*, and on the other, the GLORY of NOT receiving, are put in contrast.

But should any be disposed to make a *law* either of receiving or refusing, I would again refer them to Paul's example in making this, as every other act, subservient to a moral purpose, by exhibiting to each church its proper lesson—take, for instance, the way in which he reprov'd the disorder of the Thessalonian church, many of whose members “worked not at all,” 2 Thess. 3:11: was it not by labouring

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<sup>106</sup> I believe he is either referring to the fact that many in the clergy would not receive into ministry those whom God sent to minister, because they were not wise or mighty (1 Cor. 1:24-29), or because they did not hold titles or degrees as they themselves held, or they because they lacked an apostolic appointment, which they believed was necessary. Or he may be referring to the preferential treatment shown to those who were rich and respectable over those who were poor and considered to be of a lower class (James 2:1-8).

three years among them with his own hands? (See 2 Thess. 3:7-9), and again, 1 Thess. 2:9. How did he witness against the false teachers at Corinth, giving the saints he loved a sign whereby to know him?—was it not by refusing to be chargeable to them? 2 Cor. 11:9-15; and lastly, how did the exception he made in favour of the Philippians, whose money he took, honour the grace given to that church! (Phil. 4:15-17).

The whole of these scriptures I commend to your prayerful consideration, as illustrating the *principles* on which I ground the desirableness of leaving that free, for which there is no rule (in *Scripture*); and the important use Paul made both of his power to use and *not* use the bounty of the church, both in taking and leaving, teaching most needful lessons, and showing how much above the question of bodily support his whole service was.

It is obvious that had Paul been under the necessity of ordering every church, whatever its difference of grace, on the same model, or obliged to enforce his power by requiring for his support the equal or regular payments of churches, the whole of this varied instruction would have been lost to the church.

It really appears to me that all established churches have been led to heap upon themselves every possible encumbrance and difficulty; and when they have piled them up, they bind them on with hoops of iron and brass. Their *professed* object is to draw out the most holy, most spiritual and most unearthly men into the bosom of the church. Would any man in his senses believe, that to this end they would annex to their ministries those very things which carnal, earthly and sensual men seek after?—namely, wealth and gentility power and rank.<sup>107</sup> Too late they find that by baiting their hooks with carnal allurements, they have caught the devil's servants and not the Lord's.

But this is not all. The same crafty enemy has completed his victory by instituting these two cursed appendages; first, *once in the fraternity*,

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<sup>107</sup> I believe he is referring here to what we mentioned before regarding the worldly status and wealth given to certain bishops in the Church of England, as well as in the Catholic Church, and which, I believe (if he were still alive), he would also apply to many large Evangelical churches today where the “pastor” is given a salary, which, if compared with what the Chief Shepherd of the sheep received for His ministering, while He was here upon earth, should make every believer in Christ blush with shame.

*always so: (lest, forsooth, the devil's ministers be too easily ejected when discovered; or lest some new and more luscious bait temp them back into that which both is and is called the world; secondly, office sanctifies the ministration of a false prophet, and of one whose sins go beforehand to judgment: so that in the face of the Lord and his apostles it is decreed that we are not to judge false prophets by their fruits; we are knowingly to acknowledge Satan's ministers as our pastors; we are reverently to receive their admonitions and lend them our countenance; helping their evil deeds, for their office' sake!*<sup>108</sup>

Thus Satan soon became master of the field; and Rome and all her apostate sisters became evidences of his power. He led the church to hold out lures to his ministers, and then got her to sanctify their

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<sup>108</sup> No doubt, it seems our brother is addressing, in part, the historical apostasy that occurred in those passing centuries after the apostles died. It began first with the rise of the Roman Catholic Church when it began to develop a sacramental theology, leading into the teaching that there are seven sacraments. Within that development the Church adopted, what is called *ex opere operato* (out of the work, worked), wherein a sacrament was considered efficacious regardless the personal status or holiness of the bishop who was officiating (even if that bishop was living in a state of mortal sin—mortal sins being considered the worst of sins), as long as that bishop performed the rite correctly! For example, Canon XII of the Roman Catholic Church's *Decree on the Sacraments* reads: "Whoever shall affirm that a minister who is in a state of mortal sin, does not perform or confer a sacrament, although he observes everything that is essential to the performance and bestowment thereof: let him be accursed." Such were the evil superstitions that crept into the Church! As for the Church of England, they reduced the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church down to two, but still kept a similar mindset regarding them as seen in Article XXVI of their *Articles of Faith*; it reads: "Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil then." (Yet consider Isa. 1-18; Mic. 3:4-6!)

abominations till the Lord became banished from his church, and his faithful servants were cast out, and fed with their flesh the fowls of the air. O what a blessing would it be for the church, if her children were in their generation as wise as the children of this world!<sup>109</sup>

In the army, where courage and honour are the qualities most held in esteem, if a man is found defective in these essential requisites of a soldier, he is broken, dismissed and degraded—but in the church, where piety and humility are the essential qualities that should distinguish the characters of her officers, if these are wanting, they are neither broken, dismissed, nor degraded. Thus the present constitution of establishment is such, that they first by false motives allure corruptions into their bosom, and then by false principles keep them there, to spread their pestiferous poison wherever they can reach.

I see not how the church can ever be free from this withering evil, till she return to the New Testament rule of enforcing on her own members to judge by the written word and by the Spirit, who is a minster of Christ and to be supported as such; [and] who is not, and therefore is to be left to work his own way in the world. This can do no harm even should you be mistaken; for if he whom you would reject be really called of the Holy Ghost, it would give him an opportunity, which would be his glory, to show his truth and calling, as the apostle did—by supporting himself cheerfully.

My most earnest, anxious prayer to God for the church is that she be independent of everything that is of the *flesh*; simply hanging on her Lord in holy loyalty, as her husband, from whose lips alone she is to gather precepts, to guide her in her way to his favour, which is better than life. And I am persuaded that she never can enjoy this independence, but in proportion as she seeks nothing which man can give or withhold; but hangs like a weaned child on her Lord, never

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<sup>109</sup> I believe he is referring to the lesson of Luke 16:1-8, from which he wishes that believers would have the wisdom to know that what we do in the present affects our future. The unjust steward realized this for *selfish* reasons—his own well-being; believers should realize this for *unselfish* reasons—the future purity and well-being of the Church (II Cor. 11:1-4). And so, with this in mind, we should be willing to test the spirits, to search the Scriptures, to judge the evil within, and to contend for the Faith, all for the future well-being and purity of the Church (I Jn. 4:1; Acts 17:11; I Cor. 5:11-12; Jude 1:3).



desiring to be wise above what is written. If her Lord tells her it is for her honour appointed her not only to *reign* with him, but also to *suffer* with him, she should be content so to do; and if she hears him say, “The servant is not to be greater than his Lord,” she should not only believe, but joyfully follow him in his humiliation.

I would have the church to realize Christ to be her all in all—her crown and blessing—the fountain of her honour—and esteem all but dung and dross beside. I desire to see a bright exhibition of her graces, entwined with a bright profession of her heavenly principles, like apples of gold in pictures of silver; men set apart from the world, not by the puerile mimicry of man, which can never affect the heart, but by the over-powering realization of the eternal weight of glory, constraining the soul to declare, “We cannot but preach that which we have seen and heard; though (as I have observed before) the whole Sanhedrim and rulers of the people arise and forbid. It is the setting apart the body, soul and spirit to the Lord, as a holy, reasonable and lively sacrifice in all its exercises, that God desires in his ministers; not the hands set apart from the needle and the canvas, as Paul by example shows us.

