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H. Leo Boles On Missionary Work

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(In the September issue of *The Tennessee Valley Christian* we gave to our readers an article by brother Boles on this same subject that appeared in the *Gospel Advocate*, Nov. 3, 1932. Those who read that article will remember that brother Boles emphasized the fact that the New Testament church is a missionary church. That when the church feeds the poor, relieves the distressed and preaches the gospel, it is doing missionary work. Brother Boles further pointed out that in the New Testament we have examples of the church doing missionary work in relieving the distressed and in preaching the gospel. Although the church, in many places, was poor in this world's goods, it abounded in zeal and missionary activity. This should teach us that no church is too weak or too poor to do missionary work. It was further declared in this article "that the missionary work of preaching the gospel as recorded in the New Testament was done by individual churches acting independent of each other. There is no example in the New Testament of two or more churches joining together their funds for the support of the gospel." Brother Boles then issues a challenge for such an example to be found in the New Testament. Churches co-operated in relieving the distress during the famine, but not in preaching the gospel. In closing, brother Boles points out three distinct sources from which the gospel preacher received his support in New Testament times. (1) From the church that sends out the preacher. (2) From the people among whom he labored. (3) From "other churches"—churches away from the field of labor. These churches sent directly to the man on the field.

In this issue we are giving to our readers another article on this subject. This article appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* Nov. 10, 1932. It will bear a careful reading by all. But in giving these articles, we again remind our readers that we are not giving brother Boles as an authority on this, or any other Bible subject. We are giving this article that all may see what godly, scholarly men have written on this subject. This should help us to study the subject more thoroughly and also help us to arrive at the truth. Jesus said: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8: 32). Other articles will follow. Please watch for them. Now read brother Boles' article.)

"The study of the New Testament reveals the fact that churches raised and distributed funds for two general purposes—namely, (1) to support the preaching of the gospel and (2) to help the poor. The churches acted in this work as individual and independent congregations. The missionary received help from the church that sent him out, from those in the field where he labored, and from other churches; but in all of this work there was no common fund for churches, no "central church" with a treasurer to receive the funds from the other churches, no general treasury to take care of the funds, no call for any church to other churches to help them do the work which fell in their province to do.

We have an account of the relief of the poor saints in New Testament times. The churches of three provinces under divine order contributed to this work, but there was no such extensive collection of funds made in the apostolic age for sending a preacher into a destitute field. No church consulted any other church. They did not form any organic cooperative plan or union with the other churches. Each church, guided by the instruction from God that it had, acted upon its own independent responsibility. Each church collected its own gift and sent by its own messengers. "Now concerning the collections for the

saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store; as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem." (1 Cor. 16: 1-3.) In this we have specific instruction to the individual congregation as to how it was to proceed to make its collection and the distribution that should be made of it. In writing to the church at Rome, Paul said: "But now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. Yea, it hath been their good pleasure: and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you unto Spain. . . . Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me: that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judea, and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints." (Rom. 15: 25-31.) This shows Paul's earnest desire that the contribution from the Gentiles to the Jewish Christians would be acceptable to them; that they would appreciate the gifts from their Gentile brethren.

Speaking further on this question, Paul said: "But thanks to God, who putteth the same earnest care for you in the heart of Titus. For he accepted indeed our exhortation; but being himself very earnest, he went forth unto you of his own accord. And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches; and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and to show our readiness. . . . Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker to you-ward; or our brethren they are the messengers of the churches, they are the glory of Christ. Show ye therefore unto them in the face of the churches the proof of your love, and of our glorying on your behalf." (2 Cor. 8: 16-24.) Again, we have the example of independent church activities; we have the individual churches acting upon their own initiative and liberality in helping the poor. By whom were the visiting agents appointed? They were not appointed by a convention of delegates from the churches in the provinces of Gentile Christians. These churches had no convention and took no cooperative action in appointing and sending the men to carry the contribution to the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul sent them to make up the afore-promised bounty and have it ready by the time that he arrived. "But I have sent the brethren, that our glorying on your behalf may not be made void in this respect; that, even as I said, ye may be prepared: lest by any means, if there come with me any of Macedonia and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be put to shame in this confidence. I thought it necessary therefore to entreat the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your afore-promised bounty, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion." (2 Cor. 9: 3-5.) The churches on the first day of the week, when they met, took up their collection and appointed their own messengers to bear their gift to Jerusalem. Paul did not appoint an agent to go among the churches to get them to promise to do anything; they had already promised as independent and individual churches to help in this matter, and the

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men sent by Paul were to encourage each church to be ready with its gift when he arrived. Neither did any church appoint an agent to go among other churches to get them to promise to help in this matter; neither did delegates or representatives from all of these churches appoint a man or men to go among the churches and solicit them to give to the helping of the poor. All that these men did was to encourage the churches to be ready and fulfill the promise that had been made. Each congregation acting in its own independent way made the promise without solicitation or persuasion or any outside influence; they acted upon their own responsibility and made the promise.

The example of raising a bounty for the poor as given in the New Testament is the nearest approach to the cooperation of churches that we find in the New Testament. And these examples show conclusively that each church exercises its own autonomy and independent activity in this work. This was for the relief of the poor saints in Jerusalem and Judea. Even if these churches cooperated in relieving the poor, as many want to do today, yet we would still be lacking in example of such cooperation in having the gospel preached in foreign lands or at home. There is no example in the New Testament of two or more churches that cooperated in having the gospel preached. This fact proves that God did not intend for his churches to "cooperate" in preaching the gospel, as some brethren are trying to get them to do today.

