

# Lecture 4 — Established and Endowed.

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*Acts 20: 28-36; 1 Cor. 12: 1-11, 28-31; 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22.*

**from 'The Church: What is it?'**

**Ten lectures on the church of the New Testament seen to be established, endowed, united and free.**

*W. T. P. Wolston, M.D., 1905.*

It is abundantly plain in Scripture that God's Assembly is both established and endowed. If anybody asks me whether I belong to the "Established Church," I always say "Yes," most emphatically. If they ask me "Which?" I say simply "God's" — every other I disown, because I do not find it in Scripture. I could not be a member of anything which is not God's Assembly, for, being a member of it, I cannot, in simple subjection to the truth, acknowledge any other membership. To be of it is enough. God's Assembly He has established, and established well, I hope to show from Scripture, and likewise that it is endowed, marvellously endowed, for its endowment is the Holy Ghost — not money.

Now it is noticeable that the apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, addresses both his epistles to "the church of God which is at Corinth." You may not, however, have observed that the address of the first epistle is to you and me. Read it: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto *the church of God which is at Corinth*, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, *with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*" (1 Cor. 1: 1, 2). So that, if you call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you see this epistle has its application, and is directed to you as much as to the Corinthians. What God has taught us in this epistle is therefore as binding upon our consciences and hearts as on the first company that received it.

They were called "the assembly of God." There is no other local company of saints in all the New Testament which is so addressed, or to whom an epistle comes with this inscription. In the second epistle a similar address is found: it is, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto *the church of God which is at Corinth*, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." The latter were, for special reasons, embraced by the ministry to be found in the second epistle. I think this manner of address is very important, because this epistle came to "God's Assembly" in that city, and that Assembly included every saint in Corinth. Now if a letter came addressed "To the Assembly of God in Edinburgh," I fear that the postal officials would have some difficulty in knowing where to deliver it. They might say, Oh, well, give it to such a Church. But I should say, No, that will not do, that is not *the Church*. And if they said, Then will you take it? I should say, Oh dear no — I and those with whom I am in happy fellowship — we are not the Church of God. I trust we are of it, and seeking to walk according to its plainly written instructions in Scripture, but we are not it.

What is the Church of God in Edinburgh? All the saints in Edinburgh — *they* are the Assembly of God in Edinburgh today. In that day at Corinth the saints were united, and all together, instead of being, as, alas, saints are today, divided. The postman at Corinth had not a bit of difficulty — the bearer of these letters would soon find the Assembly of God. If he asked for them he might be told, It is those queer people, who meet by themselves — keep themselves out of the world, and are a separate, holy company. Would that we all were that today, for then the people of God would have much more power in dealing with the world, in God's interests, than is now the case, the existence of an "Established Church" notwithstanding.

Now I am not concerned with what men have established — I am not at all careful about that; but I want to inquire from Scripture what God has established, and the verses I read in 2 Corinthians carry the answer: "Now he which *stablisheth us* with you in Christ, and hath *anointed us*, is God; who hath also *sealed us*, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1: 21, 22). You have there the principle of establishment and endowment. The apostle reminds the Corinthians that God had something here that He had established. It had nothing to do with the world, or with this scene, where men have their interests and occupations. It is what God has called His Church — "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (or, with the blood of his own)" (Acts 20: 28).

Do you know what the world did with God's Son? It did not know Him; spat in His face; crowned Him with thorns; nailed Him to a tree, and slew Him; and there is the end of the Son of God as far as the world's present attitude towards Him is concerned. You say, That is giving the world a very serious character. Yes, and there is an immense breach between God and the world today, because of its treatment of His blessed Son. And that is why the apostle says: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which *none of the princes of this world* knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2: 7, 8). If they had known who the Lord of glory was, they would not have crucified Him; but they have done it, and there is a breach between the world and God; consequently, the moment the world's hand appears in matters relating to God's Assembly, I do not say it is a sad day for the world, but it is a sad day for the Assembly, for it shows that it has fallen under the influence and power of the world.

