

**SINCERITY TEACHING THE WAY TO HEAVEN.  
BY DANIEL SOMMER.**

**EXPLANATORY.**

When Elder Benjamin Franklin wrote the history of his young friend, Sincerity, in seeking his way to heaven, it probably did not occur to him that in course of time that young man would become a teacher. The truth is Elder Franklin simply gave an account of Sincerity's experience with religious teachers and the Bible in becoming a Christian. Whether he remained a Christian, and what advancement he made in the new life the earlier chapters of his history do not declare. But recent developments have enabled one who knew Elder Franklin well, and who always admired his friend Sincerity, to write later chapters of that young man's life, in which he appears as a teacher. That these later chapters of Sincerity's experience may be as extensively read as the first chapters thereof have been, is the author's humble prayer.

**CHAPTER I.**

When Sincerity obeyed the gospel he united with a congregation of disciples in Cincinnati, Ohio. But he did not remain long in that city after becoming a Christian. He had a widowed aunt in southern Indiana who wished him to come and live with her. Before giving her a final answer to the wish she had expressed he inquired whether a church existed in her part of the country which had no creed-book but the Bible, and which would toll sinners to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. On being informed

that such a church assembled in a meeting house but on a corner of his aunt's farm, and that she was a member thereof herself the young man gladly accepted the offer made him, and promised her that at an early date he would be ready to leave Cincinnati for her home.

When all this had been decided upon the unpleasant thought of ending the pleasant relations which he had formed in Cincinnati began to trouble him. To leave the congregation with which he had so recently united, and in which he had been so kindly treated, was no easy matter. But he thought that he could take his leave of the church generally, easier than he could of certain individuals thereof, chief among whom was sister Priscilla, the woman who had given him his first clear idea of the gospel. Certainly she had been to him a very excellent friend, and he knew not that he would ever find another that would prove her equal in ability to teach the gospel. But while thus reflecting it occurred to him that his aunt in southern Indiana might prove her equal. Certainly her letters had indicated that she was a straight-forward, sensible woman. Consoled with this thought he was somewhat prepared to inform sister Priscilla of his intention to leave Cincinnati at an early date and become a farmer among the hills of southern Indiana.

When he called at her home and informed her of his intention sister Priscilla seemed surprised and disappointed, as the following interview indicates.

"My young brother," said she, "I regret to learn this. It is so different to persuade young men in the cities to obey the gospel, that I was specially rejoiced when you came in among us. Then I have hoped much that you might make a useful member of the church. I even entertained the thought that some day you might preach the gospel." "My sister," said Sincerity, "you over-estimate my ability. I am of defective education, and if I prove useful in the church anywhere it must be in the country where polish is not so much in demand."

"But you could get an education if you would only remain

here. If you could not spare the time to attend the day schools you could attend night schools," she said with womanly shrewdness. Then she added, "If you would decide to preach the gospel we could arrange in the church here to send you to Bethany College."

"Bethany?" answered Sincerity inquiringly. "Bethany College?" He continued. "You mean Bethany over in the Holy Land near Jerusalem? Is there a college there?"

"Oh no," said Sister Priscilla, laughing at Sincerity's simplicity. "I did not mean Bethany in Palestine, but I meant Bethany in West Virginia. The Christian Church has a college there for educating young men for the ministry."

Sincerity looked puzzled, and made no answer. So his instructor continued. "Early in this century certain godly men decided that all religions creeds and confessions of faith were more or less wrong, and all sectarian churches were more or less wrong—wrong in name, wrong in doctrine, and wrong in practice. They further decided that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible in both theory and practice should be accepted as the only safe guide in religion. They determined to restore to the people the gospel as it was preached by the apostles without addition, subtraction, or modification—to speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent. With this end in view they rejected all human creeds and confessions as standards of religions doctrine and resolved to preach the whole gospel just as it is recorded in the Bible, and especially as its commands and promises are found recorded in the New Testament."

"That was a grand idea," said Sincerity, as sister Priscilla paused in her historic statements.

"Prominent, and, I may say, chief among those who had this end in view was Alexander Campbell of Bethany, Brooke Co., West Virginia. He was an educated man, and knew the value of education in advocating and defending the gospel. So he decided to found a college—a Bible college—and invite young men to come to Bethany and secure an education, so that they might be better able to advocate and defend the gospel."

"Did Alexander Campbell build that college with his own money?" asked Sincerity, "No, I suppose not. He was probably not able by himself, He went among the churches and appealed especially to the wealthy members to help him."

"Do you know what Bethany College cost?" asked Sincerity. "No, not exactly. The first building was a frame structure, which cost, I suppose, only a few thousand dollars. But after that had burned down a brick building was erected which is a grand structure. It is immense—four hundred and twenty feet long. I have never seen it, but have a picture of it which I will show you." [Here a framed picture of Bethany College was brought.] "This is the appearance which the building will have when completed. The south end is not yet built, though the foundation is laid. This college is a splendid place for young men to get an education who wish to prepare themselves for the ministry. Sincerity's eyes were downcast. He looked puzzled. He even seemed annoyed. When sister Priscilla returned from hanging up the picture, which she seemed to prize much, she noticed her young brother's troubled look, and ventured to ask him this question: "Do you see anything wrong in such an arrangement?" "No—well, I suppose not—it may be all right, but I would like a little information.

"All right. Any information I can give you will be cheerfully furnished. "I would like to ask," remarked Sincerity, "if the Bible is the only book used at this Bethany College?"

