

DEFINITIONS OF DOCTRINE

VOLUME III

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

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It is our privilege to be able to present Volume III of Definitions of Doctrine by the late Claude Duval Cole. Bro. Cole died reading Volume II (Sin Salvation Service) the same morning he had received it in the mail. He had already started putting together Volume III for us to print. I have a brief outline of the way he wanted it to be published and we intend to stay as close to the original outline as possible. Since he was combining several outline studies and rewriting them and the Lord did not permit him to finish this third volume, I will try to put it together in such a way that would be much like he intended it and yet I will not change any of his writings. The way that you receive it is the way he wrote it. There will be some repetition in some places since some of the material covered in one subject is mentioned in another subject.

Also, I had written him concerning one or two things in this volume which were not clear to me as to the meaning he intended and due to his death, I never received an answer. We will publish them with a reservation as to one or two points and their real meaning. In particular concerning the organization of a church; I believe, and the Bryan Station Baptist Church practices, that a new church being organized must have church authority. Also, concerning the Bride of Christ. I will not try to elaborate on this but that the Bride, in my understanding of the Bible, will be made up of the faithful members of the Lord's New Testament Baptist Churches. There are others that will be saved but the Bride of Christ is the chosen of the elect. Others will be guests at this great wedding.

Be that as it may, we send forth this volume, praying that the teachings concerning the most precious institution on this earth (The Lord's Church) will be a great blessing to those that read it, and will help to strengthen God's people in the faith once delivered unto Saints. Volume I and II have spread worldwide. They are being used in many churches as

teaching guides, in many colleges as textbooks, being translated into other languages. The Lord has blessed Bro. Cole's books in a great way. We feel that this volume will be a great blessing to many on the true church and its teaching that have been neglected in this day of departing from the faith.

Yours in the service of God,  
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# CHAPTER I

## THE DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

The unity for which Christ prayed seems to be as sadly lacking among His followers with respect to the church question as any other. Christ's prayer for unity among His people has been for a long time a serious question to the author, in the light of his belief that Christ's prayers are always effectual. Modern Ecumenicalism is not the answer to the problem since it seeks organic union at the expense of truth. In this chapter we shall try to arrive at a Scriptural definition of the church. Observe:

### **A. THE COLLOQUIAL USE OF THE WORD CHURCH.**

1. The meeting house is familiarly spoken of as the church. But this is foreign to any New Testament use of the word. The New Testament Church was not the house, but "in the house." Rom. 16:5; "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house" (I Cor. 16:19); "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house" (Col. 4:15).

2. Christianity is usually referred to as the church to distinguish the followers of Christ from the state and from the world. Church history, therefore, is nothing more than the history of Christianity.

3. Denominations of Christians are commonly spoken of as churches, embracing believers in various groups without regard to faith and practice.

## **B. SOME MODERN NOTIONS OF THE CHURCH.**

1. The Universal Visible Theory, also called the Imperial Theory. This finds expression in the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. The church is a visible empire with a visible human head.
2. The Universal Invisible Theory. This makes all the saved, members of the church.
3. The Church Branch Theory. This makes the various denominations mere branches of the main stem which no longer exists.

## **C. THE PRE-CHRISTIAN USE OF THE WORD CHURCH.**

The word church comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means to call out for the purpose of assembling. The government of ancient Greek cities was democratic, being administered by duly qualified citizens in a lawful assembly, called together from time to time to transact business for the public good. And this assembly was called an *ekklesia*. The Greek word *ekklesia* in itself has no religious connotation. It simply means assembly regardless of the kind. In Acts 19:39 "But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly" it is used of the Greek assembly corresponding somewhat to our city council or board of aldermen. The word *ekklesia* is also used of the church (congregation) in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). By accommodation *ekklesia* is applied to the mob gathered against Paul at Ephesus. In Acts 19:32, we read that the *ekklesia* (assembly) "was confused," referring to the mob or unlawful assembly. The townclerk told Demetrius and his craft to take their complaint against Paul to the lawful *ekklesia* (assembly). And having restored order, the townclerk

dismissed the ekklesia (mob). "And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly" (Acts 19:41).

#### **D. THE EKKLESIA OR ASSEMBLY OF CHRIST.**

The English word church comes from the Greek word kuriakon, which means "of or belonging to the Lord." Kuriakon occurs only two times in the Greek New Testament. It is used of the Lord's Supper (I Cor. II:20), and of the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10). It is never translated church in the New Testament. Kuriakon was used by the early Greek Christians for the Lord's house or meeting place. The Teutonic tribes, when converted to Christianity, adopted this Greek word for their house of worship. It is found in the German Kirche, the Scottish Kirk, and the Anglo-Saxon Circe. The Greeks never employed kuriakon for the people, but only for the house.

In using the word ekklesia Christ did not coin a new word, but a word in current use and easily understood by both Jew and Greek. He did not employ the word kuriakon, but ekklesia which can only refer to people, a people called out to form an assembly. In response to Peter's confession of His deity, Christ said, "Thou art Peter (petrol) and upon this rock (petra) I will build MY ekklesia (assembly)." Matt 16:18. He thus distinguished between His assembly and other assemblies. Paul makes the same distinction in his letter to the Thessalonians. He writes to the ekklesia which is in God the Father (this distinguishes it from the Greek political assembly), and "in the Lord Jesus Christ," which also distinguishes it from the Jewish synagogue. In this way Paul made sure that his letter would reach the right assembly.

In the Greek New Testament the noun ekklesia occurs 115 times. It is translated church 112 times and assembly three times. The word church actually occurs 113 times in our King James Bible, but in Acts 19:37 it is not ekklesia but the word



for temples. The King James translators tried to use church for ekklesia in all cases, but in Acts 19:32, 39, 41 to do so would have been manifestly absurd; and so in these instances they had to give the correct rendering; ASSEMBLY.

Christ Himself set us the pattern for the use of the word ekklesia. In Matt. 16:18 when He said, "I will build my church (ekklesia)." He used the word abstractly of an institution, without defining, particularizing, or locating it. Just as we speak of the American home, the American boy, and other institutions without referring to any particular home or boy. In Matt. 18:17 our Lord used the word ekklesia (assembly) in the concrete sense of a particular assembly to which one might tell his grievances. And so when Christ's ekklesia, as an institution, becomes concrete and operational it is an actual assembly of His followers in organized capacity. It is a visible organization seems necessary inasmuch as it is composed of visible people. J. W. Porter says, "If there is any other sort of church than that of a visible congregation, revelation and investigation have alike failed to locate its whereabouts or define its functions. Such an inconceivable, intangible, invisible concern as the imaginary invisible church has never been known to convert anybody or to perform any functions of an actual church."

When Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it," Matt 16:18. He was speaking of the church prospectively something to be built "I will build." The church was a concept in the mind of Christ just as the building is a concept in the mind of the architect before it is erected. Christ saw all the material that was to make up this holy sanctuary, every living stone that would go into it, before it had been quarried from the hard rock of sinful humanity. "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it

to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). And so the church Christ founded to build the church for which He died, is promised perpetuity and glory.

The church of Christ as an institution finds expression in two kinds of assemblies: the local assembly here on earth; and the general assembly of Firstborn ones, now enrolled in heaven and to be gathered there as a glorious church. Heb. 12:23.

## **CHURCHES OF CHRIST**

Whenever the word church is used in the New Testament of something larger than a particular, visible, assembly here on earth the word is always plural, like the churches of Galatia, Asia, and Judaea. The church of Christ here on earth finds expression in many particular assemblies of visible people in process of salvation; the church of Christ in heaven will find expression in one universal assembly of visible people whose salvation has been completed. But there is no such thing as an invisible church here on earth or in heaven.

To a man in Florida who would not unite with any church or particular congregation, and who insisted that he belonged to the big church of Christ, the writer said something like this: In the New Testament the churches could be located and written to. I would like to write to your church; please give me its address and the name of its pastor. Needless to say, he was shut up.

In his commentary on Matthew, Dr. Broadus says: "The word church is not used in the New Testament to denote a congregation, actual or imaginary, of all professed Christians, unless it be in Acts 9:31 (correct text), and in I Tim. 3:15. In the former the word probably denotes the original church at

Jerusalem, whose members were widely scattered throughout Judaea and Galilee and Samaria by the persecution and held meetings wherever they were, but still belonged to the one original organization. When Paul wrote to the Galatians nearly twenty years later, these separate meetings had been organized into distinct churches; and so he speaks (Gal. 1:22) in reference to that same period, of "the churches of Judaea which were in Christ." In I Tim. 3:15, the church is naturally the particular local church with which one is connected.

The New Testament never speaks of one particular assembly or church as a part of the whole, but of each assembly as "the whole church." In I Cor. 14:23, Paul says, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place...." Writing to the Romans from Corinth, in his closing salutation, Paul says, "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you" (Rom. 16:23). Speaking of the church under the metaphor of the human body, I Cor. 12:27, Paul says "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The article is absent in the Greek. The same is true when the church is represented under the figure of a temple. The church at Corinth is called "the temple of God" in I Cor. 3:16 and also in II Cor. 6:16. In the second chapter of Ephesians the church is in view under the figure of a building or temple. Local congregations are in view in verse 21; "In whom (Christ) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple (sanctuary) in the Lord." In verse 22 the church at Ephesus is referred to: "In whom (Christ) ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." We have given the correct text in these quotations. In Eph. 3:21 "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." His redeemed people, making up the glory church, will be Christ's eternal monument as Savior. "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (II Thess. 1:10).

The ekklesia or church in glory will be the one real temple, body, flock, and bride of Christ. In glory the church will have been built and be forever to His glory. And because each local particular assembly on earth is a representative of His institution called the church, all the figures applied to the future church in glory are also applied to each and every local assembly of saints. (Note: See introduction of this volume as to the belief of the publisher about Bride of Christ.)

A man once said to B. H. Carroll, "How dare you apply such broad terms as 'the house of God,' 'the body of Christ', and 'the temple of God,' to your little fragment of a denomination!" Carroll replied: "I do not apply them to any denomination, nor to any aggregate of particular churches, but the scriptures do apply every one of them to the particular congregations of Christ's disciples."

In the Scriptural sense there is no such thing as the Methodist Church, or the Presbyterian Church, or the Baptist Church, etc. We should never speak of The American Baptist Church, or the Southern Baptist Church, for there is no such thing. The Southern Baptist Convention is made up of individual messengers sent to it from thousands of Baptist churches, and these messengers have no delegated authority. Naturally, we Baptists believe that our form of church government conforms more nearly to the New Testament pattern. There is no hierarchy or grades of ministry among us. All members are equal in authority and this authority is expressed by vote. One may have more influence than another, but all have the same authority.

There is more and more being said today about "One church in one world." This means one big church made up of the churches of all denominations. But such a thing is utterly foreign to scripture, so far as Christ's church is concerned. Such an idea is retrogression rather than progress. It reverses

the missionary program. In the early days Christ's church as an institution found expression in one church, the church at Jerusalem. Under persecution the church was scattered, and the members went everywhere preaching the word. And wherever disciples were made a church was organized. And some years later, we read of the churches of Judaea. And when the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas as missionaries, we soon read of churches in Galatia and other provinces.

If and when we have one church in one world, who is to be the head of this one big church? Will the head be Christ or Anti-Christ? The writer ventures the prediction that the head of this one big church will be a man living in a big house in the city of Rome, the City of Seven Hills, on the banks of the Tiber. Let no Protestant ever suppose that the Roman system of a graded ministry culminating in the supremacy of the pope will ever be relinquished or compromised. Yet with a sad heart we fear that Christendom is headed in that direction.

Suppose history repeats itself, and there again becomes one big world church: such as the Roman Catholic Church before the reformation; suppose the reformation under Luther and others reverse itself and the Protestant denominations return to Rome; will this mean that the perpetuity promised by Christ will be repealed? Perish the thought! Just as in the past, the true churches of Christ will not be a part of the big world church, which will really be the Roman Catholic Church. The institution Christ promised perpetuity to will not perish from the earth, and this institution will always find expression in particular assemblies; which will not be swallowed up by the big ecumenical body.

## CHAPTER II

# THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

- A. Its Members.
- B. Its Officers.
- C. Its Autonomy and Independence.
- D. Its Perpetuity.

There is no account in the New Testament of any mode of procedure by which churches were organized. As an institution Christ founded the church while on earth, left it in care of the apostles and prophets with delegated authority. Before his return to the Father He gave the commission to the church through the apostles and promised His presence with them until the end of the age. He also promised to send the Holy Spirit as their helper in the task of perpetuating the church. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost and the book of Acts is an account of what was done from Pentecost until the imprisonment of Paul. The first organized church was at Jerusalem. This church was scattered through persecution, this led to missionary endeavour and the organizing of churches in Asia and Europe. The second church was at Antioch in Syria. From this church Paul and Barnabas went out as missionaries. Then we read of the churches in Galatia and other provinces of the Roman Empire.

It seems evident from the New Testament that Jesus gave no formal prescription for the organization of any church. For sometime after Pentecost the disciples of Christ had no thought of separating themselves from the religious life of Israel. Temple-worship was adhered to "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46); "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1), being supplemented by the teaching of the apostles, and by fellowship in prayer and the breaking of bread "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Organization was of gradual development according to emerging needs as when deacons were selected to serve tables so that the spiritual leaders might give themselves to the ministry of prayer and the word. "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:2-4).

Baptist churches come into being today somewhat after this manner. A group of believers in a community wish to become a church. The members in conference will make this wish known to other churches, and these churches send messengers to counsel them in accomplishing their desire. For the sake of order and recognition these messengers will inquire into their belief, and if it is thought wise, the visitors endorse their articles of faith and recommend their constitution as an independent church. These visiting brethren do not organize the church. Since the church is to be self governing it must of necessity and logically be self constituted.

And so those wishing to become a church enter into covenant to that effect; and another church is born. The help from the outside is for the sake of order and fellowship and is not absolutely essential. (Note. See Introduction to this volume as to the belief of the Publisher and the organization of a new church.)

From the Book of Acts and church epistles and also from the pastoral epistles we learn all that we need to know about the organized church. Observe:

### **A. ITS MEMBERS.**

It is quite clear that the members were born again and baptized believers in Christ as Lord and Savior. And nobody else has any business in a church of Christ. There must be blood before water, and salvation before church membership. The church is a fellowship and partnership of believers and believers are saved people. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16; "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36); "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1). When sinners repent towards God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, their immediate duty is to be baptized and enter into the fellowship of the church as a servant of Christ.

### **B. ITS OFFICERS.**

Eph. 4:11: "And he gave some men to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and



teachers, for the .....equipment of God's people for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ....." (C. B. Williams).

1. Apostles and Prophets. These were temporary and had no successors. Prophets were not needed after the New Testament was written. Apostles had delegated authority not given to anyone else. That their office was temporary is obvious from their qualifications.

(1) To be an apostle one must have seen the risen Lord "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:22); "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" (I Cor .9:1). Paul was the last person to see Him after His resurrection "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:8).

(2) One must have wrought "the signs of an apostle." "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (II Cor. 12:12). And so from the very nature of the qualifications the apostolic office was temporary. There are no apostles among us today.

(2) Evangelists. These were traveling preachers whose labor was not confined to any given locality. And we have these with us today.

(3) Pastors and Teachers. These are local and are confined to a single church. It is the writer's opinion that this refers to one office, the pastor who is also the teacher in the church. Others may teach, but they are not a commissioned officer in the church. The text we are following says nothing about elders,

or bishops, but from other scriptures we learn that they belong to the same office as pastor and teacher.

As an apostolic delegate, Titus was left by the apostle Paul in Crete to complete the organization of the churches and to ordain elders, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). And in giving their qualifications these elders are called bishops "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;" (Titus 1:7). And in Acts 20:28 the elders from Ephesus are enjoined by Paul to "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, (bishops), to feed (pastor, shepherd) the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." And so these elders were to do the work of an overseer and pastor in their respective churches. And in I Tim. II a bishop must be apt to teach. So the spiritual leader in the church must be able to care for the church as overseer and teacher. Baptist churches have leaders but no lords. "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen" (I Peter 5:14).

When the church is thought of as a working body, the spiritual leader is called BISHOP. When the church is viewed as the Lord's flock, he is called PASTOR, which means shepherd. When it is conceived as a school of God's children, he is called TEACHER.

And so the elder of a church is the pastor and bishop and teacher; all referring to the same office involving different duties.

A prelate of the Church of England asked Dr. George Truett, "Do you Baptist have bishops?" "Yes, indeed," replied Truett. "I did not know that. How many do you have in the United

States?" "Some 60,000 more or less." replied Truett. The prelate was confounded and said, "Pon my word, I didn't know that." Of course he didn't, for he did not know what a New Testament bishop is.

4. Deacons. This office originated in a crisis caused by liberal giving. During prolonged revival which began at Pentecost there were many poor people, particularly widows. The well to do put money into a common fund to care for the poor. Barnabas sold some property and put the proceeds into this common fund. Ananias and Sapphira also sold a possession for this purpose and kept back part of the proceeds, pretending to give it all. All giving was voluntary and nothing like modern communism.

The apostles were administering this fund. The Grecians (foreign born Jews) complained that their widows were not getting their share of this fund. The apostles neither admitted nor denied the charge. They suggested a division of labor and urged the church to select seven "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3). This suggestion was accepted by the whole multitude, and seven were chosen and "set before the apostles," and ordained by the laying on of hands. The reason for this new office was that the apostles might give themselves exclusively to prayer and ministry of the word. The result was that "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly..." (Acts 6:7). For a better account of this the reader will turn to Acts the 6th chapter.

The church is a spiritual institution in a material world and has material needs and matters of business to look after. And so we may think of deacons as the business administrators of the church.

### **C. ITS AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE.**

The churches of the New Testament were autonomous (self governing) and independent. Each church managed its own affairs. No other church or groups of churches had any authority over it. Each church was responsible only to Christ, its Head. Each church dismissed and received members, and exercised discipline over them. Each church determined its own activity and made its own program.

At the same time cooperative relations were entered into by New Testament churches. There are many examples of this. See Rom. 15:26,27; II Cor. 8th and 9th chapters; Acts 15th chapter. And so it is today, Baptist churches cooperate in many enterprises. But in and through it all each church acts voluntary and maintains its independence. The writer has a way of saying that the churches of Christ are dependent, independent, and interdependent. Each church is dependent upon God for success; it is independent, in that it is free from dominance of any other body; and it is interdependent, in that it works with other churches in kingdom enterprises. No church has the right to be a local church in its interests and labor. It must look beyond its own doors to other fields of labor. Any church that does not have missions on its heart has the death rattle in its throat.

### **D. ITS PERPETUITY.**

After Peter confessed his belief in Jesus as the Christ (Messiah of the Old Testament), Jesus told him that this truth was not taught him by any human being, but by "My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (petros), and upon this rock (petra) I will build MY church; and the gates of hell (hades, the unseen realm of the dead) shall not prevail against it." In these words Jesus promised perpetuity to His church: it would not be

swallowed up in death. This does not mean that no church will ever go out of existence, but that His institution would remain and always be found in churches. Many of the New Testament churches have ceased to exist, but there has never been a time when true churches ceased to exist. Our Lord provided for perpetuity when He gave the great commission to make disciples, baptize disciples, and teach them (disciples) .... "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (age)" (Matt. 28:20). And until Christ returns there will be churches making and baptizing and teaching disciples. When Christ's saving work has been finished He will return in judgment, and the day of grace will be over. And who knows how soon this may be?

