

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A MANUAL
OF THE
ORDER AND ADMINISTRATION
OF A
BAPTIST CHURCH.

A MANUAL
OF THE
ORDER AND ADMINISTRATION
OF A
BAPTIST CHURCH

BY
J. R. WOOD
AND
SAMUEL CHICK

Second Edition.

LONDON:
THE KINGSGATE PRESS,
4, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C.1.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE	7
DEFINITIONS	9
CHAPTER I.	
THE CHURCH	13
Formation of a Church—Declaration.	
CHAPTER II.	
THE MINISTER	16
Call of the Church—Recognition and Ordination—The Minister at his Work—Public Worship—The Sermon—The Ordinances—The Lord's Supper—The Pastor as President—Pastoral Visitation.	
CHAPTER III.	
THE CONDUCT OF CHURCH MEETINGS	31
Order of Business—Motions and Amendments—Voting—Introduction of Business—Rescinding of Motions.	
CHAPTER IV.	
CHURCH DISCIPLINE	35
Candidates for Church Membership—Church Discipline.	

CHAPTER V.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL	<i>Page</i> 39
Building and Officers—Management—The Pastor and the School.	

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEACONS	42
Functions of a Deacon—Spiritual Qualities of a Deacon—Deaconesses—Elders and Deacons—Number of Deacons—Period of Office—Election of Deacons—Induction of Deacons—Diaconal Service—Division of Labour—Church Secretary—Deacons' Meetings—Minutes—Deacons and Vacant Pastorate.	

CHAPTER VII.

FINANCE	54
Various Methods—Control of the Finances— The Treasurer—Concerning the Collection —Audit of the Accounts—The Pastor's Salary.	

APPENDIX I.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED, AND THE BYE-LAWS TO BE ADOPTED AT THE FORMATION OF A BAPTIST CHURCH	57
Declaration — Bye-Laws — Directions to Members.	

APPENDIX II.

TRUSTEESHIPS	62
Appointment of New Trustees—New Trusts —Transfer of Trusts to the Baptist Union Corporation, Limited—Conditions.	

PREFACE.

THIS brief Manual has been written at the request of the Committee of the Baptist Union Publication Department, and is prepared in order to meet a need widely felt in the Churches. It is published in the hope that it will be received and used in the spirit in which it is prepared. It is not offered as a *Book of Laws*, intended to bind our procedure, but as a *collection of Rules* whose value has been attested by experience in many Churches through long periods of years, and as a simple statement of their practical application in Church life. The authors are alone responsible for the opinions expressed. The design of the compilers is to supply guidance, which has been tested in a sufficient number of instances to give it value; in short, to provide a Chart, which will enable Church officers, as they consult it, to avoid shoals and quicksands, occasioning peril and loss. The attempt, however imperfect in itself, is commended to the blessing of God and the good-will of the Churches.

DEFINITIONS.

For clearness' sake definitions must be framed of three things—the *Church*, *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*. Until this is done and the ground cleared, the respective duties of ministers, deacons, and Church-members cannot be dealt with.

1. The Church.

What is the Holy Catholic Church? The answer given to this question in the Free Church Catechism can scarcely be improved—"It is the Society of Believers in Christ Jesus which He founded, of which He is the only Head, in which He dwells by His Spirit; so that though made up of many communions, organised in various modes, and scattered throughout the world, it is yet *one in Him*." Variety is recognized, for believers are men; unity is maintained, for Christ is the one Head of the Catholic Church. Baptist Churches then, are *communions of believers, united in love to Christ, and to each other, without regard to numbers or class distinctions, practising the primitive mode of baptism*, and by their fellowship seeking to perfect one another "unto the work of ministering" in the world for which Christ died. The Kingdom of God becomes visible and operative in every age through communions of this kind: they are the "Body of Christ," the organism

through which the world's regeneration is being effected.

References :—Mat. xviii. 17-20; Acts viii. 36-40; x. 47-48, xvi. 31-33; Eph. v. 25-27, i. 22-23; Rev. i. 20.

Baptism is an ordinance instituted by our Lord for His disciples, immediately before His Ascension. In obedience to His will thus solemnly declared, believers are immersed in water in His name; the immersion being a type of their burial and resurrection with Him. The formula of baptism is "Into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." By general consent it is admitted that immersion was the mode of baptism practised in the Apostolic Church. *Baptists observe the primitive mode.*

References :—Mat. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15-16; Rom. vi. 3-5.

3. The Lord's Supper. By an unbroken line of succession, this great Christian Feast is traced up to Jesus Christ. "The same night in which He was betrayed, He took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said—This is My body, which is for you; this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also He took the cup," etc. (1 Cor. xi. 23-26). As Master in His own House, Jesus is the Host; disciples, sitting at the table, are His guests, proclaiming by their act His Death, Resurrection, Enthronement, and final Advent; they also proclaim their union with Him in these solemn events, and their union with one another. In the ancient Roman Empire this last feature of the Supper became the most

arresting feature. With astonishment proud Rome saw all classes, including slaves, sitting together at the Table of the Lord, thus practically recognising their oneness as brethren in Christ. A service of such significance and worth, enshrining memories so sacred, ought to be frequently and reverently observed.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH.

**The
Formation
of a
Church.**

THE questions, *when, where, and how* shall a Baptist Church be formed? raise difficulties that a Manual of this kind cannot meet. Neighbourhoods differ, and circumstances; each case must be considered on its merits. One thing is certain: the only motive for undertaking such an enterprise that Christ will sanction is *love*: love to Himself, to His Gospel, and to the souls of men. Strife, personal ambition, and denominational rivalry are excluded and condemned. The last question, How should a new Church be formed? may be answered with advantage.

1. The believers who propose to form the new Church must come together for prayer and conference. They must count the cost of their enterprise and seek Divine guidance.

2. They ought to take counsel with experienced ministers in the neighbourhood; and especially with the secretary of the Association within whose bounds the new Church will be situated. God often makes His will clear through His servants. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Moreover, Churches as much as individuals are "members one of another";

the new Church will require the sympathy and help of neighbouring ministers and Churches. This claim will be responded to far more graciously if counsel has been taken beforehand. The spirit of Christian fraternity demands it.

Declaration. Then some sort of Declaration may be framed and agreed to, thus: "We whose names are hereunto subscribed, being with one consent gathered together before God our Father, do solemnly, with uplifted hand, dedicate ourselves to the Lord Jesus, our Divine Redeemer, and to one another as brethren and sisters in Him. We declare ourselves to be a Church of Christ, an habitation of God through the Spirit, united to walk worthily of our profession; for the observance of His ordinances; the preaching of His word, and for such other labours for the salvation of our fellow men as God by His grace may enable us to do."

When preparations have thus been carefully made, all who propose to become members of the new Church should be invited to attend a meeting specially convened for the purpose of its formation, a senior minister of the neighbourhood being asked to preside. Time will first be spent in prayer and praise, followed by an address from the president on the nature and function of the Church, and the privileges and duties of Church membership. The Declaration, previously agreed upon, being read, members will by show of hands accept it, and proceed to sign their names. The Church being thus formed, the minister will invoke the blessing of God on the new fellowship. "May He

Who is the Head of the Church pour down the rich blessings of His Holy Spirit on these disciples who in love and faith have now banded themselves together, that He may be glorified in them, in life, in death, and for evermore."

