

A READING ON ASSEMBLY ORDER

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NEW BIRTH RELATIONSHIP

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons (children) of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.

Beloved now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

And Every Man that hath this hope in him (set upon him in Christ) purifieth himself even as He (He—Christ) is pure. 1 John 3:1-3.

ASSEMBLY ORDER

A READING

This pamphlet is the substance of a reading at a Conference in Toronto, July, 1900 (now over thirty-two years ago). Messrs. Ridout, Greenman, Enefer, and Booth were the chief speakers. The first three are with us no longer; they have been called Home. Their voices we shall hear no more in Bible readings. The reading had in view the correction of certain views and practices in the assemblies of an independent character. The reading was published in pamphlet form (now out of print) and is again printed that all our readers may benefit by it and consider afresh the truths contained therein. Guides may pass away, but Christ our Lord and the Truth ever abide. "Remember them that had the rule (guides) over you, men that spake unto you the Word of God and considering the manner of their life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever." (Heb. 13; 7-8. R. V.)

B. C. G.—1 Cor. xii. 18-27. It is very important in reading a Scripture like this to recognize the twofold application of it; that is, if we rejoice, as we do, in our blessed privilege as members of the body of Christ, we must also recognize the same unity as to the visible local representations of the body of Christ as there is between the individual members of it. Hence Paul says: "Now ye are the body of Christ," addressing the Corinthians, "and members in particular." He addresses them as though there were no other Christians in the world, and says: "Ye are the body of Christ." Would that each child of God would get into his soul the blessed sense of this—a member of that body, of which Christ is the Head, in which the Holy Spirit dwells. What honor that places upon us. A little assembly might say that we are set in this world to be a perfect representation of what the body of Christ is; a body ruled by the Head, and indwelt, every member of it, by the same Holy Spirit. We could

not possibly think of a body in which the parts of it were at variance with each other, except the head is wrong. The Head being right, all the members of the body are supposed to be governed by that Head, and energized by the Spirit that dwells throughout it. That which has caused all the sad denial of this, practically and otherwise, is a lack of knowledge as to the way this works practically. So, neglect in getting a letter of commendation shows ignorance or indifference. When leaving home, with the same care as a man gets his railroad ticket, he should get his letter of commendation from his brethren. He should not leave the place that he goes from without a letter of credit to the meeting that he goes to, and if we expect a fellowship worth anything to us, it should be a fellowship that we seek to maintain in all its integrity; and if we value it in that way, we expect others to value it likewise; because a thing that puts down all fences—a field that has no fence around it, is soon a common, and has nothing for anybody.

A. E. B.—I will read a verse giving the Church as the house. 1 Tim. iii. 15.

B. C. G.—The thought added to the previous one is, that there the Church was presented as the body of Christ, and that truth must be maintained by all of us. In this, the Church is the House of God and we must maintain an order suitable to Him that dwells there.

S. R.—Eph. iv. 2-4. That is, the unity of the Spirit is the unity which we are to keep in the bond of peace. There is a unity of the body, and the order of the house; and the power which is to make practical the unity of the body and the order of the house, is the unity of the Spirit. One thought; one mind; one principle; one truth; one

government—one control throughout the body and throughout the house. The unity of the Spirit is a different thing from the unity of the body or the order of the house, in this that it gives us the vital principle in which we are to live and act as members of the body and as being in the house. As the *body* gives us the activities and ministries of the Church, so the *house* gives us the order and the government of the Church, but the unity of the Spirit gives us the oneness in ministry and the oneness in government. Whether we look at the Church as the body or the house, there is the oneness of the Spirit which we are to keep in the bond of peace. This requires lowliness, meekness, forbearance, but at the same time it must express itself identically wherever the house is or wherever the body is. That is a most important principle. The unity of the body always exists, but if we are practically to be a testimony to it there must be the endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit.

B. C. G.—As an illustration of what our brother has been presenting, there are two species of things in contrast with it which are found in Christendom. The one is the thought of union, which is not unity, which puts contradictory things together and just glosses that over with a union, the elements of which are not put together by the Spirit of God. That is man's substitute for a divine truth. If I cut off all the fingers of my hand and tie them together, that would be a union but it would not be a unity. The fingers would be together, but they are not together as united, running to the centre of the palm of the hand. If I took a piece off the tips of the taller ones, making them all of the same size, that would be another phase of things—uniformity. The Word of God does not

present either of those things; it presents unity. There are differences of attainment; differences as to growth, but there is a unity which God forms, and He forms it with relation to Christ the Head, so that now, as God has given us a hand we have not any of us to make a hand: we have to keep one. God has given us the various parts of our bodies to maintain intact, and so He has formed the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, and it is our business to keep the unity of the Spirit.

