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BIBLE AUTHORITY -- ESSENTIALS AND EXPEDIENCIES

Roy E.Cogdill, Nacogdoches, Texas

(This is the **sixth** in a series of articles in review of the book "We Be Brethren" by J. D. Thomas.)

In the fifth article of this series we called attention to the fact that our brother convicts himself of the attitude of a "Denominationalist" by "feeling free to add to or take from the required matters, in line with his own traditions; yet all of the while he feels that he is definitely showing allegiance to the Bible". Brother Thomas professes to have respect for the authority of the Bible but readily admits that the Bible does not teach certain things that he wishes to practice and that they can be understood to be right only by an appeal to "common sense." We suggested that this is indeed a contradictory attitude. If we must have authority from the scriptures for what we practice in the church of the Lord, then we must find it taught in the scriptures, and if it is not taught there, then "common sense" will not justify it. We pointed out that our brethren who divided the church over instrumental music and missionary societies and went off into apostasy in the Christian Church have always relied upon "sanctified common sense" to justify those practices which they wanted and which the scriptures did not teach.

Mr. Kershner, an eminent scholar of the Christian Church discusses this matter of common sense in his book "The Christian Union Overture" and raises the question of how to reconcile the "use of common sense" with proper recognition of scriptural authority. In several quotations in the article preceding this we gave you his conclusion, and it is the only conclusion that such an appeal can reach. He reasoned the matter down to a rejection of the "infallibility of the text as interpreted by one person" such as the Pope of Rome or the clergy of the Roman Church. He also rejected the acceptance of some humanly written creed or manual such as the Protestant Denominational bodies of the world offer in solution of this problem. In the final analysis he appealed to the "common mind" and argued that Mr. Campbell in his "Declaration and Address" would "unquestionably have answered the question by an appeal to the intellectual majority. Whatever the great bulk of thoughtful men agree upon as touching the interpretation of Scripture is doubtless an expression of the common mind upon the subject"! This is the conclusion that Brother Thomas will have to reach and the only conclusion that can be justified in appealing to "common sense" as a means of "interpreting" the scriptures and ascertaining what they authorize.

Again we raise the question, If we are going to depend upon common sense to supply what the Bible does not teach either generically or specifically, by precept or command, approved example or necessary inference, then whose common sense shall we go by? We, each, prefer our own. Brother Thomas prefers his. There cannot be any unity concerning

revealed matters by following such a course. All authority will be lost sight of in the appeal "each man to that which is right in his own eyes". This God will not accept. Unless Brother Thomas has conceit enough to think that the brethren everywhere should accept his own judgment in these controverted matters, or that the "bulk of thoughtful men" — the "intellectual majority" as Mr. Kershner of the Christian Church would put it—should be convened and reach a decision for all of us on these matters, then he will have a hard time convincing those who think and study for themselves that he believes in the Scriptures as "our rule of faith and practice" and the exclusive source of authority in revealed matters. We affirm again that his difficulty and the difficulty of the vast majority of those among brethren who stand with him is in their **attitude toward divine authority**. This is the fundamental issue in these questions. Are we willing for the Bible to settle the question ? Are we willing for the issues to be resolved by what God has said and that alone?

We certainly recognize, as we have already said, that a proper application of divine truth can be made only by the employment of all the good judgment and wisdom God has given us. But there is a vast difference **in applying the principles of law determined** by statute or court decision to the facts and circumstances involved in any particular case and **determining what the law is** and what it provides. In our application of divine truth to our lives and service to God we often err for we are lacking in wisdom and are often influenced by other factors. But Truth in revealed matters does not depend upon our wisdom and judgment but upon a "Thus saith the Lord". "What saith it? The word is nigh thee even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach—". (Romans 10:8.)

In the previous article we illustrated the means of establishing authority from the scriptures. We pointed out the difference between generic and specific authority and showed the effect of each. We want to further this study of Authority by illustrating the difference between matters that are **essential** in carrying out what God has authorized and those things that are **optional**. In the language of Brother Thomas we would say "required specifics" and "optional expedients".

● ESSENTIALS AND EXPEDIENCIES ●		
Commandment	Essentials	Expediencies
TEACH Matt. 28:18-20	GOSPEL	CLASS - Privately Publicly
BAPTIZE Matt. 28:18-20	IMMERSION IN WATER	NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL POOL
LORD'S SUPPER I Cor. 11:23-27	ELEMENTS Bread & Fruit of Vine	TABLE CONTAINERS
ASSEMBLY Heb. 10:25	FIRST DAY OF WEEK	HOUR - PLACE
RELIEVE I Tim. 5:16	CHURCH (Congregation)	METHOD-MEANS MODE Buy, Rent, Gratis

Chart No. 4

It is necessary in the study of New Testament authority that we make a distinction between those things necessary or essential and those things which expedite or are optional and therefore matters of human judgment. By essential on the chart above we mean those things which are necessary in carrying out God's instructions and without which obedience cannot be rendered. In the realm of essentials God has specified or made the choice and they are either expressly commanded or necessarily inferred by the very nature of the thing commanded. Concerning them we have no choice but to either obey God's instructions or rebel at his will. But by **expediencies** as we use that term on the chart, we mean those things which may or may not be employed in carrying out God's command and yet obedience is rendered which ever may be chosen. In other words the methods or means within the scope of the command, which God has left to human judgment, circumstances, or expediency and concerning which God has not specified and therefore has made no choice for us.

In the chart above we have illustrated this distinction —not with a wavy horizontal line—but with a straight perpendicular line — maybe it will do just as well. In carrying out the command to "teach" there are some things essential, viz., we are to teach the gospel of Christ. We cannot obey God's commandment and teach anything else. He has placed that limitation upon our teaching and specified what we are to teach. But in the church of our Lord the manner of teaching to be employed has not been specified; whether it shall be done in a public class, before a specified group, publicly preaching, or privately teaching one individual at a time. He has specified what we shall teach but he has not specified the particular method of teaching. In one God has made the choice and in the other he has left the choice to be dictated by our ability, opportunity, and the circumstances.

Baptism

Likewise in the command to "Baptize" there are some things which are essential in obeying the will of God in this command and there are some things that are optional or matters of choice with us. Again, where God has made a choice, there is none for us to make. We must simply obey what God has specified for us to do—all things essential in carrying out God's will. The action of baptism is immersion. The meaning of the word, the description of the action, the circumstances surrounding the action in New Testament examples all demand that conclusion. Water is the essential element. The believer is the essential subject. These are clearly taught in the Bible. But the Bible does not teach whether the act shall be performed in a natural or artificial pool. This is a matter of indifference, it is not indispensable, absolutely requisite, or of the essence of obedience to the command that baptism be performed in either. It can be done in one as well as the other and every element of the command be respected and obeyed. This matter then, since God has made no choice in it, is left up to the circumstances or choice of the individual. Some try to exercise such a choice in the "mode" or action of baptism and some of the creeds tell us that it can be either "sprinkling, pouring, or immersion according to the convenience and preference of the candidate". But God has not given us a choice as to mode. Baptism is immersion and when we perform another action, we have not baptized.

The Lord's Supper

Another illustration of this same point, viz., the difference between things essential and things optional in carrying out God's commandments, is the Lord's Supper. We have no choice as to the elements that compose this supper for the Lord has ordained that these elements are the unleavened loaf and the fruit of the vine. These are essential. Nothing can be added, substituted, or changed about these elements and the will of the Lord be done. But the Lord has not specified as to the kind of a table that shall be used or whether or not one shall be used. He has not specified as to whether a plate shall be used for the loaf or how many. He has not specified the number of containers that shall be used for the fruit of the vine or what kind they shall be though some kind of a container is essential since the element specified is a liquid. These matters of the table, place, and container for the fruit of the vine, are optional matters. God made no choice or specification about them and therefore they are matters of option or choice with man. The most expedient or convenient way that is decent and in order is the ruling factor in such matters of choice.

It is also true in the assembly on the Lord's Day to break bread. We have no choice concerning the day to assemble and break bread in memory of the Lord for God has made that choice. We do have a choice however as to the hour when we assemble on the Lord's Day for the Lord has not specified that. Where God has specified, we have no choice but to obey. But when God has not specified, the choice is left up to us in harmony with righteousness otherwise revealed. The Lord's Day, the First Day of the Week, is the day

chosen by the Lord for our assembly to break bread. Some place to assemble is necessary in obeying that command. The Lord has left no instructions as to how that place shall be provided. We have to use our best judgment as to providing a place for assembly. The hour of the day and the place to assemble are matters to be decided upon the basis of human judgment, the convenience of those involved, the most expedient source.

Relieving the destitute

But someone asks, is this not true in the work of relieving the destitute ? Has not God commanded the church to relieve the destitute without telling us how to do this work ? Is it not therefore our privilege to choose the method or means of carrying out this command ? The claim is often advanced today that "there is no pattern." Is this true? It depends altogether upon what you are talking about. If you mean that there is no "pattern" **as to the organization** that is to do the work which God has commanded the church to do, then such a claim is absolutely false and untrue. God has given the church an organization. The pattern of it is perfectly clear and unmistakable in New Testament scriptures. It is the local church. (Phil. 1 :1.)

Our chart illustrates the command to "relieve" — I Tim 5:16. This is a commandment to the church — **unquestionably directed to the church**. The fact that it is limited to a certain class of the desolate and destitute does not concern us in this particular discussion. It is the work of "relieving" by the church that we are interested in, and how it is to be accomplished. As a command addressed to the church, what is essential and what is optional that is involved in carrying out this command ? Is the organization formed by the church and maintained by the church an optional matter? Will Brother Thomas so affirm ? We are not talking of organizations from which the church buys services or which the church pays for services rendered. But what kind of an organization can the church build and maintain to actually do this work of relieving? Can the organization which God has given in the scriptures—authorized by Jesus Christ—do this work of relieving ? Can the members of a local church furnish the resources, the deacons, or others appointed, do the work of ministering to the needs, under the supervision of the elders of the congregation that has such a responsibility ? Has God given us the "pattern" of an organization that is able to function in the actual discharge of such an obligation as this which God has assigned His church to do ?

If the congregation is the only organization God has given and this is a work which God has assigned his church to do, then either the organization which God gave is able to do this work and God so intended or God assigned his church a work to do for which he gave no organization or the means of executing the thing commended. Which is true? Are we ready to deny that the church can do the work which God has assigned it? The fact is that this verse answers the question. The very thing which the individual Christian is commanded to do, if he has a widow for whom he is responsible, is the thing the **church** is commanded to do for

the "widows indeed". The word "relieve" is used with reference to both the individual duty and the duty of the Lord's Church. Whatever is necessary for the individual to do in "relieving" the widow for whom he is responsible, the church can do and is commanded to do for the widow for whom the church is responsible.

The particular means and method to be used is not specified. If she needs a place for shelter, that can be furnished in the most expedient way at hand, whether it is the individual that does it or the church. If she needs the necessary things of life, (food, clothing, medicine, or anything else) that can be furnished in the most expedient and proper way at hand, whether it is done by the individual or the church. If she needs someone to take care of her, not being able to take care of herself, then that care can be furnished in the most expedient way at hand, whether it is done by the individual or the church. These particular methods and means have not been specified when the church does the work any more than they are specified in the individual doing the work. But the organization of the church has been specified definitely and clearly. Will our brother deny this?

We will deal with the misrepresentations engaged in by our brother in his book in another article but we call attention now to the fact that when he or any else accuses any of us of specifying some particular method or means, they misrepresent all of us. We do not know and we do not believe Brother Thomas can produce a single instance of anyone trying to specify as to method or means to be employed by the local church in doing this work. If they have, they are wrong about it. No man has the right to specify where God has not. But we know of no one who has done so, except in the case of the contention made by Guy N. Woods in debating these issues. He plumbed every possible ground upon which to find footing until he hit upon the idea that the church cannot actually do the work of relieving but can only furnish the money so that some other organization (which he tries to classify as a "home" in spite of the form it assumes not even being a forty-second cousin to a home) can do the work of relieving. Even though B. C. Goodpasture recently denied that the Advocate contends there is only one way in which this work can be done, the chief exponent of the Advocate's promotion of these human arrangements has firmly taken, and positively advocated, the position that such arrangements as Boles Home, Incorporated are essential to cooperation among the churches in doing this work and the church itself **cannot** do it. They have done the only specifying as to method which we have discovered. The fact is that the organization controlling these homes must itself employ methods and means of doing this work after it is formed. When the corporate set-up has been affected there still must be the employment of methods and means of doing the work. The organization of the church, God-given, can employ whatever means may be necessary to do its work of relief and since God has not made the choice, the selection is to be made by the church as to the **particular way** in which the work shall be done. But we have no choice as to the organization to do it for God has made that choice and we either respect it or we do not "walk by faith". **The organization in God's plan is essential—it is the local church. The methods and means of doing the actual work of "relieving" is optional for God has not specified the particulars**

any more than he specified the method of teaching, the place to baptize, the number of containers, the hour and place of assembling.

Aids and Additions

But in establishing authority we meet face to face with the problem of distinguishing between aids and additions. To illustrate this we present Chart No. 5.