## CHAPTER III

### THE NAME OF THE CHURCH

We believe a church of Christ is an organized body of baptized disciples, equal in rank and privilege, agreeing on what the Bible teaches, and covenanting to do what Christ has commanded. His command was to make disciples, and this can only be done by preaching the gospel to the lost. And this is the only way the church can perpetuate itself. There will be no disciples tomorrow if they are not made today. Evangelism is the life blood of the church.

We are now confronted with this question: By what name is the church of Christ to be known and identified? What is the proper name of His church? The writer is so bold as to say that there is no proper name by which the church is to be called and identified. If the reader dissents from this, before he is too critical, let him turn to the Bible and find the proper name of the church. And when he has found it, he may reject the position we have taken.

The true church is to be identified by its characteristic features rather than by name. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9). I will not show you the name of the bride, but the bride herself.

The followers of Christ are called by a variety of names in the scriptures, but none of them is a proper name. They are called believers, brethren, children of God, children of the kingdom, saints, sheep, disciples, etc. But none of these is to be

thought of as the proper name of the church. These names indicate their relation to God, to Christ, and to one another.

They are called "Children of God" because God is their Father.

They are called "Children of the Kingdom," to indicate that they have been born into the kingdom.

They are called "Children of Abraham" because of their spiritual descent from Abraham who is the father of the faithful.

They are called "brethren" to indicate their relation to one another as equals.

They are called "sheep" figuratively to fit in with the figurative title of Christ as the good Shepherd.

They are called "disciples" because of their relation to Christ as their Teacher.

Now let the reader, if he can, use any of these words as the proper name of the church.

They are called "Christians" three times in the New Testament, but this name seems to have been given as a term of reproach. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). This name originated at Antioch, but this does not mean that it was then and there that they began to call one another by this name. In Acts 26:28 the name Christian is used by King Agrippa as a sort of slur. I do not agree with the usual interpretation that Agrippa was about to become a Christian. The Greek here is difficult to translate

and there are several different renderings. Perhaps the latest, "Good News for Modern Man" renders it thus: "In this short time you think you will make me a Christian?" Notice, that in reply, Paul did not use the word Christian. In I Peter 4:16 the word Christian is used the third and last time. The Amplified New Testament renders the verse like this: "But if (one is ill treated and suffers) as a Christian (which he is contemptuously called), let him not be ashamed, but give glory to God that he is (deemed worthy) to suffer in this name." Be that as it may, these verses afford little ground for applying the name Christian to the church. If the name "Christian Church" is correct it is strange that we have no example of any of the believers calling one another Christians, and that no epistle was addressed to "The Christian Church." Nobody objects to being called a Christian unless it is used as a term of reproach, in which case we should be glad to suffer in this name.

Several Bible names have been adopted as the proper name of the church by several denominations. For example, we have "The United Brethren," and "The Plymouth Brethren," "The Disciples," and "The Church of God," and "The Church of Christ," and "The Church of the Latter Day Saints." It is a wonder that we do not have a denomination named, "The Sheep Church." If any of the Bible names were meant to be the proper name of the church, then the most heretical and false churches could adopt the name as proof they were the true church.

Names given to churches in the New Testament indicate the kind of people who were in the church. And for any denomination to take to itself any one of these names is to imply that such people are to be found only in their denomination. For instance, the Mormons call their church "The Church of the Latter Day Saints," clearly implying and



claiming that they are the only saints in the latter days. Perish the thought!

## **THE NAME BAPTIST CHURCHES**

Let us now examine the name Baptist for a church of Christ. We never use the definite article "The Baptist Church," without locating a particular church. There is no such thing as "The Baptist Church" in a provincial or national sense, as in the case of most other denominations, such as "The Methodist Episcopal Church," or "The Presbyterian Church," etc. When Baptists wish to speak of something larger than a particular assembly they use the plural: Baptist Churches.

The name Baptist is a denominational name to distinguish it from other denominations. There were no denominational names until there came to be distinct denominations. Before the time of the so called Reformation under Martin Luther there were scattered churches under different names, and the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. The Reformation started in the Roman Catholic Church, and was only partial. The reformers took with them some of the heresies of Rome such as baptismal regeneration, a graded ministry and a form of government much like that of Rome. And some of the Protestant denominations hated and persecuted Baptists.

Baptists are sometimes accused of being narrow bigots because we believe Baptist churches are after the New Testament pattern. The line must be drawn somewhere, for all the hundreds of diverse and conflicting denominations cannot be the church Christ founded and to which He promised perpetuity.

While claiming to be the true church, Baptists do not deny the salvation of others. We put salvation in the person of Jesus Christ, and believe any and every sinner who pins his faith

and hope to Jesus Christ will be saved. We never tell the sinner to unite with a Baptist Church in order to be saved. Like John the Baptist we point the sinner to the Lamb of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

The writer is a Baptist but not a Baptist braggart. We lay no claim to superiority in character or conduct or education. When you find a Baptist with a superiority complex, you may be sure that he is an off brand. The churches of the first century were not made up of perfect people in character and conduct. In an experience of salvation the sinner becomes nothing in his own eyes and Christ becomes all in all. Before his conversion Saul of Tarsus was proud and self-righteous, but after he trusted Jesus as the Christ he thought of himself as less than the least of all saints. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8); "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:14-25); "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same

things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Phil. 3:1-17); "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (I Cor. 15:9).

The first New Testament preacher was called John the Baptist. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea" (Matt. 3:1); "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matt. 11:13); "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16). Proof that John's baptism was valid is in the fact that the followers of Christ and members of the first church had only John's baptism. The only difference between John's baptism and that of Christ is that John's looked forward to the coming of Christ, and since then valid baptism looks backward to the Christ who has already come. John baptized those who confessed their sins and who trusted the Christ who was to come; we baptize those who profess faith in Jesus Christ who has already come.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

There is a Divine model of church polity. The Government of the churches of Christ is too important to be left to chance or human opinion. Whatever is left to human discretion in religion, pertains to matters of minor importance, such as the building of meeting houses, the hours of public worship, the manner and order of divine service. Specific legislation on these points would not be practicable. To be sure there are divine principles to be adhered to in all things, but there are some things for which we have neither divine pattern nor explicit teaching. That there is a divine model of church government may be argued.

1. From Scriptural Analogy. Moses was commanded to make the Tabernacle after the pattern shown him in the mount. "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25:40); "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5). When the temple was erected, Solomon followed the plan given to him by his father David: "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all

the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD. He gave of gold by weight for things of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; silver also for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service: Even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof: and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, both for the candlestick, and also for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick. And by weight he gave gold for the tables of shewbread, for every table; and likewise silver for the tables of silver: Also pure gold for the fleshhooks, and the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basons he gave gold by weight for every bason; and likewise silver by weight for every bason of silver: And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD. All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (I Chron. 28:11-19). If it were necessary to make the Tabernacle and Temple according to a divine pattern, then it would seem that the church, which is a habitation of God through the Spirit, should be after a divine pattern.

2. From New Testament Examples. The first New Testament church was the one founded by Christ at Jerusalem. The second was the church at Antioch. Other churches sprang up here and there under missionary endeavor, and all of them were patterned after the church at Jerusalem. These churches had common faith, a common baptism, and a common Lord or Head. Whatever was ordained for one of them was ordained for all. "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord

hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches" (I Cor. 7:17); "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33); "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (I Cor. 11:16). These churches are to serve as patterns for the churches of all time. The faith or body of divinity has been once delivered, and whatever was ordained for the churches of the first century was likewise meant for the churches of the twentieth century. Otherwise the churches of the twentieth century would either be without a Bible, as a rule of faith and practice, or else would have a new Bible. Since God has not and will not give a new Bible the churches of this century must use the Bible long ago given.

### **THREE FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

There are three forms of church government in existence today among the professed followers of Christ. All groups of professing Christians, that is, all denominations may be, generally speaking, classed under these three forms. They are Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational.

1. The Episcopal form is a graded ministry; a system of big "I,s" and little "U,s." Episcopacy recognizes three orders or ranks of ministers, namely, deacons, priests, and bishops.

The Roman Catholic Church is a world church, recognizing the bishop of Rome as supreme head. The Romanist view is based upon the idea that Christ gave to Peter such authority and that the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) is the successor of Peter.

The Episcopal form is also represented in national and provincial churches. This means that the members of the church in any province or nation are bound together in

national or provincial organizations, and that this organization has authority over the local groups. This is the form held by: the Episcopal and Methodist denominations

2. The Presbyterian form recognizes two classes of elders—preaching elders and ruling elders. The authority in this form of government is in the "Session" which is composed of the pastor and ruling elders of the local congregation. They transact the business of the church, receiving and dismissing members, etc. An appeal, however, can be made to the Presbytery, and from the Presbytery to the Synod, and from the Synod to the General Assembly.

3. The Congregational or Democratic form of church government is the Scriptural form. This means that each local congregation or assembly is a little democracy under the rule of Christ. "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Eph. 5:24). It is independent of every other congregation. From the divine side, the church of Christ is a monarchy with Christ as its Lord and Head (Eph. 5:24); from its human side it is a democracy, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren...Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:8,10). An absolute monarchy on its Divine side requires for its complement on the human side and absolute democracy.

## **THE DEMOCRATIC FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT PROVED**

1. It may be argued from the very word *ekklesia*, which was chosen by Christ to designate His churches. The word designates something that can assemble. A world church or a national or a provincial church could not assemble under present conditions. Like the Greek cities, each assembly is



independent and therefore complete in itself as to government of itself.

2. The whole matter of discipline, formative and corrective, was committed by Christ through the apostles to each individual church, and not to church officers or to a higher body. I Cor. 5; "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations" (Rom. 14:1); "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom 16:17); "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6); "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17).

3. It is the duty of the whole church to maintain unity in its faith and practice. "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16); "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10); "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3); "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil 1:27). A. H. Strong says: "A quiet and peaceful unity is the result of the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts of Christians. New Testament church government proceeds upon the supposition that Christ dwells in all believers. Baptist polity is the best polity for good people. Christ has made no provision for an

unregenerate church membership, and for Satanic possession of Christians. It is best that a church in which Christ does not dwell should by dissension, reveals its weakness, and fall to pieces; and any outward organization that conceals inward disintegration, and compels a merely formal union after He has departed, is a hindrance instead of a help to true religion." These are plain words and our hearts should be exercised by them. There is much outward union today, where there is no unity of the Spirit in the faith.

## **OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

There are only two commissioned officers in a New Testament Church, namely, pastor and deacon. The pastor is also known as bishop, and elder. Bishop, meaning overseer, denotes the duties, and elder, the rank of office. Bishop and elder are equivalent terms. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre" (Titus 1:5-7). When the church is looked at as a flock of sheep, the bishop is called pastor or feeder of the sheep.

The deacons are to be helpers to the pastor. Their official duties consist primarily, if not exclusively, of looking after temporal and material needs of the body, such as feeding the poor, financing the church, etc. The pastor is to be free from temporal and secular matters that he may give himself to that which is exclusively spiritual, prayer and the ministry of the word. He is to teach and, therefore, must give himself to study. He must be "apt to teach". "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach" (I Tim. 3:2); "And

the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (II Tim. 2:24). In order to have something to teach he must study. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). The members must support him with their carnal things. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6); "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?... Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" ( I Cor. 9:11,14).

Deacons ought to be men of spiritual power, for they are to handle the money of the church: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre" (I Tim. 3:8). They are to be sound in the faith, for they are to support the pastor when he preaches the truth. Much criticism of the pastor could be silenced, when he preaches on unpopular doctrines, if the deacons, "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (I Tim. 3:9) would give their support. Next to the pastor, the deacon need to be learned men in the once delivered faith.

## CHAPTER V

# CHURCH HISTORY

What is known and taught as Church History is in reality history of Christianity rather than a history of the church Christ founded and promised perpetuity to. History reveals that the true Church as an institution was represented by local congregations as opposed by a developing and growing hierarchy until the bishop of Rome is made Pope or Supreme Bishop. This hierarchy is made up of the collective body of bishops with the pope as supreme bishop. This hierarchy is independent of the lay members in Roman Catholic churches who are nothing short of spiritual slaves being told what to believe and do. This false church claimed to be the only mediator of grace, and to cut oneself off from it was to lose all hope of salvation. The first general organizations were diocesan (district).

Things became so rotten in Roman Catholicism until some of the members could stand it no longer and being excommunicated became founders of other denominations of Christians. This period began in the reformation under Martin Luther, when Protestantism was born. The Lutheran Church was organized in 1520; the Episcopal (Church of England) began with Henry VIII in 1534; the Presbyterian by John Calvin in 1535; Dutch Reformed separated from Roman Catholicism in 1540; Congregational founded by Robert Brown in 1580; Methodist by John Wesley in 1740; Free Will Baptist by Benjamin Randall in 1780; Disciples of Christ organized by Alexander Campbell in 1827; Mormons by

Joseph Smith in 1830; Anti Mission Baptists by Daniel Parker in 1832; Nazarenes by S. F. Breece in 1835; Christian Science by Mary Baker Eddy in 1884.

Now the history of Baptists is altogether a different story. If there has been a New Testament church existing down through the ages it has to be the Baptist Church, since all other groups have a beginning sometime since 1520. Our contention is admitted by others. Alexander Campbell, in his debate with McCalla (Presbyterian) had this to say: "From the apostolic age to the present time the sentiments of Baptists and the practice of baptism has had a continued chain of advocates; and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced."

John Clark Ridpath (Methodist) wrote to W. A. Jarrell (Baptist) as follows: "I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist Church as far back as A. D. 100, though without doubt there were Baptists then, as all Christians were then Baptists."

In preparing their history, the Dutch Reformed Church, devoted a chapter to the Dutch Baptists. And in this chapter is this statement: "The Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the apostles and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel through all ages."

## **SOME DISTINCTIVE BELIEFS**

1. The New Testament is the only law of Christianity-the sufficient rule of faith and practice. We do not go to the Old Testament for what we believe and practice as a church. This in no wise means that the Old Testament is not true as the word of God. But we do not get our doctrine as a church from the Old Testament. The Church of Christ is a New Testament

institution. The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants.

2. Individual responsibility. This covers a lot of ground. It does away with proxy religion in baptism, etc. This calls for freedom of conscience and religious liberty. Every person must give account of himself to God. Calls for obedience to God when there is conflict between God's command and human authority. Calls for separation of Church and state. Calls for liberty not toleration. I do not want to be tolerated by the state in religious matters. I want to be left alone, to follow my own conscience. I do not want to have to get any license to preach from any human government. I got a license to marry people because marriage and the home are state institutions, not religious and spiritual.

3. The church is a body of baptized believers, equal in rank and privilege, administering its own affairs under the headship of Christ.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

- A. The Subject: Only a believer (born again).
- B. The Mode: Only by immersion.
- C. The Design: Only to symbolize the burial and resurrection of Christ.
- D. The Authority: Only a church of Jesus Christ.

### **A. THE PROPER SUBJECT**

Baptism is only for believers, and believers are saved or justified. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39); "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31); "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1), "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9). This excludes unregenerate adults and all infants. A Jesuit Theologian, S. J. Hunter, said:

"It is impossible for infant baptism to be discussed directly between a Catholic and a Baptist. They have no common ground. The Baptist urges that the scriptures everywhere teach faith as a prerequisite to baptism. The Catholic defends his practice as to infants by the authority of the Church, which the Baptist refuse to accept." (Outline of Dogmatic Theology Vol. 3, page 222.)

## ARGUMENT:

1. To baptize any but believers is to accept Catholic authority rather than Scriptural authority. The Scriptures nowhere command baptism for any but believers. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19); "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41); "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12); "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" Acts 18:8); "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts 19:4).

2. To baptize infants destroys the privilege of personal obedience to the command to be baptized. There can be no personal obedience on the part of an infant when it is immersed or sprinkled.

3. To baptize infants or unregenerate adults is to merge the church and the world. It is filling the church with the world. Infants have no personal responsibility and are not lost and need no so-called saving rite of baptism.



4. To baptize any but the saved is to deny that the church should be composed of only lovers of God and of Christ. Think of having enemies of Christ in the church which is His body, and the custodian of His truth. And nobody loves God except the born again believers. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7); "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1). In these two verses the perfect tense should read-"has been born of God." Love and faith are results of the new birth from God.

## **B. THE PROPER MODE**

Baptism is to be by immersion only.

### **ARGUMENT:**

1. From the meaning of the word baptize. Greek scholars are in agreement that the word means to dip, immerse.

2. From the "Church Fathers." Cyril 315-386 A. D. Bishop of Jerusalem: "For as he who sinks down in the waters and is immersed (baptized)...." Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, 370 A. D. "Imitating the burial of Christ by the immersion (baptism)...." Gregory, Bishop of Constantinople, 380 A.D.: "Let us, therefore, be buried with Christ by the immersion (baptism) that we may also rise with Him...."

3. From the admissions of those who do not now immerse. D. Dollinger, a Roman Catholic historian: "At first Christian baptism commonly took place in the Jordan; of course, as the church spread more widely, in private houses also. Like that of St. John, it was by immersion of the whole person, which is the only meaning of the New Testament word. A mere pouring

or sprinkling was never thought of." (The First age of Christianity and the church, page 324-325). Mr. Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, in his comment on Rom. 6:4, 5 admits that the reference is to immersion as the primitive mode of baptism. The Catholic Encyclopedia: "The most ancient form usually employed was unquestionably immersion.... In the Latin Church immersion seems to have prevailed until the twelfth century. After that time it was found in some places even as late as the 16th century.." (See The Catholic Encyclopedia, in 15th vol., edited by Charles G. Herberan, Ph.D., LL.D., pages 261, 262). Prof. Marcus Dods, Edinburgh explained baptism as "a rite wherein by immersion of water the participant symbolizes and signalizes his transition from an impure to a pure life, his death to a past he abandons, and his birth to a future he desires."

4. From the practice of the early church. The first instance of baptism by any other mode than immersion was about the middle of the third century. A man named Novatian was ill and was baptized by having water poured around him. The first public (official) authority for sprinkling was given about 811 A.D. by Pope Steven II. Some of the French clergy informed the pope that there were some too sick and some too small to be immersed and asked for permission to sprinkle them. The pope replied, "If such were cases of necessity, and if sprinkling were performed in the Name of the Trinity, it should be valid." At the Council of Ravenna in 1311, the Roman Church decreed: "Baptism is to be administered by triune aspersion (sprinkling, CDC) or immersion."

The Westminster (Presbyterian) Assembly met in 1643 to compose a Confession of Faith. Baptism was hotly discussed; 24 voted to retain immersion; 25 voted for sprinkling or pouring.

5. From the New Testament metaphor by which baptism is represented. It is called a burial and a resurrection. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4); "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12).