## TENDENCY TO JUDAISM<sup>110</sup>—THE FOUNTAIN OF ALL THIS CARNALITY IN THE CHURCH

It may be asked, “If these things are not the institution of God, how did they creep in? Nothing could be more natural, nor is more obvious, than

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<sup>110</sup> Because there are so many false prophets today who wish to demean God’s people the Jews, rather than weep for God’s people the Jews (as we are told the Paul wept—Rom. 9:1-5), it might help to say a little more about the title *Tendency to Judaism*. I do not believe in any way our brother was disparaging the Jewish people by that phrase, rather he was disparaging the fact that some wished to turn the Church into a New Israel, replacing the old Israel as the people of God! He did not believe the Church replaced the nation of Israel, but rather that the Church was a New Man composed of Jewish believers saved out of Israel, and Gentiles believers saved out from the nations, who were both made one in Christ Jesus by their faith in Him. He did not believe the Church replaced the nation of Israel, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches; nor did he believe the Church became a new or spiritual Israel, as some others teach. He believed, as Paul taught, that a partial blindness had happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles had come in, at which time, as Paul says, a Deliver will come out of Zion and so all Israel shall be saved (Rom 11:26 Darby; Rom. 7:6; II Cor. 3:3-18; Eph. 2:13-15). So there was no disparagement of the Jewish people intended by his title. So what I believe our brother was referring to by his title was that some Christians in Jerusalem, who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, were trying to “judaize” the entire Church so that it would live by the rules and regulations of Old Covenant (Acts 15:5). In his Memoirs our brother Groves said it this way: “The more I trace the existing evils of the Church of Christ, the more I believe, in my inmost heart, they have originated in the natural worldliness of man seizing on that in the Jewish dispensation which suited his carnal nature, and grafting it into the spiritual dispensation of the Lord of glory” (Memoir, p. 330). And so, we see that his title, *Tendency to Judaism* might today be better rendered as a *Tendency to Judaize*, for his title, I believe, was simply referring to those who wished to bring the Church back under the rules and regulations of the Old Covenant, rather than allowing one to serve in the newness of the Spirit in the New Covenant, which covenant was instituted by the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, wherein Jewish believers and Gentile believers in this dispensation are now made one in Christ Jesus, forming a New Man, the Church, and not a New Israel that was raised up to replace the Old Israel. The nation of Israel remains the people of God, whom God will one day save by the Spirit of Grace (Zech. 12:10; 13:8-9).

the tendency of the early churches to judaize. Against this tendency to corrupt the doctrine of the church, the whole force of the apostle Paul's zeal and energy is directed, and with but partial success, even in the Gentile churches: in Jerusalem it overwhelmed everything but the foundation, so that even the intrepid Paul himself was borne down by the current there.

In writing to Titus, he says, that those false teachers of the circumcision must be stopped, who subvert whole houses. To Timothy he says, that some have swerved from the truth, having turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law.

Necessitated as he was to oppose the evil principle of *enforcing* the law of Moses, he found the irritation so great, that he was led *voluntarily* to submit to the law in his own person; and on the same ground he induced Timothy to submit to circumcision. And in Gal. 2:10-14, the tendency in those days to judaize and the power of the Jerusalem church to enforce it, are lamentably exhibited in the case of Peter himself; for, as we there learn, when Peter first came down to Antioch, he exercised his Christian liberty by eating with the Gentiles, as the Lord had expressly, on his visit to Cornelius, commanded him: yet no sooner did certain brethren come down from James, than both he and Barnabas were drawn away, fearing them of the circumcision. Now if this tendency to judaize was so strong that the very pillars of the church were bowed down under it, can we be surprised that others were borne away likewise?

The whole epistle to the Galatians appears to be but one grand effort of the apostle to root out this judaizing tendency from the Galatian church. In fact, the tendency to judaize in the Christian church appears to have been just what the tendency to idolatry was among the Jews;<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> I believe what our brother means is that man is never satisfied with the way that God declares He is to be worshiped. Man wishes to worship with fleshly things he can see and feel. The incident of the golden calf is emblematic of this. Those Israelites attempted to worship the LORD God by a calf they could see and feel (cf. Ex. 34:4-5 NKJV; Neh. 9:18). Thus, after the LORD Jesus introduced the new and living way by which God is to be worshipped in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:21-24; Heb. 10:19-25), man once again became dissatisfied with God's way, and so created a worship they could see and feel, taking things from the Old Covenant, and combining them with the New.

who made a calf under the very mount of God, after his presence and power had been manifested before them.

If then during the personal ministry of this most devoted apostle, and in the face of his plainest declarations, they were so ready to turn away to those beggarly elements <sup>112</sup> of bondage from the glorious liberty of

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<sup>112</sup> Some have translated *beggarly elements* in Gal. 4:9 as *poverty-stricken principles*. Although Paul will also apply this to the outward ceremonies of the Old Testament, in this verse he is applying it to those pagan ceremonies that the Gentiles practiced before they were saved, for Gal. 4:8, speaks of it in connection with their service to their pagan gods—which would not be true of those Jewish Christians. Thus it refers to those old outward pagan ceremonies that they practiced on certain days, months, times, and years in service and worship to their gods, which framework they now wished to adapt for their worship to the true God by Christianizing that old framework; thus, making it appropriate for Christian worship. This practice came to mature fruition in the Catholic Church, wherein certain prayers to certain gods and goddesses were replaced with certain prayers to certain saints; and pagan feasts were soon transformed into Christian feasts. These were the old carnal ways of worship that were called *poverty-stricken principles*, for, even though they might be Christianized, they brought nothing but *spiritual poverty* to the Churches. Only spiritual worship, in spirit and truth, can bring the *riches* of Christ Jesus into the lives of Christians. Thus, even though this reference in Gal. 4:9 applied specifically to the Gentiles, Paul also uses it as an general example as to how the outward ceremonies of the Old Covenant can never be Christianized, and then be introduced into the worship of the Church—with the expectation that it will lead one into the riches of Christ. The things of Old Covenant only pointed to the *riches of Christ*; they did not contain the riches of Christ, which riches we now receive by the Spirit. Perhaps the Judaizers told the Gentile Christians that outward ceremonies and practices, in and of themselves, were not wrong, only the content of those ceremonies were wrong. So maybe they said something like this: “Now that you no longer believe in those false gods, but now in the true God, we have outward ceremonies in the Old Covenant that you can now use for worship in the New Covenant, for their content is good, coming from the true God. So, instead of Christianizing your old ceremonies for worship, use our Jewish ceremonies for Christian worship, for we know you are familiar and comfortable in worshipping by such outward means.” Perhaps this Christianization explains how the things from the Old Covenant became so completely integrated into the practices, worship, and ceremonies of the Gentile Churches at large, as our brother will continue to explain.

the children of God, in matters which involved the very essence of Christianity;—if the apostle had to cry out, *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage*; and if this strange infatuation seized alike inspired apostles at times, and Gentile churches during the lifetime of the apostles, and that, in things relating to doctrines concerning which the declaration of the Spirit were so clear;—can you be surprised that immediately after the apostles, in things relating to discipline [i.e. rules of worship], of which Scripture says so little, their eyes should have reverted to the old ruin, for material to build their new house with? Indeed, I think we can without any difficulty trace every stone to its place in the temple; so little has it been altered; as, for example:—

High priest, with supremacy among priests.	Bishop, with supremacy among priests.
Priests, inferior in dignity to the high priest.	Priests, inferior in dignity to the bishop.
Levites.	Deacons.
High priest, consecrated to his office.	The bishop, consecrated to his office.
High priest's handsome vestments.	Bishop's handsome vestments.
Priest's peculiar vestments to minister in.	Priest's peculiar vestments to minister in.
Levites to help the priests in the temple service.	Deacons to help the priests in the church service.
High priest had a mitre.	The bishop a mitre.
Separation between laity and clergy, so that for the other tribes to interfere in the priest's office was profanation.	Separation between laity and clergy, so that the former have been excluded from various ministries.
Temple consecrated and separated from common use.	Christian places of worship consecrated and set apart from common use.
Altar in the temple.	Altar in the church.
Jewish clergy titles.	Christian clergy titles.
The high priest had functions he only could perform.	The bishop assumes functions he only could perform.