● AIDS AND ADDITIONS ●		
Commandment	Aids	Additions
SING	BOOKS - LIGHTS LEADER - ETC.	INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC (another KIND of MUSIC)
BAPTIZE	BAPTISTRY	SPRINKLING (another KIND of ACTION)
ASSEMBLE TO BREAK BREAD	BUILDING, LIGHTS, SEATS HEAT, ETC.	SATURDAY (ANOTHER DAY)
PREACH GOSPEL	RADIO LITERATURE, ETC.	MISSIONARY SOCIETY (ANOTHER ORGANIZATION)
RELIEVE THE DESTITUTE	BUILDING, CARE NECESSARIES	BENEVOLENT SOCIETY (ANOTHER ORGANIZATION)
EDIFY ITSELF	PLACE FACILITIES TEACHERS	SUN. SCHOOL SOCIETY (ANOTHER ORGANIZATION)

Chart No. 5

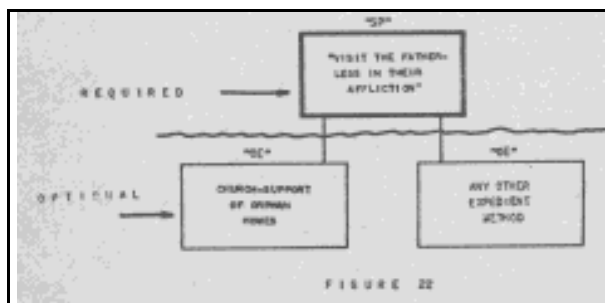
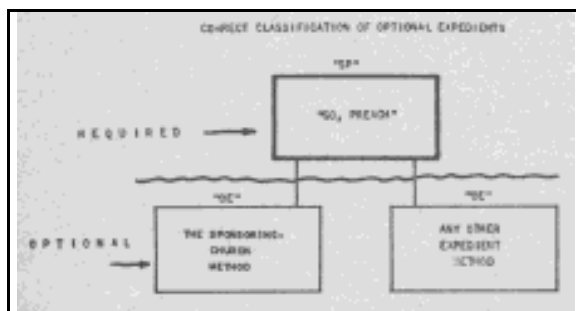
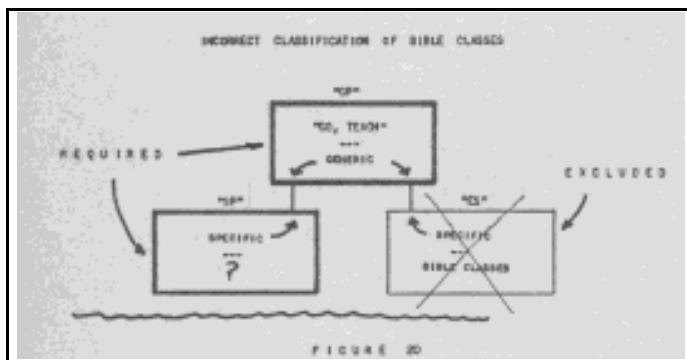
We have already shown that **those matters essential** and **those matters that are optional** in carrying out God's commands or the instructions of the scriptures **are both included in the authority** given by such instructions or commands. When a thing is included within the scope of the authority given by the scriptures, it can properly be classified as a **means** or **method** or **aid** in executing the command and is properly authorized because **it is included**. In all such cases, **aids are subsidiary** to the thing **commanded and never coordinate with it**. In other words, it cannot be an aid and belong to the same order or class as that which God has specified. All coordinate things, of the same order, class, genus, or species, are excluded and eliminated by the very choice that God has made when he specified his will in that particular genus.

In the article before this (No. 5) we included some very fine teaching along this very line by our late Brother M. C. Kurfees, a great Gospel preacher. He points out in that very article

quoted from his book, "Instrumental Music In The Worship" that the same principle applies to the organization of the church through which God has specified that its work shall be done as applies to the kind of music which God specified shall be used in praising him in worship. **This fact is absolutely irrefutable.** The principle is exactly the same.

In the above chart No. 5 we have illustrated this principle which is fundamental in establishing scriptural authority. We must see the difference between AIDS and ADDITIONS to scriptural authority. One of the fundamental and glaring errors in the book, "We Be Brethren," is the failure of our Brother Thomas to recognize that in matters of authority when God specifies all coordinates are eliminated and excluded and that is always the nature of specific authority. In order that we may not be accused of misrepresenting our brother on this point we give you below two of his charts in which he uses his "Standard Diagram of Authority" to illustrate his argument concerning these matters. The charts are

found on pages 122 and 140 of his book.



In the chart (figure 20) page 122 he correctly illustrates and

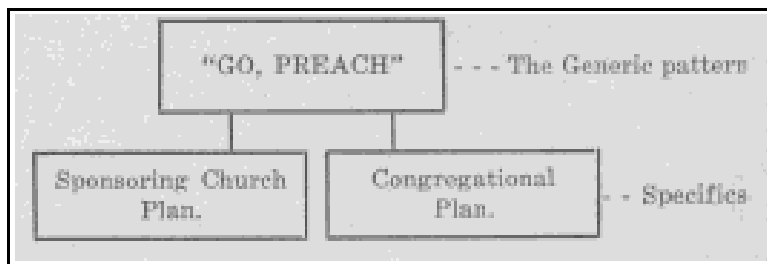
classifies the "Bible Classes" as a method of teaching. It is not excluded because the Lord has not specified the method of teaching to be used in the church. But look at the charts on page 140 (figure 22). In these charts he has the "sponsoring church method" as optional with any other method that is expedient. Now, Brother Thomas, what is another expedient method beside the "sponsoring church method" of preaching the Gospel ? Is the missionary society method another expedient method? If not, why isn't it? How would you rule it out? Our Christian Church friends insist that it is only a "method" of doing what the Lord commanded. They also insist that it is an "expedient method" and can give some imposing figures to prove it — even much more imposing than all of the "gigantic, stupendous, and colossal" facts claimed by the Herald of Truth. How would you rule it out? On page 141, our brother undertakes to answer this question, hear him:

"The Missionary Society is a human organization that could serve as an optional expedient to the generic pattern "Go Preach;" but inasmuch as it involves "control" over the churches that comprise its membership, its use would demand the violation of local church autonomy. It therefore necessarily infers a form of church government that differs from that of local autonomy, the required pattern, and it thus is an "excluded specific" and is definitely a violation of God's pattern will and is sinful and wrong. What we mean by "control", is that the Missionary Society is an organization whose board "legislates,)' or passes rules that they expect to be binding upon the member churches, and where the member churches expect to be so bound".

(Page 141—last paragraph)

We shall show in an article to follow that our brother represents the Missionary Society **contrary to all that its advocates claim for it**. It does not claim to be an organization of churches but a medium of cooperation for churches that work together through it. They also specifically deny that they are a "legislative" body over churches or that they exercise any control whatever over churches. As we have said we shall produce their side of this story in another article. But be that as it may We want you to see from our brother's chart that if he excludes the Missionary Society, then there is but one other coordinate to the "Sponsoring Church Method" as a specific of "Go, Preach". That coordinate and the only one, so far as the Church of the Lord is concerned would be each congregation doing its own preaching under its own eldership and using its own resources. Let us illustrate what we mean by our

brother's own chart.



Now, Brother Thomas, where does the wavy line go with reference to these specifics ? Are they optional expedients ? If so, **then you can either find neither of them in New Testament scriptures or you must find**

both of them. Which will you undertake? Will you agree with your fellow teacher Bro. Roberts that the scriptures actually authorize the sponsoring church plan in Phil. 4:15-17 and that we therefore have an approved apostolic example for it? If you take this route, you will go exactly contrary to much you have said in your book. You will also stand squarely opposed to the most of the "institutional" exponents for they say there is no such thing as an example of one church contributing to another church in New Testament scriptures. In case you have not read what your team mates are saying on these matters, you need to page G. K. Wallace, Guy N. Woods, Thomas Warren, Roy Deavers, and a multitude of others.

If both are not found in the scriptures, Brother Thomas, then is either of them found there? If so, which one can you find? It is not difficult to find repeated instances of local churches sending men out to preach the Gospel both at home and abroad. Local churches were the medium through which this work of preaching was done in the New Testament days. Of course, individuals went by their own resources and upon their own initiative and local churches sent men out also. But where did the churches **pool their resources under one eldership and in one congregation in a joint effort to preach the gospel?** Find it for us, Brother Thomas, or what you think will do for it, and we will abundantly show that you have perverted the text you choose.

Coordinates and Subordinates

It is important that we do not forget that in order for a thing to be an "aid" it must be a **subordinate** to the thing commanded or authorized, and cannot be a **coordinate**. If it is a coordinate, it is an addition to the thing commanded. To illustrate this you have but to think of the commandment to sing. A song book, lights, leader, and such matters are not a "kind" of music. They are not therefore coordinates with singing. They would classify as aids in carrying out the command to sing and can so serve for the reason that they do not bring another element into the worship. But playing upon an instrument brings in another element—a coordinate—and therefore is an addition to the commandment to sing. Instrumental music is another kind of music. If you find both in the New Testament then either or both can be used in the worship of God. But the New Testament teaches only "sing". That does not include playing. Playing is then an **addition** to what God has commanded. God condemns those who **add** to his Word.

By another illustration on our chart No. 5 we see the same principle demonstrated. When we baptize a believer in water and use a baptistry to accomplish that act, we have used an "aid" to the action that God has commanded. The baptistry simply "aids" in carrying out God's commandment. But when we sprinkle water upon a believer and claim that he has been baptized, we have offered a human substitute for what God has ordained. Any one can see that sprinkling is "another kind of action". It is coordinate with immersion or baptism for it is another kind of action. It cannot classify as an aid in obeying God's commandment because it is not a subordinate but a coordinate of the action commanded. It is therefore an **addition**

instead of an **aid**.

The same thing is true in the assembly to break bread. God has commanded that we assemble to keep the Lord's Supper. This assembly was to be observed on the First Day of the Week and only then "to break bread". In carrying out this commandment there are many things that would classify as "aids." A building or place in which to assemble, lights when needed, seats, heat or air conditioning in season, and many other things would be "aids" in keeping the commandment to "assemble." But these are all "aids" because they come within the scope of those things essential or helpful in executing the command and therefore are "subordinate" to the thing commanded. But if we were to assemble on Saturday or the seventh day of the week "to break bread", that would not facilitate our obedience to God's Commandment but would pervert and add to it for Saturday is "another day". As a "day" it belongs to the same "genus" or class as "The First Day" and since God commanded that we should "Break Bread" on "The First Day", if we were to do so on the "seventh day" we would be substituting or adding another day to God's commandment. This is always condemned.

In like manner the command to "preach" is carried out by the use of means such as radio, literature, visual aids, etc., for these are subordinate to the command to preach and are not coordinate with it. They do not belong to the same class or "genus" with preach. They are methods or means of carrying out the command to "preach" and are therefore subordinate to it. Since God has commanded no specific way to preach, all of these and others that could be listed with them are included in the command, and can therefore be used to carry out the command without adding or substituting something of human will for God's will. But God has specified the organization through which this preaching is to be done. It is the church and in organization is congregational or local. It has no other: When we build a missionary society of any kind to do this work of preaching (which God built the church to do) we add another organization of our own making and substitute it for the one God made to carry out his command. This is the thing that is wrong with the missionary society. It is not ordained, authorized, provided by the Lord. It has been fashioned by man to be added or substituted for the one ordained of God and is therefore "adding" to the Lord's Word and Way. This is sinful and wrong, has always been so, and will always be so.

Present Applications

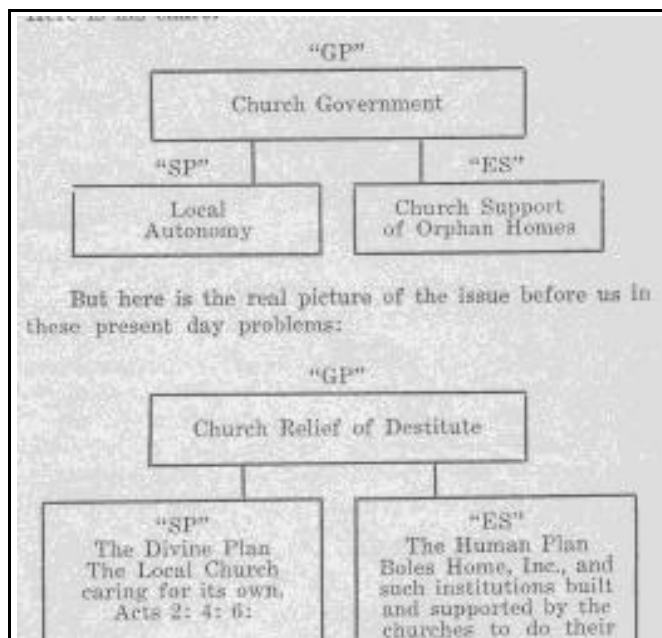
Now for the application to present day problems. God commands the church to relieve certain destitute persons. God gave the church a specific organization through which to do the work he assigned it to do. That specific organization which God gave is the congregation — the local church. (Phil. 1:1.) There are many aids that can be used in the nature of methods and means of executing this commandment in the church but ANOTHER ORGANIZATION IS NOT A METHOD OR MEANS THAT CLASSIFIES AS AN AID. The congregation itself is an organization. God commanded this organization to do the work of relieving. It can employ methods or means to do so but it cannot build another organization to do this work.

Another organization would be "coordinate" with not "subordinate" to the congregation. As a coordinate organization to do this work another organization would be an "addition" and not an aid to the congregation in doing anything God has commanded it to do.

Boles Home, Inc. is not a "method" or "means" of taking care of orphans any more than the Masonic Lodge is a method or means of taking care of orphans. Boles Home, Inc. is a chartered organization with entity separate from everything on earth. It uses methods and means in providing and supplying the needs of destitute children. Boles Home, Inc. then is an organization to do benevolent work coordinate with the local church or congregation in its benevolent work. Benevolent work can be done through and by either. God ordained one — the local church. There is no choice or option about the one God ordained. We either do the work God wants done through it or we "add" our own will and wisdom in a "substitute organization" for the one God ordained. As a church institution or organization to do the work of the church, Boles Home, Inc. is therefore sinful and wrong just for the same reason the missionary society is wrong. Boles Home, Inc. is not wrong because of the good work it is doing. Neither is the Missionary Society wrong because of the good work it is doing. Both are wrong because they are human organizations provided by the will and wisdom of man to do the work God gave to his divine organization, the local church. They "add" to the word of God and to God's way. They are without authority and therefore without a scriptural right to exist as church organizations or institutions.

Brother Thomas is mixed up in his "coordinates". On page 134 of his book he has a chart that demonstrates how badly confused he is or that he is trying very definitely to confuse someone else. He has a "GP"—generic pattern in his vernacular—with two specifics in the field of benevolence 1)—local autonomy, and 2)—church support of orphan homes. But this is not a true picture at all. Local autonomy is not a "form of church government". It is but one principle that characterizes the government of the Lord's Church. God gave form or organization to the government he gave his church. That form or organization is the local church. It is definitely identified in New Testament scriptures. The choice in doing the work

of relieving so far as the organization to do the work is concerned is not a choice between "local autonomy" and 'church support for orphan homes". It seems Brother Thomas must know this. A human form of organization or government could have "local autonomy". Many of them do. This characteristic of government can be true of either the human or the divine. So far



as I know Boles Home, Inc. runs its own affairs without any authority over them. But they are a human organization as everyone knows. Why didn't Brother Thomas represent fairly the alternates in his chart and keep the issue clear ? Here is his chart:

We contend that the scriptures teach one and they do not teach or authorize the other. One is found in the Word of God and the other is not found there. The local church doing its work of benevolence does not include such organizations as Boles Home, Inc. Both are organizations—they are coordinates—in the same class—or genus. Since they are coordinates, one cannot aid the other but is an addition to the other. This is the thing God condemns as sinful and wrong. Churches of Christ have absolutely no authority in the Word of God to build and maintain such human organizations as Boles Home, Inc. The divine plan in the chart above can be found in the scriptures but the human plan has no support from the scriptures whatever. God's church, organized as God designed it, can do the work that God gave it to do and should do it without building some other organization which God has not authorized to substitute for it.