### **C. THE SCRIPTURAL DESIGN**

On this point there are two views of baptism: The sacramental and the symbolic. The sacramental makes baptism a saving sacrament; it is to confer grace. The symbolic declares that grace has already been conferred. One makes baptism essential to regeneration and remission of sins; the other makes it a symbol or figure of what saves, even the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

W. M. Nevins says, "The design in Baptist Churches is not in order to obtain the remission of sins. It is not a means of grace. It is not in order to obtain regeneration. It has nothing to do with our salvation. It is a picture showing forth the gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and signifies that the one baptized is dead to the old life of sin and risen to a new life in Christ."

The author states his view of baptism as a symbol in a somewhat different way to most of his brethren. To him it is not a symbol of regeneration but of justification. It symbolizes the believer's death to the guilt and penalty of sin; and the Bible word that denotes this judicial death is justification rather than regeneration. Rom. 6:7 says, "For he that is dead is freed (justified) from sin." This is judicial death and not death in the experimental sense. Regeneration is not the Bible word used to denote death to sin. Regeneration does kill the sinner to the

love of sin, but not to the experience of sin. Regeneration is the putting of the divine nature within, but it does not remove the old nature. The new birth makes one more sensitive to sin; it does not kill him to the sense of sin.

## **D. THE SCRIPTURAL ADMINISTRATOR OF BAPTISM**

Who is to authorize the believer's baptism? This question reverts back to the question to whom or to what was the commission given? It was given to something, an institution that would be perpetuated until the end of the age. It was spoken to the apostles, not as individuals but as representatives of the church. And so the church is to make disciples, baptize disciples, and teach disciples what God has commanded to be observed or practiced. The believer must be received by the church; he unites with and his baptism must be authorized by the same church.

Only a church of Christ--a Scriptural church can execute the commission to baptize. And so every group of Christians must prove itself to be a Scripturally constituted church before it can Scripturally execute Christ's command.

Until the time of the reformation beginning with Luther, there were widely scattered churches, each a little democracy in contrast to the Roman hierarchy with a human head. These scattered churches were called Anabaptists because they insisted on baptizing all who came to them from the Roman hierarchy. The name Anabaptists was applied to them because they were charged with rebaptizing those who came to them from Rome. They rejected the name and claimed that those they baptized had never been baptized. The early conflict was not over the mode of baptism because the Roman Catholic hierarchy immersed for several centuries. The issue was over the authority to baptize. None but a Scriptural Church has authority to baptize, for the command to

baptize was given to the church that would be in existence from the days of Christ to the end of the age. The strongest argument that Baptist Churches represent the institution to whom the commission was given is the witness or testimony of those who are not Baptists.

Mosheim, the Lutheran historian writes: "The true origin of that sect which acquired the name of Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion, is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, and is, consequently, extremely difficult to be ascertained." The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge has his to say: "The Baptist's, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mednonnites, were the original Waldenses, and have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin." On this account, the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the apostle's, and which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all the ages."

Greek word for sprinkling: Rhantizo: I Peter 1:2 "of the blood of Jesus" Hebrews 12:24; "blood of sprinkling" Hebrews 10:22; "hearts sprinkled... and bodies washed in pure water."

THE DIDACHE: An ancient Christian document, referred to as the "Teaching of the twelve Apostles," written in Greek and dealing with the organization, belief, and worship in the early church. Its date is probably between 120 and 150 A.D. and is thought to have originated in Egypt or Syria. It was found in 1873 in an 11th century manuscript in the Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre in Istanbul.

Composed of two parts: 1. A description of the Two Ways, one of life, the other death, in the form of rules for Christian conduct. 2. Deals with the rites of baptism and Lord's Supper and defines the office and duties of Christian leaders.

The Didache; Here for the first time pouring (Greek-ekcneo) is used for baptism (baptizo). We give the translation by Philip Schaff, a Presbyterian: "Now concerning baptism, baptize thus: Having first taught all these things, baptize ye into (eis) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, in living water, and if thou hast not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm (water). But if thou hast neither, pour water thrice upon the head in (eis) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Analysis: This is actually saying, baptize (immerse) in any kind of water; living, cold or warm, but if this is impossible because lack of sufficient water, then ekcheo (pour) water three times upon the head in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It is actually saying if you can't baptize in water then pour water on the head. Here we have the first error in baptism which was in the design resulting in a change in mode. Because it was thought that water had power to regenerate it had to be applied in some way to the individual. It is not known who wrote this ancient document. Baptizo is the Greek word for baptism and is never used for anything but immersion. Ekcheo is never used for baptism.

## CHAPTER VII

# FOOTWASHING NOT A CHURCH ORDINANCE

SHOULD WE WASH FEET IN THE CHURCH? Many sincere Christians think so. And they point you to the words of Jesus: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:14-15).

The writer faced this question early in his ministry, and decided that if the scriptures taught that we should wash feet as a church ordinance, he would urge his church to do so. I make no claim to infallibility or personal perfection, but I am sensitive to the commands of scripture, and have a heavy conscience when I realize that I have ignored any portion of scripture.

A. AFTER A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, I REACHED THE POSITIVE CONCLUSION THAT JESUS DID NOT COMMAND US TO WASH FEET IN THE CHURCH.

Here is my ARGUMENT:

1. There is no mention of footwashing in any of the church epistles, such as Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, etc. The church epistles were written to regulate the faith and practice of the church. There is ample instruction

concerning baptism and the Lord's Supper in the church letters, and one would judge that if footwashing was to be observed as an ordinance, there would be some instruction concerning the when and how it is to be observed.

2. Footwashing was to be practiced in the home and not in the church. The one other place where the washing of feet is mentioned in the New Testament is I Tim. 5:9 "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." The early church took care of its poor, especially the widows. And to guard against abuse there were conditions under which church support was to be given. In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul said they were not to feed the man who is too lazy to work. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thess. 3:10). And so widows were not to be supported unless they had a record of good works, some of which are enumerated, including the washing of saints feet. Any honest reader will admit that the good works mentioned were to be done in the home, and not as a church ordinance.

3. Footwashing was to be an act of humble service. One must get on his knees to wash another's feet. But no service is rendered when feet are washed at church. The writer used to go with his father (a very godly man whose memory is cherished) to his church on Footwashing Day. And he observed that his father always washed his own feet before leaving the house for church. His feet were not dirty and no service was rendered by the brother who washed his feet. But in olden times when sandals were worn it was a deed of lowly service to wash the feet of a guest.



If anyone who believes in footwashing as an ordinance to be observed in church, that it is an act of humility to show how humble one is, our reply to that is, that humility is a grace that cannot be paraded, and to attempt to show off humility is spiritual pride; pride of the worst kind.

The writer recalls an incident of many years ago. Bro. Jeff Rogers was a humble country preacher who looked more like a Kentucky colonel, or the proverbial Philadelphia lawyer. Bro. Rogers loved horses and one day as he was riding his favorite steed down the road, he met his neighbor on horseback. They stopped for a friendly chat, and after awhile the conversation was about religion. Finally, the neighbor said, "Bro. Rogers you are not a very humble man, are you?" Bro. Rogers dropped his head and replied, "No, I am not as humble as I ought to be. But I suppose you are a very humble man?" And the neighbor, lifting himself up in the saddle, said, "Yes I am, and I show it!" referring to the fact that he practiced footwashing at church.

4. Footwashing is not needed as a church ordinance. The purpose of the ordinances is to symbolize the gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Baptism presupposes His death and symbolizes His burial and resurrection. The Lord's Supper symbolizes and proclaims His death at Calvary. Footwashing does not give us a picture of Calvary. Moreover, it is not needed since baptism and the Lord's Supper give us a full picture of the gospel facts: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

## B. THE FOOTWASHING EPISODE EXAMINED AND EXPLAINED

1. The Occasion. We can do no better than to quote from Halley's Bible Handbook. "This was occasioned by their contention among themselves as to which of them were to have the chief offices in the Kingdom. That had been one of

their standing problems, "Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:46-48). In spite of Jesus repeated statements that He was going to be crucified, "And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him" (Mark 9:30-32), on which they somehow, even to the last, took to be parables. They seemed to think that the Triumphal Entry, five days before, portended that it was about time for Him to erect the throne of a world empire in Jerusalem. Jesus finally had to get down on His hands and knees and wash their feet, the menial service of a slave, to burn into their minds that He had called them to serve, and not to rule."

2. The Conversation. After it became apparent that none of the disciples was going to perform the menial service of washing their feet, Jesus gets up from supper, laid aside His garments, and girded Himself with a towel. "After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel...Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter protested this act of humble service and said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Still ignorant of what Jesus was teaching, Peter goes to the opposite extreme and says, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus

corrects him by saying. "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash (a different word) his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all" (John 13:5-11). Here Jesus reminds Peter that when one has had a bath he will not need another bath so soon but will only need to have his feet washed. And then Jesus says that all of them had had a bath save Judas.

It is evident from this dialogue, that Jesus was teaching something more than a lesson in humility. We may think of this episode as an illustrated lecture on spiritual footwashing. When it was over, Jesus returned to the table and "said unto them Know ye what I have done to you?" (Verse 12). They certainly knew that He had done them a menial service, but they did not get the spiritual meaning of what He had done. He then goes on to say, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (Verses 14-15).

### 3. Lessons To Be Learned.

a. A lesson On Humility. He set them an example of lowly service to one another. We follow this example when we are willing to render humble service to one another. The writer is reminded of an experience he had several years ago. He was conducting a revival meeting and being entertained in a certain home. One night after he retired, some member of the family came and took his shoes and polished them and returned them. He never found out who did it, but whoever did it was following the example Jesus gave. That was a deed of humble service, for my shoes needed a shine. But there is a deeper lesson than this.

b. A Lesson In Spiritual Cleansing. Peter was going to deny Jesus and would need to be restored before he could have part WITH Christ in blessing to others. It was not a question of

salvation but of service. Peter did not lose his salvation, but he lost fellowship with Christ in service. Peter did not get the spiritual meaning of the incident at the time, but Jesus said that he would understand it later. And now we are to see Peter as he gets the deeper meaning.

Our Lord's prediction that Peter would deny Him had come true. "Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (John 13:38). Jesus had been denied by Peter (a saved man), betrayed by Judas (a lost man), and crucified. The disciples had returned to their nets, thinking their cause was lost through the death of their Master. But Jesus is alive and will fulfill His promise to Peter. Jesus had risen from the dead and appeared to the disciples after they had fished all night and caught nothing. Jesus tells them where to cast the net, resulting in a large catch. Then He serves them, giving them bread and fish. Now it was time to wash Peter's feet in the true spiritual sense. Behold how He does it.

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (the strong word) thou me more than these? Simon answered He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (weaker word) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (strong word) thou me? Peter replies He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (weaker word) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (Peter's weaker word) thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest (weaker word) thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love (weaker word) thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (John 21:15-17).

And now Peter's feet are washed; he is restored to fellowship with his Lord in service. He now has a part WITH Christ. Peter was no longer a boaster; he had learned that he did not love Christ as he had boasted. But he does stick to his claim to love Jesus a little. And this is all the writer can claim, and like Peter he insists that he loves Jesus a little. His prayer is that he may love Him more, even with a dying love.

Jesus told His disciples to wash one another's feet. This, too, has a double application: physical and spiritual. We should follow His example in stooping to serve our brethren in their physical and material needs. And we should also serve them in spiritual things. In Gal. 6:1 we are told how to do it. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Here we have spiritual footwashing.

If a brother is caught in some sin, it is our duty to restore him. We must wash his feet, provided our own feet are clean. A sinning brother must not be left in his sins. He must not be neglected on the one hand nor dealt with harshly on the other hand. He must be brought to face his sin, repent of and turn from it. He must not be dealt with in a holier than thou spirit, but in meekness, remembering that we, too, might be tempted and fall into sin. There are two difficulties in restoring a sinning brother. It is often difficult to get the sinning brother to acknowledge his wrong doing. It is also difficult to get the one who attempts the restoration to do it in a spirit of humility.

### C. THE HISTORY OF FOOTWASHING AS AN ORDINANCE.

It is sincerely believed by many that footing as an ordinance is an ancient practice. History seems to disprove this.  
ARGUMENT:

1. From Church History. Dr. E. J. Daniels, Florida evangelist, has searched here and there for information on the custom of footwashing, and found that footwashing was not practiced by any group of Christians prior to the fourth century. He quotes from the fourteenth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, and also from Dr. A. H. Newman's Manual of Church History.

2. Confessions of Faith. The Philadelphia Confession (1742) based upon the London Confession (1689) makes no mention of footwashing. Nor do we know of any old confessions of faith that speaks of footwashing as a church ordinance.

The Bible is not much concerned about people's feet in the physical sense. Feet are used in the Bible to represent moral conduct. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Ps. 1:1). "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." (Ps. 37:23). "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15).

There are many dirty feet among God's children, and so few who ever make any effort to wash them. God has made provision for sinning saints, and so we read, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1: 8-9).

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE LORD'S SUPPER

I Cor. 11:17-34

The old covenant religion of the Old Testament was characterized by ritual or ceremonies and the priest was the important person in worship. He offered sacrifices for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. These ceremonies were typical. They found their end and fulfillment in Christ when He offered one sacrifice never to be repeated. This made them of a temporary nature.

The new covenant religion of the New Testament has only two ceremonies or ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These, are not sacraments of saving efficacy, but symbols of what does save. Together they give us a picture of the whole gospel. Paul defines the, gospel as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3-4). Baptism is a picture or symbol of the burial and resurrection of Christ and the Lord's Supper sets forth His death. Baptism takes us to the place where Christ was buried and arose again. The Lord's Supper takes us to Calvary where He died for OUR sins. Baptism tells us what we are in Christ; dead to sin and alive unto God through Christ. As a burial, baptism presupposes the believer to be dead and alive. Baptism is for a dead person.

We have met as a church, to observe the Lord's Supper. We should be as Scriptural as possible; and to do this, we shall ask three questions: 1. What is it? 2. Why should we observe it? 3. How should we observe it?

## **A. WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?**

1. It is a memorial service. It is to be observed in memory of Christ. This implies His absence from us. We never hold a service in remembrance of someone who is still in our midst. Christ is present with us in the Holy Spirit, but not in person. While alive, He instituted the Lord's Supper as a means of remembering Him after He was gone.

2. It is a church ordinance a church act. There is no example of the Lord's Supper being observed by an individual or in a private home by the family. Christ is one bread or loaf and the church that observes the Lord's Supper is one body. At Corinth it was observed individually, or, in groups for gratification of appetite and resulted in some being drunk and others hungry. Paul says tarry one for another-wait until all members are present. Do not make a common meal of it.

Thinking of it as a church ordinance, we might ask; Who is to come to the table? Is it for everybody or are there restrictions? In one sense it is for everybody-nobody is barred. But there are certain steps to be taken in coming to the table.

(1) One must be saved. He must come to Christ before coming to His table.

(2) One must be a baptized believer. Baptism is the initial ordinance to be observed only once; Lord's Supper is the recurring ordinance to be repeated again and again. No differences among denominations on this question.



(3) One must be a church member. The believers at Corinth were members of the church there and as such were told to wait for one another.

(4) There must be self examination. We will consider what this is later on.

## **B. WHY SHOULD WE OBSERVE IT?**

Because Christ commanded it. Why did he command it? As a way of helping us remember His death. Paul said: "ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (I Cor. 11:26) The word for "shew" here is translated "preach" 10 times, "declare", 2 times and "show" 3 times. It is a sort of visual aid-a picture of Christ's death to the eyes.

As a mother might tell her children to meet at her grave to commemorate her sacrificial toll for them, so Christ bids His people to meet to commemorate His dying love for them.

## **C. HOW SHOULD WE OBSERVE IT?**

We are not left in the dark about how to observe the Supper.

1. It must be observed worthily, that is, in a worthy manner. It is not a question of personal worthiness, or else none could come to the Lord's table. It is not to honor ourselves as if we were worthy. It is to honor Him, Who is altogether worthy.

2. Now what is the worthy manner of observing it? There must be the exercise of three faculties: memory, faith, and hope.

1. Memory must work. Memory looks back. We must remember Christ; not father, mother, wife, brother, sister or any other person. We must look back to Christ dying on Calvary. He said, "This do in remembrance of me" (I Cor

11:24). We must do this to show His death. We are taken to think of Christ as a baby in the manger, or as going about doing good. We are to think of Him as He hung on the cross.

2. Faith must be exercised. What does faith do? It discerns His body. By faith we commune or participate in His broken body and shed blood. We do not have His actual body and blood, but only the emblems of them and we are symbolizing our faith in His death for our salvation. Just as eating is appropriating food for our body, so faith is an act of appropriating the benefits of His death. We symbolically appropriate or eat the emblems of His body and blood and thus declare our faith in what He did for us at Calvary.

3. Hope must be exercised. We show His death till He comes. He is absent now. The Romanist insists that the real body and blood of Christ are in the elements, "That by and at the consecration of the elements they are changed into the real body and blood of Christ; and that it is bread and wine only in appearance." What a travesty of the truth! Paul taught the very opposite. He said, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor 11:26). Paul says we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, emblems of His body and blood.

Communion is a much misunderstood word. We are talking about communing with one another. It is not communing with one another but with Christ. Dr. Bob: "It is a spiritual participation in the blood of Christ which is symbolized by the cup." While He is away we show our faith in His death by eating and drinking the elements that represent His body and blood.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

This is an important question and one upon which there is much disagreement. It is a question that needs to be prayerfully studied. I sincerely believe that the churches, generally speaking, in their cooperative work have become sidetracked. And the sidetrack leads into the wilderness of debt and confusion. As a result, the by products of Christianity have become the main thing. I am afraid that we have been seeking prestige with the world rather than power with God.

### **A. SOURCES OF INFORMATION.**

1. The Commissions of Christ. Christ told his people what they were to do while He was here. This ought to be of great help in defining our mission in a church capacity. These commissions are of two kinds. One kind is of a temporary character; the other is of perpetual obligation.

1. The temporary commissions.

a. The first commission to the twelve. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:36-38); Read also Matt. 10:1-42; Mark 3:13-19; 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6. This commission was limited to the

Jews. "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5,6). "It gave miraculous power to heal and to cast out evil spirits. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8). It provided for Spirit guidance in speech.

b. The commission to the seventy. Luke 10:1-24. The same provisions as in the commission to the twelve. Both were of a temporary nature.

2. The great and perpetual missionary commission to the apostles in church capacity. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:16-20). This is the commission under which the church is to work until the end of the age. It provides for a perpetual church; for a perpetual gospel; for perpetual ordinances; for a perpetual task; and for His perpetual presence.

3. The practice of the early church under the instruction of the apostles.

## **B. THE CHURCH HAS A FIVE POINT PROGRAM.**

1. The Missionary Program. The church is to perpetuate itself by making disciples. There can be no church perpetuity apart

from missionary activity. Disciples can only be made by preaching the gospel. Without missionary endeavor churches are limited to a single generation. Disciples are to be made to the end of the age, and the making of disciples guarantees church perpetuity.

