

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

The article in a back issue of the TOWER (Vol. 4, No. 4), entitled "The Ecclesia," furnishes our understanding of what constitutes the Church of Christ and the spirit of love and truth which binds and unites the saints of all ages. But we have inquiries from a number of ministers and others who are coming back from sectarianism to the original and only true church which includes all SANCTIFIED believers in the ransom, asking whether we recognize local organizations such as the Apostles established in every city (Titus 1:5), having elders and deacons, etc.; and if we do not have such, Why? Is such organization not as proper now as in the Apostles' days? And if there are no such organizations, how is the work of the ministry and teaching conducted successfully?

We reply, that the circumstances now differ from those of the Apostles' day in that their work was more to organize and lay the foundation for an age of work just beginning, while our work is the reverse almost of this; it is the ending or harvesting of this age; and the methods of then and now might be as different as are the methods of a farmer and the implements he uses in sowing seed and in reaping his harvest.

The methods of Jesus, in harvesting the Jewish age, furnish a better guide to present work. It is with us much as it was with him: His mission was not to bring peace but a sword – division (Matt. 10:34.) In some respects, dividing and tearing down are not as agreeable employment as building up; but if we are anxious to do the Master's will we have no other wish, and especially if he has shown us the necessity of the separation in order to the glorifying of the saints and the bringing in through them of an age of blessing to the

world in general. Seeing this, harvesting becomes the most enjoyable work in the vineyard.

For the same reasons that Jesus did not organize congregations while present with his disciples in the Jewish harvest, we do not consider expedient or necessary organizations even simple and unsectarian as those established by the Apostles. Our Lord is again present, not again in the "form of a servant," in the flesh, but a spiritual being; and he, being present, is in all things the guide and director of every laborer.

But, though no earthly organization is attempted, yet we are as one – all united to the one head and following the leadings of his Word and Spirit. If we see any among us turn aside and "err from the truth," each other member will feel a loving duty to do what he can to restore such a one to the truth; yet we feel that the further responsibility of disciplining, etc., is with our present Lord, who also will do it. We labor to do his will and leave results to him.

Our ministers, if assembled, would contrast nearly as strongly with those of the nominal "church" as did Jesus' followers at the first advent contrast with the Scribes and Pharisees.

The ministers of the nominal Church seek for and receive the popular approval; and for their labor they have their reward, being abundantly supported and honored. In fact, a young man of talent finds no easier or more direct road to the honors, ease and comforts of life than to enter the ministry of the Nominal Church. But far different is it with those who, for the love of the truth and the glory of God, go forth to declare the whole counsel of God whether men will hear or forbear. These are by no means salaried lords of God's heritage, but, like their Master, they are despised and rejected of men; but they esteem it a privilege to receive the wages of persecution, hardship, and trial of the present time, while joyfully looking forward to the glory to be revealed. They use whatever talents they possess to

the best advantage, whether they be many or few. [R537 : page 2] Some, through the columns of the "TOWER," are stirring up the gift that is in them; and some, who have the opportunity, travel from place to place preaching by word and printed matter, while others, whose field is not so wide, are thus engaged in their own immediate neighborhood. Few can give all their time directly in the Gospel work: the mass of them, in order to "provide things honest in the sight of all men," are obliged to "labor, working with their hands."

The majority of these ministers [servants] of Christ do their work by searching out the "saints," for whom present truths are meat in due season, and by conversation on these subjects and the loaning of a paper containing some article which they have marked, they endeavor to build them up in the most holy faith, helping them to understand the word of God more perfectly, as did Aquilla and Priscilla with Apollos (Acts 18:26), and each doing with his might what his hand finds to do, using whatever talents he possesses, seeks thus to glorify God in body and spirit which are his. It is the mistake of very many Christians, however, and one which all should guard against, to suppose that they are serving the Lord's cause when they are indiscriminately distributing anything which claims to be a religious tract or paper. The careful servant will be judicious and discriminating in this and in everything he undertakes. Such are the simple methods of the majority, and their work, under God's direction, is mighty in the pulling down of strongholds. Here a little and there a little, Babylon and her wall of errors is crumbling before the truth. Another question in connection with this subject is:

WHAT CONSTITUTES "A CALL TO THE MINISTRY?"

All who consecrate are led of the Spirit (if they will follow) into more and more of an appreciation of God's goodness and loving plans; and as they become filled with the spirit of love and see those about them needing the precious truth which they so freely received

of God, and which so blessed and helped them, they realize that this very condition of things is a call from God to declare it to them, using their best talents in their heart-work, and letting their light so shine as to glorify their Father in heaven.

Of every member of the anointed body it is true as of the Head – "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto THE MEEK." (Isa. 61:1.)

The Master is saying even now to every consecrated one: Go ye also into my vineyard – why stand ye idle? Reading matter for judicious use we will supply free. Sample copies of the TOWER will be sent free to those you think might be interested if you send us their addresses. We consider this one of the means in our hands for spreading the good news.