Of course it is apparent to all that even in Brother Thomas' chart—the congregation has no control or government over its work or its resources when it turns either of them over to some human organization like Boles Home, Inc. Therefore the idea of local autonomy in the work he is talking about and churches doing their work through "church supported orphan homes" is within itself a contradiction. They go together like a "hen-pecked husband" and the "head of his house". He may have voluntarily surrendered his position but he lost it just as completely anyway.

NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES AND DIVINE AUTHORITY

Roy E. Cogdill, Nacogdoches. Texas

(This is the **seventh** in a series of articles written in review of the book "We Be Brethren", J. D. Thomas, Abilene Christian College, Author)

We have already seen in this review that Brother Thomas was very much concerned in his book, "We Be Brethren" with getting rid of every rule or reason that would "exclude" the "sponsoring Church" plan of congregational cooperation or the building and maintaining of human organizations as a centralized agency through which congregations could cooperate in doing their work of benevolence. He recognizes no obligation to find authority for these practices that are today devastating the unity of brethren in Christ. He feels that all of us are under obligation to accept his judgment and that of others who think that these great promotions are perfectly all right and that we do not have the right to demand scriptural authority of some kind, if there are kinds, as the basis for their being practiced. We should let the "trained thinkers" among us—the professionally trained men— or as Kershner puts it—the "intellectual majority" determine such matters. They are "optional expedients" anyway and need no pattern or, for that matter, any authority, but can be brought in under the justification of the "silence of the scriptures"—"sanctified common sense" and as the true and correct "hypothesis" reached by "leaps of inference" made by the competent men in the church today, of which our brother certainly counts himself to be one.

We have emphasized in a former article that if these "cooperatives" are matters of "optional expediency" as Brother Thomas claims then one of two things must be true; 1) both the "congregational plan" and these "cooperative plans" must be authorized in the teaching of the New Testament, thereby giving us a choice, or, 2) neither of them is authorized by the teaching of New Testament Scriptures and the Bible is entirely silent as to how the church shall function in accomplishing its work.

If neither is **specified** (if one were specified, the other would be eliminated and excluded since these are coordinates) then both must be **included** in the **general authority given or both are excluded by the authority of the scriptures because God has said nothing that "includes them"**. If this is not true, then scriptural authority means nothing and we can forget about it and "walk by sight" rather than "by faith".

Our Brother Thomas says that even "cooperation itself is an optional expedient".

"As before mentioned, COOPERATION ITSELF IS NOT A REQUIRED THING! It is not a Box "SP" type, required, matter that Christians have to obey without addition, subtraction, or change! Cooperation is an expedient method of doing required things! It is

a WAY of preaching the gospel or of doing other things efficiently. It necessarily diagrams "below the wavy line", and there can be no pattern for cooperation because we do not have to cooperate in the first place. It is purely optional!"

(Page 80—Para. 4—Page 81—Para. 1)

Of course many of his "brethren" do not agree with him about that. Most of the principal advocates of "cooperative societies" up to this point have freely contended that cooperation is necessary. In his attempt to prove the "Herald of Truth" scriptural in the Birmingham debate, Guy N. Woods argued that if there were no scripture but the Great Commission of our Lord, that would be sufficient for its justification, for it is impossible to execute the Great Commission without cooperation between churches. Now Brother Thomas either doesn't know that some of his fellow "institutionalists" are so contending or else he does not classify men like Guy Woods among the "intellectuals". He is not a Ph. D. and probably does not rate as a "school man trained in logic" and is not therefore a "trained thinker". Brother Woods agreed with all of our charts on authority and said that he did not find any fault in them but that it simply wasn't a question of authority. Brother Thomas thinks brethren have made a terrible mess of understanding what authority is and how it is to be established. He and Brother Woods and the other exponents of these "cooperative societies" should hold them a convention during some of their numerous lectureships and get together on the grounds of their defense.

"Interpreting Examples"

Our Brother Thomas is as confident of his ability to properly solve the problem of the binding and exclusive force of New Testament examples as they concern present day problems as he is that he can solve all other problems by his "Methods of Interpretation". In the matter of examples and how they teach us today also, he discounts and rejects all other efforts but his own as insufficient and inadequate.

"During the present controversy BRETHREN have formulated hypotheses of one sort or another in the attempt to determine when and how examples establish pattern authority. In the various writings that have circulated, lists of these hypotheses have been given often with dogmatic claims about their authority and finality. The scientific method was, however used somewhat loosely in their formulation, and they were either not checked with all the possible facts or available data, or were not fully tested after their formulation, or both. To say the least the hypotheses that have been suggested are not qualified to pronounce with definite authority as to when an example is or is not binding; and they actually serve only to confuse, and to maintain tensions. Some of these inadequate hypotheses may have merit, but singly or collectively they do not fully meet our needs. Our "pattern principle" which states that "some examples bind and some do not — those that bind us clearly bound the New Testament exemplars, and those that are optional to us were optional to them, is the only hypothesis that we have seen that seems to stand all tests". (Page 76—para. 1)

"The main reason our tensions have developed is because no one on either side has had a clear-cut criterion for interpreting examples. What we have needed is a clear method of knowing when we are dealing with a Bible pattern, that is applicable in all cases". (Page 82— para. 1)

It may not require a Ph. D. to be that egotistical but it is bound to help. Here once again our brother tells us that he has solved the problem which he thinks all other brethren of every generation have failed to solve. He doesn't even grant that his brethren who are "institutional advocates" along with him have found the solution to the problem of "interpreting examples" in the New Testament. "No one on either side" has been able to produce the solution until he wrote his book. This book we are reviewing is a great book indeed! That is, if you take the author's recommendation for it. We hope that he will not think us too unkind if we are not as "high" on his solution or his book either as he is. The rest of us are not as "scientific" as our brother in our "methods of interpretation" or we would arrive at the same conclusions, so he thinks and says.

In the chapter which follows the above question, Chapter VI. he dismisses with a wave of the hand all other suggestions made concerning the study of New Testament examples and comes up with a profound (?) "hypothesis" which we suppose to be the product of his "scientific method" of "interpretation". The "Pattern Principle" for Examples, as he calls it is his own invention, he thinks, and his judgment is that it is brilliant indeed! In fact, he thinks it will, with the "Standard Diagram of Authority", solve all our problems unless we are determined to be "antis" and "legalists". This "Pattern Principle" on which he dotes so much is stated for us on page 91 of his book.

"What we now wind up with as we conclude Part II on the Solution of our problem is a major premise produced by our inductive reasoning thus far, and which is the finally formulated hypothesis derived from actual data and facts, gathered from the New Testament itself and tested with many illustrations. (In the process of formulating this final hypothesis the New Testament was read through several times, watching for certain data and in testing the hypothesis).

This major premise can now be used in syllogisms in the study of specific problems of interpretation or in the specific applications of Part III of this book. The minor premise will be supplied by each specific application studied. We must remember that in syllogisms, if both major and minor premises are true, and if the syllogism is properly constructed, **THE CONCLUSION WILL BE TRUE**, without exception.

The Major Premise, and "Pattern Principle" is:

Any New Testament example that implies an underlying command, which **requires** specific action or attitudes of its exemplary characters, establishes a pattern, which

requires the same specific action or attitude of people today.

And conversely,

Any New Testament example that does not imply an underlying command which would **require** specific action or attitudes of the exemplary characters, establishes no pattern whatever, and serves only to illustrate matters that are purely optional for people of today".

What is the meaning of this very formal and impressive statement? Well, to put it in eighth grade English it means:

If it is an example of something essential in the New Testament day, then it is essential now and is therefore a pattern that is binding upon us today.

And conversely,

If it is an example of something that was purely optional with the people who carried it out then, then it is optional with us now and does not therefore set forth essential action for us today.

If it was binding then!, it is binding now, and if it was optional then, it is optional now. Not many of us have studied in the "Humanities Division of the University of Chicago" or been privileged to take a course in Bible from the learned "Professor of Bible" in Abilene College but this great discovery and wonderful deduction so laboriously given birth by our Abilene professor has been recognized by every "cornfield preacher" in the country in generations past who had travelled outside of his own back yard! Anyone who does not know that much without the help of the "Professor of Bible" should be put back into the first grade of Bible study and started all over again. It is equivalent to saying, If it was necessary to salvation then. it is necessary now, and if it wasn't necessary then, it isn't necessary now. Isn't that a wonderful "hypothesis"?

If we were to use our professor's method of dealing with arguments, we would simply say, "This particular 'rule' is really only a truism and it affects commands and necessary inferences the same way", and feel that WE had dealt it a master stroke that would result in its being forgotten from now on. (see page 82—para. 3—his book).

If ever anyone insisted that an example of a thing which was not binding in the New Testament day is binding now, we do not know of it. On the other hand, if anyone has ever contended that an example of a thing bound then by a commandment of the Lord would not under the same or similar circumstances be binding upon us now, we have not heard of it. So, in the profound discovery and great contribution which our brother thinks he has made, there is nothing whatsoever new and any student of the Bible even in the grades should be "flunked" if he doesn't know that much.

Furthermore, anyone who does not know that a binding example, approved or taught by the apostles, had to rest for its authority upon a **command** of the Lord, hasn't done much thinking and studying. In Matthew's record of the Great Commission given by our Lord to the apostles, Jesus commanded them in view of his authority to "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you**". The only thing any apostle had the right to teach the baptized to observe was **that which Christ had commanded**. Whether the command is expressed in the scriptures or not, it is implied when the church practiced a thing under apostolic teaching and approval. The authority of Christ is the only thing that makes anything binding that is taught in the scriptures.

We have never seen so much laborious effort produce a greater "dud" than this which our brother calls his "pattern principle" for determining when an example is binding. We say about his great production what he said about a simple rule of Bible study in our book, "Walking By Faith".

"Again, this is the whole point—determining what is essential and what is incidental." Anyone knows that if something is incidental it does not set a pattern. A statement like this gives no help at all for determining when a thing is incidental and when it is an essential. It is not a "rule" which helps our problem, but is merely a group of words without a point." (Page 84 Para. 4)

In this matter of examples as in his "Standard Diagram of Authority", he actually solves nothing for in the one we are left to determine where the wavy line belongs as we have illustrated and in the other we are left to determine when a thing was essential in the New Testament day and therefore essential action now. Of course, if we are willing to "offer idolatrous worship at the shrine of scholarship" as our Brother I. B. Grubbs says in his preface to "Exegetical Analysis", and allow our learned professor to locate the "wavy line" and specify what was essential in the New Testament day and therefore what examples are binding now, as he undertakes to classify them by his own arbitrary judgment in his book, instead of thinking independently for ourselves in our study of the Bible that our faith might be in God and His word and not in the wisdom of man, then these "rules" fashioned as "hypotheses" by our brother might prove something for him. Otherwise they make no contribution whatever for we must study the scriptures for ourselves in order to know what is incidental and what is essential in the service of the Lord.

In this same chapter, with a wave of his hand and sometimes even with a sneer, he dismisses some "rules" or statements, well recognized through the years in the study of the Bible as guides in the field of "Hermeneutics" or interpretation (understanding) of Bible truth. These "rules", many of them, say in principle what the "pattern principle" suggests. They are helpful when used as a guide in our study of the Bible in determining what is binding and when. They help us to determine when an example is **a case in point**. But we

suppose that it is not uncommon for a Ph. D. with his highly developed ego to think when a plain principle dawns upon him that he gave birth to the idea!

Let us look at some of the "so called hypotheses", as he denominates the "Hermeneutical Rules", suggested in "Walking By Faith", Chapter VI, as he professes to answer and dispose of them in Chapter VI of "We Be Brethren". Brother Grubbs in his book, recently republished, "Exegetical Analysis," deals with many of these principles of Bible study and calls them "Hermeneutical Rules". But he was not privileged to sit at the feet of our great professor of Bible, in the Bible Department, of Abilene Christian College. If he had, he might have been more "scientific" in his "methods of interpretation" and known the difference between a "hypothesis" and a "rule". Our guess is that he did know that a "hypothesis" is a "conjecture, surmise, guess, theory, or supposition," and hence called his principles of Hermeneutics "rules." He was a great student and teacher of the Bible in yester-years and his book on Hermeneutics and Exegesis is a wonderfully helpful book. Brother Thomas sneers at the idea of "rules" and seems to be "tripped" on the word "hypothesis" and everything seems to belong in that class with him whether it is true or not.

In "Walking By Faith" we undertook in Chapter VI to deal with some principles well recognized by Bible students through the years as guides to a proper understanding and application of Bible teaching. Where all of these rules given in the chapter come from, we do not know but we learned them from some one. Some of the works along this line that have been helpful to us we might suggest in this connection. They are: "Principles of Interpretation" by Clinton Lockhart, copyright 1901; "Exegetical Analysis" by I. B. Grubbs, copyright, 1893-94; "Companion to the Bible" by Barrow, copyright 1867; "Messages of the Books of the New Testament" by Farrar; and even more recently—"The New Testament—A Survey" by Merrill C. Tenney. From all of these, and other sources in addition, these "rules" given in our Chapter VI were gathered. We, of course, stated them in our own language and developed them in our own way of discussing matters. We believe they are true, applicable, and helpful, though we have never claimed perfection for them or any other set of human, uninspired "Rules" that we have ever seen. Brother Thomas labored hard but was unable to do anything with them — any of them — as any fair reader must know. Evidently they were very disturbing to him and they well should be for they will disprove, if properly and fairly used in Bible study, everything that he undertakes to defend in present day issues.