When the world cast out God's Son, a new structure came in view; it was God's Assembly, which He had bought with the blood of His own. It was something very precious to God; it had cost Him the life-blood of His own dear Son. That blessed Son had come Himself to redeem and bring that Church out of the world to God, as the apostle puts it in another epistle: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1: 4). God looked to have something here in this world, that was peculiarly His own, and separate from the world. And why was it left in the world? To let the world know what the character of God was, whose Son it had cast out. The Church is to be morally the continuation of Christ, characteristically. "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1: 21), said Paul. The life of Jesus is to be repeated in the lives of His people (see 2 Cor. 4: 10, 11). The world is to learn the nature of God through His Assembly. If this is to be, He will need to establish it — not the world.

This is exactly what 2 Corinthians 1: 21 presents. First of all you have the *establishing*, and what is that for? I do not doubt it is for power. The moment the saints have the sense of being

established in Christ by God, and of thus being sustained by God, there is power, since all is by the Holy Ghost, to walk in this scene for God.

Further, He has "*anointed*" us. What will that give us? Divine intelligence. Intelligence is always connected with the anointing. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing *teacheth you of all things*, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it *hath taught you*, ye shall abide in him" (1 John 2: 27), *i.e.*, they were intelligent. Where does this intelligence come from? Not from the human mind, which can contribute nothing in divine things, but from the Spirit of God, that has anointed every believer. And then we further read: "Who hath also *sealed us*, and given *the earnest of the Spirit* in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1: 22). There you get two other thoughts — the seal and the earnest. Everybody knows the meaning of a seal — it gives the thought of security, and it is a mark of identification, while the earnest of the Spirit is connected with the enjoyment of all that is ours even now. The individual sealed with the Spirit, and having the earnest of the Spirit, is secure and joyful. We are then established, anointed, sealed, and have the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts; hence power, intelligence, security, and enjoyment mark God's Assembly. It really wants nothing else. Show me the assembly that has all this in their souls, and they will want nothing else — they could not be contributed to, for blessing, by anything which has its spring in man's mind. Nay, the more man is in evidence the less will there be of God.

We read a good deal in Scripture of individuals and of the Church being *established*. To see this we will go back to Paul's history, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Before his conversion he had been bitterly opposed to the Assembly of God, and had wrought terrible havoc in it. He was at the bottom of the slaying of Stephen, consented to and witnessed his death, and then went on his mad career to Damascus, to wipe the name of Jesus off the earth. He was the terror of the Assembly. But God did then what He loves to do now — He stepped in, and converted the foremost opponent, and the "chosen vessel," an apostle of Satanic hate one moment, became an apostle of Christ the next. A wonderful transformation was that, very like the figure given us in Jeremiah 18: 2-6, where the potter wrought the shapeless clay. First the vessel was in the mind of the potter, then he wrought on the wheel and formed the vessel, and then the mind of the potter was in the vessel. From eternity there had been a purpose in the mind of God regarding Saul, and now He picks him up and converts him — his will is broken, and from that moment he becomes a most blessed servant of Christ. Before, the vessel was in the mind of the great Potter; and now the mind, and thought, and purpose of God are in that "chosen vessel," and he carried them to the Assembly.

After Saul's conversion we read: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified" (Acts 9: 31). Why rest? Because Paul was converted, and his conversion marked an epoch. It only shows what that man's power was. Before his conversion ceaseless persecution afflicted the saints. Then, converted by God and brought into the Assembly, the Church had rest. How much may result from one conversion!