The bishops, priests and deacons, after the example of the high priest, priests and Levites, soon considered themselves as orders, instead of the two sets of officers, viz. overseers and servants, with probably but local or temporary authority.

To say that it can be traced up to the apostles' time, is nothing; for it can evidently be traced up to the Jewish dispensation, just as much as the traditionary additions to the Jewish ritual might be traced into Egypt, as washing of cups and pots. And yet as a fact, the earlier we can trace back the history of the church, the less traces can be found of external conformity between the Christian and the Jewish church [i.e. the nation of Israel]. But the principle having got admission, it grew up step by step.

By going a little into the history of the church of Rome and the eastern churches, it could easily be shown that this tendency to judaize went yet farther, as for instance in the Armenian; where crimes, *natural* and *unnatural*, are no disqualification for the priesthood; but should the holiest among them have *lost a tooth*, in vain does he seek his desired pre-eminence.<sup>113</sup> The Coptic churches observe circumcision (which was doubtless of older date with them than their Christianity) while those of Abyssinia have circumcision and the Sabbath, divorce and polygamy, distinctions of meats, priestly purifications, and various other rites. This will, I think, be sufficient to establish that the systems we now are enveloped in are not the offspring of the new testament in the blood of Jesus, the divine legacy to the Gentile church, disencumbered of all the

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<sup>113</sup> Our brother's statement that one seeking the priesthood could never have such an external blemish was presumably learned from one of his many Armenian contacts that he made when he was a missionary in Baghdad, some who were priests, and some who were merchants. Or, perhaps, he might have learned it from the Armenian priest who was made the schoolmaster of the children's school he had established in the Christian quarter of Baghdad. Another British resident in the Ottoman Empire, near that time, reported the same thing, writing: "No high intellectual or moral qualifications are required for admission to the priesthood; but the slightest physical imperfection would be an insuperable difficulty, and the candidate for holy orders who has the misfortune to lose a *tooth* must give up his pretensions to sacred office!"—The London Quarterly Review, Vol. I, September and December, 1853 (Patridge, Oakey, and Co., London, 1853) pg. 21

pomp and all the separation between holy and unholy among the saints, as well as clean and unclean among animals; but they are clearly of the dispensation of Moses.<sup>114</sup>

If then we are obliged to confess from Sacred Writ that the overwhelming tendency to judaize corrupted the church, as well as bore away apostles, in the purest and most spiritual times of the church; we need be but little surprised at finding in after ages those things copied which every natural mind pursues after and cleaves to.

Had they confined themselves to the New Testament, what would they have found? Poor bishops or overseers, recommended to work [with their hands] for their bread, and to give to the poor; one and the same with elders, only one name showing the nature of the office, the other the kind of men to fill it; and simple deacons to manage the charity of the church. They would have found a marked prohibition to be called doctor or teacher, for *one* was their teacher, even Christ; or to

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<sup>114</sup> The problem was not that Jewish Christians continued their observance of certain things of a Jewish nature derived from their background and culture, such as their dress, or their choice of circumcision, that is, if they so wished to do so, as Scripture shows with the story of Paul and Timothy in Acts 16:3. (I do not believe Paul, who withstood Peter to his face in Antioch, would have ever done this if he did not believe it was part of his liberty in Christ Jesus to do so.) Nor was their continuance of such things as taking a vow, as Paul did in Acts 18:18, or even in such things as maintaining their meeting together in a synagogue a problem (James 2:2—Darby's Version), that is, assuming it did not replace their worship on the first day of the week. The problem was when such things among Jewish Christians became legalisms that were not only seen as that which would please God, but also as that which was once more required by God for salvation! And, most certainly, it was a problem when such things were then imposed upon Gentile Christians as being those things that were necessary for their salvation or sanctification (Acts 15:1)! And also, after all the apostles had passed away, it was a problem when the Gentiles themselves ending up adopting such rules and regulations from the Old Covenant as being those things essential for all Gentile Churches to observe and follow under the New Covenant! And, finally, it was a problem when such regulations from those earlier Churches reached even into the Church of England, becoming so thoroughly mixed together with the things of the New Covenant, that they became man-made traditions, which, like the traditions of the Pharisees of old, ended up nullifying the Word of God and the things of the Spirit.

sit in the chief seats in the synagogues, or to exercise dominion or authority like the Gentiles; but if any one wished to be great, he was to become as the younger; and if he would be chief, he was to be a servant; even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve others; and that whosoever would exalt himself, should be abased. And Peter says, the elders in exercising their episcopal office or oversight, are not to be lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock. And they were not to be called father, because one was the Father of the church, even God.

This would have been but sorry fare for those who wished to enjoy the good things of the world—its wealth—its pageantry—and its distinctions. And Satan, who endeavoured to destroy the efficacy of the atonement which bruised his head, by leading back the heart to ceremonial confidences, and thus cheating the soul of its solid peace, led back the increasing carnality of the church to a judaical polity, to corrupt its true minister and ministration; and put in (as the apostle says) his own ministers, transformed as the ministers of righteousness.

But when the desire of this world's power and wealth and glory infested the church of the lowly emptied Jesus, where could the soul seeking these things find repose or encouragement? If the eye rested on the King of saints, the Lord of life, the great Exemplar of the church, it recoiled, and the half-formed thought of ambition was extinguished. If it wandered from him to his apostles, they were the off-scouring of all things. If again it strayed through all the sacred pages, left for the direction of the Gentile church in after ages, here again were lamentation and mourning and woe to every earthly thought and ambitious hope. Wearied at last in the vain pursuit of sanction from the testament in the blood of the Son of God, or from the example of him or his disciples, they fly to Moses as their patron. For it is Moses who makes priests to be earthly princes, their houses palaces; and make it appear congruous that the followers of the humble Jesus, the houseless, homeless wanderer (who, while the foxes had holes and the birds had nest, had not where to lay his holy head; who said, "The servant is not greater than his master, but it is enough that he be as his master) should be thus exalted among the princes of the earth.

What but an eye averted from Christ's institutions, and resting on those of Moses, can make an overseer or elder or bishop (call him what



you may) be content that his house shall be called a *palace*, as if in derision of his Lord—his seat in the cathedral a *throne*, in defiance of His precept to his apostles, not to take, like the Pharisees, the chief seats in synagogues? <sup>115</sup> Moses also gives them their tithes—he gives them their vestments—their supremacy—their peculiar holy and privileged character—their mitre, their lordly dignity altogether. <sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> I believe he is referring to the fact that in the Church of England, and also in the Roman Catholic Church in Rome, the Archbishop lives in a *palace* and sits on a *throne*, rather than walking as Jesus walked, and serving like His Lord served while He was upon earth. Jesus did not live in a magnificent palace, but in the lowly house of a carpenter, and then of a fisherman; and He did not sit on a throne high above, but on the lower seats below. So what was the minister of Christ, whose eyes were averted from Christ's institutions (i.e. His ways), to do, knowing that such outward adornments were incongruous with such service like his Lord? Our brother says those worldly ministers turned to Moses, knowing that in the Old Testament a priest could possess such adornments and still be considered righteous before men. And so, those called to be ministers of Christ in the New Testament began to integrate the things of the Old Testament, so they could possess those outward adornments and attainments from the Old, and yet, still appear righteous before men! In this way they became *priestly princes*, without losing the appearance of being righteousness, just as the priests in the Old Testament were able to do—"And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be prince of the princes of the Levites, *and have* the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary" (Num. 3:32 ERV1885).

