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IS THE OFFICE OR MINISTRY OF THE
DISSENTING MINISTER
TO BE
FOUND IN THE SCRIPTURES?

I do not ask the above question for the purpose of finding fault with individuals as such, nor in the way of argument or controversy, but simply and solely to examine the word of God and see how far the official position and standing of the Dissenting Minister is in accordance with what is written there. No one, I trust, will say that anything which will not stand the test of the truth of God, should be upheld by the really christian man or woman. It is in no angry or bitter spirit that I would call the attention of my fellow-believer to the Scriptures alone; while in candour and faithfulness I would compare what is plainly written there with what is now upheld, as I think, unscripturally, by many really christian people in these days.

We have unfolded to us in the New Testament seven several, distinct ministries, through seven several, distinct parties, all divinely given of God. We have the "apostolic," the "prophetic," the ministry of the "evangelists," that of the "pastors," of "teachers," of "deacons," and of elders, presbyters, or bishops, which latter three are one in the original. Here, then, we may say, we have all the fully defined ministries of this dispensation; there are others—as helps,



governments, tongues, &c., but these are only alluded to as it were, and not brought out or put before us as the seven which I have quoted above. In another, and a very important sense, all service is ministry, and any, the least act done in the name of the Lord—if it be but the giving of a cup of cold water—shall not be forgotten, but remembered by the Lord. But acceptable and blessed as all such ministry is, and would that we had much more of it, it is not in this form of it that we would now look at it, but rather in the more prominent, public, and, as we may say, popular form; as for instance, those seven open, clearly defined ministries suggested in connexion with, or in contrast to, the Dissenting Minister's ministry; and we shall consider them in the order in which they appear in the New Testament.

1.—APOSTLES. (ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ.) MESSENGERS, OR SENT ONES, IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY FROM GOD.

These men had commissions and functions of a peculiar character, which none others possessed, and which none possess now, although the heretical Irvingites and Mormonites pretend that they have them; but this we know is a mere delusion of Satan. No party claiming to be at all orthodox, disputes for a moment, that we have no apostles in these days. The Roman Catholic, the High Churchman, the Puseyite, may talk of apostolical succession, but this is a mere figment of man's imagination, for the Apostle Paul himself solemnly declares, that after the decease of the apostles (or after "my decease," which is the same thing in principle,) instead of a succession of them, "grievous wolves should come in, not sparing the flock;" and amongst the very elders he said should "men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples *after them*." And this is what has come to pass, and what is still occurring every day, instead of, and in dire opposition to, any succession of apostles.

False apostles, wolves, and hirelings, as the Scriptures declare, would come, and have come in, but no real apostles. As the Dissenting Minister, however, does not claim the position of an apostle, we need not quote further on this point, but we may just say that there is no affinity in any way between the peculiarly "sent messengers" of God—the apostles—and the ministers or clergymen of these days; for, to name nothing more, the one was appointed exclusively and peculiarly by God Himself, the others by man. The office and the ordination, therefore, of the former, in no way agree with the office and ordination of the latter.

2.—PROPHETS. (ПРОФНТНΣ.) THOSE WHO FORETOLD FUTURE EVENTS, AND, AS CHRISTIAN PROPHETS, TAUGHT THE CHURCH BY THE DIRECT POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. (1 Cor. xiv. 8.)

These persons underwent no human ordination, but, like the apostles, were directly ordained or appointed of God, that is to say, raised up in the then infant Church by the Spirit of God, both to inform it of things that should come to pass before they had occurred, and to unfold, in a special divine manner, the Scriptures of truth. To them were given, it is supposed, that peculiar knowledge called (1 Cor. xii. 8) "The word of knowledge." Here again the Dissenting Minister, or even the clergyman, can have no pretension to the peculiar office, ministry, or place occupied by these men; nor do they, as far as I know, pretend to it, although amongst the Irvingites and Mormonites such persons as prophets are profanely recognized; but inasmuch as all such individuals of the present day are man-made, and the real prophets of the New Testament were ordained by no human interference, but by God alone, there is no ground whatever for recognizing their office, ordination, or ministry amongst *any* of the sects, societies, or so-called churches of the present day.