Bye-laws for the orderly government of the Church will then be adopted (*v. p.* 57). At an early date after the Church has been formed, a Public Meeting may with advantage be held, at which officers of the Association, and ministers and members of surrounding Churches may express goodwill, and pledge themselves to co-operate with the new society in the work of the Gospel in the town or neighbourhood. Such public recognition will prove itself to be of real value as years multiply.

The definition of the Church already given governs its membership. If the Church be a "holy society of believers in Jesus," walking in obedience to Him as Head, then those only who love the Saviour are eligible for membership. All who love Him and live in obedience to His commands, irrespective of age or class, should be warmly welcomed into fellowship; and within the Church so constituted, the Laws of Christ, recorded in the New Testament, are final; an authority from which there is no appeal. *Christ is the only Law-Giver; disciples must obey their Lord.* John xiv. 15.

CHAPTER II.

THE MINISTER.

**The Call
of the
Church.**

SINCE the office of the minister is of Christ's appointment, its importance can hardly be over-estimated (John xvii. 18-19, xx. 21-23; Eph. iv. 11). The Christian Church, therefore, never addresses itself to a more solemn duty than that involved in the choice of a minister. The assumption is that Christ has called His servant to be an "under shepherd," to feed the flock; the call of the Church is now to be added to the call of Christ. The "validity of orders" according to the New Testament depends on these two calls. No other "succession" is recognized in our Baptist Churches than that of "good men full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost" called out to minister, first by the Lord, and then by His Church. "No man takes the ministerial office on himself; self-intrusion is forbidden by the vastness of the responsibility incurred." (Heb. v. 4).

Seeing that the chief factor in the choice is the Will of Christ expressed in His call, the members of the Church ought to give much time and thought to prayer, both private and social (Acts i. 24). The burden of petition should be, first, that the Will of Christ may be clearly made known, and that the

members of the fellowship may all be brought into harmony with that Will, and be of one mind in their obedience to it. Church members are not to please themselves; personal preferences must be controlled; for "One is our Master," and we are bound to please Him. We shall not be held guiltless if any other motive sway us. Whenever there is a vacancy in the pastorate, the sacred claims of unity must be impressed upon all who take part in the conduct of Church affairs (Eph. iv. 3). "That brethren dwell together in unity," is a sight pleasant to behold.

To secure and maintain such unity in the choice of a minister, the Church will be wise to appoint a Selection Committee, consisting of the deacons and a few representative members. As this Committee must meet and confer frequently, it ought not to be too large; in large committees the sense of personal responsibility is apt to become weak; on the other hand it must be large enough to command the confidence of the entire Church. The first business of this Committee will be to arrange for the supply of the pulpit, the senior deacon acting as Chairman, and the Church secretary as convener; the conduct of correspondence, and the keeping of minutes will devolve on him.

Letters relating to the vacant pastorate will all be referred to the Selection Committee. It will eliminate at once letters from ministers commending themselves. Letters of recommendation from presidents of colleges, officers of the Baptist Union, and secretaries of local associations, and from ministers of reputation with personal knowledge of the brethren for whom they

write, should be courteously answered. Though the range of recommendation is usually ample, the Selection Committee may deem it wise to go beyond, and pursue inquiries of their own. To this course there is no objection.

Between ministers who come as "supplies" and ministers who "supply with a view," it will be necessary to discriminate. The Committee should not invite a minister to "supply with a view" till information has been obtained on the following points. If the minister has served already in the pastorate, the Baptist Union might be appealed to, or the secretary of the Association to which his Church belonged, as to whether his spirit has been Christian, his character honourable, and his work efficient. Pains taken at this stage will save complications and disappointments farther on. It may also be a wise precaution to ask two brethren to hear this minister preach in his own place, and to his own people; they might thus see his work for themselves and report. In the case of a student, fresh from college, the college authorities are the proper persons to appeal to; their judgment will be of great value. When the Selection Committee has satisfied itself on such points as these, and has reached a definite and unanimous decision, an invitation to preach with a view to settlement will follow; *in which case the ground must be kept clear; no other name must even be whispered, till the case of this candidate has been determined.* A mistake at this point, whether intentional or unintentional, involves peril to the Church and dishonour to the ministry. One name at

a time before the Church; and one only! The non-observance of this simple rule of elementary justice has done more mischief in ministerial elections than any other thing that can be named.

When the minister has preached according to arrangement, the Selection Committee will deliberate on the important question of submitting his name to the Church for election. It is a happy augury when deliberation results in a unanimous decision, and the proposition can go forward with the approval of all. When this is not the case, and feeling is divided, prudence is necessary and great forbearance. Haste must be avoided. Unanimity is so important that it is worth waiting for and working for. As the Committee is representative, it is probable the Church will be divided in much the same proportion as the Committee; and a divided Church is ever wounded and weak.

Suppose, however, that the Selection Committee is practically unanimous, then a special Church Meeting will be announced, according to the provisions of the Trust Deed. The Deed should be consulted, in every case, before the announcement is made, and its requirements must be complied with in all subsequent proceedings. At the Church Meeting so convened, the Minister's name will be submitted, and a vote taken by ballot, the voting being confined to members present, over sixteen years of age, and of six months' standing in the Church. If the result be that *less than two-thirds* of the members present vote for the name submitted, the matter ought to proceed no farther:

when more than two-thirds favour the choice, the feelings of the minority must be considered. This is a case for conference and negotiation. The union of Church members in love is a boon of such worth, that it is desirable to make any sacrifices, short of sacrifices of principle, to secure it. Deacons are not compelled by any law, Divine or human, to send, without further negotiation, an invitation to a minister, which, if it were accepted, would divide the Church. The right of the majority to rule is undoubted; but the question of the Christian use of this right, in critical circumstances, should be laid before the Church, and its sanction obtained for at least some delay. Patience is a golden virtue: gentleness makes great: the meek inherit the earth. The vision will not always tarry; wait for it.

Having resolved to give an invitation to the pastorate, the letter conveying the decision of the Church must be full and frank in statement. The circumstances of the Church, and the conditions of the call should be set forth in plain terms. Is the invitation for a term of years? What salary is offered? What provision is made for removal expenses? What holidays will be offered? What duties, if any, will be required of the minister outside his own Church? At the termination of the pastorate, what notice will be given or required? The Trust Deed occasionally determines this last question: where, however, this is not the case, in these days of unrest, in the pulpit and the pew, it should not be left open. A definite answer will be useful, and it can best be obtained at the beginning. There must be

no colouring or concealment in the Church's letter of invitation. Painful complications in after years will best be avoided by plain statements at the outset. A false start is a serious handicap.

Recognition and Ordination. When the invitation has been accepted, the Church will proceed to make arrangements for the public induction of the new minister. Since Churches as well as individuals are "members one of another," ministerial settlements have a public as well as a private interest. If the minister has held the pastoral office before, a Recognition Service will be most appropriate. It will be mainly a social function, affording an opportunity to introduce the new minister to his brethren in the town or district, who will listen with interest to the account usually given of the steps which led to the formation of the new relationship between pastor and people; and will also accord the newly elected pastor a fraternal welcome. Such a service is not only pleasant, it is distinctly useful; for it generally includes words of commendation from officers of the pastor's former Church, and of the Association to which he belonged. Ministers must be of good report.