S. R.—As illustrating that in a very simple way: here we are together this morning from all parts, and soon we will have to be separated, bodily. We will suppose that we were to break bread this morning, or, what is the same thing, take some action as gathered to our Lord. Let us notice it—we are always at the Lord's table; not simply on Lord's day morning, but we keep the Passover seven days. That is, there is no time when we are not at the Lord's table. Our whole life is at the Lord's table, just as Mephibosheth was always at the king's table. Not that he was eating all the time, but his position was that he was at the king's table. Now, someone seeks, we will say, to minister, and it is not the truth of God; it is not for edification; then, of course, it fails to edify us as gathered here. I judge that we would say that ministry was more particularly connected with the body, just as government is more particularly connected with the house. You would say that if one's ministry is not edifying or is not true, he would come under the government of the house—that is, we would have to deal with him. Would we not, if some one came here and taught Unitarianism or something that denied Christ, would we not arise at once and put him from our midst? We would not go on

with it at all. That is the order of the house, of course. If a person applied for fellowship who was not in a right state or held false doctrine or anything of that sort, we would not receive him. That is connected with our responsibility as members of the one body and as members of the house.

But now we separate. Have those principles changed in the least? Some of us go to western Ontario; some of us into the States; some of us to Nova Scotia, and all that. There is the same precious Gospel; the same kind of ministry; the same application for fellowship. What would you do in any one place differently from what we have done as gathered together? Would not our act be identically the same if it were done in some local assembly as if it were done in this large and representative gathering? There is the application of the unity of the Spirit—the truth of the unity of the Spirit to the saints as gathered in various places; and if we are to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, it must be acting separately just as we would act were we all together and the act of the separate assembly representing the action of the Church of God—the action of the House of God, just as much as if we were all together in one large united meeting. There is no separation; in other words it is identical.

B. C. G.—The first is a thought which may be new to some—“we are always at the Lord’s table”—are never seen distinct and severed from it. We are not always in the act of taking the bread and wine, but you see we are identified with that. Read 1 Cor. x., beginning at the seventeenth verse—“For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Behold Israel after the flesh: Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is anything or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lords' table, and of the table of devils." So he puts it upon them seriously: How can people who are partakers of the Lord's table—that is their every-day character—how can they ally themselves with what is the most distinct denial of that?

S. R.—We ought to have it stamped upon us; we are people in this world who are identified with His name and His table.

Ques.—How can that be carried out practically, that we are always at the Lord's table?

B. C. G.—Having the sense upon us that we are associated with Him in that fellowship which is expressed at the Lord's table.

W. McC.—And in our practices during the week or any of the intervals between the time that we would be sitting at the Lord's table, actually partaking of the loaf and the cup, our associations and all should be consistent with the moral significance of the feast that we partake of, we should not be playing fast and loose with things as we see some. The authority of His Name must be maintained there; so, as those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, we are bound to refuse any who are careless. We are the stewards of the Lord's table; we are to keep His

Name clear in relation to what is associated with it. So the very name, Lord's table, puts it upon us that we cannot be indifferent to the Lord's holy claim to it.

G. M.—To illustrate what our brother R.— said: A few weeks ago, I was very deeply and forcibly impressed, when I was at a place, that whatever I was doing there, though as an individual, I was doing for all, and it was not a question of any personal estimation of persons or liberty that I could have myself, but it was a question of all—the whole body.

A. E. B.—That is important. It would be nice if all the laborers would remember that.

S. R.—Acting not as individuals, but for all. That what was sought to be done was to carry out the Lord's interests for all His people, and that nothing inconsistent with that should be done.

A. E. B.—I wish all the laborers would just keep that same thought before them. In all our service, that we are *to act for the whole*, and especially where little gatherings are formed and the Lord's table is spread.