**3.—EVANGELISTS. (ΕΤΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΤΗΣ.) THE MESSENGERS,
BEARERS, HERALDS, OR PREACHERS OF GOOD
NEWS, OR THE GOSPEL.**

This seems the only one out of the seven different sorts of ministry openly treated of in the New Testament that at all resembles the ministry of the Dissenting Minister; and yet though at first it seems to be like, in reality it is very unlike it. The evangelist, as his name imports, was a preacher, the modern or Dissenting Minister is a preacher, and here, in the name only, can I see any resemblance between them. The following Twenty-five Features—not to name a number of others—will show how very and really unlike they are :—

1. The minister receives a human preparation or schooling for his office.
2. The minister receives a human call.
3. The minister goes through a human test or trial.
4. The minister is received by a public vote.
5. The minister is ordained by ministers.
6. The minister has his pulpit.
7. The minister confined to a particular sphere.
8. The minister located in a particular town.
9. The minister set over one particular, so-called church.
10. The minister has pew-rents.
11. The minister receives public collections.
12. The minister receives weekly offerings.
13. The minister receives funds even from the unconverted.
14. The minister receives a settled or stated salary.
15. The minister interferes with and hinders the various gifts of the Spirit in the Church by what is called the one-man ministry.
1. The evangelist was taught only by God the Holy Ghost.
2. The evangelist was “the called of God” only.
3. The evangelist did not.
4. The evangelist was not.
5. The evangelist was not.
6. The evangelist had not.
7. The evangelist was not.
8. The evangelist was not.
9. The evangelist placed over no church.
10. The evangelist had none.
11. The evangelist received none.
12. The evangelist did not.
13. The evangelist never.
14. The evangelist had no salary.
15. The evangelist preaches Christ and interferes with none of the gifts of the Spirit in the assembly.

16. The minister presides at the Lord's Table, and no one but himself can "dispense the elements."

17. The minister takes the place of head of the "members" who are under him.

18. The minister has what is called *his* deacons with and "under him."

19. The minister claims, by his position, almost exclusive power over the baptistry.

20. The minister, only, baptizes.

21. The minister is led and guided by the human rules of the creature.

22. The minister has a stated monthly "ordinance."

23. The minister has such power over his pulpit and the chapel that he can exclude another from preaching there.

24. The minister frequently speaking or lecturing publicly on other than sacred subjects; as amusing tales or stories of various kinds.

25. The minister in a public manner interfering and occupying himself with worldly politics.

16. The evangelist took no such place at the Lord's Table.

17. The evangelist took no place of headship amongst believers.

18. The evangelist had no deacons in connexion with, or under him.

19. The evangelist claimed no such power.

20. The evangelist and even the apostles exercised no such exclusive right.

21. The evangelist had no human rules either to lead or guide him.

22. The evangelist, when in the way of it, attended the Lord's Supper weekly and not monthly.

23. The evangelist had no such power.

24. The evangelist unceasing in preaching the truth and gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ.

25. The evangelist never meddling with such things, but occupying himself solely with the truth as it is in Jesus.

Here is a large number of true and faithful statements, and many more might be added of the minister's acts connected with his position as a preacher, never found in the Scripture; and consequently, he, and the real evangelist or preacher, instead of having any real identity, are as unlike each other as possible: and thus, even in this case, where an apparent likeness exists, there is found to be no real resemblance. We have not, therefore, as yet, found the office or ordination of the minister-preacher in the Scriptures.

4.—PASTORS, (ΠΟΙΜΗΝ,) SHEPHERDS, OR THOSE WHO CARE FOR, TEND, FEED, AND MIND THE SHEEP.

It is evident that, though the pastor and elder were in many particulars much alike, there was, nevertheless, a very clear distinction between them. The pastors give the idea, not of rule or government, as the elders, but of tending, feeding, and minding the sheep, as the word pastor implies. Visiting, healing, comforting, restoring, give more the thought of the office of the pastor; while authority or ruling express the position of the elder or bishop. Now, inasmuch as the minister is viewed and educated *entirely* with the view to his speaking or preaching powers, and, as we have shown already, is prepared, chosen, and ordained for a preacher, filling and *owning exclusively* a pulpit for this very purpose, he cannot candidly and fairly be looked on as a pastor. Indeed this could not be, for the pastor's place was always necessarily amongst the sheep, while the evangelist's or preacher's work was continually outside the sheep, going hither and thither as a herald or bearer of good news to "every nation under heaven"—the modern Dissenting Minister, therefore, being a preacher, and not a pastor—for, according to the New Testament, both were raised up at the same time—does not in any particular resemble the pastor of the Scriptures.

I know in three instances myself where Dissenting Ministers openly stated to individuals who were suffering from indisposition, and wished to be visited, that "they were not bound to visit them." This plainly proves, if further proof were needed, that they did not consider themselves as pastors, but as preachers or ministers.