"Oh no, I judge not for I am sure that Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, and probably several other languages are taught there, besides the sciences, and literature. They graduate pupils there."

"Please tell me what you mean by the word 'graduate.' That is a word that seems strange to me."

"Why, when a young man has passed through one course of Study which requires about three years, I think, called the

'Scientific course' he receives a certificate called a 'diploma' and that gives him the title 'B. S.,' which means 'Bachelor of Sciences'; and there is another course which generally requires four years, and those who take it and make a success receive a certificate which gives them the title A. B., 'which means Bachelor of Arts'; and there is another— "Pardon me for interrupting you, but couldn't a young man graduate there before he becomes a bachelor?" I asked Sincerity.

"Oh yes," answered sister Priscilla, smiling, and with difficulty avoiding an outright laugh, "the title 'Bachelor' is not given in view of age, but in view of the course of study he has taken."

"What relation has such a title to such a course of study?"

"Really I can't tell. There is something about that which I don't understand. Our preacher is a graduate of Bethany, and I shall ask him."

"Do married men ever go to that Bethany College?" "Yes, I am sure I have heard of several being there. Why?" "Do they likewise receive the title 'Bachelor' if they graduate?"

"Certainly. As I said before, the title is not given by reason of age, and, I may add, not because of circumstances, but because of the course of study that has been taken." "I don't understand it—I would like to ask another question—Do only uneducated young men obey the gospel?"

"By no means. Our pastor "has baptized several quite highly educated young men since he came here. But why do you ask such a question?"

"Because I was thinking—one more question, please. Was Alexander Campbell educated when he first understood the gospel as it was preached on the day of Pentecost mentioned in Acts 2nd chapter?"

"He was a mature man and well educated when he was first enabled to see the gospel in its simplicity. But why do you ask such a question?"

"I was just thinking that if the gospel can convert young men who are educated the church might have depended for an

educated ministry, as far as that was needed, on converting educated young men. Then uneducated young men in the church who wished to preach and felt the need of education might have gone to colleges already in existence to study Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and whatever else might be needed."

"Yes—ye—es," answered sister Priscilla hesitatingly. "But then it is certainly far better to have our young men under the instruction of our own teachers." At this juncture Sincerity thought of the method he adopted when he first began to seek his way to heaven. So he drew from his pocket a copy of the New Testament and said, Sister Priscilla, I wish that you would take this New Testament, and mark the passages which speak of the church building a college to educate the young men for the ministry, and give those who take one course of study such a title as 'Bachelor of Sciences,' and those who take another course the title Bachelor of Arts.'" It will be a great satisfaction for me to read them hereafter."

"There is nothing—well—the truth is—I cannot show you anything about a college in the New Testament, yet there was certainly a college at Jerusalem?" answered Priscilla. "If there is nothing said about a college in the New Testament, why do you say that there was certainly a college at Jerusalem?"

"Because the Old Testament speaks of one being there." "Please tell me where—I would like to read about it." "Wait till I examine my concordance, and I will give you chapter and verse. Sincerity waited and watched the woman who first taught him the gospel. As he did so he saw that she was nervous.

"I find it in two places," she soon remarked. "It is in 2 Kings 22: 11; and 2 Chron. 34: 22."

So saying she took up her Bible and read the passages to which she had referred and then paused and looked at Sincerity as though she thought that ought to be satisfactory. He said, "Your reference to the Old Testament reminds me of my former teacher, Mr. Honesty. When I asked him to

show me how to become a Christian In: advised me to read the Psalms of David, and when I and ask you for the scripture which shows that the church should build colleges to educate preachers you refer me to 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles."

"But this is a very different matter from showing people how to become Christians. He ought to have referred you to Acts of Apostles."

"I know that he ought to have referred to the Book of Acts, and if the New Testament—just here let me ask if you didn't tell me once that the New Testament is our only book of divine authority in religion and that the Old Testament is for us now only a bonk of divine history?"

"I don't recollect whether I told you that, yet I am sure that it is true," answered sister Priscilla.

"Another question occurs just here," said Sincerity. "How long was it after Huldah the prophetess dwelt in that college at Jerusalem before Christ came?" "My Bible says in the margin that it was six hundred and forty-one years." "Wasn't Jerusalem-destroyed after that?" "Yes it was destroyed by the Babylonians."

"Was that college where Huldah the prophetess dwelt ever rebuilt or re-established?" "I don't know—I couldn't say. But that would make no difference, as the New Testament tells us that Paul was brought up or educated at the feet of Gamaliel a learned Doctor of the Law."

"Did Paul use his learning in preaching the gospel?"

"Well, yes—no—I can't say. I suppose ho used some of it? But why do you ask such a question?"

"Please listen while I read a few verses," said Sincerity. Turning to 1 Cor. 2nd chapter he read the following: And, brethren, when I came to yon, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech,

and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration, of the Spirit, and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, bat in the power of God.'

"Now," .said Sincerity, "here we have the positive confidence that Paul did not use his human learning in preaching the gospel.

"I must confess it looks that way," answered sister Priscilla with downcast eyes. But she looked downward only a moment. Raising her eyes, and in a tone of voice which indicated the first' exhibition of temper which Sincerity had ever noticed in that excellent woman she asked, Why do you oppose preachers being educated? Would you have men who preach the gospel to be ignorant—incapable of speaking correct English like the Old School Baptists, who are a laughing stock by reason of their blunders?"