The work of God goes on, and here and there individual companies spring up; all of one kind, of one stamp, each an integral part of the one Assembly, which the Holy Ghost had formed on the day of Pentecost; but they need establishing, and Paul goes round confirming the disciples (see Acts 14: 22, Acts 15: 41). In Acts 16 he goes out again, after the great congress at

Jerusalem, because he had the sense of the liberty of Christ, and he was very desirous of teaching the disciples to walk in that liberty. Judaizing teachers were dogging his steps, and saying to the Gentile converts, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15: 1). Hence the congress at Jerusalem, from which came a letter containing instructions as to what the Assembly should do; and Paul and Barnabas were the messengers, accompanied by Judas and Silas. "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches *established* in the faith, and increased in number daily" (Acts 16: 4, 5). There we get the first thought of *establishment* in relation to the Church, and what is it? Worldly support? Far be the thought! It is the ministry of the Holy Ghost through this beloved apostle and his fellow-workers. It is the ministry of the truth that makes people free — takes them out from under law, puts them in liberty, and the sense of "the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Peter 5: 12). The Greek word for "establish" means "to make stable, or strong" — that is real establishment. It, is divine support, and divine ministry, though coming through human lips.

Now I will take two other verses where the word comes in. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be *established*" (Rom. 1: 11). What is establishment there? Spiritual gift — which leads to divine ministry of the Word — nothing else. You may depend upon it, in any measure in which the world touches the Church of God, it is not established, but dis-established — the faith of God's people in Himself, as the alone source of good, is undermined, for they are thereby taught to rest upon an arm of flesh, and not upon the Lord. Truly said the prophet: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited" (Jer. 17: 5, 6). The heath in the desert is the driest thing out; and you must of necessity get a fruitless, sapless condition of spiritual life, usually called "Moderatism," in every Assembly where the things of God are allowed to be mixed up with, supported by, or are in any way tampered with by the world, that is at enmity with God.

Now turn to the very first epistle penned by Paul — that to the Thessalonians. These dear young saints a little while ago were heathen. They were converted through the apostle's ministry. There was a great deal of opposition in Thessalonica, so that Paul had to leave it, of which we read in Acts 17, as also of his going to Berea. Of his hearers there we are told: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (ver. 11). I want you to be Bereans — men that search the Scriptures. What I say, or any other man says, is of no value — it has no weight or authority — unless it be supported by Scripture. You go to God, and God's Word, the Scriptures, and get your light — as I seek to get mine — alone from Scripture, the only source of light on divine things, whether the Church or aught else. And if I am wrong — put me right. I want the truth, because truth is above everything.

To these young Thessalonian believers, undergoing much persecution, the apostle wrote: "Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to *establish you*, and to comfort you concerning your faith" (1 Thess. 3: 1, 2). What is it that really establishes people? The ministry of the truth. Timothy was a very remarkable young

man, though perhaps a little timid, hence the apostle says, "Let no man despise thy youth" (1 Tim. 4: 12). Some were inclined to snub him, and throw cold water on him — a thing not unknown in the twentieth century on the part of venerable seniors towards their younger brethren — a practice not to be commended, however. Do you know what the apostle says regarding Timothy? "I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state" (Phil. 2: 20). He was a very devoted young man, though he needed possibly a little exhortation and encouragement, which Paul gave to him, in the two epistles addressed to him. The Assembly of God today would be all the better of a legion of Timothys, for the Thessalonians were much established by the visit alluded to (see 1 Thess. 3: 6-8).

Establishment, then, is by the ministry of divine truth, that builds the soul up in the knowledge of Christ. To this the apostle Peter agrees as he says, "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, *stablish*, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5: 10). And again: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be *established* in the present truth" (2 Peter 1: 5, 6, 7, 12). I recommend you strongly to belong to the establishment — to be an established Christian in the sense in which Scripture uses the word.