S. R.—Just there is a point of importance; the formation of new gatherings. *It is a very important thing that new gatherings should be formed*, but the table should not be spread in any place *without, if possible, the practical fellowship of some gathering near by*—at any rate, with the written fellowship. Let it be known that the saints are contemplating breaking bread, and seeking the fellowship of their brethren. I think some of the brethren here could give very interesting illustrations of how the neglect of that has worked harm, and how the observance of that principle has been for blessing.

B. C. G.—It would be just as imperative—it is just the same thing—supposing there were two or three suburban meetings here, that the same fellowship should be between them as if it were two or three meetings here in the city. The point is to recognize fellowship with each other, and if these little gatherings are formed, they should be formed in relation to those which already exist.

To follow up what we have been saying; when persons would ask us for some definite Scripture with reference to it, I would like to call attention to two or three passages to show that there was not a diverse order as to assemblies in the earlier days, and there should be no more now.

1 Cor. vii. 17. Without looking at what was in the beginning, it says in the last part of the verse, “And so ordain I in all churches.” That is, what the apostle insisted upon there he insisted upon everywhere. The arrangement of things was universal. *He had not one order for Corinth and another for Ephesus.* God’s order he claimed was divine authority.

S. R.—Just with your finger on that verse, I would like to quote what has been said, “What has Ephesus to do with evil at Corinth?” How absolutely contrary to the Word of God such an expression as that would be, which has been used and maintained as a principle of independency.

B. C. G.—The sixteenth verse of the eleventh chapter is in the same line. And this is the epistle of order in the house of God. This is what might be deemed an unimportant matter, but the apostle insisted upon it here, (and he would if he were here now), “If any man seem

to contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." That is, he could not yield to any man who wanted to set aside God's order.

W. McC.—Let us remember in studying first Corinthians that it was not confined in its address to the church of God in Corinth, but to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours"; so that its application is as much for us in the last days and last hours, and for every saint of God, as it was for them. That was a special remark that widened out to all; while we know that all Scripture is of universal application, in another way this has a special stamp upon it.

A. E. B.—"If any one think to be contentious, we have no such custom,"—*that is, we the laborers, nor the assemblies of God.* There is *perfect unity amongst the laborers, and perfect unity amongst all the gatherings.* That is a very important thing.

B. C. G.—Here he has spent half a chapter upon such an unimportant matter, seemingly, as to how brethren should be distinct from sisters in the Church of God. But some have said that Paul says, if any one objects to that, he does not hold to this. If any one objects, we have no such custom—we yield. That is not true in the least. If any one is objecting and is contentious, why he is rejecting the universal custom of the laborers, of course, and the universal custom of the assemblies of God.

F. J. E.—That should be well taken notice of, because there has been a great misconception about that verse. It has often been quoted the way you have put it with reference to what you have stated just now in connection with the sisters.

S. R.—The apostle says in another place, “If any man will be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” Such an one is still ignorant, that is all.

B. C. G.—Chapter xiv., verse 33 is on the same line; and we know that is the chapter that regulates the ministry of the Church when it comes together. It is a sample case. After giving all these directions, he says the reason is, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” In all the churches it is the same. How could the apostle say this—how could he vouch for the various gatherings if this were not so? It is not but that gatherings may differ in their spiritual condition, but there was but one order maintained. There was but one centre; but one order of the assemblies coming together. So he can speak for all the assemblies of the saints. *Now this is specially to be noticed, for I was challenged more than once across the sea, and have been this side, as to this expression which has been used, as to the “Circle of Fellowship.”* A person said to me: I do not agree with what some of you American brethren say as to *the Circle of Fellowship*. Well, I said, *if you can give us a better name to express a divine fact, we will be glad for any good name, because we know the name is but human but the thing is divine, and we do not want you, in objecting to the name, to do away with the thing. Here is a circle of fellowship—here is an order that the apostle can vouch for—that if you leave Corinth and go to Ephesus you will find it there too.* So we have got to look into it to see what this order is. If we go to Ephesus, what ought we to do? We bear a letter from Corinth, we go to the same fellowship in Ephesus that we leave in Corinth; we are in the fellowship wherever it may be. Some people, for

convenience or other reasons, do not put in their claim elsewhere, and they say they do not belong there for the time. That is not true. The day they land at the other place they belong there.

S. R.—Yes, and are under the discipline of that place—of the saints as gathered there. We, for instance, have been under the discipline of the assembly at Toronto for the last three days; subject to the discipline of the House of God as expressed in the assembly of Toronto of which for the time being we form part.