"My dear friend and sister," said Sincerity in kindest tones, "you have drawn a wrong inference. I do not oppose men becoming educated who would preach the gospel. I am sure that education will do them good if they remain humble. It seems to me that every man who preaches ought to be able to speak and write correctly the language in which he would preach. But I did ask you for the scripture showing that the church should engage in building colleges—spending the Lord's money in building colleges to educate men for preaching the gospel, I don't know whether I have made myself clear or not, yet I have tried to do so. I believe that learning—the right kind of learning—is a good thing. I wish I had more of it. But I also believe that the church should depend on converting learned men, and not on building colleges to make them learned."

"I think I understand you, my young brother, and I am glad to receive your final explanation," answered Priscilla in modified tones.

"In conclusion on this subject for the present," said Sincerity, "permit me to tell you that when I recollect your easy manner when you were showing me how to become a Christian, and your uneasy manner in trying to show scripture justifying

the church in taking the Lord's money to pile up brick and mortar in building colleges to educate, preachers—when I think of this I come to the conclusion that you know of no scripture reason why the Church of Christ should build colleges."

"Indeed, my young brother, I know you could preach if you would prepare yourself and try. Your clear thoughts and your ease of utterance convince me that you would make a good preacher."

"In order to prepare for preaching would I need to go to Bethany College and graduate and become a 'Bachelor of Art' or of 'Sciences' do you think? "Now you are making fun of what I told you a while ago," said Priscilla. "No, but it makes me sad to think of what you told me a while ago. When I was baptized and took my stand with the church I was altogether happy because I had not only learned what Christ required of me in order to be saved, and had done it, but I thought I had found a church where everything was according to the gospel. But now I am not sure that I have found such a church."

"I think the church is all right," my young brother.

"Should the church connect itself with the world by building colleges to educate men and give them high-sounding and absurd titles, for which you can give no Bible reason, nor common sense reason? But I must go. Tomorrow will be my last day with the church in this city."

"I'm sorry. But you will come to see us at some time."

"Yes, I may. But I don't know what my situation will be in southern Indiana, nor what chances I shall have for leaving after I once get there."

"Come back if you can; I know I shall always be glad to see you. And my prayers shall be for your welfare."

"I thank you; and at the same time allow me to say that I shall always hold you in grateful remembrance for showing me how to become a Christian, said the young man with emotion.

These two disciples then shook hands, and though they met again at the meeting house, yet this was their last interview for about fifteen years.

**CHAPTER II.**

When Sincerity had completed his thirty-fifth year, and he had become a thrifty farmer in southern Indiana he was called to Cincinnati on business connected with the Ohio and Mississippi Rail Road. Peculiar emotions possessed him as he thought of returning to the place where he obeyed the gospel, and he decided that he would go a day or two earlier than was necessary, so that he might meet the church with which he first took his membership. He found a few who remembered him, chief among whom was sister Priscilla, who had reached her sixtieth year. She was delighted to see him, and invited him to call and see her that very afternoon.

He wrote down her address, and promised that he would do so. Having returned to the hotel where he was stopping he dined, and then walked around to view the city, calculating to call on his excellent friend and sister about half past two o'clock. He went down to the river, took a look at Covington, Ky., returned to the main part of the city, and began to look for sister Priscilla's street and number. In due time he was at her door, and soon he was in her parlor, though not the same parlor where he parted from her over fifteen years before, as she had moved.

She anxiously questioned him concerning his personal welfare, and family, and the church in his neighborhood, and seemed gratified with his answers. When Sincerity thought that the proper time had come he began to ask questions, and thereupon the following interview, took place: "Sister Priscilla, I see many changes here." "Yes, there are very many, and I think very excellent improvements in this city." "But I refer to the changes in the church here."

"Yes, we were in the old building on Sycamore St., when, you were here." "But I refer to changes in what I saw and heard in connection with the services to-day." "You refer to the organ, I suppose." "Yes, and to the announcement of a Ladies Aid Society, and

a Dorcas Society, and of a Mite Society. If I mistake not one of the announcements made mention of you as resident of something, Please tell me if I heard correctly." "Yes, I judge that *you* did, I am president of the Ladies Aid Society." "What is it an aid to? In other words, What does it aid?"

"It is an aid—well—I might say to the church; but, it is rather with a view to aiding in raising money for the Missionary Society. Which of our papers do you read?" "I read the *Christian Board*, and I sometimes see the *Review*. But why do you ask?" "Well, I thought if you had been reading the papers you would be posted. If you had read the *Christian Standard* you would know all about the progress that is being made, especially in the cities. We believe in progression."

"So do I, and so do the churches down where I live in southern Indiana, but we believe in progressing *in* the gospel and not away from the gospel." "We don't think that our organ and societies are away from the gospel, but are aids to the gospel."

"Did the gospel have any such aids eighteen hundred years ago?"

"No, I suppose not. I wish I had invited our pastor to come over this afternoon. He could explain these matters to you much better than I can.

"My dear sister." said Sincerity, in a plain, direct manner, "when you first found me, nearly sixteen years ago, I was almost entirely ignorant of the Scriptures. What was worse I was in confusion, having been confused by my old friend Honesty who was himself in confusion concerning how the sinner should proceed to become a Christian. You understood that I needed help, and the help that I needed you gave me by giving me chapter and verse concerning faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. You thus taught me and befriended me as no one else had ever done. From what you had taught me, and the manner in which you proceeded in teaching me I was led to believe that the disciples were a strictly Bible people. But be-

fore I left this city I recollect an interview which we had concerning Bethany College, which disturbed me a considerable. Do you recollect that interview, sister Priscilla?"