2. The Teaching Program. The church is to edify itself. This means the teaching of the Word of God, for it is teaching the disciples to observe all things commanded by Christ. No place for secular education either in the great commission or in the practice of the early church. The church is not responsible for the education of the world, but for the education of the saints in the Word of God.

3. The Ceremonial Program. The church is to guard the ordinances. The preservation of these ordinances in their original purity and simplicity will help to preserve the gospel in its purity. The perversion of the gospel had its beginning in the perversion of the ordinances. When men began to trifle with the ordinances the true gospel was perverted.

4. The Benevolent Program. The church is to care for its poor. The church at Jerusalem took steps to take care of its poor widows. Paul took offerings on the mission field for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

5. The Disciplinary Program. The church is to regulate itself. It is to keep itself pure and chaste by disciplinary measures. Christ gave the church the discipline commission in "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18). Paul commanded the church at Corinth to exclude the man guilty of incest. "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:13). He commanded the church at Thessalonica, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye

withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6).

### **C. SOME THINGS THE CHURCH HAS NOT BEEN COMMISSIONED TO DO AND FOR WHICH THERE IS NO NEW TESTAMENT PRECEDENT.**

1. It is not the duty of the church as such to reform the world. Christ and the apostles were not reformers in the modern sense of that term. The church is not a world betterment society, but a missionary society with regenerating power. This power is in the preaching of the gospel in power and demonstration of the Spirit.

2. It is not the duty of the church to feed the world. The church is not commanded to look after the material interests of the world. Of course, as individual Christians, we should do good to all men, and relieve suffering wherever we come in contact with it. But to enter into an organized capacity looking to the material welfare of the world is to become sidetracked. No Scriptural command nor example for taking part in indiscriminate relief campaigns, such as are being put on from time to time. Paul took up a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. 3. It is not the duty of the church to educate the world. Here is a task beyond the power of the church. To the extent that the church joins in secular education to the same extent she loses her spiritual power. Secular education is an individual and state matter and not a work committed into the hands of the church, which is a spiritual institution. Schools have crippled the missionary program of Baptists as no other one thing has.

4. It is not the duty of the church to furnish lucrative positions for men and women. That is what the Baptists are doing as a denomination. The army of executives and secretaries and

statistical and enlistment experts supported by so-called mission money is alarming.

5. It is not the duty of the church to provide entertainment for the world. Much of our organized work is in that direction. The wife of the pastor of one of my previous pastorates was putting on a swimming party for the young people at Disneyland. She told them she could not do it at home, for the former pastor had taught them that it is wrong.

6. It is not the duty of the church as such to build hospitals. This is a by product of Christianity, and may be done by individuals in a purely voluntary capacity, but to make it the program of all the saints is to become sidetracked. This is a work that can be and is being done by men who are not Christians. But the main task of the church is to do that which nobody else can do, namely to preach the gospel of Christ to the uttermost part of the earth.

# CHAPTER X

## THE CHURCH'S PENTECOST

### ACTS 1 & 2

Introduction: Acts is to the gospels what fruit is to the tree. In the gospels we see the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying; in Acts we see it bringing forth much fruit. In the gospels we see the sufferings of our Lord; in Acts we see the glory that should follow according to "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Peter 1:11). In the gospels we see our blessed Savior in His humiliation; in Acts we see Him in His exaltation. In the gospels we see Him on the earth; in Acts we see Him enjoying the fruit of His labors. In the gospels we see Him on a cross; in Acts we see Him on a throne. In the gospels we see Him purchasing the church with His own blood; in Acts we see the church in actual existence, first among the Jews and then among the surrounding Gentiles, sweeping militantly from Jerusalem to Rome. In the gospels we have the worldwide commission from the lips of our Lord; in Acts we have the execution of that mission.

Acts is the historical book of the New Testament. Luke writes as a historian and not as a theologian. We have in Acts the first church of church history. The book of Acts covers about thirty two years and in that time the gospel went from Jerusalem to Rome. Here is ample evidence that the church of Jesus Christ is a missionary institution. The primary



business of the church is to witness unto Christ around the world, and the church that is not engaged in that business has no business in the world and is a cumberer of the ground. The church that does not have missions on its heart has the death rattle in its throat.

In Acts 1 & 2 we have the church's Pentecost: it is the church endowed with power to witness by receiving the Holy Spirit.  
NOTICE:

## **A. PREPARATION FOR PENTECOST**

1. For ten days the Lord was absent from the church. He had ascended to heaven. The church was helpless upon the earth. The resurrection had been fully proven. All believers believed Christ to be alive and enthroned in heaven.

2. There was a waiting group of one hundred twenty believers in Jerusalem. We know who they were: eleven apostles, the four brothers of Jesus, a number of unnamed women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and others whose names we do not know.

3. Consider the place of meeting. It is usually thought that these one hundred twenty were in the upper room somewhere in the city of Jerusalem. This idea is based upon the fact that when the apostles witnessed the ascension of the Lord to heaven that they returned from Olivet to Jerusalem and "went up into an upper room" (Acts 1:13). But it is my belief that they were in the temple. Luke closes his gospel with an account of the ascension Luke 24:5-53. Then in Acts 2:46 we read: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." So these Scriptures would indicate that the waiting company was in the temple. It is difficult for us to realize what a huge building the temple of

Herod was. Eidersheim says that the temple area would accommodate more than two hundred thousand people. There were many rooms and Solomon's porch with its many colonades furnished many places for gatherings. Christ often preached in the temple and in Solomon's porch where there were many benches where people could rest when there was a recess from the ritual of the day. That is the picture that I see of the ten days waiting. One can hardly see how the one hundred twenty could have been in an upper room and receiving three thousand additions in one day.

4. Next consider what they were doing. There was not much they could do.

(1) They prayed. They could not preach, although surrounded by many thousands of Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. They must have been praying for God to send the Holy Spirit He had promised.

(2) They held a business meeting. Peter took the initiative. He quoted Scriptures about Judas and his successor: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Ps. 41:9); "Let his days be few; and let another take his office" (Ps. 109:8). He used these to justify his suggestion that they elect a successor to Judas. Peter then reminded them of the qualifications of an apostle, he must have been with them since the days of John's baptism and also be a witness of the resurrection of Christ. Two qualified men were nominated: Joseph, and Matthias. They chose by lot and the lot fell on Matthias. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (Prov. 16:33). Morgan thinks all this was out of order and not in the will of God; that Paul was the successor to Judas. I cannot go along with that idea. Paul was not one of the original twelve and did not take the place of

Judas. Paul was the special apostle to the Gentiles and was qualified and chosen by Christ at the time of his conversion.

## **B. THE PHENOMENA OF PENTECOST**

1. Two physical signs of the Spirits coming, one to the ear and the other to the eye. "Sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind...and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:2-3). Symbols of the power of the Holy Spirit. Power like that of wind and speech suggested by tongues were for their witnessing under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak in tongues or languages they had never learned by studying, they spoke as the Spirit gave utterance. All was a demonstration of the Power of the Holy Spirit.

2. The sensation in the city was great. A great crowd came to the scene and was amazed to see Galileans speak in their tongue. How is it that we hear and understand what is said? How is this to be explained? Some said these men are drunk.

## **C. PETER'S EXPLANATION**

1. Too early to be drunk third hour of the day or 9:00.

2. Peter finds explanation of this phenomena in "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:28,29). Joel was speaking about the Holy Spirit and this is what you have seen. This is that Holy Spirit of which Joel was prophesying. Joel 2:28-32. Peter then quotes Psalm 16:10 where David says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (Hades) neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." David could not have

been speaking of himself, for he is dead and buried and we know where his grave is. He was speaking as a prophet and his prophecy has been fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter then quotes Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And so Peter says that all this means that Jesus is alive and has shed forth what you have seen and heard. Peter accuses the Jews of crucifying their Messiah and says that God had raised him from the dead.

You say these men are drunk; I say they are filled with the Holy Spirit. You say Jesus of Nazareth is still dead; I say he is alive, the living Christ is the explanation of what you have seen and heard this day. Peter is now preaching to the throng of unbelieving Jews and he presses his point. He preaches for conviction. He has them on the run and will pursue them relentlessly. He has not said a word of comfort thus far. They must be converted of their sin in putting Christ to death before they are ready for any message of comfort. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

They had been convicted of their awful sin; of their awful mistake, they now realized they had crucified the Lord of glory. And their question is: Is there any way out of the trouble we are in? Is there anything we can do about what we have done? And Peter says, yes, there is something you can do about it. You can reverse your attitude, you can change your mind or way of thinking about Jesus. And you can show you have changed your mind or attitude by being baptized.

The verb here for repent is plural; all were told to repent and each one who repented was to be baptized for (eis) the

remission of sins. And they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

# CHAPTER XI

## TESTED IN FELLOWSHIP

ACTS 2:42 - 5:42

Introduction: The early church was a fellowship as well as a school. The members continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

As a fellowship they had all things common. This was an inspired fellowship, nothing political or legislative about it. It was voluntary and not compulsory. They were so knit together as one soul that they said nothing they had was their own. Those who had property sold it and put the proceeds into a common fund. Nothing was taken from anybody. Out of this common fund distribution was made according to the needs of the members.

This was a voluntary and temporary measure to meet the present emergency. This fellowship was tested. It resulted in tragedy as well as victory. Barnabas sold his property on the island of Cyprus and put the proceeds into this common fund. This large gift was the envy of Ananias and wife Sapphira. They had some property and they wanted honor, but they did not want it to cost them too much. They conferred and agreed to sell the property and keep part of the price, but leave the impression that they were giving all. That seemed innocent, but it wasn't that easy, they had to say out right that what they gave was all it brought. Peter asked the embarrassing

question. As Ananias made his offering, Peter asked, "Is that all the land brought?" Then Peter went into action: "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price?" (Acts 5:3). It was yours. You did not have to sell and when you sold it you did not have to bring all of it or any of it; but you lied unto the Holy Ghost when you planned to leave the wrong impression. Ananias had heart failure and died on the spot. Fear spread through the crowd as young men took his body to the cemetery. Sapphira came in and was asked by Peter the same question: "Did you sell the land for so much, naming the amount they gave?" She said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter brought the indictment and made the announcement that the young men were coming for her body. She was so frightened that she dropped dead at his feet, and the young men made another trip to the cemetery and buried her by the side of her husband.

All this checked the rush to join the church, but it also resulted in more believers being added to the Lord. The people magnified them. The church had the respect and confidence of the people. They brought their sick into the streets in the hope that the shadow of Peter might fall on them. They were having a great time in their healing services.

But all this aroused the ire of the Sadducees. The high priest and other members of his party had the apostles arrested and jailed. But the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and sent them back into the temple to preach Jesus. They got there early next morning. The high priest called the Sanhedrin court into session and sent officers for the prisoners. The officers came and found they were not in prison and went back with this report. We found the prison shut and guards at their places, but no prisoners inside. This threw the court into a panic and they could see no way to stop the movement. While they were expressing their fears, a reporter came and

said "Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people" (Acts 5:25).

The temple police went and brought the apostles without violence for they feared the people. The prisoners were placed before the council and questioned. The high priest asked them if they had not been charged not to teach in the name of Jesus. Peter replied, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). They preached Jesus to the court and charged them with murder of Jesus whom God raised up. The court was cut to the heart and took counsel to slay them. They were saved temporarily by Gamaliel, a pharisee who was a member of the court. He offered wordly wisdom.

## **ZEALOUS IN WITNESSING**

Acts 6:1 thru 8:40

This section begins with a crisis resulting from the community of goods. There were two social classes in the church: The home-born Jews and the foreign-born Jews who were called Grecians or Hellenists. They spoke the Greek language and were not so narrow as the Jerusalem Jews. The Grecians had a complaint. They murmured that their widows were not getting their share in the daily ministrations.

The twelve called a meeting of the church and had full discussion of the matter. They neither confessed nor denied the charge. But they said, We need a division of labor. It doesn't make sense for us to serve tables, minister to the poor; our job is to minister the word and pray. "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business...And the saying pleased the whole multitude and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, Prochorus and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and



Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:" (Acts 6:3,5). Apostles have set an example for preachers of all ages.

Two of these men whom we think of as deacons soon became prominent, not in serving tables, but in witnessing. Stephen became a martyr and Philip a foreign missionary.

Stephen did great wonders and miracles. He was soon opposed by the members of a certain synagogue to which he also probably belonged. They were not able to meet him in debate. He was too much for them. They got somebody to accuse him of blaspheming Moses and God. So they brought him into court and had false witnesses who said they had heard him continually blaspheme against the temple and the law. "We have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (Acts 6:14).

But as the court looked at Stephen they saw a face that looked like an angel. The high priest asked Stephen if he wished to plead guilty or innocent. Stephen reviewed Hebrew history, shot through and through with instances of sin and failure on the part of their fathers. When he comes to Solomon who built the temple, he says, "Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48). Then he bursts forth with an awful indictment: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost," etc. (Acts 7:51).

This cut them to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth. They had heard the charge of murder once too many times. He saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God and he told them what he saw. They screamed at him and stopped their ears and ran upon him. They stoned him, but he went down praying. We are here introduced to a new character in Acts: Saul of Tarsus. He held the clothes of these who stoned Stephen and consented to his

death. This young man took the lead in this awful persecution against the church. He will be heard from later.

The church was scattered. Everybody had to leave Jerusalem except the apostles. A deacon by the name of Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. He had a good hearing and a big revival. When the apostles hear about Philip's big meeting at Samaria, they send Peter and John. When they came they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.

## CHAPTER XII

# THE EARLY CHURCH TESTED IN FELLOWSHIP

Acts 4:32 - 5:14

In our studies in the book of Acts we have seen the early church tested by persecution. This test was met by prayer. When the apostles were warned not to talk or teach about Jesus Christ, the church prayed for boldness to be better witnesses. And when they had prayed the place where they were assembled was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spake the word boldly. Before opposition they stood firm.

But they were to face another test, a test within the fellowship—the test of stewardship. The new problem was that of poverty within the church. And it is wonderful to read how they met this problem: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; But they had all things common" (Acts 4:32).

This spirit-filled church was also spirit-taught. They recognized the principles of stewardship. Stewardship implies ownership without possession and also possession without ownership. God owns all while men possess all of this material world.

This recognition of the principles of stewardship led the church to meet the problem of poverty within the fellowship.

The early church was full of poor people, especially poor widows whose husbands had forsaken them because of their faith in Jesus Christ. What will become of these poor people? This spirit filled church will find an answer to the problem. And so we read that they had all things common. That is, they created a common fund from which to take care of the needy. This was a voluntary matter; there was no coercion; nothing was taken from anybody. It was not the result of legislation but from a spirit of compassion.

The church did not vote for all members to sell what they had and put the proceeds in a common fund. What each member had was given voluntarily, and the Holy Spirit guided so as need arose there was money in the common fund to meet it. It was not done all at once so that nobody owned anything from that point on. It was not done to make all members equal, but for actual need. The principle of private ownership was retained else there could be no stewardship. As the Spirit led the members sold their property and put the proceeds into the hands of the apostles to be administered where there was need. The tenses of the verbs in the account indicate that it was an occasional course of action and not a once for all act.

An example of what was being done is given us. A man named Joseph, better known as Barnabas, a Levite, of the country of Cyprus, having land sold it and brought the money to the apostles to be used for relief of the poor.

Now over against this true exhibition of the spirit of Christian stewardship they have an effort to play a double role. A man named Ananias and his wife wanted the credit for a generosity they were not willing to practice. They too, sold some land and divided the money, secretly laying a part of it aside, while pretending to give it all.

Ananias came alone and handed money to the apostles. Peter discerned his deceit and hypocrisy and charged him

with lying to the Holy Spirit. Ananias had dealt falsely not with men but with God. Peter goes on to say in effect, that he did not have to do this. You did not have to sell the land and when you sold it you did not have to give it. It was in thy power to use it as you pleased. Your sin is in trying to deceive the Holy Spirit.

When Peter got through Ananias dropped dead and fear filled the hearts of all who heard it. The two young men gave him a speedy burial. Peter pronounced no judgment; his death was a direct act of the Holy Spirit.

Three hours later, Sapphira his wife, not knowing of what had happened to her husband, came in to where the apostles were. Peter inquired about the price they got for the land, mentioning the amount Ananias had given. Sapphira said, Yes, that was what we got for it. Peter himself must have been shocked when he said to her, "How is it that ye agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those which have buried thy husband are at the door and shall carry thee out" (Acts 5:9). And instantly she dropped dead and the same young men coming in found her dead and buried her by the side of her husband.

Look at the effect of all this!

1. Great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard what had happened. One translation reads, "The whole church was appalled, great awe and strange terror and dread seized them and all others who heard of these things."

2. "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people" (Acts 5:12). The gospel grew and miracles of healing increased after the leaven had been purged out.

3. And unbelievers were afraid to join the church.

## CHAPTER XIII

# THE FIRST PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH:

Acts 3 & 4

It is interesting to recall what Christ said to His disciples to prepare them for what they were to face after He left them. John 14; "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues" (Matt. 10:17); "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever...But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:16,26); "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service...Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:2,7). To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

The infant church was not to be popular and at ease very long. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:46,47). The

first persecution after Pentecost is recorded in Acts 3 and 4. Consider:

1. The Occasion: healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate.

2. The Cause: Peter's sermon. He explains the miracle. Negatively: Why marvel at what you have witnessed? It was not done by us, not by our power or piety we deserve no credit or glory.

Positively: God has done this to glorify His servant Jesus whom ye denied and delivered up to death when Pilate wanted to release Him. "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." (Acts 3:14-15).

Peter says "that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:17). They had without knowing it fulfilled what God had said through all the prophets. Paul: "If they had known it the princes of this world would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." Ignorance did not excuse them, for Peter calls upon them to repent and be converted that their sins might be blotted out, and that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Now this sermon by Peter arouses the anger of the Sadducees, "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:1-2).

3. The Source of Persecution: religious leaders or the Sadducees. The first persecutors of the church were religious people, Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Roman

government tolerated all religions and licensed them. When they conquered a country they would allow the people of that country to practice their religion. And so the Jews were permitted to practice their religion. But when the Romans discovered that the Christians were distinct from the Jews, here was a religion that was not licensed and it became a target for persecution from the state.

Most persecution of the people of God has been in the name of religion. One might recall the massacre of the Huguenots of France on St. Bartholomew, August 24, 1572. Bartholomew was one of the twelve apostles but in the New Testament there is nothing said of him other than that he was one of the apostles. But according to ancient and unreliable tradition, he was a missionary to many countries. The Roman Catholics have made a saint of him and named a day in his honor. Now in the 16th century there was a long war between the French Protestants and Roman Catholics. Charles IX was King of France and after making a treaty with the Huguenots and when they felt safe to practice their religion, they were massacred in great numbers on August 24, 1572. The Roman Catholics deny that they were responsible for this wholesale murder, but Gregory XIII who was Pope at that time celebrated the event with a big bonfire and had a medal struck to commemorate the event.