<sup>116</sup> It seems our brother is referring to the fact that there will always be Christians who love to bring the natural (Gr. soulical) man into the things of God (I Cor. 2:14 with I Cor. 3:3). The obvious sins of the fleshly body are anathema even to a soulical Christian, but the more subtle sins of a fleshly soul are often excused and/or ignored, such sins of the soul as contentions, jealousies, selfish ambitions, dissensions, envyings—a trust in man's wisdom and a love for philosophy—and that fleshly desire for reputation, prestige, and power among men, as well as that love for money (Gal. 5:20-21; I Cor. 2:1-5; II Cor. 11:6; Col. 2:8; Gal. 2:2; Matt. 23: 4-11; I Pet. 5:2-3; Luke 16:14; I Tim. 6:10). Soulical Christians will always be happy to serve God, if they can still serve "self." But a spiritual Christian will deny self, putting away those sins of the soul that Paul reveals are also a part of the works of the flesh, and will, instead, take up their cross daily in order to follow the Lord Jesus in that way of the cross, ever willing to walk as Jesus walked, and willing to have that mind in himself that was in Christ Jesus (Luke 9:23; I John 2:6; Phil. 2:5-8).

I cannot sometimes help thinking that the present titles assumed by ministers of Christ, were designed by Satan, were fastened by him upon so many of (must we call them?) the churches of God.

The Lord says, "Be not called doctor, nor teacher, nor father, nor be a lord over God's heritage."

Now when you see one individual uniting every title forbidden, and whenever he goes to worship, doing the very thing his Lord said he should not do—officially assume the chief seat; the heart is overwhelmed at the extent of disobedience, and cannot but say, "You have made the law of God of none effect by your traditions." For against all that the Lord has said, men are called doctor, right revered *father in God*, *lord* bishop; their very seats called thrones, and their houses palaces. It appears to me most absurd for such men to claim exclusive authority in deciding on the fitness of others to explain God's word. For the greatest enthusiast on earth cannot do worse with God's word, than make it flatly contradict the Lord, leading men to do those things which He has forbidden, and opposing those which He has enjoined. Remember also Christ's words: "Whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Would He then thus honour the laws of Moses during its continuance, and less honour His own all perfect precepts?

It may be said this lordship is but a name. Had it been so this would have been rebellion enough against the word and example of the Prince of life. But a lordship equal to that assumed by the episcopacy of England over the curacy, is exercised in no department of the state.\* A

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\*It may be said this is seldom exercised. It is sufficient it is held *in terrorem* [meaning a threat of punishment that was meant to deter]; and any real lenity that exists is due chiefly to the current of public opinion setting against such arbitrary exercise of power.

curate<sup>117</sup> may be suspended from ministry, himself and his family left to starve, and the bishop who suspends him need neither give an answer to inquiries nor an explanation of his conduct; and the sufferer may die, without even knowing why this visitation has befallen him.—Is this being lords over God’s heritage, or is it not?

If you ask me then, how the things came in that I grieve over, my answer is, that they are the illegitimate offspring of the natural worldliness of the professing Gentile church, united, without the sanction or blessing of the Lord, to the worldly principles and earthly glories of the Jewish that has passed away. And I feel assured, we shall never see the church in spiritual purity or power again, till this unholy intercourse is stopped: <sup>118</sup> till the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the sole

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<sup>117</sup> In the Church of England a “curate” (from the Latin *cura*— “care,” referring to one who cares for souls) refers to a member of the clergy, a priest who assists the parish priest, known as the rector, which is the priest holding the primary liturgical, pastoral, and administrative duties of the parish.

<sup>118</sup> Perhaps it would do well to give our brother’s words context. Though the Church of England had adapted many man-made traditions and practices that were not found in Scripture, as our brother has been sharing, they were still sound in the essential doctrines of the Faith once delivered to the saints, thus justifying our brother hope that they would return to spiritual purity and power again. Many brethren in Christ in the Church of England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the for a good part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, remained faithful to such essential doctrines of the Faith as the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, and the virgin birth. Some of these faithful brethren in the Church of England, whom we might mention, were the evangelists George Whitfield and John Wesley, as well as his brother, Charles Wesley, the famous hymn writer of such hymns as, *O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing*, and *Hark The Herald Angels Sing*. Then, of course, before they left the Church of England, there was our brother A. N. Groves, J. N. Darby (who was a priest in the Church of England), J. G. Bellett, John V. Parnell, G. V. Wigram, J. L. Harris, and many others, before they all left to gather only in the Name of the Lord. But then there were other godly men who remained in the Church of England, yet were well-respected as being evangelical in their faith—such ones as Charles Simeon, one of the founders of the *Church Missionary Society* and the *London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews*, and then A. R. Fausset (of Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Bible Commentary), and Henry Alford, the great Greek scholar, as well as such ones as F. Tinley Bassett, Charles John Ellicott, and S. T. Bloomfield. All these brothers in the Church of England were sound in the

object on whom every eye rests—until his example is looked upon as the *perfect model*—his precepts as *perfect wisdom*—and what he *literally acted*, if he commanded it to be followed, *literally followed*—or, at least, in holy truth, *aimed after*;—[and, finally] when, as the aristocracy in the state is based on *birth* and *fortune*, so the aristocracy of the church shall be based on *holiness* and *humility*, as the Lord has definitely commanded.

Believe me, I am contending not against dutiful obedience to lawful power, but against undutiful submission to unlawful and forbidden power; which is, both in form and in fact, a positive usurpation—the dethronement of the King of saints, and the exaltation of man.

The cases of civil and spiritual authority are quite different; inasmuch as to a weak or wicked civil ruler I am commanded to submit, in things external to the soul; while a wicked spiritual ruler is that which cannot exist; for the Lord our king has assured me, that he delegates spiritual power to no evildoers nor false teachers, and has laid each individual among us under a personal responsibility to try and examine all who pretend to such power.

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Essentials of the Faith, and were oft quoted and well respected by many Evangelical brethren. However, all of that began to change near the end of the 19th century, at which time our brother Groves' hope that the Church might return to its purity and holiness, like a vapor completely disappeared, and its unholy alliance with the world did not wane, but only increased! The twentieth century found many in the Church not only departing from the Essentials of the Faith, but also making mockery of some of the most basic morals of the Bible, desecrating the very name by which they were called. And now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, because of this ongoing unholy intercourse with the world, so many of those in the Church are Christian in name only, sadly fulfilling Jude's prophecy—"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ...[They are] spots in your feasts of charity...feeding themselves without fear: clouds...without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." (Jude 1:4, 12-13).