"I recollect it very well, and have often wondered what would be the result of the kind of reasoning you then did if carried into an departments of church worship and work."

"Was it not sound, and thus safer?"

"So far as I could judge it was safe. At any rate I could not confute it. That was one reason why I did not tell you that Bethany College also bestowed the title A. M.,' which means 'Master of Arts- I had already told you more than I could defend. Neither was I disposed to tell you of some other things which even then hail been adopted for which I could really find no defense in the gospel."

"Now, then, my elderly sister, while assuring you that I do not wish to have this interview unpleasant, yet I do wish to ask you whether you think that you have even one gospel reason for using the organ in the worship, for having a choir gathered about that organ, for your one-man preacher pastor, or for any one of those societies which the pastor announced today just before he began to preach."

"Yes, I think that there are good reasons for some, if not all of those arrangements." "I asked for a good reason. Do you think- that you have any?"

"I think so, but I would rather hear our preacher give them. Couldn't you come and take tea with me to-morrow evening, and I will have our preacher here, if possible, and he will give you my reasons, and will hear your objections."

"Yes, I can do that. But it does seem so strange to me that when I was a deluded sinner you were so ready to point me to the Scriptures, and now when I come to you and ask about certain things that you are endorsing, and some of which you are practicing you decline giving me your reasons, you don't even attempt to show me by the Scripture that you are right, but wish me to have an interview with an unscriptural character whom you call your 'pastor.' What is the secret of this?"

"I might give you several reasons, but I prefer to wait. There are some things much easier, than others. For instance, it is much easier to direct a sinner how to become a Christian than it is to direct the Christian in all that pertains to the worship and work of the church."

"I will admit that it requires less time to show the sinner how to become a Christian than to direct a saint through a period of twenty or forty years. Yet as the Inspired Scripture is given to perfect the man of God and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works certainly the instructions to the saint should be as clear as those intended for the sinner."

"That is all true, but I prefer to wait until our pastor is present who can answer all your objections," said Priscilla.

"You mean, if they *can be answered*, I suppose, said Sincerity, as he turned his hazel eyes pleasantly on his former teacher.

Then the conversation drifted back to the time that had elapsed since their former interview, and what had occurred of interest to them both until the hour arrived for Sincerity to return to his hotel. Then he left promising to be at meeting that night and hear the man preach whom sister Priscilla called "our pastor."

### CHAPTER III.

The next evening Sincerity and the par-tor met at sister Priscilla's home, and talked about the weather, and other commonplace matters until supper was over. Then they were invited into the parlor, and Priscilla, stated the purpose of the meeting after this manner: "I wished to bring you brethren, together for the purpose of hearing you talk in a friendly way over the differences between you In regard to the worship and work of the church. Because of my confidence in the preachers and ciders of our church I have been led to suppose that they would not mislead me. Thus I have endorsed, and, in some instances, have adopted what I cannot find in the Bible, cither Old Testament or New, and especially can I not find some of them in the gospel For these reasons I have arranged to bring you brethren together, and I

wish to hear both sides presented."

"Do you wish *us* to have a debate?" inquired the pastor.

"No, but, as I said before, I wish you to have a friendly talk."

"The time for debating and discussing among ourselves is over, and the time for *work* is upon us. There has already been too much debating. The *Review* and *Standard* are everlastingly at it, and are doing more harm than good."

"Permit me to inquire, Who occasioned the debating of which you complain—those who remain satisfied with what is written in the gospel, or those who have become unsatisfied, and have gone beyond the gospel?" asked Sincerity in a manner that demanded a reply.

"Why—the fact is—I say that both sides are to blame. There's been too much said on both sides, especially on the side of those who have opposed everything in the line of progress.

There's a class of people who seem to have been born in the objective case, and they are never satisfied unless they are opposing somebody or something. They are the chief ones to blame."

"Now listen to me for a minute, if you please," said the Indiana farmer. "Here is a piece of timber in good condition, with scarcely a crack to be seen. But a man conies along with a wedge in his hand, and he proposes to drive that wedge in this piece of timber. You protest and tell him that driving that wedge in the timber will split it and spoil it. He refuses to listen to your protest, says that it will make the timber stronger and better. Thus saying he drives the wedge, splits and spoils the timber. Now tell me:, Who is responsible for splitting that timber—you or the man who *drove the wedge?*"

"That has nothing to do with the question. It is altogether irrelevant. You seem never to have studied logic," replied the pastor petulantly.

"But I demand an answer to my inquiry regardless of whether what I have said is relevant or not to the subject in hand. Tell me, *Who* split the log?" "It was the *wedge* that split it."

"I didn't ask you *what* split the log, but *who* split the log. In other words, who is *responsible* for splitting the log? answer without any more evading.

"Well, I may be responsible because I protested against driving the wedge in the wrong spirit, so that I made the man angry and he then drove the wedge through pure spite work. And I do believe that this it has been in many instances. The manner of those who have opposed the organ and other expedients has stirred up a fueling of spite work."

"Worse and worse," said Sincerity solemnly. "Why, my dear brother, you don't seem to realize what you are saying. In order to evade the blame of introducing human devices into the worship and work of the church you will confess that those advocating such devices have in many instances 'been actuated by the spirit of spite work. In such confession you acknowledge that the spirit by which the organ and other devices have been introduced is of the devil."