If, however, the minister be fresh from college, serving in the pastorate for the first time, something more than a Recognition Service is desirable. The event may well be signalised by a revival of the solemn Ordination Service of former days. Andrew Fuller was thus publicly ordained at Soham. Baptist ministers attended from the whole neighbourhood; Robert Hall of Arnsby being of the number. Questions were

asked on the young minister's conversion; his views of Divine Truth; and his call to the ministry. Satisfactory answers having been given, the brethren present united in a solemn act of prayer; a charge being then delivered to the newly-elected minister, and a further charge to the Church and congregation. A social hour at the tea-table followed, and a Public Meeting in the evening. Such a day would never be forgotten; it was a memorable day both in the minister's life and in the life of the congregation. Wholesome impressions were made on pastor and people regarding the duties and responsibilities of the relationship into which they had entered; impressions not easily effaced. Guarded against episcopal conceptions of "validity of orders," "Apostolic succession," and the "transmission of spiritual gifts," Ordination Services might with much advantage be revived in Baptist Churches. For a sample of such a service, *vide*, "Life of Dr. R. W. Dale," p. 94.

**The
Minister
at his
Work.**

It does not fall within the scope of a Manual of this kind to speak of the minister *in his study*. There he must work with painstaking and persistent energy, and always in the spirit of prayer: remembering Luther's aphorism—"To have prayed well is to have worked well."

**Public
Worship.**

The conduct of Public Worship in the Church devolves on the minister; a matter hardly second in importance to preaching the Gospel. As a rule our Baptist Churches have no Liturgy or Forms of Prayer; the more need,

therefore, of a devout spirit in the minister. Preparation of the heart is indispensable; and for such preparation, time is necessary. Saturday evenings ought to be sacredly kept for this purpose. Occasionally this necessity is forgotten; the eve of the Sabbath is spent in some social engagement; and the worship of the Church suffers. Everything ought to be arranged when the minister enters the pulpit punctually on Sunday morning; hymns, Scriptures, notices, if any; nothing should be left to the last moment, for the spirit of worship loves an atmosphere of quiet. A holy calm becomes the House of God on God's day; and the minister must be its centre, not only diffusing peace, but reverence and seriousness throughout every part of the service of the sanctuary. No eloquence in the sermon can compensate for the absence of the devotional spirit in prayer. As every sermon should have a definite aim in view, it is wise to give thought to the choice of Scriptures and hymns, that all may harmonise with the purpose of the service. Such unity is eminently desirable, and with care it can usually be attained.

**The
Sermon.**

Public Worship, however, is only part of the minister's responsible work: he must "preach the word"; the "Good News" that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." A wonderful message this, yielding itself to a variety of forms of expression. As no small part of the preaching of our ministers is Pastoral, it should be Expository, searching the letter of Scripture till the spirit is reached. The wealth of the

Bible is boundless; and the preacher working in it as in a mine, his sermons will be in measure rich also, often surprising his hearers by the unexpectedness and power of their applications. The minister is also an evangelist, and to the affirmation "Neither is there salvation in any other," he will be true as a needle to the pole. "There is nothing in our quality as preachers," said Phillips Brooks, "that gives us any claim to be authoritative guides to men in politics, education, or science. On one thing only may we speak with authority, and that is the will of God" (Mat. xviii. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 4). To the Philippian Jailor's question, "What must I do to be saved?" the Gospel minister can give a soul-satisfying and final answer.

One other word may be permitted on the subject of the minister's preaching: ministers fail in their duty when they do not speak out on great moral questions; on party political questions the pulpit should be silent. Let one day and one place be sacredly guarded from the strife of political parties. There are platforms and public halls; in them let men discuss and declaim. A Divine message made the pulpit; let ministers be faithful to it; the noblest gifts will find ample scope in the service of this message.

The Ordinances. Further, it is the minister's duty to baptize believers, whether candidates for Church membership or not; and to preside at the Lord's Table. The validity of these ordinances in no wise depends on the minister's presence; but he takes his place and does his part as a matter of good order and convenience.

Baptism. Baptism, being of Divine institution, must be solemnly administered, all details being arranged beforehand, without haste or confusion, and carried out with a view to the comfort of candidates, and the impressiveness of the service. On the subject of believers' baptism, we have testimony of special importance to bear, and it must not be weakened by small misadventures which forethought might have prevented. How can we be too scrupulous as to the spirit and manner in which our testimony is borne? Quiet self-possession on the part of the minister is an important factor in a Baptismal Service. Candidates will forget their trepidation, while those who come simply to look on, regarding the service as a spectacle, will often be subdued when the deep meanings of baptism are presented in a few well-chosen words. Many date decision for Christ to services of this kind.

The Lord's Supper. On the subject of the Lord's Supper, and its administration, much need not be said. The Table should be set in order before the service commences, and its appointments ought all to speak reverence. The deacons will take their place with the minister at the Table, and after "giving of thanks," will proceed to distribute the elements. If in this distribution the deacons can enter the aisles on either side of the chapel at the same time, and return at the same time, order and reverence will be promoted. Let those who finish serving first, wait for their brethren; all the deacons can then partake together, amid the silence of the assembly. This suggestion may appear to be but a

trifle; nothing is trivial, however, in a service that "proclaims the Lord's Death till He come." As a protest against sacerdotalism, which entrenches itself strongly in the Lord's Supper service, it may be well for the minister to ask a deacon or Church member to pray. This will be a witness to our common brotherhood; and in the present state of thought in the Church, witness on this subject is of no inconsiderable value. One other hint. Time must be allowed in conducting the Lord's Supper service for silent meditation. Devout communicants endeavour then to concentrate thought on the facts of Redemption; faith in the Redeemer, and personal surrender become more definite; and for such exercises of soul silence is essential. Much speech may neutralise the value of the Lord's Supper. "Silence is golden."

At an early stage of the service new members receive the right hand of fellowship, and the minister in a few fitly chosen words voices the cordial welcome of the Church. The names of these newcomers will then be read. As a rule this public welcome is much appreciated; and counsels given then are recalled after many years. A card with the member's name, date of reception into the Church, and some appropriate texts

* *A Manual for Free Church Ministers*, containing suggested Order of Service for the Burial of the Dead, Marriages, the Dedication of Infants, Administration of the Lord's Supper, etc., has been prepared by the Rev. Principal Gould, M.A., and the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., D.D., LL.D., and can be obtained from the Baptist Union Publication Department, 4, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

of Scripture, should also be given. Ministers who watch for souls will make the most of opportunities so valuable. In the events of life, union with the Church ranks next in importance to union with Jesus Christ Himself. When Church members are supplied with tickets, they should be regularly given up at the monthly communion, that attendance may be registered.

The Pastor as President. *Ex-officio* the pastor is president of all meetings when he is present:— Deacons' Meetings; Church Meetings; and meetings of the Committees of all societies connected with the Church. To this rule there is one exception. When questions affecting the pastor arise, and meetings either of deacons or Church members are called to consider them, he must on no account preside. To insist on presiding in such circumstances would be a violation of good taste, a sin against self-respect, and it might even lead to a miscarriage of justice. Having made his own statement in writing, or otherwise, let the pastor retire, leaving the presidency in other hands.