But now you will say to me, That does not touch the question of what people call "establishment," or "the Established Church," *i.e.*, a national, religious institution, which the worldly civil power supports, and helps to maintain. I know it; but I want you first to see what the relation of the world is to the Church, and then you will be able to judge, if what we see around us, under the guise of a "national Church" has its pattern in Scripture or not. There the world and the Church are at opposite poles. Turn to the Lord's prayer in John 17, for we must go to Scripture to get the truth on this point. There our blessed Lord and Master, the night before His death, is crying to His Father for His people. He says, in the course of that prayer, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world" (ver. 6); and then adds, "I pray for them: I pray *not for the world*, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (ver. 9). Had He no interest in the world? The deepest interest — He died for it; but He did not then want the world as a sphere for the display of His power and rule as Son of Man — which will come all in due time. It is the very reverse of a prayer He will yet pray in response to God's decree: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2: 8). The Son of God is told there to ask, and God will give Him the heathen, the nations, for His inheritance. Has He prayed that prayer? No, because if He had He would have got them.

What then has He done? He has passed through the world, been rejected by it, died out of it, that He might glorify God about sin; He has annulled the power of death, broken up the grave, and brought to naught the power of Satan. He has ascended on high, sent down the Holy Ghost, the Church has been formed, and that Assembly is His witness during His absence. He says to His Father, I do not pray for the world yet — the day has not yet come when I want the world. In the meantime I pray for My people. He will get the world yet, and the kingdoms of the world, as we read in Revelation 11, where there is immense delight in heaven, when the last angel sounds:

"And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (ver. 15). The moment has then arrived for the rejected King to get His rights; then He will pray the prayer of Psalm 2, and it will be answered without delay.

But the prayer of the second Psalm has not yet been presented to God. For whom then does the Lord pray? His own who are *in*, but not *of* the world. "I pray for *them*: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name. those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and *the world hath hated them*, because they are *not of the world*, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. *They are not of the world*, even as I am not of the world" (John 17: 9-16). It is a wonderful place the Christian holds in this world — let us take it to heart — loved by Christ and hated by the world. A wonderful position of privilege and responsibility attaches to every child of God today to be here as the representative of God morally. In resurrection the Lord said to His own, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20: 21), to manifest grace, love, holiness, and what God is in active goodness — that is the mission of the saint of God, the Church of God, in this world. As holy priests we are to offer up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2: 5), and as royal priests we are to "show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (ver. 9).

Could we then expect the world to support this blessed divine institution, which our Lord calls "My assembly," purchased with His own blood, and which we have seen is the House of God and the Body of Christ? Should we expect any support, any countenance from the world for that? Clearly not! All the Church ever got by dabbling with, or truckling to the world was a lessening of its spiritual power and an increasing diminution of its light and real testimony for God. We see all round about us today what was prophetically delineated by the Spirit of God, who foresaw that the world would creep into the Church and be its downfall. We get a most distinct unfolding of this defection and the expressed mind of Christ in relation to it all in Revelation 2 and 3. The Lord there sends seven letters to the seven Assemblies in Asia, commencing with Ephesus, the most favoured of all as to privilege, for its history began with Paul's ministry, and it received his letter somewhat later. I have no doubt in these seven addresses we have a panoramic view of a prophetic nature, showing that which the Church of God — seen in responsibility down here as the vessel of testimony would be, during the absence of the Lord. They were seven local Assemblies, and were told that if they did not answer to the mind of the Lord they would be removed; and they have been — there is scarce a trace of real Christianity in any of those places today. The candlestick has been removed. But there is more than this, if we look at them, as we ought to, as prophetically unfolding the main features of the Church's history, as seen in its responsibility, from its first defection of heart for Christ, to the final removal of the vessel of testimony by spueing out of His mouth.

In Ephesus it was the declining of first love — the Church could get on without Christ's personal company, and though busy in His things they could do without Him; they had let other things come in. They got sleepy, dull, and occupied with the things of the world, and ceased to be according to the mind of Christ. This took place, historically, in the first and second centuries of the Christian era.