"There is no use for us to talk any further. I see that I can't convince you, and I feel sure that you can't convince me, and so he might as well quit," said the pastor. "No, brother, I am not willing that this interview shall yet end, said sister Priscilla. "I taught brother Sincerity the gospel between fifteen and sixteen years ago. At least, I showed him where he could learn how to become a Christian. As a result he obeyed the gospel and took his stand with us. For fifteen years he has been in southern Indiana, and has evidently read his Bible with good advantage. I have remained here in this city, and by reason of my confidence in our several preachers and elders I have never questioned that the pastorate is all right, and I have been working to help raise money for our missionary societies, and I have taken part in several festivals. Besides, I have been singing with the organ. Now, if these things are right I wish to know it, and if they are wrong I wish to know it. So I wish this talk to continue a while longer."

"Do you intend that I shall present all the arguments in favor of all the different expedients which you have named? If so, It will take till midnight, and perhaps till daylight. It will make our meeting something like that at Troas," said the pastor. "Never mind about your arguments. I care little or nothing

about what are called arguments, and I presume that the same is true of our elderly sister here, who desires to hear us talk on this subject. What she wishes, and what I wish is to know whether you have any gospel testimony in favor of these things which you call 'expedients.' For instance, what is the divine authority for your position as a preacher-pastor at a set salary?"

"Have you never read Bro. David Burnett's tract on the pastorate? It is a splendid tract, and ought to be read by every disciple. I regard it as a complete defense of my position." "I didn't know that there was a tract on the subject. But if you have had the advantage of such a tract as you describe you can certainly give the chapter and verse which authorize the one-man, preacher-pastor at a set salary."

"Yes, I regard that tract as a complete defense of my position, and if you had read it, and read it *honestly*, I feel sure that you would not now be asking for chapter and verse authorizing or justifying the pastorate."

"Never mind about the tract just give us the chapter and verse."

"Well, if nothing else will do you but chapter and verse I refer you to Eph. 4th chapter and the verse which says, And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." Is that definite enough for you?" "That's about as definite as the sectarian references to Christ blessing little children in order to prove infant baptism. The verse mentions infants but don't mention baptism. So in this instance. The verse mentions pastors in the plural, as specially gifted ones before the instructions for Christians had been fully written out, but it makes no mention of the one-man, preacher-pastor at a set salary."

"As you are such a stickler for chapter and verse I demand that you give me chapter and verse for having a meeting house, and seats to sit on."

"Well, listen a minute while I read." Then Sincerity took up a Bible and read thus: " And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Here we learn that the apostles were assembled in a house and were sitting in that house. This is an approved example which justifies me favoring meeting houses with seats to sit on. Now give me chapter and verse, please, for your one-man, preacher-pastorate at a set salary."

"You are shrewd—very shrewd—indeed. And you are a legalist—strictly so." "I am not more shrewd, nor more of a legalist on this question than you are when teaching an alien sinner, or a sectarian what to do in order to become a Christian."

Here sister Priscilla spoke and solemnly expressed herself thus: "This feature of the discussion might as well be dropped. I am satisfied that there is no direct testimony in the gospel in favor of the one-man preacher-pastor at a set salary, or it would have been given, and I propose that the missionary society be next considered." "Before we leave the pastorate I wish to make a few remarks on that subject," said Sincerity. "The nearest that I have ever found of authority for the one-man, preacher-pastor as the chief man in the church is in the apostle John's third letter. In the ninth and tenth verses of that letter John says, 'I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds, which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.' Now then, that man Diotrephes with his love of pre-eminence, with his disposition not to receive the apostles, and to prate against their authority, and his disposition to cast people out of the church, and thus to persecute—that character, I say, in course of time developed into the pope of Rome, and he is found in all the higher orders of the Romish clergy. Then he is found in the arch-bishops, the bishops, and the priests of the Episcopal Church, otherwise called the Church of England. Then that

character is further found in the clergy of each of the different denominations that have a salaried ministry, and finally he is found in the one-man, preacher-pastor with a set salary among the disciples of Christ, sometimes called the Christian Church." "Where did you learn all that?" asked the pastor with a sneer. Then he added, "You are worse than old Ben. Franklin."

"Come, brother," said sister Priscilla entreatingly, "don't speak thus of that man. He is the one who taught me the gospel, and he knows better how to set forth the gospel plainly than any other man that ever heard. Don't speak slightly of him I entreat you. (The interview here represented makes mention of a date before Elder Franklin's death in 1878)

"I beg your pardon," said the pastor, "I beg your pardon, sister Priscilla, I did not mean to hurt your feelings, and I ought not to have spoken thus of Bro. Franklin. But I see that I can do no good here, and our interview might as well be brought to close. "No, brother said sister Priscilla. "Don't go yet. I wish to know if there be any gospel authority for missionary societies, ladies' aid societies, Dorcas societies, mite societies and such like.

"I must say—well—the truth is, there is no chapter and verse authorizing them. But the most learned men among us as a people have decided that they can be sustained by legitimate inferences. Yet I see that neither you nor our brother from Indiana is disposed to accept inferences of any kind. You are *sticklers*, if I must say it, for a "Thus saith the Lord and I can do you no good. So I might as well leave."