Pastoral Visitation. The visitation of his people ought to be as much a matter of conscience with the minister as the preparation of sermons. God has joined preaching and pastoral work together; nor can they be divorced without double loss; the preacher suffers if he fails to visit, and the pastor if he does not preach. The work of visiting must not be left to mood or chance; or be undertaken without method and preparation. The pastor ought to obtain a complete list of the names and addresses of members of his Church and congregation, arranged according

to the districts in which they reside, so that all who live in the same neighbourhood can be visited in order. This list will require constant revision to keep it up to date; for as a rule removals are frequent. While special attention will be given to the sick; the aged, and the poor, the minister's object will be not to omit any who claim his care. Cases of serious sickness, or sorrow, or misfortune will be promptly attended to; other duties will be postponed that this paramount duty may be discharged. Often it will be wise to act on mental impressions. A strong feeling seizes the pastor's mind, that a particular family is in trouble. Even though no request has been received, let such impressions be acted on; experience proves that God is in them, and obeying them, the minister often finds himself just where he is most needed.

An account may with advantage be kept of the number of visits paid each week, or each month, and a comparison made with the corresponding week or month of the previous year. Such a comparison may quicken the minister's zeal in this good work. If any diary be kept of the particulars of cases, it ought to be for no other eye than the minister's. The relation of pastor and people is a very sacred one; and in all the confidences reposed in him, the pastor must be the soul of honour.

A Manual like this cannot be expected to prescribe the form a minister's visits ought to take. His spiritual instincts and sense of fitness will teach him what to do. He is first of all a friend; his inquiries will be such as a friend naturally makes, in a frank human fashion.

He is, however, a friend with an object; a religious object which he neither obtrudes nor forgets. The faces of his people light up at his coming; while rough ways are made smoother, and heavy burdens lighter, by his words of cheer. No part of his work makes the minister more the father of his people, or brings him a richer recompense than this personal service rendered to the suffering, and lonely, and sorrowful.

No part of the minister's work is of greater moment and importance to the life of the Church. "If the pastoral instinct," said Dr. Watson, "be crushed out between the upper and lower millstones of raging sensationalism and ecclesiastical worldliness, then the Christian Church will sink into a club; if, however, it had full play, we might see a revival of religion more spiritual and lasting than any since the Reformation." Preaching becomes more effective through pastoral visitation. God's grace interprets itself through the gracious man. It may be questioned whether preaching ever answers its full end except under these conditions: for what is the full end of preaching? "To seek that which is lost; bring again that which is driven away: bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick"—for all time this is the vocation of every good shepherd.

When the Church is large, and circumstances require it, deacons and elders will assist in this work of visitation. These officers share with the pastor in the responsibility and privilege of this service. Here also method is important; a regular plan should be

devised; but the best plans fail to achieve their end, if they be not regularly carried out. Part of the business of the monthly meeting of the pastor and deacons should consist of the report on visitation. To supply service of this kind for women, usually a large proportion of our Church members, a Ladies' Church Visiting Committee may be wisely appointed. In cases where the Church has made the appointment, and discrimination has been exercised in the choice, the plan has worked with most beneficial results.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONDUCT OF CHURCH MEETINGS.

THE rules which guide procedure in Church meetings are few and simple, but not for that reason unimportant. Such meetings should be held at regular intervals, due notice being given on the previous Sunday. When business of more than ordinary importance is to be introduced, the attendance of all members may be specially urged. The pastor takes the chair by virtue of his office; or if the pastorate be vacant, the chair will be taken by the senior deacon.

**Order of
Business.**

After devotional exercises, the first business is to confirm the Minutes of the previous Church Meeting. The chairman calls on the Church Secretary to read them; minor corrections may be made, if necessary; but the only motion allowable at this point is—"That the Minutes now read be confirmed and signed." When this is seconded and carried, the chairman signs the Minute Book. This is a proof that the record of the meeting in question has been correctly kept. Being in the chair, the pastor must act with perfect fairness, holding an even balance whenever discussion arises. He represents the Church as a whole, and not any section of it;

and his authority will be respected in proportion as he is known to be impartial.

1. Members wishing to speak should rise and address the chair. Observations must be made and questions asked, through the Chair.

Motions and Amendments. 2. The mover of a motion speaks first. He has also a right of reply at the close of the discussion. The chairman then asks for a seconder. No speech can be made on a motion which has not been seconded; it falls to the ground. It is the chairman's duty to see that speakers keep to the motion before the meeting. Irrelevant matter must not be introduced.

On the motion an amendment may be moved; but it must not be a direct negative of the proposition. When seconded, the discussion will proceed; but no second amendment can be moved till the first has been disposed of, two amendments must not be before the meeting at the same time. It is however, permissible for a member to state, that in the event of the amendment before the meeting being lost, he will move a further amendment. In doing this he must not make a speech, but confine himself to his statement only

The amendment is first put to the vote. If carried it becomes the substantive motion, and as such will be put to the meeting again. At this point the member who gave notice of a second amendment may rise and move it. If seconded, the discussion will proceed upon it. A new phase of the subject is before the meeting, and members are entitled to speak upon it, if they so desire; but on the original motion those only can

THE CONDUCT OF CHURCH MEETINGS 33

speak who have not spoken before, except in the case of the mover, who has the right to wind up the discussion.

Again, the amendment is first put to the vote. If lost, the original motion becomes the only business before the meeting, and is voted upon accordingly.

For clearness' sake, motions and amendments ought to be supplied in writing; the ruling of the chairman may be questioned; disputes may arise in the meeting, and the nature and bearing of modifications introduced during the discussion may be misunderstood, if the practice of writing be not adhered to rigidly. If writing takes time, it also saves time, and other valuable things beside.

Voting. 3. Voting in Church meetings is usually by show of hands. When voting is close and the occasion requires a count, the chairman will exercise the utmost care, and perhaps ask the help of a deacon, that his counting having been checked, may be above challenge. In matters of exceptional importance, e.g., the election of a pastor, or the election of deacons, the vote will always be taken by ballot.

Introduction of Business. 4. The pastor and deacons are to the Church, what the Cabinet is to the Government; or a Chairman and Board of Directors to a Public Company. They introduce business on their own responsibility; though if it be other than routine business, they will give the Church due notice of their intentions. Private members also may introduce business to the Church Meeting under the same condition, viz. that proper notice has been

given, in this case first to the pastor and deacons. In cases of difficulty and delicacy conference between the member and the officers of the Church is desirable; opportunity should be found for such conference before the Church Meeting. Business should not be sprung upon the Church in hot haste, but care ought to be taken that from whatever quarter it comes, it has received wise deliberation.

Sudden emergencies may arise demanding immediate action. These precautions cannot then be observed; and the meeting has full power to transact any business the circumstances may demand.

The Rescinding of Motions. 5. Motions passed at one Church Meeting cannot be rescinded without proper notice given at the next Church Meeting. The members who passed the motion must, as far as possible, know that the question is coming up again. A month's notice is usually required for this purpose. At the Church Meeting next following that on which notice was given, the member may move his resolution, "That Minute so-and-so, of such a date, be rescinded." To be effective this ought to be carried by as large a majority as that which placed the Minute on the Book.

Few rules are necessary, and all rules are easy where love reigns. The Church is a Brotherhood; and sins against love are sins against Brotherhood; where such sins are found the ideal of the Christian Church is destroyed.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"—Ps. cxxxiii. 1.

CHAPTER IV.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

Candidates for Church Membership. THOUGH our Baptist Churches are essentially democratic in character, and self-governing, the door of admission will be found, in practice, to be largely in the minister's keeping. He may wisely request deacons and others to share the responsibility with him; but he cannot shift it altogether; the principal part of the burden will remain with him. For such a task insight into character, soundness of judgment, tact and delicacy are needed; and not less that ready sympathy with men, born of prayer and patience. Sympathy makes the minister approachable; an important factor; for the minister who is not approachable works under heavy disabilities.