We did not think of it being necessary to point out that these "rules" would apply to anything which the Bible teaches, whether by example, command, or necessary inference. Our effort was simply to take the same rules of Bible teaching that apply to whatever it teaches in any way and apply them to the study of examples. Brother Thomas treats the chapter and the "rules" suggested in it as though the Examples of the Bible constitute a separate study and can be properly understood and applied only when we have a different set of "Hypothesis" by which to study them. This is a violation of one of the first principles of

understanding anything. Mr. Lockhart, in his book, "Principles of Interpretation", gives us in Chapter two, page 31, as an "axiom of Hermeneutics" this statement: "**AXIOM: Every communication of thought, human and divine, given in the language of men, is subject to the ordinary rules of interpretation.**" Now Mr. Lockhart was a scholar of some renown, himself a Ph. D., if not from Chicago University then from some place else, and he understood that the same rules that applied to one form of communication in human language would apply to every other form equally as well. Our Brother Thomas doesn't think so. He thinks with reference to present day problems of cooperation we must have some "New Rules" of interpretation to guide to the proper point of view. (We forgot to mention it in the above list but we also have the book to which Brother Thomas once referred as very inadequate, "Hermeneutics" by Dungan.) Why approved examples should be construed and applied under any different set of rules to the rest of Bible teaching, Brother Thomas does not tell us. Evidently his conception is that unless he can "rule out" certain New Testament examples as binding, his cause is lost. We think he is right in that feeling and we do not intend to allow him to rule out those that are applicable to our problems now for he cannot do so scripturally and justly. It is confusing indeed when our Ph. D: scholars cannot agree on some simple rules of "interpreting"— (understanding) — the scriptures. "When the gods contend, men are confounded". No scholar we know of, in the class of Brother Thomas, or any other, who is recognized as such has ever contended that the examples of the New Testament must be **interpreted by a different method or rule than the rest of the Bible.**

The Rule of Uniformity

This first rule discussed in "Walking By Faith", Chapter VI, gave our brother Thomas a good bit of trouble in his effort to get it out of the way and avoid its effect. The rule, of course, has to do with the fact that in New Testament scriptures when there is but one example of a practice, or when in every occurrence that practice was the same, unless some other passage of scripture can be produced authorizing another practice or that same thing practiced in another way, the very uniformity of the occurrences would indicate that example should be followed in doing the same thing under the same circumstances. In other words, it would be a case in point, and would certainly indicate what we should do. In the introduction to the lesson of this chapter, we had this to say:

"When we can find the church practicing particular thing or method in the New Testament record with evident apostolical approval, no one with any faith would question the correctness of the same practice today under the same or similar circumstances. If there are two or more examples of methods of doing the same thing, then either would be permissible under the same circumstances now and we would have a choice in the matter based on expediency. But the question with which we are concerned in this lesson is this: when there is an example of but one method of doing a thing in the New Testament scriptures is that one example exclusive of all other methods or practices? "

Our brother refused to meet this issue squarely and spent his time trying to prove that "uniformity alone" will not establish a "pattern" of authority. Well, he wasted his time for no one—**absolutely no one!** — contends that "uniformity alone" will bind the example on us today. Did not our brother notice in the same chapter that there are six other rules given that enter into the picture of helping us to determine when an example in the New Testament is binding? He even refers to them, though he does not deal with them, in his attempt to refute what the lesson teaches. **Why then does he seek to create the impression that we are contending for uniformity alone?** This is just another bit of his subtlety in trying to confuse the issue and avoid the truth by misrepresentation. Evidently he gives no one else credit for having much sense. We may not all be "trained thinkers" or belong to the "intellectual majority" but it doesn't take a smart man to see that there is a difference in the uniformity of an example having some force and evidential value and its being absolutely conclusive within itself. The latter we did not and do not claim, brother Thomas to the contrary notwithstanding, and know of no one who does.

On this point we call attention to some of the professor's reasoning:

"First, 'examples of optional matters' could be uniform in their details. These BRETHREN have not even considered the possibility of dealing with examples grouped as optional things and as required things. To do so and to study through several cases of examples that are clearly optional might show uniformity in important details, but such uniformity would not change the examples from the optional group into the 'required' category."

(Page 77—Para. 2)

He has not given us much credit in alleging that we have not considered the "possibility of dealing with examples grouped as optional things and required things". Brother Thomas, that is what the whole chapter is about. It is headed: "When Is A New Testament Example Binding?" No one is silly enough to claim that all New Testament examples are binding or are examples of obligatory force upon us today. Every person with a grain of judgment recognizes that there are examples of incidental or "optional" nature. So does everyone know that a "binding" example is not optional and an "optional" example is not binding. What did you think we were "considering"? Your charge is very inconsiderately made.

Will brother Thomas deny that the uniformity of a New Testament example of a material or essential matter, approved by an apostle of our Lord, teaches and implies anything at all as to its binding force? Let us give our readers the benefit of another recognized man in this field. His conclusions and applications should be questioned freely but the principles of interpretation which he deals with are commonly accepted as worthy of careful consideration.

"(9) **Religious truth may be gathered from approved precedent.** — We learn from

the authorized conduct of the children of God. If we can first be assured that what is done is approved, we can know certainly what we are at liberty to do under similar circumstances. Indeed, if the conduct has been directed by men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we learn from the example what we ought to do. If the Scriptures are to be our guide from earth to heaven, then to be religiously right we must be scripturally right. Or the statement may be made stronger in this way: no one can be religiously right and scripturally wrong at the same time. Or, again, no one can be religiously wrong while he is scripturally right. Now, if the will of God has undergone no change since the New Covenant was completed, what was His will then is His will yet. And if those men did that will and we do the same now, we will be accomplishing His pleasure.

" (2) We must also be careful not to confound mere incidents or accidents with the approved precedents. The disciples met together in an upper room in Jerusalem, and so they did at Troas, but that does not make it binding on the disciples of to-day to meet in upper rooms. These were mere accidents or conveniences. And to elevate them into divinely appointed rules for the service of the Lord, would be to miss the purpose of the record altogether. The Master took all his journeys on foot, but it does not follow that we are only at liberty to travel in that way.

"But the question recurs, How shall we determine what is an approved precedent? How shall we be able to separate the many things done in the times of the apostles which are merely incidental, from those that were meant for our benefit, that we may know what to do? (1) Those actions performed by the apostles or other disciples in their day, which have a divine approval, or, if done by an apostle, nothing has been said by inspiration in opposition thereto. (2) Customs of the Church under the eye and sanction of apostles. For if, in an unguarded moment, an apostle should turn aside, he would not continue in that condition. And if it could be possible for one apostle to continue to err in his public character, it would not be so with all of them. A general custom is established in harmony with that which is allowed, taught approved by the many. If we shall find the whole church engaged in a common custom in religious service, no matter how we may come to that intelligence, if we can certainly know that such was the custom everywhere among the disciples in the days of the apostles, such practice will show certainly what was the will of God". (Hermeneutics by Dungan — Page 95, 96, 97.)

Now the above quotation does not mean that a mere incidental custom always becomes law and is therefore binding or else we would have the holy kiss and foot washing bound upon Christian individuals. But in essential practices by the churches everywhere in carrying out their God-given duties, certainly this rule of the "customary" or "uniform" thing has some weight in spite of the contention of our good brother at Abilene. We would not argue that it must be conclusive "within itself" any more than we would contend that the circumstances of baptism within themselves are conclusive proof of immersion—BUT THEY ARE EVIDENTIAL OF IT.

But our brother in his book continues on this matter:

"An illustration of this point is that in all the examples and references in the New Testament about the partaking of the fruit of the vine, it is UNIFORMLY referred to as the "cup" (singular), both in literal and figurative usages. If uniformity in examples were the thing that establishes patterns, then we sin today if we use more than one container."

(Page 77—Para. 2, Page 78—Para. 1)

We are surprised at this appeal. If this is the best our able professor at A. C. C. is capable of, he may be a "school man trained in logic" but it didn't take enough to make him a "thinker"—trained or otherwise.

In the first place, do you notice his switching his terms and changing subjects? Brother Thomas should know that in "references in the New Testament about the partaking of the fruit of the vine" there is nothing said about the container or proved about it whatever! The "cup" when it refers to "partaking of the fruit of the vine" does not have any reference whatever to the container! When the Lord gave thanks for "the cup"; wined he said, "Take this, and divide it"; did he give thanks for the container and did he mean for them to take the container and divide it? How ridiculous can a smart man get?

When he said, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood", did he mean the container? Why certainly not! What does the singular prove about the container, Brother Thomas, in such usages? Exactly nothing of course! The contention is nothing short of downright silly. Then why is the singular always used? By metonymy the "fruit of the vine" is represented by the container—"the cup" and so called—(singular)—because there is but one element — the fruit of the vine — (singular) —that Jesus ordained as communion with his blood. There is not a shred of evidence in this use of the singular form of "the cup" concerning how many containers were used then or should be used now.

But listen again!

"Again, the examples of the preaching of the apostles show that in all cases of conversion recorded in Acts they uniformly preached faith and baptism, but there were variations in the examples as to whether the people were required to repent or confess; so, if uniformity is the criterion of pattern teaching, then faith and baptism are required; but repentance and confession are optional!" (Page 78—Para. 1)

A man who professes to be a Gospel preacher whether he ever saw the inside of a college or not who can't beat that both as to Bible knowledge and reasoning should be ashamed of himself. We see more proof all of the time that our brother's idolatry for learning has warped him into thinking that others do not and cannot think.

Brother Thomas, there are some cases of conversion that do not specifically mention baptism. Does that mean that it is as optional as repentance or confession? If only one New Testament example mentioned it, it would be just as essential. Uniformity does not require "multi-occurrence" instances in the record. **Uniformity meant that the things recorded never happened and are not recorded in any other way no matter how many times they were done.** As to the illustration from the conversions that do not specifically relate repentance and confession, did the people repent and confess? Certainly! Our brother would not deny it. But how do we know they did? It is implied when it is not recorded specifically! Other New Testament examples of conversion supply the information that demands it in every case of conversion. But suppose repentance and confession were nowhere taught and could not be found in any New Testament example of conversion, would the Bible teach that it should or could be done?

That is your problem, Brother Thomas, you have the job of showing us New Testament teaching either in command, necessary inference, or New Testament example— or in "principle eternal"—or by the "law of love" or in any other way that a thing can be taught in the scriptures where churches of Christ, 1) ever built and maintained human benevolent organizations to do their work; and, 2) that churches of Christ ever pooled their funds in one congregation and centralized control over those funds and the work done with them under one eldership as a means of cooperating in doing their work; and, 3) where one congregation ever made a contribution to another congregation when the receiving church was not in need; and 4) where one local church ever sent to any work at all **through** another local church as its agent. You will not need to worry about uniformity if you will just find a "single-occurrence" or "multi-occurrence" or teaching otherwise in the scriptures for any of these. We challenge you to produce it and quit playing "ring around the rosey" with Bible teaching on these points. We think you know that it cannot be found. Brother Thomas tells us that he read the New Testament through several times in preparing the manuscript for this book — (page 91—para.. 2) — evidently looking for it and we know if he had found it, he would have put it in the book and it is not there. The book is altogether negative so far as Bible proof is concerned. Of course, it is very positive in expressing Brother Thomas' opinions and judgments.

We propose to find in the Scriptures what we practice in a congregation doing its own work of benevolence, under its own elders, out of the resources furnished by its own members, through the ministration of its own deacons and without building and maintaining another organization. We also propose to be able to point out from the scriptures how churches sent directly to the support of a gospel preacher in New Testament days. We can also find definite Bible examples of how churches cooperated in supporting gospel preachers and how they cooperated with each other in time of need. Now when our brother can find what he practices in the New Testament, we will agree that there is more than one way of doing this work, but until he or someone else can, we will still be guided by the Bible in the

only information it gives on these matters. Until you can produce New Testament teaching for what you practice, do not ask us to accept it.

We listen once again to our brother on the matter of "uniformity" in New Testament examples:

"To explore this important (and for those who hold the view crucial) argument further we now note some instances of "single occurrence" examples, which the hypothesis would insist always establishes patterns. (We recall here that this is the only reason that such BRETHREN say that the example of the Acts 20:7 context establishes an exclusive pattern for the day upon which to partake of the Lord's supper—is the fact that it is a "single occurrence" example, and therefore the uniformity hypothesis applies in its case.)

(Page 79—Para. 2)

Here is another of the many instances of complete misrepresentation in which our brother engages in his book. Who insists that "single-occurrence" examples "always establishes patterns"? **Exactly No One!** Who are the "such brethren" who say "that this is the **only reason** that the example in Acts 20:7 context establishes an exclusive pattern for the day upon which to partake of the Lord's Supper"? Does Brother Thomas mean that such a contention is made because of the fact that it is recorded but once that it occurred? That is the inference if his statement makes any sense. The force of the argument is that no instance of "breaking bread" on any other day is recorded nor is there any New Testament teaching that it should be done on any other day. Brother Thomas must have read "Walking By Faith". He refers to it and quotes from it frequently in his book. Why did he not read it fairly and if he did, then why doesn't he represent it fairly? Compare the above statement quoted from his book with this paragraph on Acts 20:7 under the "Rule of Uniformity"— (page 22-23—W. B. F.), the very rule our brother was discussing:

"(4)The fact that the Lord's Supper was observed by the early church on the first day of the week and only upon the first day of the week is significant. If it established the right to observe the Lord's Supper upon the first day, it also established that it can be observed only upon the first day for we have neither precept, example or inference of observing it any other day. Therefore, every other day is excluded."

From this it can be seen that the rule of uniformity is that where a practice occurred with apostolic approval in the work and worship of the New Testament church and that practice was uniform in essential elements, that is, it did not vary but always, whenever recorded, occurred in the same way, then there must be some weight and force given to the testimony concerning it and it establishes **only** that the same practice can be performed in the same way under the same circumstances today.

What our brother needs to prove is that the church of the Lord today has the right to practice something in its work or worship that is **not taught in any way** by New Testament scriptures. When he can find neither precept or example in the New Testament for what he is doing, how can it have divine authority?

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WHEN IS A NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE BINDING?

Roy E. Cogdill. Nacogdoches. Texas

(A Review of We Be Brethren by J. D. Thomas —Professor Bible Department, Abilene Christian College)

In the previous article we noticed the effort Brother Thomas made in his book, "We Be Brethren" to avoid the force of the rule of interpretation which we chose to call "The Rule of Harmony" in our book, "Walking By Faith". Brother Thomas was considerably bothered with "single-occurrence" incidents or examples and their effect from the viewpoint of authority. We suggested in the former article (No. VII) that what he needed to find was a "single-occurrence" (at least) example of what he is practicing under the guise of cooperation. His trouble is that he can't find even a "single-occurrence" precept, example (approved or unapproved), or inference (necessary or unnecessary) of what he preaches and practices. **There is no scripture and therefore no scriptural authority for what these brethren are practicing.** There is no wonder why they can't defend it by the Bible. All they have is sophistry and their own human wisdom and judgment to depend upon. The rest of us are not willing to accept that.