## PRELATICAL ORDER<sup>119</sup> CONTRASTED WITH TRUE ORDER

As it is nowhere laid down in Scripture, that several congregations and their bishops are to be put under the superintendence of a *prelate*, I

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<sup>119</sup> In the many of the old Historical Churches, generally speaking, the Prelatical Order first referred to those clerical prelates, i.e. the bishops, who were “set before,” and so above other members of the so-called clergy (i.e. presbyters, priests, who according to Scripture should have always been regarded as bishops themselves, as elders/pastors). The word *prelatical* comes from the Latin *praelatus*, meaning “to prefer,” to place before.” How sad it is that this mindset leads to the non-biblical practice that sets apart and elevates one elder to be above the other elders, i.e. to be the chief elder or first elder among equals, or that sets apart one pastor to be above other pastors, i.e. to be the Senior Pastor, or Lead Pastor above other pastors, or that sets apart one bishop to be above the other bishops in one church, to be a Monarchical Bishop above the other bishops (which then caused those other bishops in one church to lose their titles of bishop, becoming known instead, most often, by the title of presbyter, and/or priest). In some Historical Churches this practice led to still a higher prelate, who was called an Archbishop, who became the Bishop over other bishops. For example, in the Church of England, an Archbishop, being the highest prelate, is known as the Archbishop of Canterbury. But in other Churches there are even higher prelates. Generally speaking, out of all the Archbishops (Metropolitans) in some Churches, arose a higher prelate called the Patriarch. In the Greek Orthodox Church the Patriarch was given the title, “By the mercy of God, Archbishop of Constantinople, the New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch,” and in the Roman Catholic Church, the Patriarch of Rome, who at first was but one Patriarch among many in the world, soon separated and elevated himself above all the other Patriarchs, and took upon himself the title “Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and metropolitan of the Roman province, Sovereign of Vatican City-State, Servant of the Servants of God.” Beloved, truly the reasonings and traditions of men will make “the Word of God of none effect” just as the LORD Jesus, the true Head of the Church declared in Mark 7:13, also saying “in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men (Mark 7:7).

am unable to believe any such arrangement essential, or generally desirable. Under proper men indeed, as a personal mark of love to deep and aged piety, or under peculiar circumstances, it may doubtless be submitted to; and where the obedience is within scriptural limits, the superintendence may produce mutual profit, and deserve gratitude.<sup>120</sup> But that churches are disorderly, because [they view themselves] independent of other churches, and because [they believe they are] subject to their own bishops and not to prelates, is an idea that could occur to no one, whose views are founded on the Scriptures.

As for the allegation that Timothy and Titus were *bishops*, it is (as far as the Scripture is concerned) a mere fiction. Timothy is called an *evangelist*, but not an overseer. He was not attached to a special church or churches, but to the person of the apostle Paul. In his second captivity at Rome, Paul writes to Timothy, “Do thy diligence to come shortly to me;” which is itself a sufficient proof that he was not *then* *bishop* of Ephesus. If ever he became such, it was after the apostle’s death. For it is incredible, that Paul could *in five words*, thus unscrupulously summon the bishop of Ephesus to attend him at Rome, without one word of apology or explanation to the church, and without reflecting that Timothy might have an opinion of his own. (It were equally uncourteous and unwise.)<sup>121</sup> And when contrasted with the

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<sup>120</sup> I do not believe our brother is condoning any type of Prelatical Order in this sentence, simply because he qualifies what he says by saying, “within scriptural limits.” Therefore I think he is using the phrases “submitted to” and “where the obedience is within,” as expressions of that godly respect we are admonished to show, in such verses as Lev. 19:32; Prov. 16:31, and I Pet. 5:5, for those who are aged. So I believe he is referring to the need to show deference to any aged saint regardless of whether he accepted any one of the many prelatical titles used in the Church of England—for example, such titles as *Curate*, *Incumbent*, or *Reverend* to name but a few (the last title, being a title I believe, should be reserved for God alone—Ps.111:9 KJV). Even our brother Darby would sometimes show such respect for a godly brother who may have used such a title, once referring to one brother as “Right Reverend” (*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, “Brethren and Their Reviewers,” Doctrinal No. 3). But like our brother Groves, he did not believe in the desirable nature of such titles.

<sup>121</sup> Our brother originally wrote: “...and without reflecting that Timothy might have an opinion of his own; It were equally uncourteous and unwise; and when contrasted with the mode in which Paul besought Apollos to come to Corinth,

mode in which Paul besought Apollos to come to Corinth, and [yet] received his refusal (I Cor. 16:12) all doubt vanishes, that Timothy had made himself Paul's personal attendant, and that he was attached to no church at all at that time, as its fixed officer. [However,] as an evangelist, as the substitute of St. Paul, as one, who through young in years, was old in service, he might doubtless be often called to advise, to instruct, and to rebuke. Hence [we can see] the need of that admonition, to avoid *rebuking* elders, but rather to entreat them as fathers.

With respect to Titus, as he is addressed by the apostle in the same terms as Timothy, possibly he also might have been an evangelist; but at any rate we know that he was Paul's messenger, and did what he did at Crete, by Paul's direct authority. When Paul charges him to *reject heretics*, this implies no more official power than Paul himself had and exercised; and we have already seen what this was (p. 42) [i.e. p.50]. At the same time it is well to observe that the word *reject* does not imply authority, and has been translated *avoid* in 2 Tim. 2:23; moreover the word *heretic* (which is Greek, not English) means a partisan, as the word *heresy* means a party or sect; and is so translated, Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; 28:22. Indeed it should be so translated in all the remaining passages, Acts 24:14; I Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20; 2 Pet. 2:1.

It seems to me strangely enough assumed, that because Paul and Titus are represented as setting elders over *newly* converted congregations, therefore it always was to be done, by an authority or persons *apart from themselves* [i.e. meaning by an authority or persons *apart from* those churches, i.e. those congregations], though one word of such a necessity is never alluded to. Now surely if it could be proved that a mother fed her child when it was a baby, no one, in the absence of

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and received his refusal (I Cor. 16:12) all doubt vanishes, that Timothy had made himself Paul's personal attendant, and that he was attached to no church at all, at that time, as its fixed officer. As an evangelist, as the substitute ...” But we put the clause, “It were equally uncourteous and unwise;” into a parentheses to show that the clause was construed with previous sentence, and not with the following sentence. We then removed the comma, in order to form the rest into a new sentence. We hope this (with are added words in brackets) smoothed out the flow of the text. But in case our understanding is wrong, we have included his words as written so the readers can decide for themselves.

some strong proof, would suppose this to be a sufficient basis for a never-dying custom; so that when he became a man, then also he was to be fed by others.

It appears to me the most natural and simple event possible in the *infancy* of churches gathered out from among the heathen, for their evangelists to judge who were fittest to be elders. But when they became established in Christianity, and their evangelists or apostles had gone away, perhaps never to return, the natural inference is, in the absence of any thing to the contrary, that they<sup>122</sup> were to carry on what had been begun, only taking care to choose such men as the apostle, in his epistles to Timothy and Titus described.

That the bishops succeed to one tittle of the apostolic power, is nowhere *written*, and therefore not to be received.

Nay, but we know that they could not be brought into the same position towards the churches in which they were born, as were the apostles who founded them. “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers,” says Paul, I Cor. 4:15; “for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel.” The apostles had to deliver to the churches the commandments of the Lord, as he had delivered to them; herein also they had no successors. The apostle of the Gentiles claimed no jurisdiction, except over the churches founded by his own preaching (2 Cor. 10:13-16); hence it is obvious that he *could* have no successor. The question about the limits of dioceses, involves as such, no question of principle but rather of degree. The real question of principle between independent and episcopal churches is contained in this: whether out of the bishops a certain number are to be specially *consecrated*, in order to give them the exclusive power of *ordaining*. And of this I have spoken enough above. However, the Scriptures tell us often of many bishops in one church; of one bishop over many churches they tell us nothing.