B. C. G.—In connection with that, then, if we had presented something here that the brethren were assured was a very evil thing, and they protested against it, and we still held to it, then the next thing, inasmuch as the order of the Church of God is but one, there should at once be an appeal made from us to those we came from. Why? because they are responsible—they sent us in a sense, or commended us; so that would stop any such mischievous notion as that we should deal with evil short and sharp and cut people off before those they came from have a full opportunity to identify themselves with the matter. If you are right in taking us up for something we have presented here, then the brethren, in deference to them should have an opportunity to act with you in all that is done.

F. J. E.—In connection with *the circle of fellowship*, would you say now that in view of the failure that has come in amongst those professing to be and actually gathered out to the Name of the Lord, that that “circle of fellowship” is confined to those who are holding to the truth of God as it was accepted when the movement first

took place?

B. C. G.—Certainly.

F. J. E.—That is to say, to take ourselves, for instance: Is it not confined to that "*circle of fellowship*" apart from other companies of those who are called brethren?

S. R.—Certainly. We cannot vouch for other people maintaining that which we do not know they are maintaining.

F. J. E.—If that is the case, we would say we are in the "*circle of fellowship*" on what ground? For what reason?

S. R.—To maintain the truth which we find in the Scriptures.

F. J. E.—Then that practically condemns the other circles.

S. R.—It does, unquestionably, brethren, and I do not believe we ought to have the slightest hesitation in saying that we are where we are by conviction, and that by God's grace we maintain in love and lowliness, but with all firmness, our separate position as gathered to the Lord's Name in subjection to His Word, and that we look on our dear brethren in the sects, and on our dear brethren who are not, but who are practically forming sections in that way, we look on them all alike; we test them all by the Word of God. Some have more truth; some have less truth, but none of them, for one reason and another—none of them can have that which commends them to us as being on the ground of God's Word simply and only. The only way we can leave the ground we occupy is by conviction that it is wrong and unscriptural. That is the only upright and conscientious way that we can

change our position—that it is not according to God, and take a position that is according to God, whether it be with some other company or if we have to stand alone.

W. McC.—There are some today who have the thought that the corporate testimony is gone, and that there is nothing remaining for Christians now, but individual Christian testimony. They do not set themselves—they do not intend to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; they do not recognize that there is any more responsibility, or at least that there is any more possibility of the children of God—the members of the body of Christ gathering together as such, and maintaining together the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace; they have given up that idea. They have expressed it in words like this: “Oh, your theory of the one body is exploded,” and they point to the numerous defects among us to prove it. But that does not prove that we are cleared from the responsibility of still obeying the fourth chapter of Ephesians; that does not change the fact that God had made of twain one new man, so making peace, that He has joined Jews and Gentiles together by the baptism of the Spirit into one body. That fact remains, and will remain until Christ takes the Church out of the world, but as long as it does remain, we, as individuals are responsible to endeavor, collectively—every individual that sees the truth, is responsible with every other individual who sees the truth, to maintain that truth, to walk together in the uniting bond of peace. Ignoring this, many give up this endeavor—the endeavor which should arise from a firm belief of the truth as to this.

B. C. G.—That is a most mischievous notion; it is wider spread than we have any idea of.

S. R.—And it shows really that they have had their eyes on their fellow-brethren instead of on the Word of God and on the Lord Jesus Christ. They have been looking at one another; and if we have failed, then everything is gone.

F. J. E.—It would be wrong for me then, believing that I am where the truth is, to say to these other circles: Now let us come together; we are all wrong?

S. R.—Certainly. Why should I confess as wrong that which is the truth of God? There may be details which one would be glad to clear up, provided they were not understood as giving up the ground of God's truth.

A. E. B.—Another point as to this. Not only has the Scripture put us in this position, but certain circumstances in connection with our brethren have compelled it. We all know that our hearts' desire is not to be separated from them, but it is because they will not follow the truth, we have been forced into separation from them. And on the other side there are others from whom our hearts' desire is not to be separated but who take unscriptural, sectarian ground. So in that way I think that our consciences are perfectly clear before God as to practice.

F. J. E.—If I believe I am where the truth is, it would not be right for me to go to another company of brethren and say, Now let us get together; we are all wrong, and make a confession and see if we cannot get together again.

