

Christ would have us understand that the wisdom of the children of light is nothing more nor less than a fair use of good, and wholesome sanctified common sense, in the management of affairs pertaining to the kingdom of God. Christ did not enter into details when he gave the commission. His true followers will always find a way, for with such there is a will.

1. No one is prepared to say that an assembly needs no place for assembling. Christianity is not behind civilization. The place and its preparation are included in the commission. It should be as becometh decency, good taste, refinement. The Christian's standards and ideals will suggest good architecture, neatness, absence of any gaudy display, where men will be encouraged to look in upon the heart rather than out upon the vain carvings of this world. It will be kept in good order. It will be well ventilated. It will not be so constructed as to answer the purpose of a sleeping car. Again, books will be provided for the use of the congregation.

2. The next item in order is the support of the preacher. A place is of no importance (though the first necessary), without a preacher. The commission means all of this. "How shall they preach except they be sent?" No one is specially called to bear his own expenses while preaching the Gospel any more than are men called and qualified, bearing their own expense, to build church-houses, supply them with wool and oil and to keep them in repair.

It matters not in what way the Gospel be preached whether in Sunday-school, by tracts, books, periodicals, newspapers or by sermons arranged and delivered orally to the people. Time, which means money to the busy man, (and all true Christians are busy persons), is always needed in the preparation, arrangement and delivery. The time has passed when the believing world thirsts after words without meaning, sentences without thought, useless harangues, which our Spiritualists claim come full formed from their minds—shallow minds. Paper, ink, type, time, preparation, the capital represented by scholarly endowment, the systematic arrangement of truth, all these things may, in a physical and temporal sense, be metamorphosed into an equation whose known quantity is represented by dollars and cents. This is the only rational view. It matters not how much the hyperspiritual, more properly hypercritical or even hypocritical, may hold up their hands in holy horror at the thought, of what they may choose to call the mercenary side of the question. These things are true and all recognized of God.

3. Lastly, and singularly enough, come the people. How true it is this important element is often neglected. Go to London, or some

of the large cities, and count the sittings; note the eloquence and erudition, learn the princely style and support of place and preacher. Then cast an eye around to wonder at the sparse congregation. Why? Attention is not paid to the people. Many must be helped to the house of God. The poor must be provided for, the hungry must be fed. How can a man sit and hear, with any prospect of receiving divine grace, on an empty stomach, when the gnawings of the conscience are unfelt in comparison to the gnawings of hunger? There are those who must be taken in from the tattered and ragged regiments of destitution and squalid want, they must be protected from the storms before they will have heart to give attention to the wants of their soul. Take the Savior's example again and learn true wisdom. That is a grand prelude to Christ's Sermon on the Mount contained in Matt. 4: 23, 24, "And Jesus went about all Gallilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness among the people, and the report of him went forth into all Syria, and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with devils, epileptic and paralytic, and he healed them." Or again, see him stoop down to spit upon the ground to make a salve for anointing the eyes of the blind that he might first be healed before he asks the vital question. Then, when it is said, "One thing I know, where as I was blind now I see," Christ comes to him again and says: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" Reply is, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe?" Being assured this is the Christ, he is ready to answer, "Lord, I believe." Certainly the preaching of the Gospel means all this. It means church-houses. It means good architecture, good ventilation, and not free sleeping coaches (for body and conscience), good music, good books; good arrangements for partaking of the Lord's supper, proper apparel for attending to the ordinance of baptism. It means the support of the ministry. It means tracts, books, if necessary, telegraph lines and telephones, and a thousand things that sluggard Christianity is yet allowing Satan to use for the upholding of his kingdom. It means the comfort and convenience of all who have a soul to save, that they may be drawn thither as the children are drawn to a mother for comfort, sympathy and love.