The epistle to Philippi is directed to the *bishops* and deacons, Phil. 1:1. “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” It

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<sup>122</sup> I believe that when one observes the flow of the text, and the overall context of this subject, one sees that the pronoun “they” cannot refer to the elders alone, but must refer to the churches as a whole, which would also include, of course, all the elders within the church.



was not *a* bishop of the church at Ephesus that Paul sent for, but those whom the Holy Spirit had made bishops (ἐπισκόπους, Acts 20:28) of that church. Also Titus was commanded to appoint elders or bishops (Tit. 1:5, 7), in every city. “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders* in every city, as I had appointed thee;”.... “For a *bishop* must be blameless,” &c. &c. Paul also appointed elders in every church, Acts 14:23. In every place where they are mentioned, there are many in one church, *and in no instance one over many churches*.

Of the angels of the seven churches we know nothing, save that there was one to each\* church or congregation; and the churches themselves were too near extinction, from corruptions, to be other than *beacons*. But whether they appointed *themselves* like Stephanas, or were appointed *by an evangelist*, such as Timothy, or by the apostles, nothing is *written*, and therefore we know nothing, and may conclude that it matters little.

To the mind accustomed to the machinery of an *external* order, proportion and beauty, and accustomed to associate, with its earliest recollections, almost a divine sacredness to the whole fabric of our national churches, it must, I know, seem hard indeed to admit that the basis of many of the pretensions are so shadowy from God’s word, as I really feel that they are, and therefore have stated them to be.

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\*Those who meddle with ecclesiastical history would do well to prove, that in the first two centuries a bishop did *not* mean the head of a single congregation. Even the epistles attributed to Ignatius, which are the grand repository of arguments for episcopal authority, distinctly acknowledge one altar and *one bishop* as uniformly connected. But as my own mind gives no weight to anything but to Scripture, I have no desire to enlarge on historical topics.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Our brother cannot mean 200 years, for the Church did not even begin until well into the 1<sup>st</sup> century after the Day of Pentecost (c. 33A.D.). So he must be speaking generally. But his point is that none of that matters. Why? Because it is equally true that those Churches were corrupted, having departed from the apostolic pattern for Church government left for us in Scripture; and so, since Scripture is our guide, not history, what happened in history carries no weight, and must not be used to change the apostolic pattern left for us in the Word.

Believe me, there is much delusion spread over the minds of many, relative to the value of uniformity;<sup>124</sup> infinitely more would be often lost than gained by it.

Suppose, for instance, the government of Great Britain, in love with some fancied views of the beauty of order ceased to be satisfied that each family should govern its own internal concerns, according to the variety of circumstances, situations, ranks, and even dispositions of men; or, alarmed by some instances of gross disorder and domestic irregularity published a law that every family should be governed in the same way and subject to the same rules: there might be much more of external order than now, when every house is left to follow its own way, only subject to the common law of the land. But would there be more happiness, or more national energy developed? I would venture to assert that if it were adopted in the most prosperous and energetic empire in Europe, everything that is beautiful in social character would shortly wither away.

The tendency of forcing order in the Christian church is just the same. The order that God loved in his natural church was *natural* order; in his spiritual church, *spiritual*. In the church of Christ, the order that God loves is this—that every man be in the place where He has put him; and the most abominable disorder is where *unholy* men are attached to

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<sup>124</sup> I believe our brother is using the word *uniformity* in light of the Act of Uniformity of 1662, which stated, “An Act for the Uniformity of Public Prayers and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies, and for establishing the Form of making, ordaining and consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons in the Church of England.” The laws stipulated that there must be a uniformity of worship in the Churches in accordance with the rites and ceremonies of the *Book of Common Prayer*, including an adherence to every article of the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, which, while it contained matters of the Faith, of which all true believers in Christ would hold to and confess, it also included articles which contradicted Scripture, such as article XXIII, which stated: “It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same...” As a result the Act forced hundreds of Puritan ministers out of the Church of England, and caused much turmoil within England itself. This, and things like this, might help us understand why he said regarding the value of *uniformity*—“infinitely more would be often lost than gained by it.”

the ministry of holy offices. The profanation of the Old Testament was this: when any man not *typically* holy had to do with typically holy ministries. So in the dispensation of that Jesus, who banished by his light the *shadows* of righteousness and brought in *everlasting* and *real* righteousness in truth and substance; the true profanation lies in *real* righteousness in truth and substance; the true profanation lies in *really natural and unholy* men performing *really spiritual and holy functions*, transforming themselves, while ministers of Satan, into ministers of Christ. Of such beware; from such turn away; neither countenance them, nor bid them God speed.

The only great general principle of order, in the internal regulation and government of the church, that I find laid down in Scripture, is the same as prevails in the kingdom of nature; which (however great in some cases the difficulty of application may appear), the good sense of mankind, in their own concerns, has never felt it wise to violate, but in cases of extreme necessity. *This principle* is that the younger should obey the elder; the νεώτεροι the πρεσβύτεροι; and this is the very principle that the present system sets at defiance, and supersedes by its rules and its traditions.

A beardless youth, often knowing neither the Lord nor himself, or at best a novice in grace, as a youth in years, by a fiction of man, becomes an elder in the church, and exercises authority over men who were in Christ before he was born.<sup>125</sup> To *rule* seems to me in Scripture as essentially connected with *age*, as *teaching* is with *knowledge*. It was not *every* aged person who ruled the congregations, but none *ruled* who were not *aged* \* When any violation of order becomes associated with

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\*If any think Timothy an exception, I would remind them that he was but acting the apostle's name, and under the apostle's direction, in his own churches; and that extreme cases should not be considered as constituting any precedent.

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<sup>125</sup> I believe he is referring to the fact that in the Church of England, according to the Book of Common Prayer, it held that—"Every man which is to be admitted a Priest shall be full twenty-four years of age, unless being over twenty-three years of age he have a Faculty. And every man, which is to be ordained or consecrated Bishop, shall be full thirty years of age." Thus, in some cases, one as young as age 24 might be ordained to be an elder in the Church.

our earliest thoughts, growing with our growth and strengthening with our strength, it is most difficult to perceive it; and that which may be abomination in God's sight, may become most highly esteemed among men; but if the principle be presented in some new form [meaning an illustration taken from daily life, as he will do in the next paragraph], we at once feel its incongruity.

Let us then for a moment suppose that an act of parliament were passed, enacting that any son, by going to college and taking his degrees, should displace his father from the head of his own family; would it not be felt to be a *monstrous principle* of social disorder? Yet this would not be one tittle more disorderly in God's sight, nor more opposed to his will in the government of a family, than the other in the government of a church. If the son be wiser than his father, let him strive to teach him, but not to rule him. What father would feel that God would recognise this as sufficient reason why he should be subject to his son? Nay, I am deeply convinced that this very wisdom, willingly subject, whether in a family or in a church, would afford a most beautiful lesson on the true principle of obedience and reverence for an ordinance of God, even should it be exercised in much weakness. And surely this exhibition of grace would have more power to build up the church of God, than any pre-eminence he could aspire to or obtain by knowledge or talents; because God, who is the fountain of all honour and true influence, has declared that he who humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he who exalteth himself shall be abased. And again, if any man would be chief, let him be the servant of all. And according to the power of this manifestation of grace in a church, would be her power of begetting that spirit in the hearts of all, to which the apostle refers in his exhortation to be *subject one to another* and to be *clothed with humility*; teaching it, like their Lord, not by a lecture on humility, but by being humble.