Then in Smyrna you have great persecution, and that epoch was seen in the second and third centuries, when the most fearful persecutions took place. The Lord said, "Ye shall have tribulation ten days" (Rev. 2: 10), and it has been noticed that there were ten distinct times of persecution. But the devil found out that persecution was just the way to wake up God's people. First of all Satan will try and seduce you; and if he cannot do that, he will seek to crush you — these were always his tactics. The flames of persecution, however, brought out more and more what was in the saints that had been wrought by God. They were all the brighter for it, so Satan altered his opposition again, with better success.

When we come to Pergamos, where do we find the Church of God has taken up her abode? The complaint of the Lord is, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is" (Rev. 2: 13). They had not given up the confession of His name nor denied His faith, even in those days — looking back to the times of persecution in Smyrna — when Antipas (meaning "against everybody") was the characteristic attitude of faithfulness to Christ, involving martyrdom in many. I would like to be an Antipas, if every one else is giving up the truth, as was then the case as regards keeping separate from the world. Get hold of the Lord, and if everybody is against you, put your back against the rock and stand. Some one once said to Luther, "All the world is against you." His reply was, "God and I are a match for them." Many an Antipas lost his life, but their names are enshrined in the Lord's memorial of them — "My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (ver. 13).

This epoch, which Pergamos describes, corresponds with the fourth century, when the Roman Empire became nominally Christian. The Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity outwardly, though we are told he deferred his baptism to his deathbed. Instead of trying to crush out Christianity, pagan Rome — now become Christian in profession — said, We will shield Christians, we will take care of them, we will take them under our wing; and that was the utter defeat of God's professing Church. They were taken under the wing of the world, protected, and upheld by the world, and the profession of Christianity forced on heathen races at the point of the sword. This really was the Church going into captivity. Her being *thus established* among the nations led to what is now by men called the "Established Church." I do not wonder at one of your greatest and most pious men in Scotland — when he saw the nominal Church of the land about to assemble, accompanied by martial bands and mounted soldiery — saying of it then, "There goes the Church in chains." He saw that which was nominally the Church supported by all the world could furnish. God always tells us what is coming, so what Dr Chalmers saw, Scripture prepares us for.

In Thyatira things go from bad to worse. In Pergamos the Church courted the world. In Thyatira the Church ruled the world. It perfectly describes the dark ages, which ran fully a thousand years, when Rome as the ecclesiastical mistress of the nations of Europe, could excommunicate monarchs, and go the length of compelling a king to go and kiss the Pope's toe.

You say, That is ancient history. Yes, but here in Revelation 2 it is all depicted before it came to pass. And that is why the Lord said to Thyatira, "Notwithstanding I have this against thee, that thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess; and she teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (Rev. 2: 20). The Church began to teach in these days instead of being content to be taught. Consequently its edicts were promulgated and Scripture set aside — yea, soon forbidden to be read by the laity. We do not get in Scripture that the Church teaches. She is taught. She has to listen to God, and by His apostles and prophets of the New Testament His mind has been revealed. The Church has only to obey. God teaches by His Word, and only by His Word and His Spirit, so that any teaching not in keeping with Scripture is utterly valueless to an obedient child of God. The point is this — that which is the real teaching power in the Church of God today is the same as at the beginning, viz., the Holy Ghost acting in energy through the gifts that Christ, as Head of the Church, still furnishes to His Body.

Thyatira runs on to the Lord's return, it must be noticed. "That which ye have already, hold fast till I come" (ver. 25), shows this; and the papacy will continue till then without doubt. That history has a strange way of repeating itself is only too true, and Jezebel is going ahead with leaps and bounds in this present day in the British Isles. This will continue till the rapture of the saints — the removal to heaven of God's Assembly — and then "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (see Rev. 17: 4, 5, *et seq.*) — the Apostate Church — will be destroyed by the ten horns and the beast, who will hate the whore and burn her with fire. What *she taught* was mingling with the world socially, and going on with the world religiously. Hence in Christendom everywhere you have Established Churches, with State patronage and pay, and the reigning monarch the head of the nation and of the Church at one moment, by reason of his exalted position nationally, irrespective of any question of his knowledge of Christ, of being born of the Spirit and sealed by the Spirit — which is the very essence of Christianity — and the whole idea of the Headship of Christ is lost. Of course this kind of an Established Church suits man in the flesh, i.e., the world generally. In fact it is what is called "the Christian world." What an idea! Does it not make you shudder? The world murdered Jesus; how can it be Christian, not knowing Christ? Let us open our eyes to Scripture, and what God's Word gives us.