A summary of the teachings of the New Testament gives us the following facts with respect to missionary work. (1) In the New Testament times the churches recommended and sent out preachers of the gospel into the mission field. (Acts 13: 1-3; 14: 26; 15: 40.) The church that had preachers to spare in the foreign field recommended them, and they went under the recommendation and encouragement of their own congregation. The apostles do not necessarily belong to this class, as they were sent out by the Lord. (2) The preachers who were sent out returned to the church that sent them and reported the work they had done. (Acts 14: 27.) The missionaries were responsible to the church that sent them out, and hence reported back to it. (3) The church to which the missionaries belonged and from which they went looked after their conduct and called them to account for violations or supposed violations of duty. (Acts 11: 1-18; 15: 1-29.) (4) The churches communicated directly with the preachers which they supported. (Phil. 4: 15-18; 1 Thess. 1: 7, 8.) We should have these matters and Scriptural examples clearly in mind, as they are instructive to us in carrying on the same kind of work today. We should ever bear in mind that churches are to act independently and are not in any way to be tied by any human method of cooperation."

"RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH"

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Again, in order to rightly divide the word, one must distinguish between the blood that seals the Old Testament and the blood that seals the New Testament. This difference may be seen from a careful reading of the ninth chapter of Hebrews. The blood in which God had placed efficacy during the Old Testament dispensations was the blood of animals. When Christ died upon the cross, he did away with the power of animal blood and established an everlasting covenant which is sealed by his precious blood. When one goes to the Old Testament to find authority for what he does in religion today he is exalting the blood of animals above the blood of Christ. The plan of salvation is recorded in the part of the Bible that is sealed by Christ's blood and we must go to that part of the Bible to learn what to do if we wish to be saved by the blood of Christ. So, one of the first steps in the proper division of God's word is to distinguish between the blood of Christ and the blood of animals.

Another thing that one must do in order to rightly divide God's word is to allow each book in the New Testament to serve the purpose for which it was written. How may I know the purpose of each book? This may be determined by the contents of the book. The first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) present a record of the birth, life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ. These books contain evidence

that Jesus is the Son of God. The book of Acts presents a record of the establishment of the church and of the preaching of the gospel by the apostles of Christ. It tells how some asked what they must do to be saved and it records the answer that was given to their question by inspired men. It records a number of cases of conversion. The twenty-one epistles, addressed to churches and individual Christians, give instructions as to living the Christian life and conducting the work and worship of the church. The book of Revelation gives words of encouragement to lead the Lord's people to remain steadfast through trials and gives a glimpse of the joys that await the faithful in Heaven. If I want to study about the life of Christ, I must not go to the book of Genesis or to the book of Exodus in the Old Testament, but I must go to the first four books of the New Testament. If I want to learn how people were converted under the preaching of the apostles, I must not go to the book of Psalms, but rather to the book of Acts in the New Testament. When I read a daily newspaper, I recognize the difference in the contents of the various sections. If I want headline news, I go to the front page. If I want to read an editorial, I turn to the editorial page, because that is the part of the paper in which editorials are to be found. I would not think of going to the sport section to read announcements of religious services. Just so, when I want to learn something about the law of Moses, I must turn to the part of the Bible which gives a record of that law. I should expect to find the plan of salvation in the law of Moses no more than I expect to find an editorial on the comic page of a newspaper. It is good to study the Old Testament to learn the history of mankind and of God's dealings with him and to study the promises and prophecies regarding the Christ which are fulfilled in the New Testament. But, one is in error when he thinks that the laws of worship and service that govern men today are to be found in the Old Testament. Study the Bible carefully. Let each book serve the purpose natural to its contents and you are "rightly dividing the word of truth."

ALLEN TO LEAVE PINE STREET

Brother Lindsay Allen and his family will move to Corinth, Miss., around January 1 where Brother Allen will work with the Foote Street congregation.

While serving as regular preacher for the Pine Street congregation in Florence for the past several years, Brother Allen has made a definite contribution to the progress of the Cause of Christ in this area by faithfully proclaiming the word of God and by his example of godly living. As he leaves this area, the editor of The Tennessee Valley Christian will feel keenly the loss of his encouragement and sound counsel. He has rendered valuable assistance to this publication—serving as staff-writer during his whole stay in Florence.

Corinth is not so far away but that we hope to continue to have the benefit of Brother Allen's encouragement and frequent articles from his pen. Our good wishes and prayers go with him and his family in their new home and new field of labor.

POSEY AT WINFIELD

Brother Curtis Posey, who for a number of years has done a good work with the church at Rogersville, recently moved to Winfield, Ala., to work as the regular preacher of the church there. While he was at Rogersville the church there erected a nice home for the preacher and showed other signs of progress. They now have plans underway for the construction of a new meeting house.

We wish for Brother Posey and his family a pleasant and successful work in the Cause of the Lord at Winfield.

A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.—Blake.

By nothing do men show their characters more clearly than
by what they think laughable.—Goethe.

I have never in my whole life met a man who really knew the Bible and rejected it. The difficulty has always been an unwillingness to give it an honest trial. Our Lord himself says: "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life."—Dr. Howard A. Kelly.