Sometimes the question is asked, "What difference does it make whether each congregation takes care of its own "charge" in the work of "relieving the destitute" or all of the churches do their work through a human organization built and maintained by them for that purpose?" The difference exactly is this: **ONE IS FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE OTHER IS NOT!**

Then sometimes brethren are heard to ask, "What difference does it make whether a church sends a preacher and supports the preacher by sending money to him or sends the money to a church and lets that church support a preacher with it?" The difference again is exactly this. **ONE PRACTICE IS FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE OTHER IS NOT!**

What difference does it make whether each church does its own work by using its own resources under the supervision of its own eldership or pools its resources with another congregation or congregations under the supervision of another eldership, as is the case with

the Highland Church and the Herald of Truth, as a means of cooperating in fulfilling their mission? The difference is exactly this. ONE IS FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE OTHER IS NOT FOUND THERE!

What difference does it make whether a church sends its contribution to a preacher or church directly or through another congregation as its agent? The difference is exactly this: "ONE IS FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE OTHER IS NOT FOUND THERE!"

Of course, the fact that a thing is found in the New Testament does mean much to some people when they want to practice something that is not found there and are not careful about following Scriptural authority for what they do. They will brush aside all the principles of righteousness revealed in the precepts of the Lord's Word. Every example approved by apostolic authority, and every inference that is necessarily the result of the clear and unmistakable import of the language of the word of God, they will wave aside with a casual remark, "That is just a truism" or "such an example is not binding" or "that is legalism to insist on following that example" and insist that "there is no pattern and we are at liberty to do what we please in regard to this matter".

What constitutes a pattern of authority anyway? Perhaps a plain statement on this matter will help clear our confusion about it. What would be wrong with this? THE SUM TOTAL OF NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON ANY QUESTION CONSTITUTES THE PATTERN OF THE LORD'S WILL UPON THAT QUESTION! Can even our learned brother find any fault with that? If so, what is wrong with it?

Then we raise again the question, HOW DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACH US? And once again the answer, "THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES BY PRECEPT OR EXPRESS COMMAND, APPROVED APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE, AND BY NECESSARY INFERENCE". Whatever the New Testament teaches to be the will of God for us today must be found embraced in one of these three methods of teaching. This has always been recognized by brethren in Christ from Thomas Campbell's **Declaration and Address** until now except by the uninformed and incorrigible souls who want their own way no matter what God may say and there have been some like that in every generation. Their honest attitude could be expressed by saying, "We want it and we are going to have it, no matter whether the Bible teaches it or not". They pacify their consciences, if any, by crying "Liberty! Liberty!" when there is no such liberty. Or they camouflage their disregard for God's Word by appealing to the "great good we are doing", as if God is more pleased with sacrifice than with obedience in our age. But thinking people who reverence the Word of God will not be fooled by such deceitful sophistry and subterfuge. Their demand will continue to be, "Chapter and verse, Please", "What cloth it say?", "To the law and to the testimony", and if the passage cannot be produced that does set forth such practice in some manner, they will not engage in it in order to have fellowship with anyone.

The fact remains that Brother Thomas cannot find the New Testament teaching that supports the "indirect method" which makes a "brotherhood" agency out of God's arrangement for a local church. He cannot and has not found any New Testament teaching setting forth the right of the churches to build a human society to do any of their work, cooperatively or otherwise. He has not found and will not find in the New Testament any passage that sets forth the teaching that one church can become ambitious and promote a big work upon the prospect of getting its hands into the treasuries of other churches and appropriating their resources in order to fulfill their ambitions. **He cannot and will not find one New Testament church contributing to another New Testament church unless it was in need.** He cannot and will not find a church in the New Testament sending its support for preaching the gospel **through another church** to any preacher. Let him find these things set forth in New Testament scriptures — either precept or example, and all of our opposition to them in the church of the Lord will cease. We can then "Be Brethren" indeed and not simply in lip-service. Write another book, Brother Thomas and this time produce the plain passage of scripture that we can all understand that sets forth any of these things in any manner and we will all be satisfied.

The application of the rule of uniformity to the question of church cooperation is plain and positive.

"(1) When many churches cooperated with a preacher by supporting him while preaching the gospel, they sent directly to the individual whom they were supporting. (II Cor. 11:8, Philippians 4:15-18.) Philippi sent directly to Paul by their messenger Epaphroditus. (Phil. 2:25.)

"(2) When many churches cooperated with the Jerusalem church by contributing to help meet the needs of the Jerusalem saints, they made up their own funds, selected their own messenger or messengers and sent it direct to Jerusalem. (I Cor. 16:1-4; II COR. 8:16-24.)

"(3) When Antioch made up a contribution for the brethren in Judea during the famine there they sent it by the hands of their own messengers — Paul and Barnabas — to the elders of the church in need. (Acts 11:27-30.)

"(4) There is no precept, example or inference that any church contributed to any work through another church. A 'centralizing' of the funds of many churches and the control over them in a 'sponsoring church' is unknown to the New Testament scriptures. There is no variation from the pattern that when a contribution was made by any congregation, from its treasury to any work it was sent, always, directly to the work being done and never through any church as an intermediate agency. There is complete "uniformity" and no variation at all in the pattern in all New Testament examples of one church contributing to another church." (Walking By Faith—page 23)

We have not demanded that there **must be an example**. We do not occupy the position and have not advocated that unless "an example" can be produced, a practice cannot be scriptural. This is just another "straw man" misrepresentation in the book. (Page 30, 32, 137). Such an implication should be corrected along with other false representations in the book. In his own language we indict him, "But in all these****there has been not one point of real facing of the issue—there has been only wordy claims". Where do you find what you teach on these matters taught, exemplified, or implied in New Testament Scriptures? That is the real issue and it has not been faced forthrightly. Can the New Testament authorize a thing which it does not teach? Can it teach a thing which it does not either generically or specifically set forth in precept, example, or inference? This is the issue and we are determined that brethren shall not forget it!

The Rule of Unity

The rule of Unity was stated like this:

"This is sometimes called the lava- of harmony. It means that each passage of scripture whether precept or example must be interpreted in the light of whatever and all else God has said on the same theme. Truth is always in harmony with truth. Any example that violates any precept of truth is not an approved example."

and in the application of this rule to the problems at hand today on the subject of cooperation we had this to say:

"1. The rule illustrated or exemplified:

(1) Divine precept fixes the jurisdiction of the authority of the elders of a congregation as over the "flock over which they have been made bishops." Acts 20:28. Or "the flock which is among you". I Peter 5:2.

(2) When Antioch sent her contribution to aid the "brethren in Judea" in time of drouth, they sent it to the "elders."

a. There were "churches of God which in Judea are in Christ" among the "brethren which dwelt in Judea" I Thess. 2:14.

b. God's order was and is elders in every church. Acts 14:23.

c. The contribution sent to the brethren in Judea by the hands of Paul and Barnabas was delivered into the hands of the elders. What elders? Why the elders among the "brethren which dwelt in Judea". Since there was more than one congregation and since each congregation had elders, we are free to conclude that the contribution from Antioch was placed in the hands of the elders of each church that was in need and that distribution among its needy members was made under the supervision of its own elders.

d. The conclusion reached by some that the Jerusalem elders received the contribution for all the brethren in Judea and distributed it among them is not only without any basis in fact but is clearly out of harmony with the teaching of the Bible elsewhere on the jurisdiction of an eldership". (Walking By Faith) —page 24.

This was the second rule offered in our book, "Walking By Faith", and Brother Thomas paid no attention to the discussion accompanying it. He discounts and discredits its effect on Bible examples by saying "This hypothesis for determining when an example establishes a pattern is really more of a general rule for interpreting the Bible, than it is for distinguishing between binding and non-binding examples". (Page 82 — Para. 2) Now that is a remarkable statement and especially when you find it on the same page with this one. "The main reasons our tensions have developed is because no one on either side has had a clear-cut criterion for interpreting examples". (Page 82—Para. 1) The first statement definitely implies that while a rule or "hypothesis" might help interpret the Bible, it is of no help in distinguishing between binding and non-binding examples. **The last statement admits that examples must be interpreted.** Our brother says that the great problem is to determine whether or not a New Testament example is "binding". Then he tells us that the "general rules" for interpreting the Bible cannot determine this but that there must be some special rule for examples alone. On top of these statements we find this one, "There is no information in the Acts 20:7 context alone, that says that the Troas Brethren were keeping a required obligation when they partook of the supper on the first day of the week". Therefore, we must conclude that he thinks that an "example alone" does not establish a pattern but that **we must go to other Bible teaching to find the pattern.** He demonstrates this necessity of going to other passages, separate and remote from the example, by arguing that the example of Acts 20:7 must be amplified by I Cor. 11:20-26, I Cor: 16:1-2, Hebrews 10:25, in order to set forth a binding pattern. Of course this is not true. The best way to find out that it is not true is to remember that neither of these additional passages which he has cited mentions "breaking bread" on the first day or any other day. They mention "breaking bread" (I Cor. 11:20-26), and they mention the contribution on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2) and they teach the necessity of assembly (Heb. 10:25), but **they fail to mention breaking bread on the first day of the week or its necessity.** There is just one place where we learn when the New Testament church broke bread and that is Acts 20:7. It **stands alone** as the only passage in the New Testament that teaches us **when** to break bread or **how often. It teaches us "when"** by the example specifically set forth—"The first day of the week to break bread" was the significance of the assembly of the disciples at Troas. **It teaches the "frequency" of their doing so by necessary inference**—the clear and unmistakable import of the language implies necessarily that it was a weekly practice—as often as the first day of the week came. This easily can be seen from a comparison with the Sabbath law and its observance—"Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy"—how often? As often as it came and that was every week. That is what the law said and meant and that is what the language of Acts 20:7 says and means. Brother Thomas evidences that he does not know enough about how to

apply Bible teaching to instruct anyone by the use of this passage, if he did the best he knew.

But our point is that if he is right when he says that we must go to other passages to know if an example is binding (as he does say about Acts 20:7), then what does he mean when he tries to discount the rule of harmony by saying "but this truism applies to commands and necessary inferences as well as to examples and so does not really help our problem". (Page 83—Para. 1) How small a circle can a man get himself into anyway? If other passages must be relied upon to determine when an example is binding, then Brother Thomas actually appeals to the "Rule of Harmony" himself in "interpreting examples" in spite of sneering at us for using the rule and appealing to it! Verily the "legs of the lame are unequal". We categorically deny that "interpreting" (understanding) examples is any different problem from understanding anything else the Bible teaches.

The Rule of Universal Application

This is the third rule in our lesson on Examples in "Walking By Faith". Again Brother Thomas does not deal with our application of this principle of interpretation to the present day problems of cooperation. He sneers at it again as unworthy of any consideration. I suppose the main thing wrong with it is that our brother did not think of it or word it at least. He says this about it: "This rule is similar to the hypothesis of unity, in that it can serve only to veto certain examples". Well what is wrong with a rule that will veto an example as not binding when it is not binding, Brother Thomas? If it would have vetoed those examples that you so much want to get rid of in New Testament practice by the early church, you would have praised it. The trouble with it is that it will not work for you but against you, that is the reason you must make light of it when every scholar who ever wrote on the subject of "interpreting the scriptures" with which we are acquainted, has recognized and emphasized it. But here is another statement on the same page.

"When these so-called 'rules' for determining 'whether an example binds or not' are offered to us, and we see that they are not limited to examples, but equally affect commands and necessary inferences; and also that they would affect only a rare or occasional example and only in a negative way, we realize that whoever has suggested them has not really solved the problem of "when are examples binding". This type of 'rule' (No. 2 and No. 3) says nothing whatever that is constructive or positive toward solving the problem". (Page 84—Para. 1)

In spite of the fact that he admits that this "so-called rule" is a rule of some assistance in understanding the commands and necessary inferences, and occasionally an example, yet he asserts, that it says nothing constructive whatever toward solving the problem. Now, it seems that if it helps just the "wee bit" that he admits in solving the "problem of understanding" even an "occasional example" he could have been a little less severe in rejecting it and given it a little more credit anyway. These "trained thinkers" can give nothing credit unless they

think of it first. He has no reticence in claiming that his "so-called hypotheses" are the "Standard" for all time to come and will solve every problem. Such is his fairness and his humility.

We stated this rule of Universal Application in this manner.

"Everything taught in the gospel of Christ is within the realm of possibility in practice for all people in all parts of the world and in every age. The scope of the gospel is world wide both in its provisions and in its requirements".

Then concerning the application of this rule to the problems at hand we had this to say.

"3. The autonomy and independence of congregations as taught in the Lord's plan for His church means that in every locality where Christians are made throughout the world, the work of the Lord's church can be carried out without any necessary connection with any other part of the people of God in any other part of the world." "Walking By Faith"—page 25.

This means simply that the local church is perfect and complete in its own form and function without any federation, amalgamation, or relation with any other local church on earth. It can perform its duty and please God in the execution of its mission if no other like it existed on earth. Of course, it would be its obligation to preach the gospel and plant the kingdom of God everywhere that its resources and opportunities allowed it to do so. Then if it learned of other saints in need in a locality where the church was not able to supply that need, it would be under obligation to "remember the poor" by sending them assistance as it had opportunity and ability to do so. It takes no more than a local church to do what God has designed that the church should do.

The Law of Materiality

Our next rule, The Law of Materiality, was stated in this fashion.

"Whether a thing is relevant, material, essential to the teaching or practice of Gods will is a most important consideration. Incidental matters are never relevant, material, or competent in determining the will of God. Incidental circumstances need to be separated from divine law in anything taught in God's word."

In applying that principle we gave the following illustrations of its application to familiar matters.

"1. Whether the people on the day of Pentecost were baptized in a natural stream or an artificial pool or reservoir of water in the city of Jerusalem is entirely incidental. The design,

action, and results accomplished were exactly the same in any event.

2. Whether the gospel is preached in a temple of worship, by the riverside or in the jail house. is a matter that is neither relevant or material to the conversion of the sinner. The truth preached, believed, and obeyed constituted conversion under any circumstances.

3. Whether Christians assemble under the branches of a tree, in a rented hall, in a private home, or in a building owned by them is a matter of indifference completely. The assembly of the saints in worship in spirit and truth is the essential whether in Jerusalem or Bagdad. John 4:21-24. Whether the Lord's supper is observed in an upper room, on the third story or in a house with but one story is entirely immaterial. Matt. 18:20.