I see the world to be a system where man wants to get on and be happy without God; and if you bring in the light and truth of God's Word to men of the world, they will soon let you know what they think of you. The world is the world — let us beware of it. Our Lord truly said: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15: 18-20). Bearing His words in mind, what shall we do? We cannot get out of the world, but we can walk through it as witnesses for Christ. We are interested in every man in it, and I should like to drag every man out of it and bring him to know Christ as his Saviour, Lord and Head.

Now as to endowment. You will find there is such a thing as Christian endowment in the New Testament, and that the Church of God is splendidly endowed. You get the endowment in Romans 12: 6-8; 1 Corinthians 12; and Ephesians 4: 7-13. It is all that the Holy Ghost can bring

into the Church, nothing else. Any other endowment will eventually only do harm. In Romans 12 all flows from God; in Ephesians 4 Christ in glory is the source of the gifts; while in 1 Corinthians 12, for practical use and profit in the Assembly everything is by the Spirit. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (ver. 7). Some think this means everybody, and that all men, Jew, Turk, infidel, or heathen — have the Spirit. The only man who, according to the teaching of Scripture, has the Spirit of God today, is the one who has been born of the Spirit, been led to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, been washed in the blood of Christ, and subsequently sealed by the Spirit. That is true of every believer today — he is sealed for security and enjoyment, and whatever gift God may in His grace give him is for the benefit of all the rest. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit" (ver. 8). All the spiritual gifts taken together are the endowment — the divine endowment — of God's Assembly.

I used to have great difficulty about 1 Corinthians 13 — as to why its portrayal of love came in there, between chapter 12, which describes the various gifts given to the Assembly, and chapter 14, which shows the sphere of their exercise, i.e., the Assembly in function — like Parliament in session — where Paul makes it very plain that "*profit*" is to be the keynote of what takes place in God's Assembly. I could not understand why the apostle broke off his subject of gifts and began to speak of love in chapter 13 I think I see it now. The reason is this — in chapter 12 we have some of the variety of gifts with which the Holy Ghost endows the Assembly of, God. In 1 Corinthians 14 we see that Assembly in function, and the keynote of that chapter is, What will build up? What will *profit*? What profited was to obtain — what did not was allowed no place. No matter what gift you may have, it is of no possible value in the Assembly unless you have come right through the atmosphere of chapter 13. You have to be permeated — you and your gift — in love, or it is no good at all. Whatever you may have, if it be not exercised in love — the spirit of chapter 13 — it is really valueless. Love thinks of everybody but itself, and seeks their profit. That is a fine chapter to spend your spare moments in; you will come out a very different kind of man after doing so, for you will be so like Christ.

There, then, is the endowment of the Assembly of God; and now let us go back to Acts 20, because the servant of the Lord who brought out the truth of Church Endowment illustrated it in his own history, and in so doing he brings out points of great importance. Paul had wrought at Ephesus for over two years (Acts 19: 8-10), many had been blessed, and while there, in the exercise of apostolic authority, he had doubtless appointed elders over the newly formed Assembly. Some time after this, being at Miletus, he sent for them to come to him. He gave them a lovely review of his ministry in Asia, and followed it by the solemn charge: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the assembly of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood [or, blood of His own]. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20: 28-30).