"Hold on, brother, just for one moment," said Sincerity. "When this sister found me as a deluded sinner she had no difficulty in finding a 'Thus saith the Lord' for all that was required of me to become a Christian. That was easy because the gospel is a perfect guide to show the sinner how to become a Christian. Now, when I ask you for a 'Thus saith the Lord' for your position as pastor, and the societies in the church which you endorse it is unpleasant and irksome to you, and you

wish to reproach me for not accepting what you call legitimate inferences. Don't you know that every creed, and confession of faith, every humanly given name and humanly arranged religions institution, however erroneous, is defended by what are called 'legitimate inferences' by their advocates and endorsers? Now, what right have I to accept your so-called 'legitimate inferences' as any better than such inferences when drawn in favor of the mourner's bench, and other things unmentioned in the Bible? "You have made quite a speech," said the pastor, as he arose to leave. "You ought to become a preacher. Our legalistic brethren would soon make a champion of you." "Well, if you will not remain any longer, I must consent for you to leave." Thus saying sister Priscilla arose and in sadness and disappointment gave the defeated pastor her hand, as she bade him "good-night," and followed him to the door.

When she returned to the parlor where Sincerity was walking the floor she sank into a chair and wept. After a time he took a seat near her and spoke after this manner: "Sister Priscilla, it is evident to my mind that history has begun to repeat itself among us, and that our city churches are destined to go to the ridiculous. You taught me that the Bible is the only religious creed-book accepted by disciples, and that the gospel is our only religious rule of faith and practice. On this subject I have learned since going to southern Indiana that your teaching was correct, and permit me to assure you that many churches are still maintaining that very principle on which disciples in this century began their glorious work. But in the cities and larger towns I have learned that pride has taken possession of many preachers and people. As a result they are no longer willing to be despised for the truth's sake, but are copying after the denominations, are exchanging pulpits with sectarian preachers and are calling them brethren." To this sister Priscilla while still weeping, replied,

"I know that what you say concerning our city churches is unfortunately true in some instances. I have seen some of it here in this city, and not long since a brother from Detroit,

Mich., was here, and gave me a very humiliating account of one of our pastors named Hobbes, who brothered sectarian preachers till one of them charged him with hypocrisy. There was also another brother who gave me an account of one of our evangelists calling on a Methodist preacher to open meetings for him on several occasions, and then when that preacher heard our evangelist preach on baptism he decided that the evangelist was a hypocrite. So it seems that some of our preachers are falling from the sublime to the ridiculous."

"Yes, my sister," said Sincerity, "and the churches in the cities are going the same way. Some of them have begun to have Shakespearean readings, and theatrical performances to raise money for the church, to say nothing of oyster suppers and strawberry festivals in their season."

"All!" exclaimed sister Priscilla sighing deeply, and then she added in the language of Lamentations 4th chapter, "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed?"

"But, my sister," said Sincerity with emphasis in harmony with his manhood, "the cause of Christ will not be everywhere betrayed. There are many thousands who will suffer themselves to be taken to the stake and burned before they will compromise one sentence of divine truth. Those who live in the cities and larger towns may all go after popularity, and natter themselves that they are broad-minded, hut their breadth is much like a quart of cider in a wash tub—not remarkable for depth."

This remark forced a laugh from sister Priscilla, and while her gloom was broken Sincerity bade her good-bye.

After he had left Priscilla sank into a chair and remained almost motionless until the clock struck twelve. But several times, in course of that period, she laughed just a little as she thought of how broad and how shallow a quart of cider would appear in a wash tub, and what an apt illustration the homely reference was of certain shallow men who claimed to be broad-minded.

After Sincerity had reached his home he began a long and interesting correspondence with his elderly friend and sister in which he tried to convince her that out in the country is a better place for the gospel to live and flourish than in proud and populous cities. Yet it should be remembered that in all cities there may be many who are sufficiently humble to become Christians and so live as to reach the Christian's home in glory.

The first letter of the correspondence just mentioned is here given, in order that the reader may further understand concerning Sincerity as a teacher.

HOMEVILLE, IND.,

Oct. 15, 1873.

SISTER PRISCILLA.:—In writing you I wish first of all to report myself safe at home, and that all with me are well. This report concerning temporal affairs being made I begin at once to make a statement of those matters which I wish specially to bring before your mind, and, which other subjects prevented me from talking about when I was in Cincinnati.

The confusion of mind concerning religion which I had for a time suffered when I first met you, and the relief you gave me by your first words of instruction are both still vivid in my memory. The joy I experienced by reading Acts of Apostles according to your directions, and there learning for myself how both Jews and Gentiles became Christians under apostolic teaching I also recollect with, clearness. Since then I have read the same book many times, and in course of each reading my thoughts have been turned back to my period of darkness and distress, which was broken by your kind words of instruction and forever banished by my own reading of that precious book. The older I grow the more deeply I appreciate the importance of saving mankind from the confusion and consequent distress into which I was led by listening to men who had never learned to read the Bible aright. Moreover, the older I become the more evident it is to me, that such confusion and distress are wholly unnecessary, for the Bible is plain on the subject of becoming a Christian.