4. Whether in the Lord's supper the elements are the unleavened loaf and the fruit of the vine or ice cream and cake is a very material matter. The emblems of His body and blood on the Lord's table were determined by Him and are the constituent elements of the supper he ordained. Anything else could not possibly constitute that supper."

Then we proceeded to show the application of the same principle of interpretation to the problems at hand in this manner.

"5. Whether a congregation has elders or not is material for unless in due time elders are developed and appointed, God's order has not been respected and followed. Acts 14:23.

6. Whether elders exercise jurisdiction over the congregation in which they have been made elders or in some organization other than that congregation and whether they are elders over that congregation only or many congregations is a very material question as to whether they are exercising scriptural authority in the function of their office. I Peter 5:2. It simply determines whether they are elders or something else and whether they are exercising proper authority or are usurping authority.

7. Whether congregations maintain an equal relationship to any work in which two or more churches cooperate is very material in determining whether or not they respect the divine order of the autonomy, independence, and equality of New Testament congregations: Whenever two or more congregations combine their funds and centralize the control over "their" work in one congregation and under one eldership, they have violated a very material and essential principle of New Testament Church identity—its government." "Walking By Faith—page 25-26". Yet Brother Thomas wrote in his book:

"These BRETHREN have not even considered the possibility of dealing with examples grouped as optional things" — (Page 77 —Para. 2) That, my friends, is how honestly and fairly he dealt with the material in "Walking By Faith" and with the issues before the brotherhood today. We are ashamed of him for his profession of piety and "brotherliness"

when being so manifestly unfair. We do not wonder that he did not tell his readers the name of the book or the author to which he was referring.

The Law of Competence

This very common rule of interpretation and evidence was stated in this fashion:

"In studying any precept or example from New Testament scriptures it is important to determine whether or not the evidence obtainable from the divine record is actually competent to support the claim that is made for it. Practices which we are anxious to justify are too often presumed when the evidence of their actual existence is non-existent."

The application of this rule or requirement for evidence to be competent we offered the following:

"1: The presumption that the Jerusalem elders took charge of the contribution sent from Antioch for the "brethren which dwelt in Judea" and distributed that benevolence among the "churches of Judea" is entirely unsupported. In the example of Acts 11:27-30 Jerusalem and the Jerusalem elders are not mentioned. We are entitled to presume that the "churches in Judea" followed the divine order of "elders in every church". Acts 14:23: In that case the "elders" to whom Paul and Barnabas delivered the contribution were the elders among the "brethren in Judea". Unless it could be established that only the Jerusalem church had elders, which is entirely without support, then we must conclude that the "elders" of various churches in Judea which were in need are the ones referred to in the example.

2. The idea that any New Testament congregation ever made a contribution to any work to be done "through" another church is pure fiction. There is no example or hint of such a practice in the New Testament. **There is no** "pooling of funds" among New **Testament** churches. In the contribution sent to **the Jerusalem** saints each church selected its own messenger to carry the funds to Jerusalem and thus retained control, through their agent, over the funds until they came to rest in Jerusalem where the need existed and the work was to be done. I Cor. 16:1-4, II Cor. 8:16-24. Philippi sent directly to Paul by her own messenger—Epaphroditus. Phil. 4:15-18. This is the pattern.

3. There is no testimony of any kind upon which to base the presumption that New Testament churches ever undertook to do their work through any organization other than the "congregation" under its own elders." "Walking By Faith"— Page 26-27.

This is how fairly and fully we tried to deal with these principles or rules which our brother prefers to call "hypotheses" and the detailed way in which we tested their application to the examples of the New Testament record. Yet the learned professor would have you believe that no one but him has given any thought to testing and trying New Testament examples as to their applicability and binding force upon us today. He charges over and over

again in his book that "lists of these hypotheses have been given, often with dogmatic claims about their authority and finality." We will leave it to those who have read both books and the writing that has been done to decide who it is that has been "dogmatic" in their claims for authority and finality. Our brother is a shining example of that.

Then another untrue and false charge in this same connection is this: "the scientific method was, however, used somewhat loosely in their formulation, and they were either not checked with all the possible facts or available data, or were not fully tested after their formulation, or both". (page 76.) Now what Brother Thomas calls "scientific" and "testing", we may not have done. But these principles of interpretation did not originate with us. They have been tried and tested by the scholars in this field back through the generations and are to be found in some of the most scholarly works ever written on this subject. Too bad that our brother at Abilene is so far ahead of everything that has ever been done in this field. His humility and meekness is outstanding. We will compare and test the accuracy of these rules against anything he has evolved whenever he wants to undertake it.

The Law of Limited Application

This rule is sometimes called the law of Limited Extension or Application. We state it in this fashion.

"Every principle of divine law demonstrated in any New Testament example can be correctly applied only to the circumstances or set of facts under which application is made by the Holy Spirit in the word of God. No example or principle applied to all circumstances or conditions. The ease to which it is to be applied must be the same fact situation. There must be a case in point."

We gave the following examples of this rule and its application.

1. Much of the teaching in I Corinthians 14 cannot be generally applied for the reason that Paul was dealing with a fact situation that cannot be reproduced today, viz., the proper use of spiritual gifts. The principle to be learned for general application is stated "Let all things be done unto edifying" and "Let all things be done decently and in order".

2. Many of the things written by Paul concerning the marriage relationship in I Corinthians 7 were written "in view of the present distress" and therefore are limited in their application and would be misused if generally applied to all circumstances and situations.

3. The community of property practiced in the Jerusalem church was not intended for general emulation but was practiced only under special circumstances and in a particular situation. Acts 2:45; 4:32.

4. In New Testament scriptures one church never contributed to another church unless that church was in need. They did contribute to churches in need. (Churches of Macedonia Achaia, Galatia to Jerusalem.) A contribution by one church to another church in need does not justify one church promoting another church out of its money to do a good work. That is not a case in point because the fact situation is not the same". "Walking By Faith —page 27-28".

Brother Thomas swept this aside as unworthy of any consideration and then turned right around and fashioned in his own words a "Pattern Principle for Examples" for which he made boastful claims of its being the solution for all our problems concerning "binding examples" and when he got this laborious effort all finished he had a combination of the law of limited extension or application and the law of relevance or materiality. He announces with a great deal of gusto:

"What we now wind up with as we conclude Part II on the solution of our problem is a major premise produced by our inductive reasoning thus far, and which is the finally formulated hypotheses derived from actual data and facts, gathered from the New Testament itself and tested with many illustrations". (Page 91 — Para. 2)

Now that sounds like the solution to every problem doesn't it? What more could be claimed by even a great "inductive and scientific" reasoner? But what did it amount to?

"When an example was binding upon the people of the New Testament day, it is binding upon us now; and when it was optional action for them, it is optional action for us"!

Now what does that solve? Exactly nothing so far as determining when an example was required specific action or attitude of its characters. What we need is to determine when the action was required or binding action then and now! Brother Thomas' great "Pattern Principle for Examples" is, to use his words, "nothing but a truism"—a "group of words without a point" and "says nothing whatever that is constructive or positive toward solving the problem". Brother Thomas you will have to wind your "scientific tinker" up again and evolve something else. You didn't do the job!

SOME NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES ANALYZED

Roy E. Cogdill, Nacogdoches, Texas

(This is the ninth article written in review of the book "We Be Brethren" written by J. D. Thomas, Professor of Bible, Abilene, Texas.)

The two articles preceding this dealt with some things that need to be kept in mind in the study and understanding of the force of New Testament examples. We want in this article to examine the way our Brother Thomas deals with New Testament examples in his book.

Brother Thomas claims to have evolved a rule which he calls a "Pattern Principle For Examples" that he thinks is the solution to all problems concerning whether or not a New Testament example is binding upon us today. We have already pointed out that his "pattern principle" which he so highly touts actually contributes nothing to the solution of the problem. He treats Bible examples just like he treats the distinction between "Essential and Optional" matters in Bible teaching. He puts the "wavy line" of distinction where it arbitrarily suits him and in his use of examples he arbitrarily designates one as binding and another as not binding and expects the rest of us to accept his judgment on the matter. However, we do not have any confidence in his judgment and are unwilling therefore to accept it. The rest of us think that we can understand the Bible just as well as our learned professor and are, therefore, not willing for him to sit in judgment on whether or not an example is binding.

Modernists have treated the recorded facts of the Bible in this fashion through the years. They tell us we are not to accept the story of Jonah and the trig fish, Noah and the flood, etc., as factual. They say these things did not really happen in the Old Testament but are allegories and are to be understood as such. They classify the miracles of Jesus the same way. They say that Jesus did not actually turn water into wine, still the tempest, feed the 5,000, etc. These are just allegories. They think with their superior intellectual training they are able to discern for the rest of us what should be believed and not believed of the facts recorded in the scriptures.

Sectarians have always taken the same attitude toward the **commandments** of our Lord. They go through the scriptures and list what they consider as "essential and non-essential" commandments. This distinction, of course, is made by their own arbitrary judgment. We have never been able to learn how they think they are able to find out when God meant what he said and when he didn't, if he didn't.

Now, our brother Thomas comes along and wants to sit in judgment on **the examples** of the New Testament and by his superior ability and training select those that are binding and eliminate those that are not binding. Moreover, his selection as evidenced in his book is

completely arbitrary for the most part. We contend that he is no more licensed to classify the examples for us than is the outright modernist at liberty to classify the facts, or the sectarian or denominationalist at liberty to sit in judgment on God's commands in the same manner. In fact, all three attitudes are essentially and fundamentally the same.

In some way our brother can see a binding example in seventeen incidents, largely involving individuals instead of church action, and he lists them for us. He can see the binding pattern in all of them "without any command" (page 64-70) though every one of them rested upon a command which is implied in the example itself and is supported by what the Bible otherwise teaches. The fact is that the heading of this section is completely wrong. There is positive Bible teaching for every one of the incidents setting forth the action demonstrated as obligatory upon the part of Christians. You can examine them for yourself and see that such is the case. Without the "rule of unity" Brother Thomas would not have known that these examples were binding except by his own arbitrary judgment governed by his own will and wisdom. It does appear that when a man is able to see so much from so little in some cases, he could see more from so much in other cases.

But let us look at his treatment of Acts 20:7 in detail. Concerning this example which has proven so troublesome to our "institutional advocates" brother Thomas says further:

"Let us illustrate: A church in Texas has a regular meeting on Wednesday night, and if a visiting preacher should come to town on Monday morning, he might "tarry" three days until the BRETHREN came together on Wednesday night to pray. But the Wednesday night meeting of the Texas church, although regular, is not a service required by God, but is completely optional on the part of the local elders, and they might have chosen some other night, as Thursday. The point is, to see the parallel, there is nothing in the Acts 20:7 context to prove that the first-day-of-the-week meeting was not just an optional meeting, just like the Wednesday night prayer service. And even if churches were required to assemble "sometime" to partake of the Supper, what is there in the Acts 20:7 context to prove that there might not be a permissible "local option" for which day of the week—with Troas using the first day, Ephesus the second, and Thessalonica the fifth et cetera? In this case the required pattern would not be, "take it on the first day only" but it would be "take it once a week, but you can choose any day desired by the local congregation." There is nothing in the Acts 20:7 context alone that proves that any pattern involved might not be of the latter type.

"This, then is the reason why some good brethren have concluded against the establishment of pattern authority by examples alone. They at present do not really see any binding authority of any kind for having an exclusive day to partake of the supper. And those who have been ridiculing them have either not seen the exact problem or else have ignored it, and it calls for an answer". (page 95)

We disagree with our brother in his diagnosis of this case. The trouble with these

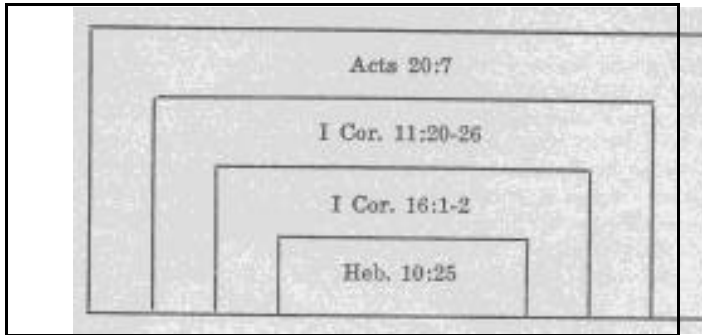
brethren who "at present do not really see any binding authority of any kind for having an exclusive day to partake of the supper " is that they are not willing to accept the binding force of any New Testament church example. They disallow the "rules of interpretation" (hypotheses to our professor) which they have always accepted and followed, such as "the rule of harmony," because it is necessary for them to escape the force of those examples of New Testament church action that set the "pattern" of cooperation by their teaching. These examples destroy the "pattern" which our "institutional" brethren worship and they will not have it. And if brother Thomas followed the same course with reference to Acts 20:7 that he follows with reference to Phil. 4:15-18, II Cor. 11:7-8, Acts 11:27-30, II Cor. 8, 9, he would stand with them and be unable to condemn by New Testament teaching the observance of the Lord's Supper on Thursday night before good Friday.

The whole fact is, as our learned professor should know, **there is no other information in the New Testament whatever about when to observe the Lord's Supper or how often to do it.** Our brother is utterly impotent in trying to establish either by any other "context" in the New Testament. It rests upon a commandment, to be sure, as far as the observance of the supper is concerned, for Jesus said "Do this in memory of me", but how can he prove a commandment to observe it "only on the first day of the week" and show that it is not a "local option" as he calls it? **In absolutely no way at all except by the "pattern" set by this example in Acts 20:7.** He must either accept the binding force of this example or be unable to teach the truth about this important part of Christian worship. And if he admits the binding force of this example—alone—then he is unable, honestly, to get away from the force of those which he is so interested in disallowing. Even he can see that if Acts 20:7, "context alone" establishes an exclusive day for the observance of the Lord's Supper, then Phil. 4:15-18 establishes "exclusively" the "pattern" for sending directly to the preacher. We can find more scripture to support the latter than our brother can produce for the former aside from the "context". This is why he labors so hard in his "ring around the rose" fashion of reasoning to accept one and eliminate the other. We insist that he can do so only by his own arbitrary judgment and he is not the authority in such matters.

This attitude toward Acts 20:7 was never taken by any of the brethren until they wanted to escape the force of some other examples of church action in the New Testament. This was the "necessity" that became the "mother" of all this confusion about examples anyway. Brethren came to so idolize their human institutions that they surrender the Bible teaching about the Lord's supper in order to escape the force and effect of other examples in New Testament teaching. If brother Thomas could find the same kind of an example of the church meeting on Wednesday night that Acts 20:7 furnishes for observing the Lord's supper on the first day of the week—supported by the Lord's command, apostolic approval, and of their meeting only on Wednesday night to pray, he would have a comparison. Until he does there isn't any. One is in the New Testament and the other is not.