And one might recall the persecutions of the Baptists in early colonial days when the Church of England was the state church in Virginia and Massachusetts and other colonies. One day some Baptist preachers were haled into court for preaching without Episcopal license. Patrick Henry heard about the trial and hurried to the place where they were being tried. He hurried to the clerk and asked for the paper of indictment. In a very dramatic way he held the paper aloft and said something like this: "What are these men being tried for? This paper says for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Are



there no thieves around here to be hailed into court? Have all the murderers been apprehended, that you must try men for preaching the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ?"

And so the Roman Catholics are not the only people who have engaged in religious persecution. One might recall the suffering of John Bunyan, who lay in Bedford jail twelve years for preaching without a license in England. Many times Bunyan was offered his liberty if he would quit preaching. But every time he would say, "Let me out today and I will preach tomorrow."

And so the apostles when ordered not to teach or preach any more in the name of Jesus, simply replied, "What do you think we ought to do obey God or men?"

## CHAPTER XIV

### **DESPISE YE THE CHURCH OF GOD?**

Romans 12:4; I Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:15-23; Col. 1:18-24

Introduction: Just as there is no man with whom we can compare Jesus Christ; so there is no institution with which we can compare the church of Christ.

We have in these passages a definition of what the church is, the relation of its members to one another, and its function in the world. The church is called Christ's body, and He is called the head. It is His executive body to execute His will in the earth. The church has both executive and judicial powers but no legislative powers. The laws of the church are already made; they are here in the New Testament. This is the church's lawbook. The church is accepting Christ's headship when it works and behaves according to this book.

The church is compared to a human body. "Many members but one body" (I Cor. 12:20). Every member is necessary. "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary" (I Cor. 12:22). It is a divinely constituted body. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." (I Cor. 12:18). "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47). The saved were added to the church daily. Nobody was in the church but the saved and all the saved were in the church. If lost people get in the church, who

is responsible for their staying in the church? The church is responsible.

In its functioning the church is:

1. A witnessing body. It perpetuates itself through mission work by telling others about Christ. By witnessing to the lost it builds itself up. Witnessing is every member's duty and privilege. A heavenly and earthly ministry. To angels as well as men. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered" (I Cor. 11:6).

2. A disciplinary body. Under the head it has judicial authority over its members. Anything but a mob has disciplinary power over its members. Take any kind of organization it must have powers of discipline over its members. I have been excluded from three fraternal bodies-three lodges. "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Cor. 5:13). "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6).

## IN THE CHURCH (Eph. 3:21)

Introduction: We saw this morning that the church is called the body of Christ. To show the relation to Himself and to one another the church is compared to a human body. If all members of Christ's church were as interested in one another as the members of the human body are interested in one another, we would have a different situation here and

everywhere. When one member suffers all members suffer with it. That's true of the human body. The toe ache or toothache makes one feel bad all over. The human body does not have to have something wrong with all its members for the man to be sick. He may have a bad heart; he is a sick man. The church is sick when one or more members is sick spiritually. Do you suffer when you see one of our members sin against Christ and the church? Do you try to do anything about it? Don't tell me it is none of your business what other members do? None of your business if he quits coming to the assembly? None of your business whether he orders his speech and life aright or not? None of your business whether he honors the Lord with his substance or not?

Our text says to Him "be glory in the church". You cannot glorify Jesus Christ and ignore His church. All the good we do must be done as a member of His body, the church, if we get any reward for it.

Are you in the church? How does one get in the church? The only way is through public profession of faith in baptism. A person is saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and then makes public profession in baptism. Nobody is in the church except baptized people. And nobody but a baptized person can glorify God.

When is a person in the church? He is in the church from the time he is baptized until he dies or is excluded from the church. Of course membership may be transferred from one body of Christ to another. We are in the church seven days in the week. All we do we do as members of the church whether we are conscious of it or not. I am told the KluKlux had an arrangement for preachers so that if they were asked if they were members of the KluKlux could say that they were not and this automatically excluded them for the time being. But we do not get out of the church that easy. The church does

not come into existence only when it meets for worship; it is in existence as long as its members are in existence and trying to give glory to Jesus Christ. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt 28:20).

## CHAPTER XV

# THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

Romans 12:4, 5; I Cor. 12:14-27

Text: I Cor. 12:27 "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

The word church in our English Bible is a translation of the Greek word ekklesia. This word literally means, what is called "out". It comes from a compound word-ek which means out; and kaleo, to call. A better translation of ekklesia would be assembly since it is applied to people who are called out to form an assembly.

In the Greek New Testament ekklesia occurs 115 times. It is translated church 112 times and assembly 3 times in the King James version. The word church has a religious connotation, but the word ekklesia itself has no religious meaning. And that is why ekklesia is translated assembly 3 times in Acts 19. Here it is used of the Greek political assembly and also of the unlawful assembly or mob gathered against Paul and his companions. At Ephesus, Paul had preached against idolatry, saying there were no gods made with hands. This preaching was hurting the business of those who made little images of the temple of the goddess Diana. Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen raised a mob against Paul. After a great uproar and much confusion the town clerk finally restored order and then dismissed the ekklesia or mob. He tells the complainants that

they should have brought their case before the lawful ekklesia or assembly, which was the Greek court. If our translators had uniformly translated ekklesia they would not have had to change from church to assembly, but would have used assembly in every instance.

Jesus was not coining a new word when He said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my" (Matt 16:18) ekklesia. He used a word familiar to both Greek and Jew. The Greeks had their ekklesia, which was an assembly of citizens of a free city called out to transact public business. The Jews had their religious ekklesia or synagogue. And so Christ distinguished between His ekklesia and others by using the pronoun MY. He was saying in effect, I am going to have MY ekklesia which will be different from the ekklesias you are familiar with.

The word ekklesia (translated church 112 times and assembly 3 times) occurs only 2 times in the gospels. In Matt. 16:18 when Jesus says "I will build my" ekklesia. He uses the word in the abstract and institutional sense without particularizing or locating it. Just as we might speak of the American home, or the American boy, or the American bride, without referring to any particular home or boy or bride. In Matt. 18:17 Christ used the word ekklesia the concrete sense of an actual assembly to which one might tell his grievances. And so when Christ's ekklesia as an institution takes on concrete form and becomes operational it is an actual assembly of His followers in organized capacity.

Whenever you find the American boy, or home, or bride, it is a boy or home or bride. And so when you find the body of Christ on earth it is always a body of Christ, that is, a local assembly. That is why Paul called the church at Corinth a body of Christ, a body with many members.

There is more and more being said today about "One church in one world." This means one big church made up of

churches of all denominations. But such a thing is utterly foreign to Scripture, so far as Christ's church or assembly is concerned. Such an idea is retrogression and not progress. It reverses the missionary program. In the early days Christ's church as an institution found expression in one church, the church at Jerusalem. Under persecution the members of this church were scattered. They went everywhere preaching the word and wherever disciples were made a church was organized. And some years later we read of the churches of Judea. When the church at Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries, we soon read about churches of Galatia and other provinces.

If and when we have one church in one world, who is to be the head of this one big church? Will the head be Christ or AntiChrist? I venture the prediction that it will be a man living in a big house in the city of Rome. Let no Protestant ever suppose that the Roman system of a graded ministry with the supremacy of the pope will ever be relinquished or compromised.

We usually think and speak of the church as a witnessing body of

believers with a worldwide commission to preach the gospel to every creature. The church is to be interested in lost humanity throughout the world. Missions are essential to the perpetuity of the church and the church that does not have missions on its heart has the death rattle in its throat. Stop the missionary program and the church will soon become a relic of the past. If new members are not added by missionary endeavour the gates of hades the unseen realm of the dead will soon swallow up the church. And so Jesus Christ implied missions when He said the gates of hades would not prevail against the church. We are rightly urged to lift up our eyes and look on fields white unto harvest. But in this message we shall



turn our eyes inward to see what Christ intended the church to do with respect to its own members. And now let us think of our church as a body of Christ and apply scriptural principles in the ministry to our own members.

1. We are one body, but many members. No member of the human body is the whole body and no member of our church is the whole church. And no member is the head for Christ is the head and master. He made this plain when he said, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8). Headship belongs only to Christ and this means authority. Our pastor is our leader but not our master. Paul made the same point when he wrote, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Cor 4:5). And Peter writes that the elders or pastors must not lord over God's heritage. Dr. Eades used to say that the pastor had three duties when acting as a shepherd. He is to feed the sheep, fleece the sheep, and flog the sheep. And all these things were to be done by preaching the word. The pastor is not a man with a big stick; he is a man with a big book. Dr. Pettie preached to his church on the subject of money. One of his men who did not like to be fleeced said to him after the sermon, that he ought to fleece the sheep. The doctor said, "Well, I believe in feeding the sheep and I have tried in my sermons to feed the sheep, but I also believe a well fed sheep ought to be of some value in wool and mutton. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). "An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law" (Rom. 2:20).

2. All our members are on the same footing so far as salvation is concerned. All the saved have been born of the same Holy Spirit, redeemed by the same blood, and have a right to membership in the same body of Christ. One Sunday morning

in our capital city, Charles Evans Hughes and a Chinese laundry girl walked the same aisle to join a Baptist Church. In receiving them the pastor remarked that the ground is level at the cross. In Gal 3:28, Paul says "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

3. All members are not equal in talent and importance, but all are important and are needed. In the human body the members which seem to be more feeble are nevertheless necessary. And those parts we think to be less honorable are treated with greater honor. And so it should be in the body of Christ. And now let us consider some of the weaker members and some of the less honorable members of the body of Christ to see how they are to be treated.

(1) Some of our members are shutins; they are too feeble to assemble with us. But they are needed and we should make them feel that they are wanted. Our sick and helpless and sorrowing people furnish us a field for sympathetic and loving service. They are a challenge to us to demonstrate the spirit of Christian sympathy and compassion. The spring of compassion would soon dry up if we did not have the poor and weak and helpless with us and among us. Paul says that we are "distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality." (Rom. 12:13). I want to commend all our members who minister to the poor and sick and sorrowing. And I want to thank all of you who have been so helpful to me and mine in our recent infirmities.

(2) There is hardly any doubt that we have some members who are in a backslidden condition. They are out of fellowship with Christ and the church and have lost the joy of salvation. We should not rejoice in their backsliding, but we should see in them an opportunity to demonstrate the Christian spirit. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are

spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

(3) And we have some members who are of an ugly and contentious spirit and hard to live and work with. But all such who are saved are entitled to membership. They give us the opportunity to demonstrate the Christian spirit in dealing with our enemies.

Paul says, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:20,21). I expect most of us throw away many opportunities to demonstrate the Christian religion at this point. We think we are wiser than God and that to get even with an enemy is better than loving him.

Back in October last year I had a paragraph in the church bulletin dealing with the patience a pastor must have. I quoted a pastor in Florida who said that when he learned that one of his members did not like him, he would determine to win that man by loving him and showing him special kindness. I was also told of a man who made this confession. He said something like this: "Our minister had one trait which you do not often find anywhere. He never seemed to remember an injury. I was prejudiced against him when he came to us and often spoke disparagingly of him and sometimes even bitterly. And I knew he was informed of it all. But he always treated me as though I were his best friend. It breaks my heart now to think of it and if I ever meet him in heaven, I will throw my arms around his neck and beg his forgiveness." The comment I made on this was that we cannot do in heaven what we should have done on earth.

A few days after the bulletin was mailed out, I received a letter from a pastor in another part of the state. In this letter he said in part: "Several weeks ago I began reading your paragraph

on the qualities a pastor should possess. I have received a challenge from each of them, but I am writing this letter to thank you especially for the one this past week. It helped me to make a decision that kept me from making a mistake." He went on to tell of a certain man in his church who had been very ugly and mean towards him and he was about to lose all patience with him. After praying much Saturday night, I came to the study Sunday morning and found the Madisonville Bulletin open on my desk. I began to read your paragraph and took it as a message from God. And with His help I shall try again to win this man. "Doing nothing for others is the undoing of ourselves."

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (II Tim. 2:24-26). "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

"Is thy cruise of comfort failing?  
Rise and share it with a friend  
And through all the years of famine  
It shall serve thee to the end.

Love divine will fill thy storehouse,  
Or thy handful still renew;  
Scanty fare for one will often  
Make a royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving;  
All its wealth is living grain;  
Seeds which mildew in the garner

Scattered, fill with gold.

Is thy burden hard and heavy?  
Do thy steps drag wearily?  
Help to lift thy brother's burden  
God will bear both it and thee.

Lost and weary on the mountains,  
Wouldest thou sleep amidst the snow?  
Chafe that frozen form beside thee,  
And together both will glow.

Art thou wounded in life's battle?  
Many stricken round thee moan.  
Give to them thy precious ointment,  
And that balm shall heal thine own."

## CHAPTER XVI

# GOD'S SPIRITUAL HOUSE

I Peter 2:5

Introduction: The church is spoken of under many metaphors or figures. It is compared to many familiar things. It is compared to the human body (I Cor. 12:27); a farm (I Cor. 3:9); a flock (I Peter 5:2) and a building or house (I Cor. 3:9; I Peter 2:5).

The church is also considered in a present and a future aspect. In its present aspect it is an institution finding concrete expression in each local assembly, as the church at Corinth, Ephesus, etc. In its future aspect it will be one big church called "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23). These two aspects must not be confused. The local assemblies are temporary; the general assembly will be eternal. The local assembly may have lost people in it. The general assembly will have only born again people in it. The local assembly is present; the general assembly is future.

Every local assembly is a miniature of the great assembly which will meet in heaven where the congregation will never break up but will serve Him day and night forever.

When Christ said He would build His church, I believe He had in mind both the present and future aspects of the church: the

church as an institution finding concrete expression in the temporary and local assembly, and the church of the future which will be made up of all the saved. There will be a time when all the saints will be in one big, visible church or assembly.

## **THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH**

The church is said to be built. It does not build itself. "I will build my church" (Matt 16:18).

There are always three parties to consider when you think of building a house; the architect, the contractor, and the occupant. So in thinking of the church as a spiritual house we will follow the work of the architect, the contractor, and the inhabitant. The house is for somebody to live in.

### *A. THE ARCHITECT.*

1. The architect designs the building. He makes the plans or blueprints. The plan of the house is in the mind of the architect and he draws the plan or pattern for the contractor to go by. He shows the size or dimension of the building and where every piece of material is to go.

2. The architect prepares the specifications, showing the kind and quality of materials to be used. Nothing is left to chance or to the whims of the workmen. Moses was God's contractor in building the tabernacle and he was warned to build it according to the pattern shown him in the mount.

3. God is the architect of His own house, "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6). God made the plans and specifications back in eternity. Everything about His house was determined and settled upon. He determined the size and the material. He determined the number of stones that should

go into His house, when they should be put in, and where they should come from.

When the architect draws plans for a building, the material for that building may be scattered over a large area. The lumber may still be in the forest, the stone may still be in the quarry, and the brick and mortar may still be in the soil. The stones for God's spiritual house are human beings and they lay in the quarry of human nature, a shapeless mass without life or form or beauty.

### *B. THE CONTRACTOR.*

Just as there is a divine architect there is also a divine builder. Matt. 16:18. Christ is the builder of His church. He employs human workmen, but the power is His. When Zerubbabel was commissioned to rebuild the ancient temple at Jerusalem, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). So the church of Christ is built by divine power.

### *C. THE BUILDING.*

1. ITS NATURE. It is a spiritual house. It is not made of wood or brick or literal stones. It is built of men who have had a spiritual birth. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" (I Peter 2:5).

2. ITS FOUNDATION. It has a personal and a doctrinal foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Cor 3:11). Christ is the foundation of our hope and faith.

The doctrinal foundation is laid by the apostles and prophets. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). They laid the foundation for our faith by preaching



the gospel to us. We have their ministry in the New Testament.

In the foundation, Christ is said to be the chief cornerstone. A cornerstone is to hold two walls together. You cannot have a building without a cornerstone. A building is not just a lot of walls placed indiscriminately here and there. The walls must be tied together that which ties them together is the cornerstone. These two walls may be thought of as Jew and Gentile or as bond and free, or as male and female, or as rich and poor (Ga1. 3:28).

### 3. ITS STRUCTURE OR THE WAY IT IS BUILT

(1) These stones come to Christ. To whom coming, as to a living stone. This is not a physical coming, it is a heart and mental approach to Christ. In coming the sinner leaves himself, that is, he ceases to hope in himself. Before I was saved I depended upon what I had done or expected to do for salvation; now I depend upon what Christ has already done, when he died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18).

(2) These stones come by being drawn to Him. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32); "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). This drawing is by the Holy Spirit who is sent both by the Father and Son.

(3) The outward means of drawing is by the Gospel. The gospel is dynamite in the hands of the Spirit. With the Gospel the Holy Spirit blasts these dead stones from the quarry of nature, to shape and polish and fit them for a place in the temple of God. These stones have a heart and mind and will, and all are exercised in coming to Christ.

#### *D. THE OCCUPANT.*

Who is to live in this house. "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). God is a Spirit and builds himself a spiritual house in which to live. "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48); "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" ( I Cor. 6:19).

The tabernacle built by Moses and the temple of Solomon were typical of the church. As soon as they were finished, the shekinah glory, the symbol of God's presence, took up its abode in these buildings. "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Ex. 40:34); "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD" (I Kings 8:10); "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5).

Conclusion: This present world and its order of things is to the church what the scaffolding is to the building. When the building is completed the scaffolding is taken down. When the church of Christ is completed when all the living stones are placed in this spiritual house, the present order of things will be torn down and taken away, and God shall dwell among His people. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1).

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE IDEAL CHURCH

Introduction: Webster: "An ideal is a standard of perfection; a perfect type, whether a reality or a conception only." "There will always be a wide interval between practical and ideal excellence." But for church and individual Christians this interval need not be as wide as it too often is. The ideal is a goal to be striven for-something every member should make the largest contribution possible towards.

What are the characteristics of the ideal church? What are its leading features? What will be the outstanding things about it?

A. It will be a church of the open Book. The Bible will be its law book and guide book. If I might choose a symbol for our church it will be the open Bible. The church of the open Book will be a place where the wicked will be warned; the lost may find salvation; the new born child of God may find food; the student of the word may get lessons in the deep things of God; the sorrowing may find comfort.

Sir Walter Scott: "Bring me the Book." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16).

B. It will be a church of the opened heart. It will be a church of brotherly love. Love may be defined as a sort of instinct planted by God in the new birth. "Beloved, let us love another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7); "Ye yourselves are taught of

God to love one another" (I Thess. 4:9). Brotherly love will be manifested, 1. In hospitality; 2. In sympathy.

It used to be said of Christians by men of the world; "Behold, how they love one another."

The church of the opened heart will be a praying church. Prayer is another spiritual instinct planted in regeneration. When Ananias was told to go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and call for Saul of Tarsus, erstwhile enemy of the saints, it was said to Ananias "For behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9:11). No need to fear a praying man.

The morning congregation reveals how popular the church is: the evening, how popular the pastor is, and the prayer meeting how popular the Lord is.

C. It will be a church of the opened purse. The church of Jesus Christ has been greatly cheapened in the eyes of the world by lack of a spirit of giving on the part of its members. The church has the biggest task of any other institution on earth; it is a globe encircling task and a time long task.