Suppose, sister, that you and I owned a million dollars and would offer a hundred dollars to every person over fifteen years of age who would learn what the gospel of Christ is, and what it requires. Do you think that we would keep your money long Certainly not if we would only toll the people that they could learn all that would be necessary in order to secure the hundred dollars by reading the New Testament. Suppose we would further inform them that in the book called Acts of Apostles they will find what the sinner is required to do in becoming

Christian, how long do you suppose that we would keep your money? My opinion is that one million dollars would not last a week if we could cause the people to have confidence in our financial offer, and could keep them from consulting sectarian preachers. From such statements as the foregoing you will readily see that my estimate of sectarian preachers has not improved as time has passed. Indeed, the more I learn of them the less I think of them. They seem to think that confusion is necessary in order to conversion. And, in this they are right when, we consider what they mean by conversion. With them the word "conversion" does not mean a turning from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God by obeying the divine commandments. But it means with them an overpowered, and a confused condition. It may be safely said that sectarian or denominational preachers study how to avoid preaching the gospel in its fulness, and for such work they are specially trained in theological seminaries. In those institutions young men receive their finishing touch for the pulpit. Of course it is true that sectarian preachers generally set forth the facts of the gospel with clearness and emphasis. They tell their audiences that Christ died, was buried, and was raised again.

They even say that Christ died in order that mankind might receive forgiveness of sins. But as soon as they come to the commands necessary for the sinner to obey in order to be pardoned they begin to flounder. Some of them say that only faith is required, whilst others tell us that it is all determined by the divine grace or election. But they can all listen to the preacher of Christ setting forth the truth with some degree of patience until he comes to "a certain water," and says that it is necessary for the penitent believer to be baptized in water in order to become a Christian, and then, with almost one accord, sectarian preachers revolt. But they cannot persuade all their people to think that water baptism is unnecessary, for some of them learn the truth and insist upon obeying the same regardless of what their preachers may say. To me it is a matter of delight to dwell on the language in

John 20:30, 31, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name," and then to turn to Acts 17: 11, 12, and there, notice how clearly it is stated that by searching the divine testimony many Jews of Berea became believers. Then by reading Rom. 10: 17 and Acts 14: 1 together, I am delighted to notice how evident it is that faith or belief comes by hearing as well as by reading the divine testimony. When I come to the subject of repentance it is a delight to read, that God "commands all men everywhere to repent," (Acts 17: 30), and then to read Luke 24: 47, which clearly teaches that "remission of sins" is offered to the fullest extent that repentance is commanded. These passages of scripture, taken together, clearly show that the Calvinist doctrine of special election and special atonement, and that those not specially elected and atoned for cannot receive forgiveness of sins—I say that these passages of scripture show that such a doctrine is false. Then the confession and baptism required of sinners in order to become Christians are equally clear with faith and repentance. Matt. 10: 32, and Rom. 10: 10 clearly show that confession of faith in Christ was divinely required. Between these two passages on confession the case of the Ethiopian officer occurs, which shows how the confession was made when inspired men were preachers. As for baptism, it seems as if the Lord was specially careful to mention it more frequently than he did faith, repentance, or confession. He was even careful to have the word "water" mentioned several times in connection with baptism, and to speak of it as a birth, or being "born of water" as a burial, also as a planting and washing so as to take the mind as far as possible from both sprinkling and pouring. All these statements I submit to you, my sister, in order that you may be assured that I appreciate the first requirements of the gospel and regard them as beautiful in their simplicity. That simplicity is such that I regard the partisan preachers who confuse the people whom they teach as almost inexcusable.

The only apology for them is that they have never learned the right divisions of the Sacred Text, and thus have never learned how to read the Scriptures *so* as to learn what the gospel requires. The Jews of old had a vail upon their hearts when they read the Old Testament, and sectarian preachers seem to have a vail upon their hearts when they read the New Testament. When some one offers to take that vail away and show them how to read the gospel, and how to instruct sinners who wish to become Christians, they generally refuse the offer, and go on in their confusion. In so doing they show per verse ness, but even this is perhaps the necessary result of the confusion in which they have been trained, and from which they may not be able to deliver themselves. Very few of them have rejected truth which they once learned, and the great Judge will know how to deal with them in the last great day.

But what shall we say of those disciple preachers who were once delivered from the bondage of confusion, or, perhaps, were never confused on the subject of religion, and yet have decided that the gospel needs amendments? If sectarian preachers are *almost inexcusable*, are not these of whom I now make mention *altogether inexcusable*. Like the Jews of whom Paul wrote in Rom. 2nd chapter they claim to be a "guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes," in regard to the first requirements of the gospel. They even declare that the gospel is perfect in its requirements of sinners, and censure sectarian preachers for not teaching sinners correctly how to become Christians. Yet just as soon as they have led sinners to believe, repent, confess, and be baptized they often begin at once to teach them to support the preacher-pastor, to support humanly organized missionary societies, to raise money by festivals and other human devices, to buy organs for use in meeting houses, to sing with organs, and do Certain other things as widely separated from the gospel as it is Jo kneel at a mourner's bench and confuse sinners by teaching (hem that they should get religion. Are not those who thus *act altogether inexcusable*'?