S. R.—That is going out to one of the cities. Leaving Jerusalem and going out to Ono. (Neh. vi. 2.)

B. C. G.—Except we have something to turn to in Scripture to tell us the principles that God established at the beginning have been rendered null and void by any

failure of His people, we must go back and see what was that order that God established at the beginning, and we must aim definitely and continuously to carry out that order. We never can buy off from those things, and it is just the devil's trick to get us to excuse ourselves from responsibility and say: "everything is gone; we cannot maintain anything," which is to say that Christ is no longer Head of His Church; His Word is not sufficient guidance for us in all our pathways here, and the Spirit of God is not competency to obey the will of God. It is a surrender of everything.

S. R.—Speaking of going back reminds me of another thing that is very important. In the movements towards union that have been made, and which have brought such sorrow in some quarters, there has been a distinct refusal to go back to the start of the trouble. If I see aright in Scripture, the only way to get right with God and to get right with one another, is to go back to the root of the thing and judge that. Here is a division, for instance, which took place many years ago. They plead the statute of limitations and say, That happened fifty years ago; what do we know about it? Let us take things as we find them now. Here is a company of saints; they love the Lord Jesus, and their walk is right. Well, beloved, how about fifty years ago? If they love the Lord Jesus, and if their walk is right, is it such a hard thing to walk back fifty years with the Word of God in our hand, and say: Here was something said: here was a principle adopted that was contrary to the Word of God, and it was wrong? We go back 6000 years. We take our Bibles and turn to the first part of Genesis, and we say Adam and Eve *sinned*. We have no hesitation in saying this thing. Some-

body might say: That happened 6000 years ago; what difference does that make? It is just as fresh to-day as it was then. And so a principle adopted fifty years ago and acted upon as the principle of fellowship amongst Christians is just as fresh to-day, and has got to be judged. If it is a right principle, dear brethren, you and I have got to go back those fifty years and confess before God our wrong in resisting that principle. If it is unscriptural, our brethren, no matter how dear they may be as children of God, no matter how nice their companies may appear, they must go back and judge that principle too, or there can be no godly basis of fellowship.

B. C. G.—We have definite Scripture as to that: the apostle speaks of some who walk in the way of Cain; so, though Cain is dead and gone, his ways are here yet. And the Lord tells the people who are rejecting Him, in the eleventh of Luke, forty-ninth verse, "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute; that the blood of the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation." The point which is of great value there, is this; that there was a people who never shed Abel's blood, who are charged with it; there were people who never shed the blood of Zacharias, but they were held accountable for it. Why? Because they identified themselves with the people who did it. We cannot get out of it; this principle of association is one of the most serious things possible, and if we learn it well and deeply, it will root us out of

things which people are so utterly careless about now.

I give you one good example. When we were remonstrating with a brother whom we heard was associated with the Free Masons, and he said he was not much of a Mason—he scarcely ever went; just kept his name on the books by paying up his dues once in a while—we followed him up by this: that if he was a Mason at all, he ought to be a good Mason. It is a good thing for a man to be zealously affected in a good thing, and if it is a good thing he ought to get his brethren to join too. We would like to belong to a good thing. We sought to show him that he was identified before God with what Masonry was in God's sight. We said, Now, we will give you time to consider it duly, but if the Scripture says; "Love the Brotherhood," that shuts out every brotherhood but one; there is only one to which the definite article is applied, and that is the Brotherhood of the people of God; these are the devices of the enemy, for God is an exclusive God and says, I am God and there is none else. The brotherhood of His people is an exclusive brotherhood which shuts all other brotherhoods. Thank God, the dear man, after a good deal of exercise, decided to withdraw entirely from Masonry. Another way the devil has of holding a Christian is because he has insured his life, and has paid out a good deal of money to a society and he wants to get his money's worth.

Let us carefully discriminate. Supposing we say that is an unequal yoke; but it is an unequal yoke of a very serious nature. Here is another man who thinks he sees what a terrible curse intemperance is, and he sees the misery that it brings, and so on, and believing he is here partly to set the world right, he goes in with others in a

temperance movement. It would be very ill-used judgment, and not weighing things properly to put those things down side by side as of equal gravity; while both are unequal yokes. Free Masonry is not only an unequal yoke, but it has most serious things attached to it, and we have to discriminate as to it.