In his "Excursus: When Observe the Lord's Supper?" we find what he thinks is the

solution to this problem that has gone "unanswered", according to him, by those who have been "ridiculing others", whoever they are. He gives us a diagram of how he arrived at this solution. For the sake of convenience we will use straight lines instead of circular lines in our reproduction of it.



We do not know why our brother's "solution" to this problem required that he go to all this trouble to establish that the church must assemble on the first day of the week to break bread. It is unfortunate that he had to appeal to collateral teaching in New Testament scriptures to establish that this example is binding. That means that in spite of his discounting the importance of the "rule of unity" as it applies to examples, he had to use it! Brother Thomas, you should leave out your criticism of that rule in any further editions of your book or else leave out your appeal to it.

What does Heb. 10:25 teach about breaking bread on the first day of the week? Nothing at all! It does not even mention either the first day of the week or breaking bread! I Cor. 16:1-2 teaches absolutely nothing about breaking bread on the first day of the week! It does not even mention breaking bread! I Cor. 11:20-26 does not mention the first day of the week! Yet our brother considered it necessary to give an exegesis on all three of these passages in order to establish that Acts 20:7 is a binding example or "pattern". Suppose we had only the Lord's command when he instituted the supper (Luke 22:19-20) and the example of the church under apostolic approval carrying out that command in Acts 20:7. How would brother Thomas make out his case? He did not want to surrender the Lord's Supper in its observance only on the first day of the week and yet he did not want to grant that the example of when it was observed under apostolic supervision and with apostolic approval was sufficient to bind it on us. That was his predicament and is the answer to why he went to such a great length to try to make out his case with proof texts that do not even mention what he was trying to establish. These brethren have to diminish the power of the examples of the New Testament church in executing the will of the Lord under apostolic direction or they are in serious trouble and they know it. But he makes further appeal to:

"The pattern for partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week exclusively which these four contexts have established, is also confirmed by:

- (a) Revelation 1:10—"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."
 - (b) Colossians 2:16.17—"Let no man judge you in respect of
-
- (c) The unanimous testimony of early church history."

But again neither of the passages he quotes in this further effort to strengthen his "solution" say anything about what he is trying to prove. His appeal to early church history we suppose is "profane" or uninspired history. We can't see how that would mean anything to him when "divine" history exemplifying the matter means so little to him. With this much latitude in scriptural proof to support an example, we will take the two examples he rules out by his own authority, arbitrarily, that are applicable to these problems of "cooperation" and strengthen our case considerably. But he wants us to stand on the example "alone" without

any collateral proof. Why don't he do that on Acts 20:7! Is he the only one that has the right to go to other New Testament teaching to show that the "pattern" of a New Testament example is binding? Will he let us also go to "the unanimous testimony of early church history" to show that the early church practiced what is recorded in New Testament history and when those practices were corrupted and the organization of the Lord's church perverted by a "bishop" extending his authority to the work of another congregation, apostasy had already set in? We can abundantly show that it was so.

There are two things outstanding: 1) it takes a tremendous lot of testimony to establish some things from New Testament examples, and 2) some New Testament examples our brother rules out in spite of all the supporting testimony that can be produced. Let us see:

"3. A third instance of an example that is clearly optional, as the contextual matter shows but which has been declared a pattern, to the detriment of the Cause we represent, is found in two passages, both of which are used for the same pattern:

Phil. 4:15, 16—And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only;

II Cor. 11:8—I robbed other churches taking wages of them that I might minister unto you;

The pattern that some BRETHREN feel is established by these passages is that **"churches sending money to a preacher are required to send it to him directly."** The real point for our consideration is that neither one of them has any contextual indication whatever that churches were **required** to send money directly to the preacher. These passages, therefore, indicate only that it is an optional choice, and we should remember that before an example can be binding it must show **conclusive evidence**, proving that it does bind. Ways of sending money to a preacher are optional and we must not make binding what God hasn't. The fact of getting money to a preacher is important, but how many hands it goes through in getting to him or whose hands they are, are purely incidental and in no sense binding. This case is another where men have been making laws for God". (Pages 73-74.)

It is amazing that when these brethren try to get away from the Lord's truth they run head on into the Missionary Society. What would be wrong with a church sending money through a missionary society, Brother Thomas? You couldn't tell us to save your life, now could you? If it is purely an optional matter as to how the church sends to a preacher, then it would be just as well to send it through a missionary society as any other way. If not, why not? It would be interesting to see our brother deal with it.

Of course he would say that

"Where the Society functions it dominates and controls (in mission activity) the local congregations which comprise its membership, and the "local autonomy" pattern is definitely replaced". (Page 35)

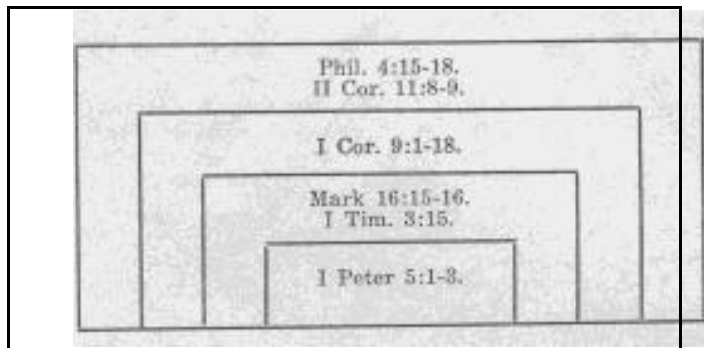
But the Missionary Society says that is not so! They deny that they are a "form of church government" as our brother alleges and deny, as we shall see in a later article, that they exercise any control over the churches. They deny these allegations just as the Herald of Truth and Boles Home, Inc., deny that they are "forms of church government" and as such exercise control over the churches affiliated with them in their work. But we will go into the parallel with the missionary society and our brother's attitude toward it in another article. The point now is, if the abuses are ruled out and the principle of the missionary society in its very existence, is not wrong because of its nature and the fact that there is no authority for its existence, then it would be an expedient way of sending money to a preacher in the minds of many and Brother Thomas, from the quotation above, would be unable to condemn it. This he has to admit and does admit in this language:

"Now to illustrate: The Missionary Society, in relation to the required pattern, "Go Preach", could be classified as an **optional expedient**, or as an "aid", (a Box OE type matter), as it is indeed considered by those who use it. The fact is, however, that the requirement "Go Preach" is not the only pattern requirement to which the Missionary Society has relation. The other pattern which it is involved with is in the area of church government, and which stipulates that each congregation is to have its own bishops and deacons, and the exclusive type of church government required is "local autonomy." To this latter pattern the Missionary Society is related as an excluded specific, a Box "ES" type matter on the Standard Authority Diagram, since it is by its nature a clear-cut violation of the local church's autonomy. ***** This means, then that the use of the Missionary Society is excluded and sinful since it clearly involves an alternate or substitute form of church government. Where the Society functions it dominates and controls (in mission activity) the local congregations which comprise its membership, and the "local autonomy" pattern is definitely replaced".

Our brother was careful to charge that the "Missionary Society" controls the local congregations **in missionary activity**. To what extent, Brother Thomas? The churches voluntarily affiliate with it. The churches determine what amount of money they will contribute to its activities. The churches themselves can withdraw from it whenever they are ready. The churches surrender no control over their local affairs in any other work. They select their own local teachers and preachers, and determine their own program of work. The Missionary Society controls nothing but the money the congregation chooses to send to it and what shall be done with it in the way of mission work. **Exactly the same thing is true of the Herald of Truth**. When a church contributes a sum of money to the Herald of Truth, that sum of money is completely controlled and the work done with it is completely controlled by the Herald of Truth in exactly the same way the mission society controls the contributions made to it. That cannot be denied successfully. It is established by the testimony of the

Highland Elders themselves. Their control of all funds contributed is "exclusive". Their control over the program—where it shall go and who shall do the preaching, is exclusive, if they have told the truth. The Herald of Truth and the sponsoring church type of "cooperation" control the "activity" — missionary or radio—of the contributing churches in exactly the same way that the Missionary Society does. They stand condemned together and for the same reason. There is no authority for either of them.

But let us try the brother's diagram on the example he undertakes to rule out, viz., Phil. 4:15-18.



Here we give Phil. 4:16-18 the same treatment that our brother gives Acts 20:7. Let us see if it is not so. His contention is that the context of Acts 20:7 alone does not establish an authoritative pattern for observing the Lord's Supper only on the first day of the week. BUT by bringing in related passages he is able to understand and show that the sum-total of New Testament teaching is that the Lord's Supper can scripturally and rightly be observed only on the first day of the week. Let us see how this applies to the example of Phil. 4:15-18. If related passages can be the means of establishing the authoritative pattern of Acts 20:7, then surely the same method can be used to establish the pattern in Phil. 4:15-18.

1. Mark 16:15-16. Here we have the command to "Go Preach". It was and is the will of the Lord that the world be evangelized with the gospel of Christ. That is as much our obligation in our generation as it was the obligation of Christians in the first century. If it be doubted that the great commission be applicable to us today, then a multitude of other passages would establish that it is the obligation of the church today to affect the same work as that authorized in the commission.

2. I Tim. 3:15 teaches that the church is the "pillar and ground of the truth". Many other related passages would easily establish that the primary mission of the church in all ages is to teach and preach the Gospel.

3. I Cor. 9:1-18 gives us a series of arguments by the pen of Paul guided by the Spirit of God to the effect that the church—the church of God at Corinth—a local church—is under obligation to support—pay wages not as benevolence—those who devote their time and talent to teaching and preaching the gospel. Divine providence caused Paul not to accept it

from Corinth for a reason that is apparent in the Second Corinthian letter—protection against the lying charges of false teachers. But he had the right to it and that cannot be denied.

4. I Peter 5:1-3 teaches us that in this matter of supporting a preacher to preach the gospel the elders of the local church are to have the oversight as in all the other work of that church of which they are elders. This teaching also can be abundantly supported in New Testament passages other than this one.

5. II Cor. 11:8-9 teaches us that while Paul was at Corinth foregoing the right to the support of the Corinthians to which he was entitled, he did receive what he needed to sustain him in that work from "other churches". This shows that a church has the right to support a preacher wherever he goes to preach and not just in their own locality. It also shows that when it is needful or necessary or expedient a number of churches can contribute at the same time to the support of the same man in the same place. They did do it in the case of Paul at Corinth. Their contributions were made in this instance not to enable the church at Corinth to do a big work which they were not able to do but to enable the preacher to preach. It was a matter of "supplying that which was lacking" or taking care of the preacher's "want" and that was the extent of the contribution made.

6. Phil. 4:15-18 teaches us that the church at Philippi, situated in Macedonia, was one of the churches that supplied Paul's need while at Corinth. (II Cor. 11:9.) It also tells us how they sent it to him. Both passages emphasize that they sent it **to Paul**. Phil. 2:25 tells us that Epaphroditus, was their "messenger, and he that ministered to my wants". This "method" is in complete harmony and unity with everything else the New Testament teaches.

The Philippian church had bishops. (Phil. 1:1.) The bishops had the oversight, if they were faithful (I Peter 5:1-3), of the resources of the church. They taught and directed the contributions of the members into the treasury of the church. They had the responsibility of the distribution of these resources and their use in accomplishing the purposes of God. They had supported Paul constantly from their beginning as a church. (Phil 1:3-5.) They selected their own messenger—Epaphroditus, an individual member of the church, to carry the contribution to Paul.

What part of that "pattern" does Brother Thomas have the right to rule out? If he can dismiss the "direct method of sending"—that is, by the church that makes up the money sending directly to the preacher whom they support—then he can dismiss all of the rest. This is not an incidental matter or "optional" as he claims. It is of the essence of "local autonomy". It is the only way the bishops of a local church can control their own resources and program of work and without that control they do not have "local autonomy". If surrendering their money to a Missionary Society gives the Society control over their missionary activity, then surrendering their money to a benevolent society gives that benevolent society control over their benevolent activity. And surrendering their money for radio preaching or mission work

to a "sponsoring church" would surrender the control over their radio preaching and mission work likewise. If not, why not?

But let us further demonstrate that if Brother Thomas had been as fair with this New Testament example as he was with Acts 20:7 he would have had to accept it as just as binding as the example of breaking bread. The "institutional advocates" seem to like syllogisms in their reasoning so let us formulate a few.

I.

1. "Authoritative patterns" can be established by New Testament teaching only in "Required matters". (major premise)
2. A local church supporting preachers to preach the gospel is a "required Matter". (minor premise)
3. Therefore New Testament teaching concerning a local church supporting a preacher constitutes an "authoritative pattern" concerning a "required matter." (conclusion)

II.

1. New Testament examples teach whatever they exemplify concerning required matters. (major premise)
2. New Testament examples exemplify how local churches supported gospel preachers in New Testament days. (minor premise)
3. Therefore New Testament examples teach how local churches supported preachers to preach the gospel. (conclusion)

(I learned how to do this in high school debating— not from Tom Warren or J. D. Thomas.)

III.

1. Whatever New Testament precepts, approved examples, or necessary inferences teach concerning "required matters" is authorized.
2. New Testament examples teach that local churches under the supervision of their own bishops supported Paul in his work of preaching by sending directly to Paul.
3. Therefore New Testament examples authorize a local

church to send directly to the support of a preacher.

IV.

1. Whatever New Testament precepts, approved examples, or necessary inferences do not teach concerning "required matters" is unauthorized.
2. No new Testament precepts, approved examples or necessary inferences teach that any local church ever sent to the support of a preacher through another church.
3. Therefore one church sending to the support of a preacher through another church is unauthorized in New Testament teaching.

We have not used syllogisms since high school debating but they come in handy when your opponent likes them. Brother Thomas gives us one on Phil. 4:15-18 and we want to look at it. It follows:

"Major Premise: Any New Testament example that does not imply an underlying command which would require specific actions or attitudes of the exemplary characters, establishes no pattern whatsoever, and serves only to illustrate matters that are purely optional for people today. (See page VI)

Minor Premise: The context of the example of cooperation between the church at Philippi and the Apostle Paul, of Phil. 4:15-18, does not imply an underlying command which would require the church to send money to Paul only "directly" (i.e., through its own messengers, as vs. "indirectly",— through another church treasury).