But the inconsistency of such preachers is not all. Paul says

in Rom. 14: 23, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Those preachers well understand that where no testimony exists there can be no faith, since faith comes by the word of God either heard or read, or by that word both heard and read. They know, therefore, that they cannot *believe* it to be the will of Christ for them to have musical instruments in the worship of God through Christ. I say "through Christ" because such instruments were allowed before Christ came. David introduced them, or ordered them to be introduced. (See 1 Chron. 15; 16.) But the 6th chapter of Amos pronounces a "woe" upon those who "chant to the sound of the viol and invent to themselves instruments" of music like David." To such persons Amos further said, "That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointment; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." This shows that a "woe" was pronounced upon those persons because of what they were guilty *of doing* that was wrong, and then because of what they *omitted*. They were guilty, among other things, of inventing to themselves instruments of music like David, and they omitted or failed to be "grieved for the affliction of Joseph." Amos further said to such in that same chapter, "Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say. Have we not taken to ourselves horns by our own strength?" This language describes that class of people who advocate the organ. In rejoicing over an organ they rejoice "in a thing of nought"—*a mere thing* which has no head, nor heart, nor life, nor soul. It is more empty than a gourd, for a gourd has seed which can reproduce itself, but an organ is a headless, heartless, lifeless, soulless, voiceless *thing*. Yet there are certain disciples who become so infatuated over this *thing* that they will divide and destroy a congregation, or any number of congregations, in order to have this *thing* in the worship.

Another thought should here be mentioned. The organ is not only a *thing*, but it is a *play-thing*. Now, what has a *plaything* to do with worshiping God through Christ? When the calf was made at Mt. Sinai we are told, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." That was appropriate

when the people were gathered about an idol, and it was permitted while the people were treated as minors under tutors and governors. (Gal. 4:1-5.) But what has *a plaything* to do with Christians worshipping; God in spirit and in truth?

Notice further what the prophet Amos says. He speaks of those against whom he pronounced a woe as saying, "Have we not taken to ourselves horns by our own strength?" Now, sister Priscilla, permit me to assure you that while I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, yet I would not be surprised if horns will hereafter be added to the organ in worship. Yes, and even the fiddle will likely be introduced. [Your prophecy has been fulfilled, brother Sincerity.] For there are very few children who don't get tired of one plaything and call for another. On this principle the restless spirit which calls for an organ in the worship, and a mite society in the work of the church, will not be satisfied with such devices, but will wish to adopt anything and everything that is pleasing and popular. My letter is already too long, and yet I am not ready to close. Thus at the risk of wearying you I shall add a few pages to what I have already written. From what I see in the *Christian Record* and *American Christian Review* it is evident that those who are now introducing the organ and other devices are disposed to charge on those who object to such things the responsibility of all the disturbance and division resulting therefrom. To my mind this excels anything I have ever seen or heard. What would we think if some one would say that parents are responsible for all the disturbance resulting from objecting to their children playing cards? As memory now serves me this very point was discussed somewhat when your pastor and I had a talk in your parlor, Yes, and I recollect how evasive he was when I asked him who was responsible for splitting a log of wood—the man who drove the wedge the man who opposed the driving thereof. But just here I am reminded of an interview between an old apostolic disciple and a preacher who said that we who oppose the organ and other devices are responsible for the divisions which result. That old disciple happened to remember a place where that preacher had gone to expose the

soul-sleepers, and the result of the preacher's work was division. So he said to the preacher, "Bro. W., why did you go to that place to expose soul-sleeping? Why didn't you let the soul-sleepers alone, and let them pervert the whole church and so have peace, rather than go over there and expose the doctrine so as to cause division?" It is needless to say that the preacher was in confusion. He knew, and all advocates of organs know, that from the standpoint of the gospel all responsibility for division rests with those who advocate the divisive doctrines and practices, provided they be erroneous. Christ said he came to send a sword or division on earth. (Matt. 10: 34; Luke 12: 51.) In view of this there is evidently one kind of division which it is right to work. That must be the division resulting from the advocacy of truth. Such a division is divinely authorized, and on this principle we proceed when we advocate truth and divide sectarian congregations. As the Lord has authorized the truth to be preached and urged he is responsible for the results of so doing. But when men advocate error, and thereby cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine" of Christ then those men are responsible for all the evil resulting therefrom. The effort of such men to fasten the responsibility of such evil on those who oppose the human doctrines and practices which they urge is the most evident perverseness.

But I must not impose upon you the task of reading more at present. Had I not known your interest in all that pertains to the advancement and defense of truth I would have closed this letter at an earlier period.

Trusting that you may be in your best health when this reaches you, and that I may at some date, not very distant, receive word from you that you have decided to spend the remainder of your days in the country, where the gospel is yet maintained in its purity, I remain your friend and grateful brother.

SINCERITY.

### ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

CINCINNATI, OHIO,

Oct. — '73.

Mr. DEAR BROTHER:—Permit me to thank you for the longest and best letter which I ever received. I have read it three

times and have each time felt deeply interested in it from beginning to end. Rest assured that I greatly regret the facts and truths of which your letter makes mention, and I greatly fear that the conduct of a proportion of our brotherhood will cause formal division. The spirit which I have already seen manifested in the church here has alarmed me, and the behavior of our pastor in his conversation with you has impressed me more unfavorably as time has passed. In reflecting on his manner I have been led to think of the Presiding Elder of the M. E. Church who undertook to show you the way to heaven about fifteen years ago. That elder's reasoning and manner were on the same order with our pastor's, I fear that the secret of such behavior on their part is chargeable to the same cause. They both feel the weakness of their cause. - In my judgment the mourner's bench for sinners is as defensible as is the organ for saints. My happiness in my church relationship here is ended. I have resigned my office as president of the aid society. While I cannot control the spirit that is now working in the church I can at least refuse to encourage it. In the midst of my sadness over the present condition of things I can rejoice that I had something to do with your conversion to Christ, and I further rejoice that you yet remain steadfast. May the Lord bless and keep you, is the prayer of your sister

PRISCILLA.