5.—TEACHERS. (ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΟΣ.) MASTERS, TEACHERS, INSTRUCTORS.

Here, again, though the teachers resemble the pastor, (feeder,) and the elders who might labour in word and doctrine, yet it is very evident that all these

had their distinctive office, work, and place in the Church of God. Pastoral gift was one thing, the gift of the elder or ruler another; while the gift of the teacher was not confounded with either. The teacher, or master, or instructor, opened up and unfolded the types, mysteries, and deep things of God; and those who needed such instruction knew where to go for it, for God provided the master, teacher, or instructor, as well as all the other needed gifts, for the bride and body of His own Son. We have before proved that the minister is the preacher, and the alone preacher, too, in one so-called church; and therefore he cannot be considered as answering to, or in the position of, the teachers of the New Testament; for in one church there were many of these, (1 Cor. xii. 23,) while in his one so-called church he is the only paid or ordained preacher. Again, therefore, we cannot find in the teachers of the New Testament the minister or preacher of the Dissenters.

6.—DEACONS. ($\DeltaIAKONO\acute{S}$) MINISTERS, OR SERVANTS, AND NEVER TRANSLATED AS MEANING ANYTHING ELSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Is it not most singular that the proper and only name of the individuals chosen and ordained deacons is that which the preachers amongst Dissenters should emphatically take to themselves. Diakonos means, and is always translated, "deacon," "minister," or "servant." The very title or name, therefore, of minister, (which means deacon,) is unscriptural in the manner in which Dissenters use it. For the minister of the New Testament was a deacon, and nothing else; but when he possessed the gift of preaching the gospel, he freely exercised it; as Philip and Stephen, who were both chosen and apostolically-ordained deacons, ministers, or servants. In this instance, then, the greatest mistakes and errors prevail as to the person called a minister, which is none other than the deacon of the New Testament. I need not

say, we do not find the Dissenting Ministers' vocation identical with the office of the deacon: moreover, there were many deacons in each assembly; but there is only one so-called minister in each so-called church. We have not yet, therefore, found the office or the ministry of the Dissenting Minister in the Scriptures.

7.—ELDERS. (ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ.) AN OVERSEER OR RULER ADVANCED IN YEARS.

We have just seen that the Greek word for deacon (*diakonos*) is always translated in the New Testament either minister, servant, or deacon, and that consequently the title minister belongs rightly only to the deacon, and not to the person now erroneously called preacher or minister; and for as much as the preacher of the New Testament was an evangelist, and had no local charge in any assembly, and the deacon or minister of the New Testament had money matters, &c., connected with the poor to attend to, neither of them can be identified with the preacher or minister of these times, for he neither attends to money matters, nor goes as the evangelist, hither and thither preaching the glad tidings of the Gospel of God. We have now, in the seventh and last place, to see whether the elder of the New Testament and the Dissenting Minister are identical. The elder was not ordained for either preaching or teaching, but as the word “*presbuteros*” imports, for governing or ruling. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers were the four peculiarly and particularly gifted persons for preaching and teaching, and none of these were ever fitted, chosen, or ordained, in a human sense for their work. But where the gift was possessed by the elder of preaching and teaching it was to be used, and such elders as were “apt to teach,” and laboured in the word and doctrine were “counted worthy of double honour.”* None but apostles or their delegates, as

* The word *honour*, (*τιμή*, timee,) in 1 Timothy v. 17, occurs forty-two times in the New Testament, in thirty-three of which it is translated “honour,” seven times “price,” once “sum,” and once

Titus or Timothy, ordained the elders. We never read of the church choosing the elders or of elders ordaining elders ; and therefore the Dissenting Minister, who is chosen by the "members" as they are called, and ordained by the neighbouring ministers, cannot be the same as the elder of the New Testament. On this subject I would ask my reader to examine a tract entitled, "Is there any likeness or identity between the so-called minister of these days and the elder of the New Testament." (G. Morrish, London.) In that tract there are twenty comparisons from Scripture drawn between them, but no likenesss or identity discovered.