No time is inopportune for interviews with inquirers, or such as desire counsel and direction in spiritual things. Pastors will, however, set apart special times for this purpose in their own homes, or at the chapel, selected with a view to the convenience of the people, and publicly announced. Cases differ greatly from each other, but probably more than one or two interviews will be necessary before bringing forward the name for fellowship. This is the opportunity for expounding

to the candidate the duties of Church membership, and urging the importance of observing them. This stage in Christian life is one of much solemnity, and it may be doubted whether in all cases its obligations are enforced as they deserve to be.

When the pastor is fully persuaded in his own mind of the sincerity of the candidate, he will mention the name first in the Deacons' Meeting, supplying some particulars of Christian experience and character. If the candidate be a brother, one of the deacons may be appointed to visit him and report to the Church; if a sister, a deacon's wife may discharge this office, or a lady member of the Church whose judgment can be relied on. In some cases visitors are appointed by the Church; but the plan suggested of making such appointments in the Deacons' Meeting has evident advantages. More care will be exercised in the selection of visitors; and as no candidate's name will be introduced till the deacon or visitor is prepared with a favourable report, possible mistakes will be discovered in time to prevent harm being done. To introduce a name to the Church, and a month later be obliged to withdraw it as the result of subsequent inquiry, is to inflict harm which cannot easily be repaired. The following is the safe course of events—1st, Interviews with the pastor; 2nd, Mention at the Deacons' Meeting and proper inquiry; 3rd, Introduction of the name at the Church Meeting, with full statement of results; 4th, Reception of the report and vote thereon; 5th, Communication of the result to the candidate.

The duty of visitors, whether appointed by the pastor

and deacons, or by the Church, is the same. They will inquire into the candidate's Christian experience, with as much wisdom and gentleness as they can command. They will remember that "lights in the world" ought to shine, and that the candidate's spirit and conduct in the home and the business are therefore proper matters for inquiry. These investigations must be conducted without regard to rank or station. It is clear that duties so important ought only to be assigned to those whose graces and gifts qualify them for their performance. Visitors who discharge their duties well, "purchase to themselves a good degree," and render invaluable service to the "Body of Christ." When along with the candidate's name the visitor's report has been presented to the Church, a month is allowed to elapse, and the vote on the case taken at the next Church Meeting, the result being communicated to the candidate by letter.

Church Happy is the Church where the necessity
Discipline. for the exercise of discipline does not arise. "It must needs be, however, that offences come"; and few Churches exist for many years without having to discharge the distasteful task, either of censure or exclusion. Whatever the offence is, the utmost care must be taken to ascertain facts. Nothing should be done in haste. The pastor and one of the deacons must seek an interview with the offender, and if convinced of his guilt, they should endeavour to bring him to contrition and confession. More than one interview may be necessary, and in the first instance the result should be reported to the Deacons' Meeting.

If the guilt be confessed, the Church may be moved to accept the confession as sufficient for the present; or temporary suspension may meet the case. Mercy shown to the penitent is never an error; it restores and heals. If, however, the offender be impenitent, it will be the painful duty of the Church to exclude him from its fellowship by a formal vote. In a Church Meeting of this kind, where, after evidence heard, discipline is exercised, it is of the utmost importance that only members be present. When members only are present the transactions of the meeting are private and privileged. If a stranger be present the case is otherwise; an action for libel may then be brought and damages claimed. When the resolution to exclude a member is passed, time may be well spent in silent united prayer that the discipline of the Church, expressing as it does the mind of Christ, may be used of God to recover the erring one "from the snare of the devil." The deliberation with which the Church reached its judgment, and the solemn manner of its expression, ought to carry weight. When the result is conveyed to him by the officers of the Church the offender will do well to regard it as a "manifest token of the righteous judgment of God" (John xx. 23; Matt. xviii. 18). Discipline is one of the most august, as it is one of the least welcome of the functions of the Church; and it contemplates a twofold object—the recovery of the offender, and the purity of the fellowship by "purging out of the old leaven." The Bride of Christ must be pure.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

**Building
and
Officers.**

THE Church provides buildings for the Sunday School. With the new methods of teaching, and the grading of the scholars now warmly recommended in many quarters, ampler accommodation will be needed in the future. Buildings which served their purpose formerly will scarcely suffice for the coming times. The Church also provides the officers and teachers of the Sunday School, who should, if possible, all be Christians and Church members. This qualification is of the utmost importance. As we have reached a period in our national history when the responsibility of our Churches for the religious education of the young is most urgent, the provision made both in the buildings and the teaching staff ought to be on a scale commensurate with our obligation. There certainly is no field of Church activity that yields a richer return for time, money, and effort, than this field of work among the young. Everywhere it is our most fruitful field; harvests never fail to reward diligent toil.

Management.

The management of the Sunday School usually devolves on a Committee, consisting of a superintendent, who is usually nominated by the teachers, and appointed by the Church, a treasurer, secretary, librarian, and the teachers. At the meetings of this Committee the pastor presides, or in his absence, the superintendent. Important business, such as the needs of the school, in teachers or contributions, or the condition of the school, the ebb and flow of its numbers, may with advantage be reported to the Church at its meeting assembled. For the Sunday School is not a separate and independent organisation, but an integral part of the work of Christ's Church. Except when crises arise it is not desirable that the Church should exercise direct control; but support and sympathy are always needed, and these will scarcely be forthcoming if the Church be uninformed. Information must be supplied, therefore, if members are to pray intelligently for the school and co-operate effectively. The space between the Church and the school ought not to be wide, and must never be blank. Intercommunication free and frequent will benefit both.

The Pastor and the School.

The pastor should not be an unfamiliar figure in the Sunday School. To encourage the teachers and gain influence over the scholars, he will make his visits frequent, with an occasional short address, or closing prayer. The pastor will lose much if he be out of touch with the children and young people of his flock. Their ready response to his efforts to help will be among

his most valued encouragements. They will open their minds to him; reveal the secret workings of their heart, and avow their faith; and it will be his joy to welcome them into the fellowship of the Church. Additions from the Sunday School are, both in quality and number, the most valuable additions made to our Churches.

The pastor will also remember the teachers and their necessities. The standard of teaching in Public Elementary Schools has been immensely raised in recent years; the teaching in our Sunday Schools must make a corresponding advance. The old order, on the old level, will not do to-day. The pastor, in the conduct of a preparation class, or in other ways, must make his contribution to this necessary advance. A Bible student himself, he will gladly share with the teachers of his school the fruits of his research. The call for help of this kind is being heard from all sides, with increasing emphasis; and the faithful minister will not neglect it. The teachers make the school, and the school to a large extent makes the Church. In this sphere as in every other, "the hand of the diligent maketh rich."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEACONS.

Functions of a Deacon. THE deacons in a Baptist Church form a very important part of its organisation. They should be a great help to a pastor, and of constant service to the Church. No Church can develop without their aid, and no pastor can give of his best to his people without their sympathy and assistance. Although the appointment of the first deacons, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, was for financial objects, and their first duties were of a financial character, they soon developed other gifts and engaged in other work. Stephen and probably Parmenas became exponents of the truth and suffered martyrdom for its sake. Simon is said to have become a bishop, and Philip devoted himself to Evangelistic work. To-day a deacon has to be many-sided, and in most Churches (growing ones in particular) they assist in all kinds of Christian work. Deacons work in the Sunday School, guide the Christian Endeavour Societies, direct the Temperance work, conduct Mission Services, and generally supervise all the varied efforts in which a really progressive Church engages.