There is more in the Bible about giving than any other subject. Nearly all our Lord's parables are related to money. The tithe did not originate with Moses, but it was incorporated in the laws given by Moses to redeem Israel.

In the Old Testament "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3:9). In the New Testament, "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (I Cor 16:2).

In Hebrews 7:8, we read that under the Levitical economy that the priests who die received tithes, but that now the priest who ever liveth receives them.

Paul tells us, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). This is called the commandment nobody believes. A man once said: "giving is good enough for me."

I'm not a gold digger, but I do mean to do my best to cultivate a spirit of giving in this church. My method will be to give you the word of God and pray that it might develop you in the grace of giving.

## CHAPTER XVIII

# THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Why join a church of Christ? What is the church of Christ for? What is its mission in the world? These are elementary questions, but they need to be asked. Let each one of us here today check and double check himself by asking this question. As I go over the list of our members, I often wonder why such and such a person ever joined the church. It is to be feared that many join the church from a motive that is entirely unscriptural, and even sinful.

Negatively:

1. Not in order to be saved. I expect this motive heads the list of wrong motives in joining the church. The lost man persists in feeling that he has a better chance of being saved if he is in the church. But the very opposite is true. Church membership is dangerous for a lost man because: 1. It gives him a false hope. 2. It adds to his condemnation.

2. Not for business reasons. I will not say much about this motive because I think it does not apply to many if any of our members. Our church is so unpopular with the world that I think some stay out for business reasons. What makes a church unpopular? The truth.

3. Not for social reasons. I do not think this motive is very prevalent among our members. Have you ever realized that

Christianity is largely split up into social groups. True even of individual churches. Old men's class, young men's class, young married women's class, young business women's class, etc. Then there are family groups, groups according to wealth, etc.

4. Not to be petted. Some want to go where the folks are the nicest to them. The only heaven some people want or will ever have is a place where they are the center of attraction. I think I have known people who have left one church and joined another for no other reason than that their own church did not seem to give them the attention they felt they should have. Instead of assuming their obligation to help the church show its attention to visitors and strangers, they wanted to be treated like a visitor. As a member of this church, I must not expect attention to be shown me; I must help the other members show attention to visitors.

Positively:

1. To help preach the truth. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth" (III John 8). The church is a base of supplies for the truth. It is a great spiritual commissary where the bread of life is dispensed. That is my vision for this church that our ministry may be enlarged and that the truth may go from us by word of mouth, beginning right here at this pulpit and reaching every spot where we have a member, that it may go from us by our written ministry beginning here in our community and reaching to all parts of the earth.

2. To let our light shine. Every saved person has some light, spiritual light. Light and darkness: day and night, are Scriptural symbols of truth and error; good and evil. Lost

people are called children of darkness; saved are called children of light and of the day. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of the light" (Eph. 5:8); "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph 5:11).

Now a candlestick is the place for a light. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16). And the spiritual candlestick for spiritual light is the church. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20).

3. To evangelize the world. To evangelize means to gospelize. To gospelize is to tell good news. It is to tell the world the good news of a Savior from sin, the good news that a specific for sin has been found. If you had a friend or even an enemy who was dying with tuberculosis and you had a certain cure for that disease, wouldn't you get the news to him in a hurry? You wouldn't have much trouble in telling him about it, would you? Or if you saw a man starving for material food, you wouldn't have much trouble in finding words to present him with some food, would you?

Brethren, we have a specific, a certain cure for sin and we ought to present it to lost men everywhere. It is the only thing we have that is sure. We do not have a sure cure for tuberculosis or pneumonia or smallpox or cancer. Every remedy has at some time or other failed, but we have a remedy for sin that has never failed when taken.



## **WHY SHOULD CHURCH MEMBERS ATTEND CHURCH?**

One of the saddest things I know is the difficulty we have in getting members to attend church. The forces of antichrist point to this fact as a proof that church members themselves do not believe in their religion, not even worth their effort to attend meetings.

### **Why go to church?**

1. Because God commands it. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb 10:25).

2. Because you cannot have a church without it. Church is an assembly. Shut the church doors, let the people stay in their homes and never get together, and you would have no church. The building does not make the church, and it is physically possible to have saved people and yet not have a church. Suppose there are 100 saved people in this community, they stay in their homes or go about their business, they have no contact with each other in a religious way, they have no fellowship in the word of God, they never meet to pray or sing or hear the word of God, would they constitute a church? No. I said it was physically possible to have saved people in a community without a church, but it is not morally possible. Love for God and for one another will bring them together. We come to church to have fellowship in word.

3. Because we need to learn. The church is a school. Believers are called disciples or learners. Christ had a school and His followers were called disciples. The pastor of the church is their teacher. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (II Tim

2:24). A church meeting is a school of spiritual instruction. From this viewpoint the churches look bad.

(1) From standpoint of attendance. We get alarmed about our day school if the attendance is much below enrollment. We expect a boy to grow up to be a sort of numbskull if he misses about half of his classes. And when he does come and the lesson is taught he doesn't know what it is all about. He doesn't get the lesson taught because he failed to get something else that must be learned first.

(2) From the standpoint of actual knowledge. A spiritual numbskull is a saved person who has not grown in grace and the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus.

## CHAPTER XIX

# THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb 10:23-25).

Introduction: This text is a large order for the greatest of preachers and yet simple enough for babes in Christ to understand. It is a twofold exhortation.

First, we are to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. This means we are to keep on believing in Jesus of Nazareth as Savior and Lord and never give up the good hope that is in Him. It is the same exhortation Peter gives when he says, "Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:13). Hope is a child of hard times. Hope has to live in a wicked world. The very word hope implies present trouble. It means something better in the future. If the present benefits of salvation are all that we will ever have there would be no place for hope and salvation would not be a blessing but a curse.

Salvation is free because it is priceless and we have nothing to pay, it is free because Jesus paid it all but the working of it

out in daily living is a costly thing. It means a life dedicated to God and separated from the world and these two things go together. There can be no dedication of life to God apart from separation from the world. God and the world are incompatible. John says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). Someone has said that you might as well talk about a heavenly devil as a worldly Christian. And this is the truth so far as living the Christian life in our daily walk.

Now the basis for this exhortation is that God is faithful who promised. God has made promises in His Son and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can pin his faith and hope to Jesus Christ with the assurance that God will keep His promises.

Second, is the exhortation to consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. Here is a vital question for us to consider: How may I stir up my fellow believers, my brethren in Christ, to love and good works? Does it matter to you how your brother lives? Do you take the position that it is none of your business what your brother or sister does? This is the spirit of Cain who asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9). We certainly are, everyone of us, our brother's keeper and to say it does not matter to us what becomes of our brother or sister is to be guilty of great sin.

## **CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

Now the text we wish to emphasize is a clause taken from this second exhortation: "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another." Here is a bad habit; a prevalent sin, but how few are awake to the seriousness of it. Even the most faithful do not think of it as a sin. It would create a sensation if the pastor should tell of the sins told him about various members of our

church. Bad language, untruthfulness, and drinking. A lost man was quoted as saying, that if he ever made a change he would not be found in some places he finds some of our prominent church members in. I question the accuracy of his statement that they are prominent members. How does he know? He is never here to see who is prominent. But to give occasion for the enemies of the cross to blaspheme is a terribly wicked thing and woe to the member who does.

But the point I wish to put to the front right now is that I never hear of failure to attend church spoken of as if it were a sin at all.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

1. It is a command of God. It is not a mere piece of advice. It is not something that is optional; it is as obligatory as the command of God can make it.

It is not merely the wish of the pastor, it is the command of God who cannot be trifled with. To hem and hew and offer excuses is to make reply against God. "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom 9:20). These words ought to awaken anyone who is not utterly beyond hope. Notice the first two words and the last word. "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Here God and man are put in sharpest contrast; God in His infinite greatness and holiness and power and wisdom; and man in his infinitesimal smallness and ignorance. In the Greek there is strong emphasis on the 'thou' "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" It will be a happy day for some of us if God will brand that text upon our hearts so that we will never be able to forget it. If God leaves us alone to criticize Him and object to His commands, it will be absolutely fatal to us. And He may do that. "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16); "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and

whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9:18). O man, who art thou anyway? And who is God?

As an individual man is only one of the more than 2 billion 500 million human beings now inhabiting this globe. And what is this globe we call the earth? It is but a speck in that part of the universe we know about. This earth is so small that if the sun were hollow, you could pour into it 1,200,000 earths like ours and still there would be room enough left for them to rattle around in it. And the sun is very, very small as compared to Arcturus and some of the other stars whose diameters have been recently measured. And there are now known to be more than 225 million of these great worlds we call stars and God made them all. Will you defy Him and say His commandments are grievous?

It is this God who made this vast and stupendous universe and who made you and me, and who holds our very breath in His hand, who is the author of my text, and He says, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25).

2. It is one way we encourage one another. Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another. Of all the people who need help and encouragement it is those who love the church and want to see it prosper in its work for Christ. The church is a workshop for Christ and all the members need to be at their post of duty. The church is a school of religious instruction and all members ought to be faithful scholars.

The church is a lighthouse for Christ and every member needs to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt 5:16). It is a sin to put our light under the bushel or under the bed, and that is what people do who try to hide the good they do. Of course we are not to parade our good works to receive praise of men, but we are to do them before

men that God may be praised. If the motive is wrong in displaying it for your own glory it is just as wrong to hide it through pretended humility.

If I give for the support of the church, or if I do anything else for its good, and nobody knows about it, how can it be any encouragement to anyone?

3. To neglect church attendance and I mean regular attendance. I mean attendance on all services is the most ridiculously senseless thing anybody can possibly do.

It is like employing a foreman and not furnish him with any workers. Or like appointing a general and not give him any soldiers. Or like hiring a shepherd and not give him any sheep to feed. Or like having a leader without any followers. Or like employing a teacher and no pupils to be taught. Or like a doctor with no sick people to be ministered unto.

Now the pastor has these several relationships in his spiritual ministry. He is a shepherd, teacher, minister, captain, and leader of spiritual forces, but what can he do without the forces? What can a pastor do without deacons? What can a Sunday School Superintendent do without teachers? What can the preacher do without hearers?

Every church member ought to feel it as binding on him to be in his pew as the pastor does to be in his pulpit. There is nothing that so takes the spirit out of a preacher as to face empty pews. It is not the opposition of the outside world that breaks the preacher's heart; it is the absence of those who once made a pledge to God.

I suppose no name stands out as representative of devotion to Christ and consecrated courage than that of Paul. He was, approximately at least, all that any faithful minister might hope to become. He often stood alone in the midst of foes, and yet

no man was ever more dependent upon the sympathetic help of his associates. You know how he lamented the departure of Demas. His words seem to drip with tears as he says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Tim 4:10). And about the last word he ever wrote he said to Timothy, "Do thy diligence to come before winter" (II Tim 4:21).

Writing to the Corinthians the great apostle Paul says this: "When I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia" (II Cor 2:12-13). Paul had a wide open door at Troas but he was so depressed at the absence of Titus that he could not preach. Where is the God called preacher who does not understand the meaning of the absent Titus? Titus may be a deacon upon whom the pastor depended. Titus may have been one with no official position but some godly woman whose regular attendance has come to be expected and if she is absent it throws the pastor into a state of depression. The absence of the faithful makes the preacher feel as though the church were empty.

4. There can be no church without it. The word church means assembly and an assembly is a congregation of people. And if the members do not meet together there can be no church.

You can have a church without money for the members can meet in the homes or under the branches of trees or even in the open, but you can't have a church without the members coming together. I say all this, not to minimize money, but to magnify church attendance.

We need money here and we have spent a lot of money on this building and for other purposes within the past few years, and we are having to spend a lot more in taking care of these



windows but we need faithful members who will meet with us at least twice on Sundays and once on Wednesday night.

We have some whose large offerings we hardly see how we could do without, but I count their attendance of more importance than their money as important as that is. I think I speak sincerely when I say that if you can't both give money and come to church too, if you must leave one of them off, then leave the money off and come to church.

# CHAPTER XX

## CHURCH LOYALTY

Eph. 5:22

Introduction: Among our many needs we need to be more church conscious. But in being church conscious we must be careful that it is the fruit of being Christ conscious. It is quite possible for one to be church conscious and yet have little or no thought of Christ. One may be a worker in the church and yet not love Christ. But one cannot love Christ and despise Christ's church.

Dr. Lee: "Church members need to confer with themselves often concerning the warmth and strength of their church loyalty. The Christian who is loyal to his church above all other institutions is like the man who is loyal to his wife above all other women, and like the patriot who is loyal to his flag above all other nations; and like the child who is loyal to his father and mother above all other men and women." And he further says that the person who regards the obligations of any relationship lightly is a light weight.

One may love the church for its material benefits and have no love and appreciation for its spiritual ministry. We ought to love the church for Christ's sake and if we love it for His sake we will love it for its ministry of Christ and His word. We will be loyal to its teaching and preaching ministry. Our minds may trick us here. We may be loyal to the church in a program of eats and entertainment and have little sympathy for its

spiritual ministry. The man who is more eager to attend a banquet than the prayer and preaching service of his church is not Christ conscious. The woman who had rather serve in the kitchen than to sit in the upper room to learn of Jesus Christ is not church conscious in the proper sense.

The word church seems to be used in Ephesians in the mystical sense. It consists only of saved people, and is considered in the making, to be completed when the day of salvation is ended. There is a sense in which only the born again are church members. The lost are in the church only in our eyes and not as Christ sees them. They are in the church only as being outwardly tied on and not as being vitally connected and drawing sap and life from Christ, the head.

Why is the church to be so important to us? Why are we to be loyal to the church above every other institution? Because of its relation to Christ:

(1) It is His body. He is the head of the church to control it. The church is subject to Him, and as members we must be subject to Him. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Eph 1:22). The church has no earthly head.

(2) It is His bride. The church is the object of His undying love. He took the sweetest and most sacred of all human relationships to illustrate the relationship between Himself and His church. No bride has ever been loved as Christ loved the church. No husband has ever given himself to his wife as Christ gave Himself for the church.

(3) Of what Christ has already done for the church. He gave Himself in death for it. He could not have the church He wanted without dying for it. He couldn't choose a bride for its beauty. He chose it and died for it while it was still in an ugly and sinful state. Men choose their brides because of their

beauty and worth, but Christ chose a bride that had no beauty and worth. He chose her to make her worthy and beautiful. The beauty and glory of the church cost Christ His life on the cross. He had to go down into the depths of shame to get the pearls with which to adorn the bride. He had to suffer to make her sinless. He had to die to give her life. The church was important to Christ and therefore it ought to be important to us. Christ cares little for empires, and kingdoms, and democracies. They will all fail and come to naught. The church is the only living and eternal institution.

(4) The church is important because of what Christ is yet going to do for it. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:27). There will not be a pimple of imperfection when Christ is through with His church. In Rev. 19:7 John gives an account of the coming wedding day "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"

(Eph. 3:21).

How are we to show our love to the church?

1. By faithful attendance upon its service. The word church means an assembly and the members must assemble. They can't do much for Christ and remain apart. They must "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together". We need a sensitive conscience on church going. It is hard to convince some folks that it is a sin to neglect church attendance. One of the best ways to cripple the influence of the church is to stay away from its meetings. And this is about the best way to show contempt for the church.

2. By loyalty in supporting its ministry. The church has a ministry to itself and to the lost. It is to build up itself in love and reach out with its life giving message.

A columnist recently said in speaking on loyalty: "Funny, even people who laugh at loyalty in a man somehow admires it in a dog." And a preacher recently said, "Loyalty is appreciated, admired and praised when found in lower animals. The dog that is loyal to his master is respected. Many dogs show themselves of finer quality in this regard than some people."

Dr. Lee: "The word loyalty seems to have gone on a voyage and been lost in shipwreck on a trip and can not find its way back. The church member who is not loyal to his church is as worthless and undependable as houses without foundations, as ships without rudders, as unarmed soldiers in battle, as dishes without food when the hungry are to be fed."

## CHAPTER XXI

### CHURCH DISCIPLINE

I was asked awhile back if I believed in church discipline. I promptly replied that I do and that I have tried to practice it in my ministry over the years. I know of no doctrine that has been so ignored and neglected on the one hand, or has been so distorted and abused on the other hand. Usually when discipline is mentioned the sole thought is that of turning someone out of the church. This is only a small part of discipline the serious and final part.

There are several aspects of discipline and these must be distinguished. Our text book must be the Bible.

1. Self discipline. This involves the whole of Christian living to the end of life. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1); "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19); "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. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:5-8).

In I Cor. 9:24-27, Paul uses the figure of an athlete to tell how he disciplined himself. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." He says the athlete strives for a fading crown, but Paul was striving for an unfading crown. The athlete, whatever the contest, disciplines himself; he watches his diet, he abstains from certain kinds of drink and food, he gives up a lot of delicacies and fleshly delights to fit himself for the contest. And Paul says, I watch my body with its fleshly desires; I keep it in subjection, I keep it fit for the service of God, lest when I have preached to others I myself might be a castaway or disapproved or fail to get the prize. And so every child of God must by all means discipline himself, put away fleshly lusts that war against the soul.

2. Discipline by the word. This involves the work of the pastor. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (II Tim 3:16). He is to use the word of God for teaching, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness or right living. The test of my preaching is not whether you enjoy it, but whether or not it makes you better Christians. And so the purpose of discipline is to make people better, not richer or happier. Webster: "To train in self-control or obedience to a given standard." The noun: "Training which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects."

3. Discipline by our Heavenly Father. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint

when thou art rebuked of him:" (Heb. 12:5). Webster: "To chastise; to punish." Discipline by our Heavenly Father is called chastisement and is for our good, to make us better.

4. Restorative Discipline. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). This is to be done by Christians who are spiritual, close to the Lord and living above reproach. The Greek word for RESTORE is used of a dislocated limb put back in place. And so the sinning brother is like a limb out of place and must be dealt with tenderly and in meekness, remembering that we, though spiritual, might also be tempted and do wrong.

We see another example of restorative discipline in "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (II Thess. 3:6,14,15).

And still another example of this kind of discipline in settling personal differences. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt 18:15-17). This is very plain. And in such a case there is evidently exclusion from the church.

The next and last case of discipline is found in I Cor. 5:13 "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from



among yourselves that wicked person." Here is the case of a man living in unholy wedlock, a sin that would hardly be found among the heathen, the case of a man living with his father's wife, who must have been his stepmother. And so Paul does not mince words, but tells the church to exclude him, put that wicked man away from among yourselves. RSV: "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

Even in this extreme case the good of the sinner was in the mind of Paul. "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:3-5).

In his second letter, Paul seems to refer to this man. Read II Cor. 2:1-10.

All this adds up to the solemn truth that we ought to take our Christian profession seriously. Salvation is free but service to God is costly. And as members of the same body of Christ we are tied together and belong to each other and are responsible for one another. What I do, not only as your pastor, but as a member, is of importance to every one of you. And we should not see one another sin and do nothing about it.