"prices." The force, meaning, and use of the word honour may be seen by the way in which it is used in this Epistle, both *before* and *after* the passage under consideration. 1 Timothy i. 17, "be honour and glory ; v. 17, "worthy of double honour;" vi. 1, "their own masters worthy of all honour ;" verse 17, "to WHOM be HONOUR and power." In 2 Timothy ii. 20 we read, "some to HONOUR and some to dishonour ; and verse 21, "a vessel unto HONOUR." Is it to be believed that the apostle would write to Timothy and use the same word in the *same* Epistle in two different or contrary senses ? Surely not. In three out of the four verses it is used in the First Epistle, and in the two cases in the Second Epistle it is plainly *honour*, as every one understands that word ; but ministerial people who uphold unscripturally a stated pay for the minister, although the word (timee) is used six times in the two epistles, and they allow it is most correctly translated *honour* in all the five other cases, yet in this sixth instance *they judge* it should be translated "pay," and not "honour!!" The word *double* in the New Testament is never connected with pay or money : it occurs only four times besides the one in hand—Matt. xxiii. 15, "*twofold* more the child of hell;" Rev. xv. 6, "*double* unto her *double* ; according to what she hath filled, fill to her *double* ;" and 1 Tim. v. 17, "worthy of *double* honour." For the following three reasons I believe the word "honour" should not be rendered pay—first, because occurring, as I have said, in the same epistle, both before and after the case we are considering, the apostle would not use it in two different senses ; second, because double pay implies that the elders must have had a fixed or stated pay already, or why speak of doubling it—but the New Testament never speaks of any stated pay for any servant of the Lord's, not to say double pay ; third, because this false idea of double pay would establish the thought that, because the elder had the gift of teaching, he was to be doubly paid for it. According to this, all the so-called ministers should be doubly paid, for they are all public speakers.

We have now examined the seven clearly defined ministries of the New Testament, and I think the christian reader will allow that we have not found the office or ordination of the Dissenting Minister amongst them.

The following extract on ministry in its varied aspects will be read with interest in connexion with what has been already stated : ‘Men, indeed, have confined christian ministry to one branch of it—a branch most important indeed—that of the ministration of the word, but by no means the whole of it. “There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord ;” (1 Cor. xii. 5;) and as the Lord, when upon earth, was not ministered unto, but as He that served, so has He left His people, relatively both to the Church and the world, in the same position, drawing a direct contrast between the world and His disciples in this very respect : “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them ; and they that are great exercise authority upon them ; but it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your *minister* ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant ; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to *minister*, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matt. xx. 26—28.) Every different ministry is honourable, because done unto the Lord ; and there is no member of the body of Christ who is not, in one way or another, put in the way of serving Him. “If *any man* serve me (*διακονη*) let him follow me ; and where I am there shall my servant be : if *any man* serve me, him will my Father honour.” (John xii. 26.) And this ministry or service might be either teaching, or exhorting, or giving to the poor, or preserving order. (Rom. xii. 6—8.) Great evil and inconvenience has arisen to the Church from not recognizing the variety and extent of christian ministry. As Aaron was consecrated to God, and received the priest’s office—a service of gift—

(Num. xviii. 7,) so the blessed standing of the Church puts her in the privileged station of serving Him—“I know thy service”—*διακονία*. (Rev. ii. 19.) To be a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, in any department of His house, is a sufficient honour. To be made of the household of God, is not a privilege sufficiently prized; and hence, instead of men esteeming it a wonder that the Lord will be served by them at all, there has been an undue coveting of serving in the word, as if that was exclusively ministry. Men have not been content to remain in the calling wherein they are called, to exhibit the manifold grace of God in it, and the beautiful arrangement of His house, in which the highest and the lowest had but one common object—the glory of their common Master. The principle laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ is, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.” (Luke xvi. 16.) As a Master, He gives to His servants one, five, or ten talents, according to their several ability; and the reckoning is, “Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over *a few* things,” &c. (Matt. xxv.) It is the Lord’s talent—that is enough; it cometh to any only in the way of grace. He that hath ten talents is, after all, but a receiver; and he that has but one is in a position to prove his devotedness to Him, as well as he that has ten. The Lord did not pray for His disciples that they might be taken out of the world, but that in it—in the midst of all the evil of it—they might glorify Him, as He, whilst in the same position, had glorified His Father. (John xvii.) How explicit is the statement of the apostle, and what beautiful harmony does it present to us: “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in *all things* may be glorified, through Jesus Christ.”

(1 Peter iv. 10, 11.) Thus it was with Jesus in the world, in temporal necessities as well as spiritual: wherever He served, it was that God might be glorified.'

Oh that the dear children of God would only read the word of God more, and not be led by prejudices and preconceived thoughts! It is most lamentable to see how little the word of God is really studied or followed, and hence the sorrowful way in which even real Christians are being led to uphold error, and the unscriptural ministry and systems of men. May our own God deliver His children from everything that is not in accordance with His own word.



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