**Spiritual
Qualities
of a
Deacon.**

What manner of men should they be who consent to serve in this capacity? Well! the same qualities that the early Churches looked for are necessary to-day. They must be men full of the Holy Ghost. They have spiritual work to do, and they must be spiritually minded. They must have the love of God in their hearts, if they are to be of use in a community held together by that love. Then again, they must be men of honest report, whose conduct must never have justified a rumour of commercial scandal to be uttered against them, nor must they be engaged in any business which would clash with their Christian profession, or conduct their business in such a way as to bring discredit on religion. It is not necessary that deacons should be men of large means, but they must be men of unquestionable honesty. Further, they must be men of wisdom—the Church needs the services of intellectual and cultured men—men of sound common sense and wide knowledge of everyday matters, and of large and liberal views. Happy the Church where men of these qualities are ready to enlist themselves in its services and devote time and effort to its welfare.

Deaconesses.

Before passing from this we may say that the exclusion of women from the diaconate, either as a result of custom or prejudice, is to be deplored. Many of our Churches consist largely of women. There are many matters with which men are scarcely able to deal, and in which a woman's tact and sympathy are most helpful, and in

any case the Church as a whole suffers by the exclusion from its management of some of the holiest, most devoted and most able of its members.

Elders and Deacons. In some Churches two classes of officers—elders and deacons—exist, but these are generally large Churches. In them it may be wise to divide the pastor's Cabinet into these two parts, the interests being so large and the work so varied. In such cases the elders are specially charged with the oversight of spiritual matters, and the deacons with that of temporal affairs. Generally, the one office will meet the requirements of most Churches. In such cases, however, it is desirable that a committee of deacons should be specially charged with the oversight of all financial affairs.

Number of Deacons. With regard to the number of deacons requisite, we may suggest that a Church of two hundred members should be served by ten deacons, including the secretary and treasurer, and that there should be two or three additional deacons for every hundred additional members; but it should ever be the aim of a Church to enlist in its services men of energy and power, of practical ability and skill, who will forward its interests, irrespective of any hard and fast number.

Period of Office. As to the period for which deacons should serve, this varies considerably. In some cases the election is without limit of time; in others the whole body retires at stated periods. In other Churches there is a provision by which a certain number retire, either every year, or better still, every

third year. This last plan seems to be the most desirable, as it usually ensures the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of disturbance. The elections are not so frequent as to create a constant change, and yet they allow the mistake of a previous election to be rectified, and also for the infusion of new blood from time to time. Under such an arrangement any deacon who wishes to retire from office can do so, and any whom it may be desirable to relieve of their office, can be quietly dropped without too much publicity.

**Election of
Deacons.**

In some cases the Trust Deed lays down certain rules which govern the election of deacons, and where this is the case these rules should be implicitly followed. In other Churches the pastor and deacons themselves submit a list containing the names of those who they suggest should be elected, while allowing other nominations to be made. This plan, however, unless the Church itself suggests it, savours a little too much of dictation.

The following plan is one adopted in many Churches and may be commended:—On a Sunday prior to the Church Meeting, the minister announces that at such meeting nominations for the election of so many to the diaconate will be received. At the same service, or at the Church Meeting, an address is given by the pastor on the teaching of the New Testament as to the office of a deacon. A notice of the election should be posted in the vestibule of the Church, and nomination papers should be distributed to any who may wish to nominate candidates. The

nominations should be in writing, and be signed by the nominators, and none but Church members should nominate or vote. In some Churches no member under a certain age is allowed to vote, or any one who has been absent from the Communion without sufficient cause for the period of six months.

When the nomination papers are filled up, they should be returned to the secretary of the Church. The list should then be printed and delivered to every member of the Church entitled to vote, with an intimation of the day appointed for the election, supposing that there are more persons nominated than there are vacancies to fill. The voting should be by ballot, and should be either by marking the paper with a cross against the names of those for whom the member votes, or by erasing the names he does not support. On the day of election the first duty will be to appoint scrutineers, whose work it will be to count the votes and declare which of the candidates have been duly elected.

In no case should the scrutineers divulge how many votes any candidate has received, as the publication of such information is undesirable for many reasons.

No paper should be received as valid if :—

- 1.—There is any uncertainty as to the names voted for.
- 2.—If the name of the voter appears on it.
- 3.—If more persons are voted for than there are vacancies to fill.

Should any of the persons elected decline to serve, then the candidate receiving the next highest number

of votes should be elected, always providing that no one shall be elected to the office of deacon who has not received the votes of at least one-half of the members present and voting.

In some Trust Deeds there is a provision that only members actually present at the meeting may vote. This provision, however, is very likely to eliminate some who would be anxious to vote, and whose judgment would be helpful, but who were unavoidably prevented from attending. Where the Trust Deed permits, it may be advisable, in order to obtain as wide an expression of opinion as possible, to accept at the meeting any voting paper handed in, whether the member is present or not.

**Induction
of
Deacons.**

Opinions differ as to the need of any public induction or ordination of newly-elected deacons, and in many Churches they take office without any public recognition. In following this procedure, however, an opportunity is missed of emphasising the importance of the election, and of impressing upon the newly-elected the grave responsibility they have undertaken. The office of deacon is the highest honour a Church can confer on one of its members, and it does seem desirable that these brethren should be welcomed by the pastor, and introduced to the Church in, at all events, a semi-public manner. The first Communion after the election seems the most fitting occasion for this to be done, as the Church then meets for its most solemn ordinance. These brethren will hand the bread and wine, symbolic of our Lord's sacrifice for His people,

to their fellow-members. What could be more in harmony with the service than that the pastor should introduce the newly-elected deacons to the Church and commend them in prayer to the loving care of the Divine Father?

Diaconal Service. The word "Deacon" means a servant (or minister), and it is as a servant to the Church that a deacon will best justify its choice of him. He will be regular and punctual at as many of its services as his strength and time will permit. He will be ever solicitous for its welfare and progress. He will take the lead in any fresh development of Christian activity, and he will give freely of his substance to its various funds. He will be a sure support in times of need, and a pilot in days of darkness and trouble. The interests of Zion will be ever dear to him, and the well-being of his pastor a matter of deep concern. As he is associated with the pastor in the government of the Church, important responsibility rests on him. The tie uniting the minister and diaconate must be fraternal, and the sympathy between them complete, if the Church is to grow and be increasingly useful. The deacons must also be in accord one with another. Discord and dissension in the vestry can only lead to disunion and disaster outside.

In some cases the minister may be a young man, devoted perhaps, but without knowledge—zealous and impetuous, but indiscreet. In such a case how helpful will be the experience and caution of the older deacon! A young man is sure to make mistakes—how inval-

able the advice and sympathy of the older man will prove when lovingly and prayerfully tendered! the success of many a young minister has been largely due to the wise words, loving regard, and tender sympathy of some honoured father in Israel, who has counselled him in his first pastorate. And alas! how the opening years of some ministers have been embittered, and their future imperilled, by the harshness, suspicion, and un-Christian attitude of an unsympathetic deacon!