If the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, there is a way of spreading the truth. So the sum of all we have said is, in plain language, "The church must have a treasury, and some one or more (wisely more), must take charge of the treasury." This is the "care of temporalities;" and these all are

resolvable into money. Deacons have this responsibility. These deacons "must (note the word); therefore, be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much crime, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," &c. In the disbursing of the funds, they must be wise. As in spiritual things the bishops have their assistants, so in temporal things, the church will find necessity for helps in these different distributions of benevolence to the needy and remuneration to the laborers. Following this as a preparation, (for it is only a preparation), comes the division of paramount importance.

2nd. *Spiritualities.*—To attain the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the church membership must be continuously under the discipline of Christ. Christ's ministers are appointed in the church whose office it is to have a care of souls, to have an oversight of the church, to feed the flock, to watch for souls as they that shall give an account. The office of bishop covers all the functions and includes all the details of this work. A proper division of these functions exhausts itself in two, namely: 1. Preaching, and 2. Teaching; or 1. Evangelizing, and 2. Disciplining.

It matters not whether one ascend the pulpit or sit at the head of a class, whether he speaks privately to a friend or write an article for the newspaper, whether he go to India or stay among American heathens, whether he penetrate the wilderness or enter the palaces of the refined in society. He who disseminates light must exercise his part in the work of bishop or overseer in the church of God. It is not necessary that he be one. He may assist. He may do much of the work. He may exercise his gift as a private member and use the talent allotted to him. This is the privilege and duty of every one in the church. But reason, experience, and revelation, all teach that this work must have supervision. That supervision is vested in the bishops. We may call them by whatever name we please, it matters not. The office is more than the name, and the work is more than the office. A bishop must be blameless. It is hard for us to conceive how any one can escape the conclusion of this statement. The Apostle Paul enumerates the qualifications of the bishop and tells the Church that he who exercises the office must have these, that is, be blameless as regards them. This building up the body of Christ is a great and responsible work. We all know in active life a man generally brings out in his work, in real things the ideals which he has. If his ideals are true his realities will be nearly so. What a reality this building up the church of God, this pillar and ground of the truth. May God have mercy upon that person who

lightly esteems it. May he have mercy upon that person who desires this office for the base and empty glory of the name—and shame brought often upon the church because he cannot and will not fulfill the duties devolving upon him. You tell me this office cannot be filled if one insists upon the strict construction of the law, and that word "must," remember, is the same one used in "What must I do to be saved?" Then let it remain unfilled. Better the office be unfilled than that the office be filled by one who cannot fulfill these sacred duties. But it is urged we must have a church, and unless we install some persons who are not thoroughly qualified we cannot organize a church. Would we then, I ask, have a church by having officers who cannot perform their part; would we, any more than by having no officers? Would we have officers by electing those whom the Lord does not recognize as fit for officers, whom the Lord absolutely forbids to exercise the office? Would a ship be a ship without keel or sails or rudder, any more, upon the simple plea that we must have a ship? The very attempt to beg the question shows how weak and beggarly is the whole argument. You say the cause of Christ will suffer without the church the pillar and ground of truth. Then will it not suffer more with a sham—a reproach to the name of Christ? Christians are the salt of the earth. If we can not have true ones we will have hypocrites, and the same course of reasoning says they will "uphold the truth." The whole truth is, we need a civil service reform in the church as much as in this government of America. Talk of ideals. If a man's ideals are gambling, tobacco chewing, tippling, dancing, he will, as an officer, generally bring forth the realities. Be assured of that. Read the qualifications and then reverently say, Lay not unholy hands upon a sacred office.

The bishops are to instruct, rebuke with all long suffering, feed the flock of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. They are also to provide for the instruction of the church. Then church edification, or the care of the spiritual welfare of the membership is their work. For this purpose they must gather together the church. The Lord's day is set apart as a day for the assembling of the membership to attend upon Christian instruction.

*Time.* We shall hastily glance at the time. It seems almost the universal custom to assemble at the 11th hour. Whether this be for the purpose of obtaining the blessing, "The last shall be first," or because no one (often bishops) "hath called" them sooner, I know not. We do not wish to pass sentence upon an old custom. We charitably prefer to think the morning