

Epaphroditus was a messenger from the church to the apostle—a competent messenger, faithful in carrying the offerings of the brethren to Paul, and able both to sympathize with him as a fellow-laborer and to give him items of welcome news by detailing the prosperous condition of the church at Philippi. Examine Phil. 4: 15, 18 and 2: 25. To the brethren in Corinth Paul says: ‘I am glad of the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus...for they have refreshed my spirit.’ These fellow-laborers were therefore messengers, who, by their personal presence, gladdened the apostle, refreshed his spirit, and supplied an important lack whether of needful pecuniaries or of sympathy required by him in his severe and constant labors. 1 Cor. 16: 17, 18. Again, says this inspired workman, ‘I took wages of certain churches to perform my work in Corinth.’ 2 Cor. 11: 8.

These references, then, to the infallible record, will serve in the meantime as a sample of what is approveable in the sight of heaven as follows:—

1. That every primitive disciple was filled with the liberal spirit of the Divine Master, considering not only his own welfare but also the welfare of others.

2. That this liberality was shown, not like religious fever and ague, but as steadily and systematically as the pulse of their affection for Christ.

3. That each congregation had a treasury by which to collect and through which to distribute.

4. That as all members of one church were united and sympathizing, so all churches were united for every good work, sympathizing with and helping one another, all being subject to the One Head.

5. That apostles, evangelists, and others were messengers of the churches both to carry contributions for the needy and to convey assistance and sympathy to laborers engaged in the work of announcing the gospel.

6. That churches in different localities and in different countries united their contributions for at least two capital purposes,—relieving the Lord’s needy ones, and maintaining general laborers in the gospel,—without such an ‘organization’ as some good friends are upholding in Cincinnati.

How any student of the pure oracles can find in these examples of primitive operation the slightest indication of such speckled and spotted organizations as are witnessed in these degenerate days, or how those who are pledged to follow all primitive customs will continue to ‘organize’ and ‘operate’ directly in the face of these examples in the great Statute Book, can only be understood by us upon the general