S. R.—As to the principle involved, we must remember that each case has its details which render it distinct. We must take into account that discipline is by the priests, as you might say, and that, by the way, includes all the assembly; not the brothers only. The brothers may be the Levites and have their meeting, and get things in order so that the priests may examine the case and decide upon it, but the brothers alone do not settle cases of discipline. It requires communion with God, and discernment, which comes from communion with God, of the state of soul. But you see in the plague of leprosy there were all kinds of things; there was a freckle; there was a bald head; there was a boil—there were such things. There were things that speak of mere natural infirmities or the ebullition of nature which do not represent the deep root of leprosy or association with leprosy; so we have to use wisdom and discernment, and as our brother has pointed out, give the brother who is entangled in these things time, and let him understand that we are not standing with a pistol pointed at him, and counting, so to speak;—we are to give him time in that way, and have our arms about him and helping him out of the thing.

I would not say that life insurance was an immoral thing; I would say it was a distinct lack of faith. It shows a state of soul, but it is not exactly an unequal

yoke with unbelievers; and being a question of faith, we cannot give people faith, but we can exhort them and counsel them; that is all. But in the case of the Christian identified with Free Masonry, we could not put it on that ground. That is a question of obedience and not of faith.

F. J. E.—There are many who join Free Masonry for the benefits that their wives and children may get, and themselves too.

S. R.—There are two distinct errors there. We must sympathize with one another in a want of faith, but not sympathize with each other in direct disobedience. A man might be tempted to insure his life, and we could ask God to encourage his faith; but if he associates himself with Free Masonry, put things before him showing him the extreme gravity of one in distinction to the other. Things are going to become more and more difficult.

It is the question of association that is the far graver question. And there is another thing about association that reaches a little more widely than that even; and that is that association by one who is clear individually with those who are not clear, which is worse than the association of a person who is not clear. For instance, if I, knowing the truth of God, associate with those, we will say, who are Unitarians, I am far worse than if one ignorant were to associate with Unitarians. One might say, these are nice people, and I do not accept their heretical doctrine of annihilation or whatever it might be; I repudiate that. Then I say to such a person, you are a great deal worse than a person who is blinded. You are in the thing with your eyes open. And so, personal clearness, if it is associated with evil, is worse than blindness asso-

ciated with evil. So, when they say—We received this person as an individual; he is personally clear. I say, What? personally clear and yet associated with evil? What is his moral state, then?

B. C. G.—Some would like Scriptures to look up, possibly. As we cannot consider them all this morning, and as this is a very important thing, and far reaching in its consequences, I would like to call your attention to two or three which you can easily remember. The thirteenth of Deuteronomy, and just note very briefly the points in it. It points really to a false prophet. That you could mark in ver. 1.

S. R.—One interruption at the beginning. It is frequently said: We object to this use of Old Testament Scriptures for New Testament saints. The apostles trod on this ground themselves. When the apostle was establishing an order amongst the Corinthians, speaking of the maintenance of God's servants there, he goes to the Old Testament for several Scriptures to prove it; and inasmuch as God has laid down there principles for the maintenance of what is due to His Name in connection with His people, those principles are never altered or changed in any dispensation. If you cannot find the same thing in the New Testament, it would be folly to go to the Old Testament for it. And that is exactly how the apostles did themselves, and we cannot teach any better. Is not the Old Testament the Book of divine government just as the New Testament is the Book of divine grace? I mean broadly speaking. And so when you get the principles of government you will find they are the same from Eden to the pearly gates of Heaven itself. Government is always the same.

A. E. B.—Only they become clearer with revelation. The fifth Book, Deuteronomy, is the Book of divine government—not simply law—law is part of it—so you go through the whole Book, and it is the Book that opens up the government of God in a marvelous way.

B. C. G.—Here we have now amongst a number of other laws, we might say, principles which some reject and say: Some of these laws have passed away. But no moral principle ever passes away. It is true, that prohibition as to eating certain things which were ceremonially unclean, have passed away, but the underlying principles have not. We are to eat to the glory of God. Just as in this chapter, the first verse is their relation to the prophet, and they were not to listen to him, for he leads them away from God.

The sixth verse is their relation to a brother. The prophet in the Old Testament answering to the teacher in the New; the brother in the Old Testament answering to the brother in the New.