Now we have often heard of apostolic succession, and men today might deceive you or me about it, so it is well to notice what Scripture says. Paul says, I shall have successors, but they will be "grievous wolves." The Lord speaks about them also. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7: 15). We have

to use our spiritual eyes, and see, and possibly we must ask, Is that man a man of God? or, Is he a wolf in sheep's clothing? The Lord speaks of false prophets, as those who come in and exercise their influence over men, and we are all apt to be influenced. The Lord tells us what they were, and Paul also indicates them. There were no apostolic successors — though there were those who falsely took that place. The Lord in writing to the Ephesians by the pen of John says, "Thou hast tried them which *say* they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2: 2). The apostles were the foundation of the Assembly (see Eph. 2: 20). The foundation of a house once laid is not repeated. Hence we should not expect to find apostolic successors. To any man who takes up that ground I should say, Scripture does indicate you, but it is not by a name to be desired. The man that takes up that ground, and assumes to be an apostolic successor must of necessity find himself classed among "grievous wolves" and "liars." Those are epithets that no sober man would desire to be labelled with, yet, notwithstanding this, so-called "apostolic successors" are to be found in Christendom today. With this clear light of Scripture on the subject we may dismiss the figment of "apostolic succession." Deliverance from it will help many a child of God into the truth, however, for while Christ gave no more apostles nor any apostolic successors, in His tender love He has continued to give all the gifts needed for the upbuilding of His Church. He never hinted at — as is to be expected — and was careful not to introduce that which we have seen introduced by man, with very sad results, as witnessed in Rome and "her children" (see Rev. 2: 23).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers [or "bishops" — as it is everywhere else rendered], to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20: 28-30) was good advice to those Ephesian elders, and to all who seek to minister in divine things. True ministry always detaches souls from the minister, and attaches them to Christ; and if ministry does not do that, then it is bad, pernicious. Holy-Ghost ministry always leads the hearer to have to do with Christ personally, and to value the written Word of God. How fully did Paul feel this as he said, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among *all them which are sanctified*" (ver. 32). There again is the endowment in result — believers are built up, enriched, and brought into touch with all the saints, *i.e.*, those separated to God, Where must the saint of God find his resources and supplies in this or any day? In God, and His Word.

Hold on to that Word. Let no "higher critic" with his axe of infidel origin lop from your Bible the portion which his "scientific criticism" — outcome only of his own blindness to the necessity of its place in the arch of inspired revelation — would have you expunge. Mark the man that would rob you of a line of it. You may say, He is a clever, learned, up-to-date, good man. I care not; if he touch my Father's Word he is a robber in disguise, a wolf in sheep's clothing. I believe that book to be inspired from cover to cover, but I know that in the so-called Church today the men who are undermining faith in that book are the very men who should be its conservators. They pose as its expositors, and are paid to be its upholders, but too many, alas! are mere "Scripture-destroyers" so far as their teaching evinces. I would say lovingly to you — Beware of these robbers; heed them not. If we were to listen to the bold and bald infidelity of these latter-day critics of God's holy Word, they would rob us of most of its books, leaving but

few pages for faith to feed on. In fact, little but the covers would be left. I would exhort you to do what I purpose doing. What is that? I will make them a present of the covers, and keep the book intact.

The apostle next says: "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (vers. 33, 34). Why does that come in? The apostle knew what a part money was going to play in Christendom. And you know today how much people are thinking about Church-money, and what a commotion there is in this land over it. Do you find money much connected with God's things in Scripture? I do not, at least in a commendatory way. It has a large place in Christendom. Very large. Did you ever face this question — What would be the result if money and music were taken clean out of Christendom? — Take out money. Would not many pulpits be affected? Take out music, and many pews would be emptied. And that is the Church, is it? Little wonder that the Church is today the laughing-stock of the world, as they note the keen contest for goods and gear, money and manses.