Conclusion: The example of cooperation between the church at Philippi and Paul, of Phil. 4:15-18, establishes no pattern whatever, which would require churches to send to gospel preachers only "directly", and the example serves therefore, only to illustrate matters that are purely optional for people of today."

Now in order for a syllogism to be correct in logic it must not only be correct in form but the conclusion is not so unless the major and minor premises are both true. The trouble with our brother here is that he wants to let his own statement of his minor premise be conclusive in the matter. We are not willing to let it be. This is the disputed ground and he is under obligation to establish his premise by the teaching of the word of God. His arbitrary ruling on it will not stand. There is no collateral New Testament teaching to sustain his minor premise. On the other hand there is much collateral teaching to sustain that the opposite is true. We have shown that from several passages of scriptures in the diagram and discussion already given in this article.

Whenever our brother comes across a New Testament example of church activity that would rule out what he practices, he always pronounces that it is concerning "optional" rather than "required matters". How did he find that out? How does he learn from Acts 20:7 that the Lord's supper can be taken only on the first day of the week? How would he prove that the fact that they met on the first day of the week to break bread was not purely "optional"? Now if he will apply the same method to the example of Philippi sending to Paul his support to preach the gospel, he will have the answer to all his problems.

But we take another look at his treatment of examples:

"2. Another optional example that has been made into a law by some BRETHREN is that determined from several passages, but best represented by II Cor. 8:13-15:

For I say not this that others may be eased and

ye distressed; but by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality: as it is written He that gathereth much had nothing over and he that gathered little had no lack.

(Acts 11:27-30; I Cor. 16:1-4 and Romans 15: 25-28 are also used in this connection)

This example is that of church cooperation where one church sends to another some help for benevolent purposes, and in this particular circumstance the receiving church is a distressed area and unable to meet all the demands. These BRETHREN add up these facts and then they claim that this example establishes a pattern, namely, that **"The only way one church can help another in benevolent matters is in an emergency, and it must be a "rich church" helping a poor one."** Such a pattern would be rather cumbersome, as it would require a perfect audit of the financial strength of each congregation. (If the auditor made a mistake, somebody would sin.)" (Pages 71-Para. 4—72)

We break into the quotation here to make a few observations. We do not know where brother Thomas found the "quotation" in the above paragraph. It did not come from "Walking By Faith" or anything else we have written. Some one may have said it but many, if not the most of us who oppose human institutions doing the work of the church, would not endorse the statement **"it must be a rich church helping a poor one"**. We do not know of anyone who makes that contention. It is a false charge so far as we are concerned and yet it is charged

upon us all. Brother Thomas should quit capitalizing and emphasizing "BRETHREN" and "WE BE BRETHREN" until he can treat his brethren fair enough to correctly represent them at least. Such piety is pure hypocrisy until it is genuine and when it is, it will not allow such unfair treatment.

We supposed that every one knew that the part the Macedonian brethren had in helping the Jerusalem saints was "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and

their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves praying with us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints". (II Cor. 8:2-4.) I do not know where brother Thomas found the above quotation. Surely he found it somewhere. He was not fair enough to tell us. But he had no business charging all who disagree with him with it. He should correct it. What then is the contention? Here it is: **There is no New Testament teaching that one church should or ever did send a contribution to another church unless the receiving church was in need!** Now, BRETHREN, find the exception to that in the New Testament and you will set a lot of us right!

But if the example called for a "rich church helping a poor church" Brother Thomas would not respect it for he does not respect what it does call for. He files his Objection to the comparative strength of the two churches on the basis that it would call for an audit and a perfect audit at that! Now isn't that impressive? Brother Thomas, if an audit happened to be necessary to do what God said, would you be willing to make one or like Jeroboam of old would you say "It is too far to go down to Jerusalem". This is on a par with his comment on Philippi sending directly to Paul and his contention concerning the **unmistakable feet that they did** but that if their doing so is a pattern for us, it is **"to the detriment of the Cause we represent"**. Well if doing anything just like the church did it in the New Testament is a detriment to the "Cause we represent", it is because we represent the wrong cause and that is evident in Brother Thomas' case.

We continue our brother's comment on the example of II Cor. 8:

"Realizing that some examples are optional and some are binding, we are also conscious of the fact that when we decide that a particular example is binding, there must be clear, conclusive evidence that such is true".

Our author is mixed up on this point. He needs to put the shoe on his own foot and recognize that "when we decide that a particular example is (**not**) binding, there must be clear, conclusive evidence that such is true". If there is to be any presumption it would logically and rightfully lie in favor of the example found in New Testament teaching. Even our brother should admit this.

But hear him further:

"In the above passage, II Cor. 8:13-15, there is nothing whatever to indicate that any exemplary person thought or that we are to think, that the only way these churches could scripturally cooperate was in the way outlined in this **supposed** pattern. The argument that Paul was making as he outlined this instruction was for the purpose of motivating them to liberality. There is not the slightest hint of a required binding pattern of how cooperation must be done. All of the details of this instance are merely incidental and establish no pattern

whatever." (Page 72).

Now, brother Thomas, how did you find that out? Why he merely decides it by his own superior wisdom and enters the decree and expects that to be satisfactory to the rest of us. How can we know that it is not binding on us today? Why our learned professor who teaches Bible in the Department of Bible in Abilene College tells us that it isn't! But that doesn't settle it with us!

He reasons further in the next paragraph that this instance of II Cor. 8: is just an illustration of an optional way of carrying out Gal. 6:10. We will have to contest that point too, brother! In addition to the fact that Gal. 6:10 is instruction to the individual Christian, which we will deal with at another time, Gal. 6:10 sets forth an obligation to "do good unto all men" and this contribution in II Cor. 8 was for the "Saints" in Jerusalem peculiarly as the context abundantly shows. If our brother is as careless in his use and application of scripture in trying to teach his classes in Abilene College as he is in his book, he is doing much harm in his mishandling of the Word of God before young students who do not know better than to swallow what he says. The churches making this contribution were not sending to the relief of the whole populace in Jerusalem but only **to the Saints**. They were not carrying out Gal. 6:10, brother Thomas, unless they were unable to help both and had made the choice in favor of the "saints".

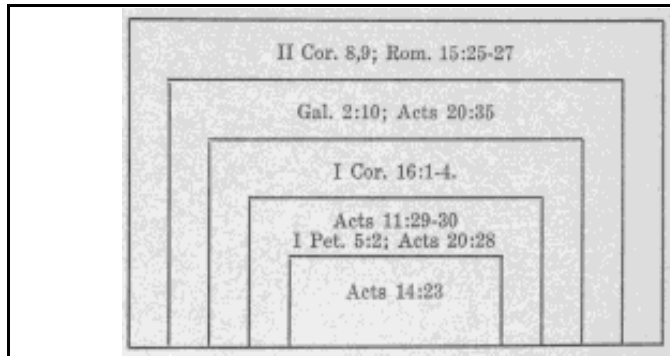
But he further tries to reason about this contribution in this fashion:

"There is another reason it is out of the question to count II Cor. 8:13-15 as establishing a pattern of the type suggested. If it should establish a pattern, required (Box "SP" type) authority, specifying how Cooperation of this type must be done, then Cooperation itself, which would be the generic to such specific, and which would have to be diagrammed in Box "GP" of the Standard Diagram of Authority, would itself also be a required thing and not optional. But we all recognize that Cooperation is optional—we do not have to cooperate to please God." (Page 73)

Here again we would have to dissent. Over and over our professor repeats that cooperation is not necessary. According to this he thinks that it is not even necessary **when it is needed**. That we are willing to deny. He is at point blank variance with even some of the champions of his own cause. Guy Woods argues that cooperation is absolutely necessary to fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord and no one church can do its duty and meet the obligation without cooperation. Brother Woods, of course, isn't a school man "trained in logic" and is not therefore one of the "trained thinkers" of our brother's class. He might be right about some things though and our brother wrong. They need to get together.

But for our enlightenment, let us make the same diagram of this example, not confining it to the specific verses mentioned and quoted by our brother but taking the whole incident

and the teaching of the New Testament relative to it and see what it looks like. I don't know why he didn't give this example the same treatment that he gave Acts 20:7 when he tried to solve that "problem". Maybe he thought this one was too big to solve.



1. From II Cor. 8,9 we learn of the instructions given by Paul to the church at Corinth concerning the contribution for the poor saints in Jerusalem. This was unquestionably and undeniably the action of the church. (1 Cor. 16:1.) More than that it is unquestionably the action of one church cooperating with another church. In fact, it is an example of many churches cooperating in relieving the saints in Jerusalem. They were in need. Those who were not destitute in the Jerusalem church could not provide sufficiently for those who were in need. They were not relieved of the responsibility to do what they could but like a man sometimes gets to the point through adversity that he cannot provide for his family, the Jerusalem church was not able to take care of its own. The churches of Macedonia, Galatia, and Achaia came to their rescue and supplied their "want". Here there was a "need". (II Cor. 8:14; II Cor. 9:12.) That "need" required help and sending that help was COOPERATION between churches.

Paul further referred to this matter in writing to Rome and points out in this passage that these Christians were under obligation to come to the rescue of the "poor saints in Jerusalem" because from them the Gospel had gone forth to the Gentile nations. (Rom. 15:25-27.)

2. Moreover this was the will and commandment of the Lord and His apostles. (Gal. 2:10.) Paul and Barnabas were instructed or reminded to "remember the poor" as they went out to the Gentile world to preach. Jesus had laid down the principle, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" and Paul reminded the Ephesians of that. (Acts 20:35.)

3. I Cor. 16:1-4. As Paul had given order to the churches of Galatia, so he gave order to the Corinthian church as to how to raise the money with which to carry out this work. They were to make it up by individually contributing on the first day of the week into a common treasury so that it might be ready.

We learn further from this passage and also II Cor. 8:19-23 that the churches chose their own messengers and that those messengers were individuals. Sometimes on this point brethren, as did Brother Thomas in his book, (page 78) argue that if **personal messengers** are a part of the required pattern then we could not use the United States Mail. That is a powerful contention! I suppose when it is sent by United States Mail it is not sent by personal messenger but through the agency of another church!

4. Acts 11:27-30. This passage definitely tells us to whom such relief was sent when another church was in need. They sent it to "the elders" by the hands of Barnabas and Paul. Those elders had charge of the distribution of this relief among the poor saints. There were "elders in every church" in God's order for his church on earth. Brother Woods got ridiculous enough at Birmingham to ask if the elders of the church had to receive it then how could you send to a church and how would it be distributed where there are no elders? The answer to such a silly question is, of course, that that church without elders would receive the relief and distribute it exactly as they carried on the rest of their work without elders and if they couldn't receive help because they had no elders then they couldn't function in any other respect without elders.

Brother Thomas, to his own amusement, attacks this example as not being an example of church action. He argues that those of us who recognize the difference between individual Christian duty and church or congregational duty and activity are "legalists" and says that such is "downright amusing" when we claim that Acts 11:27-30 is an example of a church sending for the text says "disciples". (page 174). Now the amusing thing about that would be for our brother to tell us if this fund made up by the contributions of individual disciples became a part of the treasury of the church at Antioch? Or was it still an individual fund after it was contributed into a "common fund"? Were Paul and Barnabas the representatives of the church at Antioch in delivering this fund, or the messengers of the **individual disciples** who contributed it? More than that, when the "disciples" at Troas met on the first day of the week to break bread, did that constitute church action? If so, how do you know—the church isn't mentioned in the passage? This is just another ridiculous dodge and it is "downright amusing" how perfectly crude some of the dodges of these smart men can be. Grant to them for the sake of clarifying the point that this was not a church sending— **it still is an example of churches receiving for it was placed in the hands of elders!** Then the contribution to Jerusalem some fifteen years later (I Cor. 16:1-4; II Cor. 8 and 9) was an example of churches sending so our information is complete anyway.

5. Then we learn that whether a church is sending or receiving, its work is in charge of its elders locally. (I Pet. 5:1-4. Acts 20:28. Heb. 13:17.)

Now what part of this is unnecessary and not required today? Our learned professor has the same right to mark it all out that he has to mark any of it out. We should permit him to mark out none but stand upon the word of God and do his work in the church in the way that

we know to be right and that cannot be wrong.

The whole problem he is struggling with is how to determine what is incidental in the example. He argues elsewhere (page 79) that if single occurrence examples are binding in any case then the example of selecting seven men to serve tables in Acts 6:1-6 would bind upon us today that we select seven and **seven men only** to serve tables now. Yet he reasons from Phil. 4:15-18 that the "direct sending" is purely an **optional matter and not required**. Surely his legs are "unequal" in reasoning and therefore he must be lame. Why would the one example bind the number seven and the other not bind the manner of sending directly to the preacher?

He rules on the incidental and the essential matters in New Testament examples exactly like he rules on them in his "wavy line chart" just as it suits him and his purpose. But with all of his qualifications and outstanding attainments, he is no priest to "interpret" the word of God for anybody and those who will let a mere man, however smart they may think he is, determine such matters for them have too little respect for the word of God.

The difference between Brother Thomas and the "institutional advocates" and the rest of us is that we can find examples of New Testament churches practicing what we practice and preach in these matters and those examples are supported by collateral teaching in New Testament scriptures but they cannot find what they preach and practice either in New Testament example or taught in the New Testament otherwise. When Brother Thomas produces, however trivial and incidental and optional he may think it to be, an example that demonstrates or "illustrates" the indirect method of supporting a preacher by a church of the New Testament day, he can settle the problem and restore the unity he says he is down on his knees praying for. So, Brother Thomas, get up off your knees long enough to produce the passage whether precept, necessary inference, or example of even "optional matters" where one church ever sent to any work through another church and "We Can Be Brethren" indeed!

We have called attention in these articles before now to the fact that if two or more coordinate practices belong in the optional field, either all of them must be found in the New Testament, or none of them must be found there and the Bible teaches nothing about the matter at all leaving the choice entirely up to men. If one is taught in the Bible and the other or others are not found there, and yet they are just as acceptable as what is found there, then what the Bible does not teach is just as authoritative as what the Bible does teach! If not, why not?

In spite of the great invention concerning examples our brother claims for himself, he has actually contributed nothing to the solution of the force of New Testament examples, for if he is not permitted to rule on the essential and non-essential part of the example as to even its details by his own arbitrary judgment, then he must still determine what is essential and what is optional! The only way he can determine that is by what the Bible teaches. Bible

teaching determines what is essential and what is non-essential and that is all that will do so.