## CHAPTER XXII

# SALVATION AND REWARDS

Eph. 2:8-10 Rev. 22:12

Introduction: There is a necessary distinction between salvation and rewards. To ignore this distinction will lead to confusion and perversion of the gospel. Salvation is for the lost; rewards are for the saved. Salvation is for believers; rewards are for workers. Salvation is by grace through faith; rewards are for faithful service. Salvation is common to all the saints; one will be no more saved than another, rewards are proportioned to the work done. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be (Rev. 22:12). Salvation is a present possession; rewards are a future blessing. Salvation is received on earth; rewards are to be received in heaven. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:12). Salvation is based on the sufferings of the Savior; rewards are based upon the suffering of the saint. Salvation is the result of Christ's suffering for us; rewards are based upon our suffering for Him.

I have been both surprised and disappointed at the little literature on the subject of rewards. I searched here and there for some book in my library dealing with the subject and found practically nothing. I think first of all that we need the RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SUBJECT of rewards.

Some deny the doctrine, claiming all Christians will be equal in heaven. One will have no more than another. But this is to flatly deny the scriptures. If rewards are based on works, and they are, then the works of all would be the same if there is no difference in rewards. If rewards are based on works and suffering, what believer is there today who can expect the reward of the apostle Paul?

Some ignore the doctrine, do not deal with it, simply neglect to say anything about it. This is evident from the small amount of literature on the subject. Some despise the doctrine, having no interest in rewards. Salvation is all they want. Keeping out of hell is as far as their interest goes. They will be satisfied to be saved by the skin of their teeth.

Others say the doctrine of rewards is inconsistent with the motive of love in our works. They say we should work from love and not for pay. But if our Lord promises pay or reward we would not love Him much if we did not appreciate and strive for the reward he offers. Is it inconsistent with love for its father, for the child to appreciate and strive for reward offered by its father? I think not. Is the father afraid the child will not love him if he offers reward for faithful service? I think not.

## CHAPTER XXIII

# REWARDS POSSIBLE FOR EVERY SAINT

We need not be afraid that the doctrine of rewards will give some people advantage over others, the rich over the poor or the strong over the weak. God's rewards are such that the poorest and weakest of His children may secure rewards. God's rewards are based upon faithfulness and not upon wealth and strength. There is reward for secret prayer. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6). And for giving a cup of cold water. "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. 10:42).

### **MUST BE DONE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST**

There are many institutions in the world that are doing good. They help the poor and relieve the afflicted. I have no fight to make against them for so doing. I would rather commend them, various fraternal organizations like the Masons, IOOF, and others. Our American Legion boys sent baskets of fruit and other food to the sick and afflicted, and all this was good in itself considering that it brought happiness to the recipients. But there will be no reward in heaven for all the good done by these various institutions. And of course the lost people in

these organizations would not argue the question. The man who will not take Christ to be his Savior and Lord will not want any reward or expect any reward from Christ. Every man will first have to be accepted in Christ before he can be rewarded in Christ. It is only those saved by Christ who will be rewarded by Christ. If the saved in these various organizations think they ought to be rewarded in heaven by Christ for what they do through these organizations, they need to be told in words of scripture that Christ is to get the glory in His church. That His church is the institution He founded through which His people are to honor Him and work for rewards. "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. 10:40-42).

How can we do good in the name of a disciple? First, you must be a disciple of Christ. None but disciples can do the work of a disciple.

Then, he must do it through the church. If I give something in my own name, I will get the praise for it. If I do something through a lodge, the lodge will get the praise for it. If I do good through the church, then the church will get the praise for it. And if the church gets the praise for it, Christ is being honored, for He is head of the church. Here are two questions of great importance: What place has Christ in your hope of salvation? He must have the preeminence here. He must be the one and only hope of salvation. Then what place has Christ in your hope of rewards? Whatever good you do must be done in His name as His disciple if you are to get any rewards for it.

## **THE NATURE, TIME, AND PLACE OF REWARDS**

As to the nature of rewards, there is not much that can be definitely stated. Whatever they are we will be pleased with them. Whatever they are, they will be worth working for. It may be only a "well done, thou good and faithful servant: ...enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21). But whatever it is I want it. It will not be something to be snickered at, and to lose it will be a great loss.

The time of rewards will be when Christ comes. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). If we have to have our rewards today for the good we do, we can do them to get human praise and that will be our only reward. That will end it and there will be no further reward when Christ comes. It is a blessed thing to work for pay if we are willing to wait for our pay until He comes. The place of rewards will be in heaven. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:12). The only place we can put our treasure where it will be safe is in heaven.

Conclusion: Brethren, let us not live and act as if we are wasting our time in the service of God. Let us not live and act as if Christ's rewards for faithfulness were of small value. Let us not live and act as if His promises were mere sound.

## CHAPTER XXIV

# THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TEACHER

Matt. 28:19,20; James 3:1

Introduction: The church has a teaching program as well as a program of evangelism. I would not say there is too much emphasis on evangelism, but I do say there is too little emphasis put on teaching. It is common to cry up evangelism and cry down doctrine or teaching. Evangelism has for its aim salvation of the soul; teaching has for its purpose the salvation of a life. Evangelism thinks of human need; teaching thinks of the glory of God. Evangelism seeks to get men saved; teaching seeks to get men to honor God. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" (Matt. 28:19). Paul worked at both tasks. He pioneered along both lines. He would go through a country evangelizing the people and making disciples, and then he would later visit those places again to confirm and indoctrinate.

The divine and human classification of the human race differs. Man discriminates between his fellows on the ground of birth, of natural ability, of wealth, of race, and of culture. A professor of Ethnology would classify men according to color; as Caucasian, Negroid, Mongolian, Polynesian, etc. A psychologist would class men as extroverts or introverts. French used to divide the race into men, women, and clergymen. Our Sunday School experts divide them into many

groups according to age. But God's classification of humanity is different. He looks on the heart and not on outward appearance. God divides men into two general classes: the natural and the spiritual; those who have had one birth and those who have had two births; the saved and the lost. The great command speaks of teaching the saved. First word for teach means disciple. This is evangelism. The church is to make disciples and then teach those disciples. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt 28:20).

The Bible speaks of two teachers: the divine and the human. The divine teaching must precede the human teaching if there are to be results. Men must first be taught of God before they can be saved or taught. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14); "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:4); "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45); "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (I John 4:5,6). Until God teaches in calling and regeneration we can only teach the historical things of the Bible.

For this teaching program, God endowed the church with pastor and teachers. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11).



James speaks of the responsibilities of teachers: "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:1).

Paul: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27).

Everyone of us who speaks for God should shudder at our responsibility.

### **A. Who are to teach?**

In choosing teachers we should certainly select the most godly and spiritual among us and this is no easy task. What I know of the lives of our members would not make it easy for me to select a teacher. I dare say that nobody can be selected that there might not be some objection to. I do not live with you. I do not know your home life. I do not know much about your social life. I do not shadow any of you to see where you go or what you do. But certainly no teacher of God's word ought to mix and mingle with people of this world in their sinful amusements. I do not believe that any Christian ought to go to a show. If I thought they should I would go. And how unspeakably bad that one should desecrate the Lord's Day by such conduct. I do not see how many Sunday School teachers live with themselves, those who live as the world lives. Unspeakably sad is the very thought that a Sunday School teacher should be found in juke joints, night clubs, and the like. Teachers have a responsibility to practice what they preach. The teacher should be an example for his class to follow. How can a teacher warn against worldliness if he himself is worldly? How can a teacher teach liberal giving if he himself is covetous? How can any teacher warn against sin if he himself is living in either secret or open sin? How can a teacher emphasize honesty if he himself ignores his

obligations and fails to provide things honest in the sight of all men?

### **B. What to teach?**

Teach the word of God. The church as such has no Bible program for teaching arts and sciences. The command says teach them to observe all things Christ commanded. Nothing about physics or science.

### **C. How to teach?**

I would not pretend to lay down any method of teaching as imperative. Our Savior taught by lecture method. His lectures were in the nature of parable and story and quiz. He did not ask many questions, but His disciples put many questions to Him. Our teaching ought to provoke questions and arouse interest in Bible subjects.

### **D. When to teach?**

The teacher teaches all the time. What we teach on Sunday should not be discounted by what we teach on Monday through Saturday.

## CHAPTER XXV

# THE OFFICE OF DEACON

Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3

In our English Bible the word deacon occurs in only five places: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1); "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre" (I Tim. 3:8); "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless...Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 3:10,12,13). But in the Greek New Testament the word occurs many times and is translated minister or servant. And the word is applied to all kinds of ministers or servants: political, ecclesiastical, angelic, and Divine.

In Romans 13:4, it is applied to the civil magistrate who is called "the minister" or "deacon of God to thee for good". The apostles are often called ministers, the very word used for deacon. In Acts 1, Peter says in speaking of Judas, that "he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry" or deaconship (Acts 1:17). And in electing Matthias to succeed Judas, the disciples prayed thus: "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two

men thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry" or deaconship (Acts 1:24,25). Paul, speaking of himself and Apollos says, that they were ministers or deacons by whom the Corinthians believed the gospel. In Eph. 6:21,22 Tychicus is called "a beloved brother and faithful minister" or deacon. The angels of God are declared to be deacons in Hebrews 1:14: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister" or to deacon "for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And our Lord Jesus Christ is called a deacon in Romans 15:8 where Paul says "that Jesus Christ was a minister" or deacon "of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises."

So you see the word itself has no religious connotation; it simply means a minister or one who serves. It is the context in every case which determines the application.

Now this word of general use and varied application is applied to a specified class of officers in the church. And our English version translates the word "deacon" to designate this class of officers. In I Tim. 3, they are mentioned along with the pastors or bishops and their qualifications are given. In the Philippian letter they are addressed along with the bishops, indicating that they hold office in the same church with the pastors or bishops.

In the letter to Timothy the duties of deacons are not given but only their qualifications. And this must be because their duties were already well known. Paul is simply telling Timothy what kind of men to ordain to the office. To discover their duties, we must go back to the beginning of the office and see why they were appointed. And this takes us back to Acts Sixth chapter, where a division of labor was necessary.

## **A. THE ORIGIN OF THE OFFICE. Note,**

1. It did not originate with the founding of the church. The church at Jerusalem existed some time before the office of deacon was instituted. A church can exist without deacons but it cannot function properly without them.

2. It originated in a crisis. The days of persecution for the early church were naturally days of poverty. There were a few well to do but most of the members were poor. In the interest of the whole body a common fund was created to which contributions were voluntarily made by those able to contribute. Barnabas sold a piece of property on Cyprus and put the proceeds into this common fund. Ananias and Sapphira sold some property and kept back part of the price, pretending and claiming they had placed all of it at the apostle's feet. And for lying to the Holy Spirit, they were killed on the spot.

This liberality on the part of the rich greatly increased the labors of the apostles who were giving out rations daily to those in need. The foreign born Jews complained that their widows were being neglected in this daily ministrations. They charged that the apostles were showing partiality to the home born members. When the apostles heard of the complaint, they neither admitted or denied the charge. They suddenly realized the need of a division of labor, and recommended that the church search "out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" of feeding the poor. To use their own words, they said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables" (Acts 6:2). And the word "serve" here is the word for deacon. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry" or deaconship "of the word." In other words, they said, We will deacon or minister the word while these seven men deacon or

serve tables. Here is a clear distinction between two kinds of official service or ministry, the one in spiritual matters and the other in material things.

Look at the results of this division of labor: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

The church of Christ is a spiritual institution in a material or physical world. And while in the physical world it will have material or physical needs. We have many needs today the Jerusalem church did not have and its one major need is a minor need today. They had a multitude of poor people to be fed, while we have a comparable few. They had no church house to build and maintain, for they still used the synagogue as a place of worship and when they were put out of the synagogue, for many years they met in the homes of their people. Today we have church buildings for which there is no direct Scriptural sanction. But it is reason that we should have them. So this matter of serving tables covers all the material needs of a church: feeding the poor, feeding the pastor, feeding the janitor, feeding the furnace, feeding the light meter, and what not. Some things are left to sanctified human reason.

The reason given for deacons in the Jerusalem church was the necessity of a division of labor so the ministers of the word should not be hampered and encumbered with the material side of the church's life. God calls His spiritual servants to a spiritual ministry, and this is to be a life of prayer and preaching the word.

**B. It is interesting to see how other denominations regard this office.**

The Roman Catholic and Episcopal denominations make deacons a lower rank of the clergy who may preach and baptize. Baptists are not supposed to have any ranks in the ministry. The title "Assistant Pastor" is to be objected to because it is practically a recognition of rank. The early churches had a plurality of elders and were paid according to their work and not rank. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (I Tim. 5:17).

"Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (I Tim. 3:11). Does this justify women deacons or deaconesses, or is the reference to the wives of the deacons. This is a mooted point. Dr. Carroll thinks it justifies deaconesses and in his church in Waco, Texas, he used women as deaconesses to look after certain matters that deacons could not well attend to, such as preparing women candidates for baptism, making inquiries into the homes, etc.

It is also thought by some that Phoebe was a deaconess in the church at Cenchrea. The Williams translation renders the word deaconess. It is exactly the same word rendered deacon in Phil. 1:1 and I Tim. 3, gender and all.

A literal translation of I Tim. 3:11 reads thus: "Women in like manner grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." It is argued that this could not refer to women generally, nor to the wives of the deacons because the pronoun "their" is not in the Greek. And also because the context is dealing with official classes in the church. But the next verse says when literally translated, "Let those who serve or deacon be men of one woman."

### **C. Duties of Deacons:**

1. Not a board of directors to run the church.
2. Not a jury to discipline members.
3. Not a pulpit committee to hire and fire the pastor.

Deacons may serve on the pulpit committee as individuals when the church is without a pastor. Nobody has any authority over the pastor but the church acting under the Lord. Let the deacons stick to their work which is that of serving tables, looking after the temporal and material affairs of the church.

### **D. Qualifications of deacons:**

1. Men of good report men with a good name in the community.
2. Full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. Spiritually minded men and men of judgment.
3. Grave or serious minded men not given to levity and frivolity. This is not to be taken as being grouchy or mean and sour faced.
4. Sincere in speech, not double tongued, saying one thing to one person and another thing to someone else.
5. Not given to much wine. In the light of the present distress, I would say, a total abstainer.
6. Not covetous, not greedy of filthy lucre.
7. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Sound in the faith with conviction. Not official teachers but have opportunity for private witnessing.



8. Men who have proved themselves faithful as members of the church.

**E. Reward of Deacons:**

"Purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith" (I Tim 3:13). "For those who render good service win a good standing for themselves in their faith in Christ Jesus." (Williams).

## CHAPTER XXVI

### **THE MEANING OF BAPTISM**

Introduction: Christendom seems to be hopelessly split over the ordinances. It is split over ordinances because split over the way of salvation. The ordinances are closely related to the gospel and the way of salvation. Christendom not even agreed on how many ordinances there are. Some say three, some two and some none. To me it is obviously true there are two, baptism and the Lord's supper. Not the gospel, but picture or represent the gospel. Do not save, but testify to what does save.

Baptism is not an empty ceremony. It has a deep and blessed meaning. It was given for a purpose and when we find the purpose, we find the mode or act. The mode was changed because the design or purpose was perverted. This is easy to see: when men began to think that baptism saves they naturally changed the mode. Here is a lost man; he is sick and can not be immersed but he must be baptized to be saved, so he is sprinkled. Novatian, 250 A. D.

In most of our English translations of the Bible, the word for baptize is not translated, it is anglicised. King James I ordered the translators to keep the old ecclesiastical words without translating them. Baptize is not a translation. The Greek verb is baptizo. It is anglicised by changing the last letter from o to e. The Greek word for sprinkle is rhantizo and it is rightly translated sprinkle. If they had dealt with that word like they did baptizo they would have anglicised it and call it rhantize.

Those who have been sprinkled have been rhantized, not baptized.

John Calvin: "But whether the person who is baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, or whether water be only poured or sprinkled upon him, is of no importance; churches ought to be left at liberty, in this respect, to act according to the differences of countries. The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

### **WHAT BAPTISM IS NOT FOR:**

It is not for the purpose of saving the sinner. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but baptism is not any part of the Gospel. The three gospel facts are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Paul: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" ( I Cor 1:17); "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" (I Peter 3:21); "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

### **WHAT BAPTISM IS FOR:**

1. Baptism is to commemorate the death and burial of Christ. It commemorates by symbol the three facts of Gospel. Baptism testifies to the death of Christ. To commemorate His death we take a sinner who is dead to sin and plant him in the likeness of Christ's death and raise him up in likeness of his resurrection. We take a sinner trusting in Christ and bury him in the liquid grave and then lift him out of it.

2. Baptism illustrates the believer's position before the law of God. What is the believer's legal status or station? He is dead to sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. It is not something to be felt but to be reckoned. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). I must take this by faith. I do not feel as if I am dead to sin, but God says I am, and I take it on faith. Now if I am dead I must be buried and then raised up out of the grave. I must symbolize my own burial and resurrection. As a believer in Christ I have been crucified, buried and raised, and this is what is symbolized in my baptism. I did not know this when I was baptized. You believers here tonight have this advantage over me. I can see the meaning of my baptism now, but I did not see it then. You have a new life to walk in, and this new life is symbolized by the resurrection part of baptism.

So your baptism testifies to the faith you have in Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. By faith you are united to Him and occupy His position before God in the legal sense. As the old man you have sinned and the sentence of death has been executed on your surety Jesus Christ. And now before the law as a new man you are to walk in the new life. This new life is to be lived by faith, faith that you have been crucified with Christ, faith "that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). Baptism anticipates the believer's bodily resurrection from the dead. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Rom. 6:8); "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:29).

Conclusion: Baptism commemorates the resurrection of Christ. It illustrates the believer's death to sin and resurrection to walk in a new life he has in Christ. It anticipates the resurrection of His people.

## CHAPTER XXVII

# SACRAMENTALISM AND BAPTISM

Matt. 3:11; Matt. 12:41; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21

It is the glory of Baptists that we have preached a non-sacramental gospel. We are about the only great denomination in the world that holds that baptism neither saves, helps save, or keeps us saved. We have consistently held to the symbolism of the ordinances over against the sacramental idea. Baptism symbolizes a salvation already obtained through faith and sets forth in beautiful picture the great redemptive acts which are its objective causes.

Catholics have seven sacraments, Protestants have two, and Baptists have none. W. C. Taylor says that sacrament is a word of pagan militarism, alien to the New Testament and to apostolic Christianity. It took centuries to get the false translation of the word out of the printed Bibles, but the idea has outlived the word, and many religionists have no other concept of the ordinances.

And the idea is still expressed in the sacramental translation of the preposition *eis*. Sacramentalists make the preposition look only to the future, expressing purpose and never backwards, expressing cause. It can look either way and the context determines whether it looks forward in the sense of purpose or backwards in the sense of cause. Dr. Robertson says that it is not Greek grammar that determines the translations, but whether a man is evangelical or not. The

general idea of the preposition eis is with reference to the context determining what the reference is "I indeed baptize you with water unto (eis) repentance" (Matt. 3:11). Phillips, an Anglican, translates Matt. 3:11: "I baptize you as a sign that your hearts are changed." Baptism is with reference to repentance; not in order to get a man to repent, but because he has repented.

Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah; not in order to get Jonah to preach but because of his preaching.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38):etc. C. B. W.: "You must repent and, as expression of it, let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ that you may have your sins forgiven." W. C. Taylor: "Be baptized on the basis of the remission of sins previously obtained by repentance."

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21). R. S. V.: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience." In the Greek, the word for body is sarx, meaning the old sinful nature and the word for dirt is the word that means moral defilement. What Peter is saying is that Baptism saves only in figure and is not the washing away of the moral turpitude of depravity. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11); "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James

1:21): James is not prescribing a physical bath for salvation. He is speaking of moral filth.

Sacrament: "In classical usage means an oath, especially a military oath, and also a gauge in money laid down by two contending parties in court, is not strictly a Scriptural term, but occurs repeatedly in the Latin Vulgate as a translation of the Greek mysterion (mystery). It was first loosely employed for all sacred doctrines and ceremonies, and then more particularly for baptism and the Eucharist, and a few other solemn rites connected with Christian worship." Schaff Hyphen Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

"The word was used in two senses (1) as a legal term to denote the sum of money deposited by two parties to a suit which was forfeited by the loser and appropriated to sacred uses; (2) as a military term to designate the oath of obedience taken by newly enlisted soldiers." The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.



# CHAPTER XXVIII

## BAPTISM

Matt. 3:15

Baptism is one of the most familiar subjects to Baptists and we may come to think that we have learned all about it. Many Baptists think they have graduated in this one subject if in no other. But the word of God is so wonderful that we never learn all there is to learn on any subject. Just the last few days I have seen things in the Scriptures on Baptism that I had never seen and understood before. The Bible uses baptism in a literal and figurative way. Literally baptism is the plunging of a person in water and then raising him out of the water. It is both an immersion and an emersion. Figuratively, it is used of suffering and of joy as well. John said that he could only baptize in water but that Christ would baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire. Christ would perform two kinds of baptism. He would baptize in the Holy Spirit. The first time He baptized in the Holy Spirit was on the day of Pentecost. All the lost who have died physically are in a baptism of fire and after the day of judgment all the wicked will be baptized in the lake of fire.

### THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Why was Christ baptized? Why did John at first refuse to baptize Him? What does it mean to fulfill all righteousness? In what way did His baptism fulfill all righteousness? Only in a typical way. It was His pledge to go to the cross and actually provide for sinners the righteousness they so much need.

Christ had another baptism. "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able" (Matt. 20:22); "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50). This baptism was essential to our salvation. A baptism of suffering.

## **THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS**

1. Symbolizes faith in the righteousness He provided in His baptism of suffering.
2. It is like putting on a uniform. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).
3. It ought to be submitted to promptly and gladly. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan (sixty miles) unto John, to be baptized of him" (Matt. 3:13).
4. Washes away sin pictorially.

## **THE BAPTISM OF UNBELIEVERS**

1. Baptism of fire.
2. Begins immediately after death. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Luke 16:23).
3. Continues forever in the lake of fire. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev 20:14).

## CHAPTER XXIX

# THE BAPTISM THAT SAVES

Matt. 3:13-15

At a banquet honoring some athletic celebrities, Helen Wills Moody was called on for a speech. She said something like this: "To be seen one has to stand; to be understood one has to speak distinctly; and to be appreciated one has to sit down."

In this message I want to affirm something and then support that affirmation. I affirm that there is a baptism that saves. In this message we shall discover that baptism. What is baptism?

### **NEGATIVELY:**

*A. THE BAPTISM THAT SAVES IS NOT THE BAPTISM OF THE SINNER IN WATER.*

It is not denied that water baptism saves figuratively and symbolically. Saul was already saved when he was told by Ananias to arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. He was converted and called into the ministry when he met Jesus on the Damascus road. Water has cleansing properties and is a fit emblem of the blood of Christ that actually cleanses from all sin. It is also an emblem of the Holy Spirit and of the word of God.

### **ARGUMENT:**

1. The contention that water baptism saves is unreasonable as well as unscriptural. If water baptism is essential to salvation, then all who are unbaptized are in their sins and lost, regardless of how much evidence they may give of a birth from above. This theory shuts out all Quakers who do not believe in water baptism at all, but among whom can be found many people of evident spirituality. It also shuts out of heaven all unimmersed Presbyterians and Methodists. This view limits the number of the saved to a small denomination of professing Christians. The implication is narrow, carnal, and cruel.

2. Passages that may seem to teach baptismal remission can be fairly, honestly, and intelligently interpreted in the figurative sense. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Water is here made by some to mean baptism. But it is a false and dangerous scheme of interpretation to make water and baptism interchangeable terms. Water is often used where there can be no possible allusion to baptism. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again" (John 4:13); "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38); "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8); Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). All through the gospel of John water is used in a figurative and spiritual sense to make John 3:5 refer to literal water of baptism is to use the word water in a different sense in which it is used in all the other places. And besides, the word baptism is not in John 3:5 and to introduce baptism here is to violate the meaning of water in the gospel of John.

3. Water baptism cannot save because of the subject to be baptized. Baptism is for believers only and the believer is a saved person. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36); "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" (John 20:31); "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). The pastor is looking for people to baptize; where will he find them among the saved or lost? The answer is obvious.

4. Water baptism cannot save because baptism is no part of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3,4). Paul thanked God that he had not baptized many of the Corinthians. "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;" (1 Cor. 1:14). "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (I Cor. 4:15).

5. Water baptism cannot save because of the design of baptism. Baptism is not a saving sacrament but a symbol of what does save; namely the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Baptism speaks of the legal union between Christ and the believer. The believer is dead to the guilt of sin and alive unto God and to this, baptism testifies. Baptism is a burial and a burial testifies to the death of a person. Our old man was crucified with Christ. Old man does not mean our old nature, our old nature is still very much alive. The old man is the man

of old the person I once was under law and cursed by it and awaiting the day of execution. As a believer in Christ I can look back at the cross and see the sentence of death against me executed in the death of Christ. Christ had my guilt upon Himself and died under it, then rose again, and as my Surety and substitute, I died and rose again in His death and resurrection. Now the purpose of baptism is to symbolize all this, to put it before our eyes in visible symbol.

This death and resurrection is not something to be felt, but something to be reckoned as so because God says so. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). Reason may argue, but I do not feel dead to sin. But feeling has nothing to do with it. What God says is the important thing. And God says that what Christ did on the cross and in coming out of the tomb is what saves us. The believer is declared to be dead to the guilt of sin and alive unto God on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ.

### *B. THE BAPTISM THAT SAVES IS NOT THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.*

#### ARGUMENT:

1. Because of the design of Spiritual baptism. Spiritual baptism was not for salvation but for power. Holy Spirit baptism was associated with the miraculous. The disciples (who were already saved) were told to tarry in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit who would empower them for witnessing. Holy Spirit baptism at Pentecost enabled the disciples to speak in tongues or languages they did not know. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). In Acts 8 the Samaritans who had been converted under Philip's preaching and had been baptized in water received the Spiritual baptism through the laying on of the

hands of Peter and John. "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:17). In Acts 10, Cornelius and others heard Peter say that whoever believed in Christ should receive remission of sins. And as Peter spake they believed and the Spirit fell on them and they spake in tongues. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (Acts 10:43-46). I do not believe we have Holy Spirit Baptism today; else we would have people speaking in languages unknown to them as well as performing other miracles as they did in the early church. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

And so the baptism that saves is neither water baptism nor Spiritual baptism. It is not the baptism of the sinner in anything. The baptism that saves is the baptism of the Savior at Calvary. The Bible speaks of baptism in water, in the Holy Spirit, in fire, and in suffering. And the way to be saved is to trust in what Christ suffered on the cross.

John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River. He was baptizing people who came to him confessing their sins. He refused to baptize anyone else. He turned down the Jews who wanted to be baptized as descendants of Abraham. Jesus walked from Galilee to the Jordan and asked John to baptize Him. John demurred, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me?" (Matt. 3:14). John was baptizing self confessed sinners and he could not think of Jesus as a sinner. But Jesus prevailed by saying. "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"

(Matt. 3:15). John then baptized Him. Jesus was not a sinner but He was in the sinner's place and to save sinners He must work out a perfect righteousness for them. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). And so John's baptism of Jesus fulfilled all righteousness only typically and figuratively. It pointed to another baptism of Jesus when He would be baptized in suffering and thus provide righteousness for sinners. The baptism of Jesus was a prophecy and pledge of the cross.

And so the baptism that saves was the baptism of Christ at Calvary. We find Christ speaking of another baptism after His water baptism. On His last trip to Jerusalem He told His disciples of His approaching death under the figure of a baptism. "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able" (Matt 20:20-22); "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50).

On the cross our dear Savior was immersed in suffering. Hear Him in the prophetic word: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me" (Ps. 18:4,5).

The cross is the place to look for salvation. The way of the cross leads home. The water baptism of Christ typified His baptism of suffering; and our baptism in water symbolizes



what He did in his death and resurrection. His water baptism looked forward to the cross and our water baptism looks back to the cross. The baptismal pool that actually washes away sin was filled at Calvary, filled with the blood of Christ.

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Emanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see,  
That fountain in his day;  
And there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.

"Ere since by faith, I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die." --Cowper.

## CHAPTER XXX

### **THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20; I Cor. 10:16, 17, 20, 21; I Cor. 11:17-34

The Old Covenant religion was characterized by ceremonies and the priest was the important person. He offered sacrifices for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. These ceremonies were typical and found their fulfillment in Christ. This made them temporary. They passed away with the coming of Christ and the one sacrifice He made. In the New Covenant religion there are but two ceremonies or ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism symbolizes the work of Christ in death and resurrection; and also our legal union with Him in death and resurrection. In Him we are dead to sin and alive unto God. The Lord's Supper symbolizes our participation of the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection.

Baptism says that the believer is in Christ; the Lord's Supper says that Christ is in the believer. These two ordinances gave us a full picture to the eye of the whole gospel. Do not save but give us a picture of what saves.

We will try to answer some pertinent questions concerning the Lord's Supper. 1. What is it? 2. Why observe it? 3. How should we observe it?

## **A. WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?**

1. It is a memorial supper. It is to be done in memory of Christ.

2. It is a church ordinance, a church act. The church must act in concert. Christ is one bread or loaf and the church is one body. At Corinth it was observed individually or in groups or parties. One group would come and bring their basket and eat, then another group, and so on. The rich would have a big meal and get drunk; the poor would have nothing and go away hungry. Paul says tarry one for another. Thinking of it as a church ordinance, we might ask, Who is to come to the table? What are the steps to take to get to the table?

(1) Salvation- one must be a believer.

(2) Baptism-all Christians say that baptism must precede the Lord's Supper.

(3) Church membership.

(4) Self examination.

## **B. WHY OBSERVE IT?**

1. Because Christ commanded it. "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (I Cor 11:24).

2. It is to help us remember His blood shed for us. "And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:24).

## C. HOW SHOULD WE OBSERVE IT?

1. It is to be done worthily. That is, in a worthy manner. Not a question of personal worthiness. It is not to honor ourselves as if we were worthy. He is to be honored as the one altogether worthy.

2. What is the worthy manner of observing it? Answer: There must be the exercise of three faculties: memory, faith, and hope.

(1) Our memory must work. Memory looks back. We are to remember Christ, not father or mother or wife, or any other human being. And we are to remember Christ on the cross dying for our sins. Christ said: "This do in remembrance of me". We are not to remember Jesus lying in the cradle or Jesus going about doing good. We are to remember Him as He hung on the cross.

(2) Faith must be exercised. What does faith do? It discerns its body. In partaking of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ we are symbolizing our faith. Just as eating is appropriating food for the body; so faith is appropriating the benefits of His shed blood.

(3) Our hope is exercised. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). In observing the Lord's Supper we should look back at the cross and look forward to the future when we will have all the benefits of the cross in glorification.

Communion is a misunderstood word. We talk about communing with one another at the Lord's table. It is not communing with one another but with Christ. We commune with one another only in the sense that we are physically together, but we all participate together as a unit of His blood

by means of the symbol. We participate symbolically occasionally while we participate by faith continually.

The Corinthians perverted the Lord's Supper:

1. By mixing with heathen ceremonies, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (I Cor. 10:21).

2. By making it a common meal to satisfy hunger. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Cor. 11:31).

3. By failure to discern the Lord's body. "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (I Cor. 11:27).

4. The order and meaning of the Lord's table. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be

condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come" (1 Cor. 11:23-34).

# CHAPTER XXXI

## THE MINISTRY

I Cor. 4th Chapter

Paul tells how ministers are to be regarded, what account is to be taken of them, what attitude people should have toward them. We should not be too hasty in criticizing them or passing judgment upon their work.

1. They are ministers of Christ and stewards of the mystery of God. They belong to Christ. They are stewards of mysteries. A steward was a house manager, a slave under his lord, but a master over the other slaves in the same family. The gospel is here called mysteries. Mystery is something known only to the initiated. "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:11). The man who never preaches anything that everybody can't understand is not preaching mysteries.

2. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor 4:2). Plain honesty is what is required of a steward. This is what is expected of bank clerks and others in positions of trust, like public officials.

3. Human judgment does not count in appraising the work of preachers. The preacher cannot judge his own ministry. Paul was not justified by what he thought of his work. He placed little importance to what the Corinthians' thought of it. The

Lord is the only one who has the right or ability to judge. Failure to be conscious of one's own sin does not mean that he is innocent. Most prisoners plead "not guilty".

4. "Judge nothing before the time" (1 Cor. 4:5). Stop passing judgment, quit criticizing. The censorious habit was ruining the Corinthian church. Wait and let the Lord judge when He comes. He alone can judge the secret things of a man's ministry. He will turn on the light and reveal it all. Wait and get His praise.

5. These principles are to be applied in their thoughts about Paul and Ananias. Apply these principles and you will not be puffed up for one against another.

6. It is God who makes ministers to differ. He speaks only of true God called ministers.

Preachers are to have no credit for their difference in gifts. But at Corinth they were making their different gifts ground for division. Different gifts are a great blessing. They are sovereignly bestowed. No preacher is the best example on all points. In calling and qualifying preachers, God does not imitate the candle maker who brings a tub full of tallow and pours it into one mold. All candles come out of candle molds just alike. We have diversity of gifts and divisions of labor. Exhortation, exposition, interpretation, tactfulness in visiting the sick and strangers.

Paul contrasts between the Corinthians and the apostles and uses sarcasm and irony. They were satisfied and having an easy time; the apostles were having a hard time.



## CHAPTER XXXII

### **"FEED MY SHEEP"**

John 21:16

Introduction: This conversation between our Lord and Peter is one of the most beautiful and interesting stories of the New Testament. Our Lord excelled in conversation for in all things He has the preeminence. Whenever He conversed with anyone there was a sermon rich in truth. Think of His talk with Nicodemus, the fallen woman at Jacob's well, the pharisees, His disciples.

These words of our Lord to Peter were designed to administer reproof and also to communicate forgiveness. Peter had behaved badly as a disciple of Christ. Along with the other disciples he had forsaken and fled but he had done worse than that. He had denied with cursing that he even knew the Lord. Christ had died and had been buried, but Peter had been to the grave and found it empty. More than that he had seen the risen Christ and was convinced that He was alive. But even so, Peter did not expect the Lord to have any further use for him and so one day he said to the other disciples, "I go a fishing" (John 21:3). And they were in the same mood and said "We also go with thee." But after a night of so called fisherman's luck, the Lord appears to them and turns failure into success. He apparently ignores the others and says to Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" (John 21:15). This cutting question thrice spoken hurt and humbled Peter. It was like a dagger in his heart. But the command, "Feed my sheep"

(John 21:16) also thrice spoken was the way of forgiveness and restoration. Peter had lost his office only temporarily; the Lord would fulfill His promise to wash Peter's feet and give him a part with Him. He forgave his conduct and recommissioned him. Peter and Judas both fell from an office, the office of apostleship. But with this difference: Judas, as a lost man, lost his office forever; Peter as a saved man lost his only temporarily. Judas was an apostate; Peter was a backslider. Judas was an unbeliever and a devil; Peter was a sheep and a believer. Judas had remorse of conscience; Peter had godly sorrow. Peter came back to Christ with humility and penitence; Judas went away by the suicide route. Judas died at his own hands; Peter died as a martyr.

From this story I have gathered some thoughts that by the Spirit's blessing may prove helpful.

### **A. THIS CHARGE TO PETER REVEALS THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE.**

As the Good Shepherd, Christ had just laid down His life for the sheep. He had taken His life again and was about to leave them in the world. But He still loves them. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). And in His love He commits them to an under shepherd. This command to feed the sheep causes Peter to think of preachers as under shepherds with Christ as the chief shepherd who will reward them for faithful care of His sheep. "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:4). Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

1. The interest He claims in them: "My sheep," "My lambs." They were His (1) by a gift from the Father. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9). (2) By purchase. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28); (3) By reward for His travail of soul. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11).

2. The qualifications required in the pastors, or shepherd. There are several but only one mentioned here: Love to Christ. It was on this question of love that Christ examined and cross examined Peter. He would not trust them to one who did not love Him. It is not love for people but love for Christ that is needed. If we love Him we will love His sheep for His sake. If we love Him we will feed His sheep. If we do not love Him our service will be that of a hireling. "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep" (John 10:12-13). A hireling would starve them or poison them and forsake them. A hireling will fleece them and flog them. He will fleece them for his own interest, or flog them to get something off his chest. I heard of a preacher who boasted of his "sucker list."

3. Provision of pasture. The word of God is the pasture of the sheep. As pastors we must lead them into the pasture.

## **B. DUTY OF THE PASTOR TO HIS PEOPLE.**

There are two words translated "feed". The word in our text is different from the word in the 15th and 17th verses. In those two verses the word means "give food to," but in our text it has a wider meaning and means shepherd or take care of. It includes feeding, but includes all that a shepherd is to do for sheep; feed, protect, govern. Requirements:

1. Unselfishness. "Woe to the idol shepherd who leaveth the flock!" (Zech. 11:17). "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (Ezek. 34:2).

2. Knowledge of the word. The sheep's food is in this book. We are not to feed the flesh but the best principles the graces of faith, hope, love. Our preaching must not give men faith in themselves but in Christ. Hope is the grace that looks to something better in the future. We are feeding this grace when we preach that this earth has nothing for the saint; that the heavenly country is his fatherland. We nourish the grace of love by preaching the sovereign and gracious love of Christ.

## **C. WHAT YOU MUST BE TO THRIVE ON THE WORD.**

1. You must be a sheep or you will not know His voice in His word. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" ( John 10:26).

2. You must be a sheep or else you will not relish the food of the Word.

3. You must be a sheep or else you will listen to false teachers who are thieves and robbers. "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them" (John 10:8).

4. You must be a sheep or else you will not enter by the door into salvation. Christ is the door. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9).

C. D. Cole