The twelfth verse: "If thou hear say in one of thy cities." And a city in the Old Testament would answer to a company—a shut in company of God's people in the New. A city had walls, and just as a city had walls so the assembly has its bounds, and the people outside are not in. That is sufficient. You can look it up with care; I take it they are easily remembered. The thirteenth of Deuteronomy is a sample case of how God called His people to refuse false testimony; not to go on in fellowship with one disowning His name, and that the same rule existing between brother and brother existed between city and city.

S. R.—In connection with the city, we might add 2 Sam. xx. from the sixteenth verse. You have one wrong doer in a city who embroils the whole city. The whole city is responsible for the presence of one wrong doer, and unless he is judged, the people of God must be against that whole city. From the sixteenth to the twenty-second verse. The whole tribe of Benjamin in the Book of Judges were all guilty on account of evil-doers allowed among them.

B. C. G.—There is the principle announced in the thirteenth of Deuteronomy; the application is given in that chapter of 2 Samuel. In the thirteenth of 1 Kings, we have this lesson emphasized for us in connection with the division. This is important. A division among the people of Israel, between the ten tribes and the two, and how God chose a servant of His who was in Judah—a man of God out of Judah to go down to Bethel to bear testimony against an altar there which was associated with idolatry. How was he to go? Sent by God, he was to go and bear his testimony against it, and then his practice must be like his testimony; what he said must be like what he did. See how serious the charge was. Eat no bread and drink no water there, nor come back by the way you went. Three pointed things: he was not to get any strength there; eat no bread. He was not to be refreshed there, and he was not to come back upon the same track, which would look as if he made a mistake in going there. He must come back another way. He goes and delivers the testimony faithfully, and when the king tempts him with great reward to come into his house, he says, openly and frankly, in the eighth verse—"If thou give me half thine house I will not go with thee,

neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place." He holds definitely to his original orders. I will do what I am told. And see how he was holding—"For so it was charged me by the Word of the Lord, saying: Eat no bread nor drink water nor turn again by the way that thou camest." But now, the next thing we see an old prophet of Bethel finds out what has happened and goes out to him and tells him an angel has told him to go and get him back. Meantime the Lord's Word seems to have weakened in this man's soul. He does not say as he said to the king, "I *will* not," but "I *may* not return with thee nor go in with thee" (ver. 16). And he does not say, "It was charged me by the Word of the Lord," but he says, "It was *said* to me." Now there is something in that. In the first case he realized under the solemn charge how he must not deviate a hair's breadth from it. In the second case that does not seem to have the same hold upon his soul and he goes back and dies under the judgment of God. And the eighteenth verse, "The old prophet said unto him I am a prophet also as thou art, and an angel has spoken to me by the Word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water; but he lied unto him." He said he was a prophet too. I am like you—I am just like you; but then it was an angel only that spoke to him, so he said. Paul says: "Though we, or an angel from heaven." Not an angel—but the Word of God. The written Word of God is better than all the prophets and all the angels or anything else; it is just the simple Word of God. We must not trust an angel against the Divine testimony. How careful we need to be as to all the commands of God. "Barnabas was carried away by their dissimulation." He

thought a good deal of Peter, and when Peter just goes wrong, the whole thing was gone, if it had not been that the apostle Paul stood for God. Barnabas was carried away, so we have got to guard against those who are near and dear to us. If they do go wrong, we have got to keep to God's Word.

S. R.—To not eat bread and all that, applies in many ways. People are put away from the Lord's table. If we have the truth as to the Lord's table, we know, that includes the whole life. But if putting away from the Lord's table means merely putting away from eating bread on Lord's day morning, that is not being put away at all. "Put away from among yourselves," is what the apostle says, "the wicked person." As to companies of the Lord's dear people, of course, they are not wicked persons, let us remember that; and God will never go with us in using stronger language than He does. Let us never do that. Let us treat in all love, in tenderness and compassion, those with whom we cannot be identified; but notice, "Not to eat bread there." Of course, that would be, primarily, not to break bread. We could not go and break bread with a company that is not clear. So we can only go and bear our testimony and then come back. As our brother said, not treading the same path twice even,—not making it an accustomed thing even,—just to go around and come back—just to circle through as bearing witness against a thing, in love, tenderness and in meekness, seeking to deliver souls, but not going on with their course.

THE FAMILY UNITY

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

It Is Like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments!

As the Dew of Hermon that descended upon the Mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even Life for evermore.—Ps. 133:1-3.

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