Division of Labour. Wherever possible, it will be well to divide the duties of the diaconate among its various members. A special committee should deal with finance. To one deacon should be remitted all questions of the repair and up-keep of the building. To another the supervision of the work which pertains to the caretaker, and to others the arrangements for the showing of strangers to pews, and allotting sittings to applicants. In all cases some deacons should be in the vestibule of the Church at the various services and meetings, to welcome members and friends, and answer inquiries as to sittings, etc.

The Church Secretary. A most important official in a Church is the secretary, who will keep the minutes of the Deacons' and Church Meetings, and also conduct all correspondence. It is part of his duty to see that proper notices, preferably typewritten, are prepared for the pulpit, to make arrangements with the deacons for supplies in the absence of the pastor, to write for transfers, prepare agendas for all meetings, and generally keep the entire machinery of Church work in good order.

Deacons' Meetings. The Deacons' Meeting should be held at least once a month, and preferably once a fortnight. In the former case it should always be arranged for an evening just before the monthly Church Meeting, and this in its turn should be during the week immediately preceding the usual monthly Communion. The pastor should preside, and the meeting be opened and closed with prayer.

The first business will be the reading of the minutes of the last meeting, and the consideration of any business arising from them. Then the names of applicants for membership will be submitted, and deacons or others appointed to visit them and report. Transfers to and from the Church will be arranged for. The prosperity or otherwise of all societies in connection with the Church will be considered, and the condition of the buildings and the need for renovations or repairs. The revision of the Church Roll will from time to time be also necessary. And here we may suggest that in no case should a name be removed from the Church Roll without an earnest effort being made by one of the deacons to see the member in question, and ascertain the reason for absence from the Communion. Cases of discipline may need to be dealt with. Applications for the use of the chapel or school-room for any purpose will be discussed and decided upon. Finance in all its details will be an important item of business, and any other matter which concerns the welfare of the Church will appear on the agenda prepared by the secretary.

Differences of opinion on all these questions will

arise, but these differences will end with their expression in every case where mutual forbearance and Christian courtesy have characterised the discussion. In any case it will be wiser to wait than force a decision on any question on which there is a division of opinion, if there is the slightest chance of anything approaching unanimity being obtained by delay.

As a general rule resolutions passed at a Deacons' Meeting should be submitted to the Church Meeting as the unanimous opinion of the diaconate. In matters of great importance, therefore, ample discussion should be allowed before a decision is taken. When unanimity among the deacons cannot be attained, it will often be advisable to refrain from bringing the question before the Church at all. Should one of the deacons feel so strongly on a question as to consider it his duty to oppose the views of his colleagues at a Church Meeting, he should, as a general rule, resign his office before taking such a course.

Minutes. Minutes of all meetings should be carefully kept. In some Churches any odd book is supposed to be good enough for this purpose, with the result that no permanent records of the resolutions passed at the various business meetings are available. This is most unfortunate. Everything about minute-keeping should be of the best. The quality of the book, the binding of the book, and the minutes themselves should be such as to ensure that

* Suitable Minute Books can be obtained from the Baptist Union Publication Department, 4, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

the resolutions and doings of the Deacons' Meetings and Church Meetings shall be handed down to the future in a thoroughly creditable manner.

Deacons and Vacant Pastorate. The character of a diaconate is never more evident than in the period which elapses between the resignation of one pastor and the appointment of another. This is the time when the greatest care, patience and discrimination are needed. The leader of the Church has gone, and many of the duties which he discharges have to be performed by the deacons. They have to make arrangements for the usual services, and not infrequently one of their number will have to preside at the weekly prayer meeting and give an address. The Church Meetings and Deacons' Meetings have to be held at the stated periods, and one of the diaconate should preside at them, unless a senior minister of the district is appointed as Moderator or Chairman of the Church Meeting during the interregnum. The efficiency of the various efforts in which the Church engages will much depend on the oversight and wisdom of the deacons. They have to make arrangements for the weekly supply of the pulpit, and at the right time, carefully and with great delicacy, guide the decision of the Church, so that a thoroughly suitable man is invited to the pastorate.

And now we come to a most painful subject—the duty of intimating to a pastor the necessity for his resignation, on account of either misconduct or unsuitability. This is a matter in which the greatest care, patience, and Christian common sense are

required. A false step may cause a terrible disaster to the pastor, or the Church, or both.

There are cases in which a small body of members have decided to secure the resignation of a minister, simply on the ground of dislike. The pastor may be doing good work. He may be an earnest and capable man, in every way fitted for the post he is filling; but he has incurred the hostility of these members, and they have made up their minds that a change is desirable. Whenever this occurs, the duty of the deacons is evident. Every proper means must be taken to crush such a movement, and the officers of the Church should loyally support the pastor. But where good grounds exist for a change being made, the senior deacon should undertake the unpleasant duty of making the fact known to the minister.

CHAPTER VII.

FINANCE.

Various Methods. THE financial needs of the Church, under which are included the pastor's salary and the incidental expenses, may be provided for in various ways. In some Churches a fixed charge is made for sittings, which varies according to the position of the seat. This method is gradually being displaced by others, and cannot be recommended, inasmuch as it tends to perpetuate in the House of God those distinctions of social position which should have no place in the Church.

The ideal plan is that of systematic giving, in which each member dedicates to God a definite proportion of his income, and prayerfully allocates it to the different objects which claim his help. In this way all the departments of the work of the Church receive regular and adequate support. As far as the expenses of maintaining the public worship and the services of the Church are concerned, the most effective method and the one least open to objection, is that of asking each worshipper to promise a certain minimum contribution weekly, monthly, or quarterly, towards the incidental expenses, and to give in addition as much as he thinks

fit for the support of the ministry. It has been found by experience that the best way of collecting these subscriptions is by means of envelopes, to be returned weekly, monthly, or quarterly, as may be preferred.

Each society connected with the Church will, of course, have its own treasurer, but all accounts should be properly audited and included in the general Church accounts.

Control of the Finances. All questions of finance should be managed by the deacons, or by a financial committee nominated by the deacons and elected by the Church, and the pastor should be relieved of any anxiety in this matter, nor should he ever be present at any meeting while the question of his stipend is being discussed. In fact, when any announcement regarding finance has to be made, it should never be made by the pastor, but by the treasurer, or one of the deacons.

The Treasurer. The treasurer should receive and pay out all moneys, and his accounts must be most carefully and accurately kept. Incomplete or ill-kept accounts are a constant source of anxiety and worry. The treasurer should be a man of acknowledged commercial position, and one whose occupation makes him familiar with figures and finance.

Concerning the Collection. It will be found advisable that moneys collected either by means of bags, boxes, plates, or envelopes, should be counted in the presence of not less than two deacons, who should initial the entry in the Church cash-book when the amount is entered there.

Audit of the Accounts. The accounts of the Church should be properly audited at the end of each financial year. For this duty auditors should be appointed by the Church, on the nomination of the deacons. One auditor should be elected annually, holding office for two years, so that one will always have had some experience of the work. Wherever possible, one at least of the auditors should be a professional accountant or someone thoroughly conversant with the keeping of accounts. The Church account at the bank must be entirely separate, and should never be included in the private account of the treasurer or any other officer of the Church. The bank pass-book must be produced for inspection and examination in detail by the auditors. The auditors should also make a point of seeing that any unusual item of expenditure is authorised by a minute passed at the Deacons' Meeting or the Church Meeting and recorded in the official minute-book.