The only order to connect different churches that seems desirable or attainable, but by a force which loses more than it gains (which popery aimed at and failed to attain) is, that while all the family of Christ walk within the general laws of their spiritual empire, as contained in the New Testament, every separate congregation, as a family in the great Christian family or nation, should exercise the liberty, which the Lord has not withholden from them, of managing their own concerns, as best

suits their own circumstances, views and apprehensions; appointing their own bishops and deacons, as the Lord shall give them wisdom; considering that if they are children of God, they have received and anointing from the Holy One that teaches them all things, and is truth, and no lie

If any object that there is no Scripture warrant for the congregation choosing their own overseers, or bishops—*there is certainly as much* as for the king or lord chancellor, or premier, or deans and chapters, choosing them; and there is a direct warrant for their choosing their own deacons.<sup>126</sup>

It is, however, I conclude, of little matter who appoints, whether apostle, evangelist, or the congregation, so long as the man appointed is a man of god, fitted by the Spirit for the office, and acceptable (as in such case he ought to be) to the congregation.

It does not appear to me, from the perusal of the New Testament, that it was in the mind of the Spirit, of the least consequence *how* a man got into an office, whether he took it upon himself, or was appointed to it by others; if only when he was in it, he discharged the duties of it as a man sent of God. I feel myself that no invariable rule or order was ever proposed or ever laid down.

It appears to me, from the conduct of Paul and Barnabas, Timothy and Titus, that whoever is made instrumental to gather churches out from the heathen, will generally be necessitated to act for them. He might, during their infancy, appoint bishops and deacons for them; yet without ever assuming the right of exclusive appointment or authoritative exclusion: and doubtless it should be his pleasure to see symptoms that they were no longer *babes*, but growing up to be men in Christ, able to act without his direction; and if after due time they

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<sup>126</sup> Our brother is referring to the fact that in the Church of England the King (or Queen) has the title of the “Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England.” In that role he or she was the one who chose archbishops and bishops in the Church, in careful consultation with the Lord Chancellor and the Premier (i.e. Prime Minister) of the State Government, along with input from Deans (the most senior priests in Cathedrals), along with their chapters, i.e. the body of clergymen who assisted him in the Cathedral. Thus, our brother is making known that the *secular* controlling the *spiritual* had no biblical warrant either.

proved unable, he would consider it to need reproof, such as is bestowed in Heb. 5:12.

It appears also to me, that though these bishops and deacons were appointed as the officers of the church, yet all may speak, just (as I have observed before) as the Jews might in their synagogue or temple, only one by one. Yet should any speak unadvisedly the bishops [elders] should be ready, with sound words, to put to silence, or correct any error.

With respect to the Lord's supper, it appears, I think that it was an ordinance which particularly was to distinguish the Lord's-day, and therefore should every Lord's-day be partaken of, as in the cathedrals in England and some few congregations besides. If any of the bishops [elders] were present, they would naturally preside; if not, any saint.

That is not essential to have a bishop or elder to "consecrate" the supper, I should unhesitatingly infer from the perfect silence of the Scriptures. But this point is made clear beyond all reasonable contradiction, by the fact, that Paul, while rebuking the church of Corinth (who partook of the supper promiscuously) for their want of moral decency, does not rebuke them for any breach of *form*. If it had been "administered" by any ruler, bishop, or pastor, he would have rebuked the ruler for the disorder. But when he neither blames any individual for the disorder, nor blames the church for celebrating it without such "administrator;" when he sums up all by the admonition to "tarry one for another;" it is manifest that the church had no one to administer or consecrate, and that Paul considered such omission quite immaterial. In short, that 11th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians is alone sufficient to give a fatal blow to the whole fiction of *consecrated elements*, so rich in results to the priesthood of Rome and Greek, Syria and England.

Baptism also would naturally fall to the church officers, if present; if absent, to any saints.

Now this liberty, which I have in Christ, as an individual, and which every congregation as a family in the Christian empire of the redeemed has from the Holy Word of Him, whom the Father commanded us to hear (and concerning whose words Moses said, "The soul that would not hear them, should be cut off"), I still feel able in many cases to forego. Yet I never can cease to pray and desire that the church may

assume her true liberty, knowing that she will be thereby better prepared for all that is coming from infidelity.

For all the varied circumstances that can arise in an increasing empire\* like this of ours in India, every body of believers, however small, will then feel their full liberty, authority and power, notwithstanding any secular pursuit, to take the office of bishop in the church of God; and every one of the church, however humble his gift, will feel free to minister, as of the ability which God giveth.

Let me call your attention to what the apostle says, Rom.12:3-8: “For I say, through the grace given unto me For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

See again the apostle’s description of the church of Corinth in 1 Cor. 12. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” “For the body is not one member, but many.”...“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” “And if they were all one member, where were the body?” “But now are they many members, yet but one body.”

The idea here conveyed is anything but that of one person [being] set up, in whom are collected eyes, nose, mouth, &c. for all the rest, and the others mere passive recipients; but [rather] every member is exhorted to seek from the Holy Spirit some ministry and gift for the purpose that

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\*The first edition of the pamphlet was published at Madras

the apostle mentions in Eph. 4:7: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." "And again, ver. 11-13 of the same chapter, "An he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Here you see the apostle again declares that to every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. We may not all have the appointments of apostles or pastors or teachers, yet we have some gift, and this we should exercise in love for the edification of the church.

And let no one be discouraged or alarmed at this liberty; for it was enjoyed by all the Jews, the seed of the bond-woman, who, as the apostles says, is now in bondage with her children. How much more then shall we who are children of the heavenly Jerusalem, the free city, enjoy this liberty; who are made a nation of priests to God to show forth the virtues of our Emmanuel?

All my desire is to say with Peter, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."—1 Pet. 4:10, 11.



## CONCLUSION

From what has been stated, the following positions, I think, are clear:—

1. That the apostles never made their approbation or appointment necessary to minster in the church of Christ.
2. That the apostles delegated no such power to others.
3. That they excluded false teachers only by *informing the conscience of the church*, and not by exerting a mere official authority.
4. That only the principle set up for knowing a minister of Christ from a minister of Satan is, by examining his *life and doctrine*
5. That anyone who countenances a professed minster of Christ, who is a transgressor in his life or fundamentally unsound in doctrine, is a partaker of his evil deeds.— Therefore our Lord says, Beware of such; Paul says, Accurse such, John, Receive them not into your house.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Which persons is our brother referring to by his use of the two pronouns “such” and the one pronoun “them” in this sentence? To answer that question, we must determine to whom those verbs *beware*, *accurse*, and *receive* refer. As our brother already said, our Lord uses the verb *beware* to refer to “false prophets.” But our Lord never said to be “beware” of the ones who were deceived by them (Matt. 7:15; Mk. 8:15; Lu. 20:46). Paul uses the word *accurse* to refer to those “false preachers,” who preached another gospel; but he never said to “accurse” those who were misled or bewitched by them (Gal. 1:8; 3:1; 3:1; 5:7-10). And, finally, John uses the verb *receive* in the phrase, “receive them not into your house,” to refer to those who did not abide in the doctrine of Christ as seen in II Jn. 1:9-11—but John never used it to refer to the ones who, without holding to the false doctrine themselves, might still disobediently receive them into their house, or bid them a God speed (which reveals their blindness, immaturity and carnality). So we see that our brother Groves, by those pronouns, is referring to those false minsters of Christ who were *false prophets*, *false preachers*, and *those unsound* in their doctrine of Christ. Nevertheless, even though John never declared that the sin of *partaking of their evil deeds* was on the same level as those sins that require separation and excommunication from the assembly, is not that sin still a serious sin like are the sins of *jealousies*, *angers*, *contentions*, *evil speakings*, *whisperings*, *puffings up*, *disturbances*, etc. (II Cor. 12:20 DBY), which sins also do not result in excommunication, but are nevertheless still serious? Also, could not the sin of partaking of their evil deeds, even if one never embraces their false

In the various discussions concerning false teachers and warnings against them, *life* and *doctrine* are the only elements recognized as distinguishing them from ministers of Christ: but human appointment is never referred to us at all affecting the question.