But you say, The servants of the Lord must be supported. Certainly. Look at this dear man of God, and see how he was supported. To every one who would have given to him, he could say, I do not want your support. To the Philippians he wrote when they had sent him help: "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account" (Phil. 4: 17). At that time he was a prisoner, but before then he supported himself by making tents, and I guarantee they were the best tents in the market (Acts 18: 3). He would not give any man a chance of saying, Paul was paid for it; or, I have made Paul rich. He kept himself; and I think the man that earns his bread by some honest trade, and then gives himself to the work of the Lord, is the happiest and the freest man, because he is perfectly independent of any man but his Master. Paul would not take a penny from the Corinthians (see 1 Cor. 9: 15, 18; 2 Cor. 11: 7-9), though he laid down the rule that the servant should be supported. He laid it down for others and flung it up for himself. He laboured and supported himself, ministered the truth, but kept the things of God far apart from "filthy, lucre" as he himself terms it (Titus 1: 7).

Money is spoken of in Scripture, but rarely with commendation, for "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6: 10). This statement is easily corrected if not true. Let us trace the history of money in connection with Christ and His things. It began with Judas, who grudged his Master the value of the box of ointment that Mary of Bethany broke over His blessed body. He could have made "three hundred pence" out of it, and kept for himself what would not have been missed from the bag he bare (John 12: 5, 6). Foiled then, he directly afterwards sold his Master for "thirty pieces of silver" (Matt. 26: 14-16). Next we hear of the "hush money" which the chief priests and elders of Israel paid the Roman soldiers to deceive the world and deny the Lord's resurrection. "They gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matt. 28: 12-15).

The end of Acts 4 shows Barnabas doing well with his money as he lays it "at the apostles' feet" (vers. 36, 37). This act then led some others in the Assembly to desire to have a better character for devotedness than they deserved. Ananias and Sapphira sought to deceive the

apostles about the price of their land. They were convicted of having "lied to the Holy Ghost," and the hand of God fell upon them in judgment, and they died.

Then in Acts 6, "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations" (ver. 1). In Acts 8 Simon the sorcerer offered money to the apostles to buy the Holy Ghost, which revealed his true state, for Peter says to him: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (vers. 20, 21).

The twice repeated allusion to Balaam should make every man chary of trafficking in divine things coupled with money, lest he in any degree might seem to be of those "which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2: 15).

The apostle Jude's allusion to such is no less solemn, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core" (ver. 11). Three characters of evil which would be apparent in Christendom, becoming apostate, are thus portrayed.

"The way of Cain" is mere natural religion characterised by the opposition of the flesh to God's testimony and God's real people. "The error of Balaam" is an ecclesiastical evil, teaching error for reward. "The gainsaying of Core" is open opposition to God's Authority in his true King and Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. From how many pulpits today is the very divinity of the blessed Lord denied, and the atonement He effected scouted, as being quite unnecessary, for man is not *fallen* and needing redemption, but ascending gradually.

In a day when the ministry has become, alas! a mere "bread trade" with many — I do not say all — who take it up, just as a man would enter the army, the navy, or one of the learned professions, to make a living thereby, and are prepared to fling Scripture and scriptural creeds to the winds, to keep in touch with the world's advancing infidelity, Jude's words are indeed weighty and pregnant with deepest warning to all who minister in God's house.

The less money enters into the things of God the better. The endowment of the Assembly of God has no relation to money. Its endowment consists in the Scriptures of truth — God's holy Word — and in the Holy Ghost. The latter dwells in every Christian, and likewise in the Assembly, and is competent to supply all that the Assembly needs in its earthly pathway down here.

If I have trenched in these remarks upon anything that you have held as true and sacred, believe me it is only because I desire that you and I should walk in the light of Scripture, and according to what God has given in His Word. God builds, God establishes, God furnishes, God endows; and His Spirit is as much here today to supply all the need of His Assembly as on the day of Pentecost. The Lord give us to heed His Word.