The Pastor's Salary. A proper and comfortable maintenance for the minister is an imperative duty and its punctual payment a necessity. Indifference or neglect in this matter is sure to be attended with disastrous results. How can a man preach helpful sermons or perform the other duties of a pastorate properly, when his salary is long overdue? If a Church is to be prosperous, no financial burden or anxiety must rest upon the minister.

APPENDIX I.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED, AND
THE BYE-LAWS TO BE ADOPTED, AT THE
FORMATION OF A BAPTIST CHURCH
(UNDER WHATEVER FORM OF TRUST DEED).

DECLARATION at the Formation of the Church :—

We whose names are hereunto subscribed, being with one consent gathered together before God our Father, do solemnly, with uplifted hand, dedicate ourselves to the Lord Jesus, our Divine Redeemer, and to one another, as brethren and sisters in Him.

(Here follow the signatures.)

We do now declare ourselves to be a Church of Christ, banded together, to glorify His name, for the observance of His ordinances, and that we may labour, as God shall help us, for the salvation of others.

We being now constituted a Christian Church, do proceed to the election of (a pastor and other) officers and to whatsoever other business lies before us.

May He who is the Head of the Church pour down the richest blessings of the Holy Spirit on these

disciples who love and trust Him, and who desire that He may be glorified in them, in life, in death, and for ever.

The foregoing is written and is now signed in the presence of those whose names appear above.

(Signature) (Chairman or Pastor)

(Date).

BYE-LAWS.

1. That the pastor *ex officio* be president of the Church, and of all Institutions connected therewith.
2. That the Lord's Supper be observed on the first Lord's Day in each month.

The meetings of the Church for business, or quarterly meetings, etc., shall close with the Lord's Supper, or with family worship.

3. The Church shall, as a rule, meet for business once in each month.
4. Any person who shall have been absent for six months consecutively from the Lord's Table, without satisfactory reason being given, shall, on a report to that effect, by the pastor, or deacons, and confirmed by the Church, cease to be a member of the Church.
5. A report shall be given of all absentees, or absenting members, at the Church Meetings in June and December.

6. That in receiving members of this Church, the pastor shall, after due examination of candidates, and with the concurrence of the officers, present their names and addresses in a book prepared for the purpose, at one Church Meeting, and the members shall vote upon each case at the following Church Meeting.
7. Any business can be postponed for one month, at the request of any member of the Church, of which business a month's notice had not been given previously.
8. Any five members may demand the ballot on any question before the Church.

DIRECTIONS TO MEMBERS.

1. Friends joining the membership of this Church are earnestly reminded of the solemn responsibilities involved in their union with the Church; that henceforth they are responsible in their measure for its strength or weakness, its prosperity or decline; and they are affectionately urged to attend regularly, as far as possible, the various services, to pray daily for its welfare, that the Saviour may be glorified, both in the conversion of sinners to Himself, and in the consistent and blameless lives of those who have named His name.
2. When a member is in affliction, a communication to that effect should at once be made to the

pastor, or to the deacon in whose district the member resides, *Members will be kind enough not to expect a visit until this has been done.*

3. Members of the Church are expected, as far as possible, to take some active part in the various Church organisations—such as Sunday School, Evangelistic Work, Tract Distribution, Sick Visitation, Ladies' Working, Dorcas, Mothers' Meetings, etc.—and to contribute, according as God has prospered them, to the support of the Gospel at home and abroad (remembering that the Saviour still sits over against the Treasury). *Each member is also expected to hold a sitting in the chapel.*
4. Members changing their residence are requested to communicate the fact immediately to the Church Secretary, or the deacon of the district in which they have been residing. Great inconvenience often arises through members neglecting to do this.
5. Members about to leave the neighbourhood should inform the pastor or the deacon of the district of their intention; and they are earnestly advised to have their membership transferred as early as possible to the Church where they afterwards worship.

In preparing a Manual for the Church, only "Directions to Members" need be printed, but in

addition paragraphs relating to public services : District Visitation : the Lord's Supper : Church Meetings : Admission of Members to the Church : Enquirers and Candidates for Church Membership : Finances, Hymn Books, Marriages, etc., and the various departments of Church Work, will have to be inserted.

APPENDIX II.

TRUSTEESHIPS.

New Trusts. INSTRUCTIONS concerning the appointment of new trustees can be obtained from the Baptist Union Corporation, Limited.

**Appoint-
ment of
Trustees.**

In connection with the creation of new Trusts, the Council of the Baptist Union have prepared two Model Clauses for Trust Deeds—viz.: No. I., "The Baptist Union Corporation, Limited, being Trustee," and No. II., "Certain persons being Trustees." Either of these documents may be had on application to the Manager, Baptist Union Publication Department, 4, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1., price 2/8 post free. When desired, the Baptist Union Corporation, Limited, is willing to act as Trustee, and this course is suggested on the ground that such appointment obviates the difficulty and expense involved in the appointment of new Trustees, on the decease or resignation of existing ones. For this purpose, Form No. I., mentioned above, is applicable. *In any case, it is desirable that those responsible should engage a local solicitor, or the Solicitors of the Baptist Union Corporation, Limited, Messrs. Rooke & Sons, 45, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2., to act for them.*

Transfer of Trusts to the Baptist Union Corporation, Limited. If it is desired to appoint the Baptist Union Corporation, Limited, in place of existing Trustees, a Form of Application should be obtained from the Secretary of the Charity Commission, Ryder Street, London, S.W.1., which, when completed, should be transmitted to the Secretary of the Corporation, with the original Trust Deed of the property. The matter would then be placed before the Committee of Directors, and, in the event of their approval, the Application and Trust Deed would be forwarded to the Charity Commissioners.

Conditions of the Baptist Union Corporation, Limited. *It should be understood that the Corporation willingly accept Trusteeships in certain cases, but will not undertake any responsibility whatever in regard to mortgage debts or similar liabilities.*

1. Application to the Trustee to raise money on mortgage to be made in writing by the Pastor or Church Secretary, on a resolution of the Church, in accordance with the Trust Deed.

2. In the case of new buildings, a detailed statement of the actual amount expended in purchase of site and erection of buildings, to be furnished, together with a certificate of the architect as to the execution of work, and verifying statement.

3. Not more than one-half of the amount of expenditure to be borrowed on mortgage, except under special circumstances.

4. The Church to undertake, by special resolution, to keep the interest on mortgage regularly paid.

5. The Corporation may (in cases where it is considered necessary) require a valuation of the Trust Property, or an indemnity by individuals against loss, in the event of the Mortgage Security proving insufficient.

6. The Corporation shall be entitled to require from time to time receipts for the payment of interest, ground rent, insurance, and other liabilities in respect of Trust Property, to be produced for inspection. It is suggested that, where possible, the fire and other insurances should be placed with the Denominational Company.

7. Churches placing their property in trust with the Corporation are required to furnish a description of the property as contained in the Deed, together with a plan (or plans) of the land upon which the property stands, to enable the Corporation to comply with the requirements of the Board of Trade.

8. Churches are also required to remit a sum of not less than £1 to the Secretary of the Corporation, in order that ordinary out-of-pocket expenses may be covered.

9. *All Deeds submitted to the Corporation for approval must be in Draft Form.*

**Custody of
Church
Deeds, etc.**

The Corporation is prepared to receive Trust Deeds, etc., for deposit in the Strong Room of the Baptist Church House. Registration fee, 2s. 6d.