All the claims now set up, circumscribing this liberty of ministry in the church of Christ, and taking away the allegiance of His subjects from Himself and transferring it to man, appear to me [to be] direct rebellion against the Lord: like Israel of old, saying, “We will have a king,” when the Lord was their King: and so [is], exactly a counterpart of the traditionary Judaism of our Lord’s time, by which the law of the Lord was made of no effect. Such claims often result in making those ministers whom God has *not* made [ministers] and (by rules and principles directly opposed to those established by the Lord) excluding those whom he *has* made [ministers]<sup>128</sup>.

Hence I cannot yield obedience to those who set them up, without compromising altogether the allegiance I owe to Him who has told me, “One is your Master, even Christ, but all yea re brethren.” They must therefore be disregarded not only because these claims are *more* than Scripture enforces on me, but because they are *contrary* to that which it enforces.

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doctrine, still result in the sin of disorderliness (II Thess. 3:6,14), which does require discipline, especially, if such a person refuses the admonitions of the elders to stop such fraternization with the one who is unsound in doctrine? Moreover, could not that sin also finally lead to a sin of *railing* (I Cor. 5:11), which does require excommunication? So, it is important to note that all sin is serious, but some sins lead to excommunication and others do not; rather they may lead first to a different form of discipline, which if refused could eventually then lead to a sin that does lead to excommunication as determined by the elders of that assembly, and not the elders of another assembly. Therefore our brother is saying to Christians, in regard to a “professed minister of Christ, who is a transgressor in his life or fundamentally unsound in doctrine,” to beware of such, to let such be accursed, and, most certainly to not receive such into your house, for if you do, it might lead you astray into a sin that could, eventually, lead to your own removal from the assembly.

<sup>128</sup> This must be understood in light of the aforementioned means of appointing bishops in the Church of England, wherein the king of England, along with others in the Church, as well as some in civil positions of authority, took part in the appointment of ministers (bishops) in the Church.

I have shown how little ground there is for saying that Timothy and Titus were *bishops*, as the churches of Rome and England teach, or were *pastors*, as the late Mr. Irving taught: but [rather I have shown] that they were evangelists acting on special occasions, under the direction of the apostle Paul, and that neither they nor the apostles had any successors *inheriting* their authority.

I regret there are so many passages in this long letter, necessarily painful to many whom I would most unwillingly wound. Yet in those things which reflect on particular systems, I have kept entirely within the bounds of what might be said against the operations of the systems, as they now stand. But should I inadvertently have looked at any defect in too strong a light, I shall most willingly correct it. I feel perfectly unconscious of the slightest unfairness in the references to Scripture; and I can call God for a record upon my soul, that in the main, with whatever measure of infirmity and weakness it may be mixed, I desire to know and to do my holy and blessed Lord's will, without choosing one precept before another. But two masters I cannot serve, and therefore I simply choose the Lord.

I by no means deny that there must be order, as in the government of every family; but this is consistent with perfect liberty, when there is love, as we see in the happiest and best governed families; and the anointing which the saints have received from the Holy One, will supply them with all that is needful of this wisdom, according to their varied circumstances and situation.

I do not complain of the exercise of any church's liberty in managing its own internal concerns, within certain limits. If one likes a form of prayer, if another none; if one would kneel, when another sits or stands; in these things I could and would be, "all things to all men:" but no church has a right to cut me off, by its regulations, from the privileges of a brother, except for some offence which cuts me off from Christ. I consider that the purity of the church depends on every individual considering himself responsible to the body for a holy walk; and that the judgment of the church is ordinarily exercised more scripturally, when individuals act for themselves, in shunning false teachers and evil workers and cleaving to that which is good; rather than by the exertion of public authority, where human influence is apt to prevail more than the word and Spirit of Christ. It is by being light that we reprove

darkness; which light is manifested *primarily* by a living walk and conversation, and *secondly*, by a jealous oversight which prevents our suffering sin upon a brother, being only careful in the order of reproof to follow our Lord's rule, first between him and thee alone, &c.—Matt. 18:15-19.

I do not apprehend that the church possesses any proper *legislative* authority.<sup>129</sup> I believe that at the very outside, in the extremest and most formal cases where her authority is called for, as in the excommunication of the notoriously scandalous, she acts only *judicially*; applying the laws which Christ has laid down; and to which she can neither add nor take away. Neither did Paul or Peter ever command anything in their own name, but only in Christ's name, and as enforcing what he has commanded.

I understand my liberty in Christ to be *the liberty* of giving up to every brother, in everything not expressly forbidden by the Lord, or his apostles: and the Holy Spirit having *enjoined* this, I could never submit to any human system, which prevented and condemned it. For instance,

Though I have much delight in the greatest part of the liturgy of the Church of England, if any brother were to come, not liking to use it, my liberty in Christ would lead me to say, "Be fully persuaded in your own mind; only preach Christ and pray truly, and all is well." Some may like the gown and bands, other not; some may come ordained by bishops—some by elders—some by pastors—some by nobody; my whole concern would be to know on whose side they were, as our Lord says [Luke 9:49-50]; and if they were on the Lord's side, I would bid them God

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<sup>129</sup> By this he means that the Church, as left by the apostles, was not given the authority of a "legislature," to legislate new laws, principles, and regulations for the Church to follow and to be bound by, such as is commonly called today Canon Law in the Roman Catholic Church, or, as in the Church of England, the Order and Discipline, both which exceed what is written in Scripture. Rather, the Church was left with the authority of a "judiciary," in order to adjudicate situations that might arise by simply looking to, and by applying, the law of Christ, if you will, which is none other those biblical injunctions and Church principles left for us in the New Testament. It is those, I believe he is saying, are the governing principles for the Church in this dispensation, not the rules, regulations and traditions of man that have been added to the Word of God over time.

speed, and let them minister. And though there might be disorder to the *eye* in this, there would be infinitely greater order to the *heart*, and this is the order which the Lord loves. If he only love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, what authority have I to force him to submit to what Scripture has not commanded? Rather let me give up my liberty, and be bound with those who are bound and free with those who are free, and not please myself, but my neighbour for his good to edification.

I apprehend that true order does not consist in aiming after outward uniformity, but in following Christ; avoiding discrepancy with the Word, not so much in unity of the *letter* as of the *spirit*; for in this, as in everything else, “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,” for “God looketh not at the appearance, but at the heart,” therefore “that which is highly esteemed among men” is continually “abomination in the sight of God.

I do not say that no system can be made out of the New Testament, but I am quite sure no *imperative* one can, nor one from which difference of circumstances may not make it at once allowable and holy, in some respects to differ. In fact I do not see a single church existing, that appears [as] an exact transcript of what is evident in Scripture; and I should feel it to be my duty, and I hope my happiness, to submit to any discipline that did not violate the *spirit* and *essential nature of the gospel*; which my brethren in Christ thought it right to institute. But if they made their tradition or regulation stand in the way of the least of my Lord’s commandments, they would be as weak round my heart to bind it to obedience, as fetters of burnt thread to bind my feet.

Thus then I bring to a conclusion this long letter; with a most fervent prayer, that if there be anything in it calculated to make any other impression than my Lord would have made, it may be prevented by his power; and that every word that is agreeable to truth and for his glory and for the church’s honour and true ascendancy over the world, may by him be acknowledged and blessed.

Yours, most truly,  
A. N. GROVES

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