


DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE



*An Overview of
Some of the
Essential Doctrines of the Bible*

*by
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Several years ago, following a Bible study, a young man approached me with these words: "*The doctrine that this church teaches, is it new, or historic?*" The answer, of course, is that it is historic, both being in the Bible and there have always been Christians who have held these truths. "*Then I'll consider it,*" he said, "*I've had enough of 'new' doctrines, such as Russelism, Mormonism, etc.*" A commendable attitude indeed!

Though these doctrines are by no means new, there are millions of Christians who have never heard of them in spite of the fact that each of these doctrines we hold with other Christians. The doctrine of Grace we share with many fundamentalists, but they deny the Pentecostal doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of the Bride. We hold the doctrines of the Holy Spirit together with other Pentecostals, but they deny the Bride and Grace. We share the doctrine of the Bride with some Holiness groups, but in denying the Holy Spirit and Grace they greatly distort the Bride. We hold much in common with all dispensationalists, but in denying Pentecost and the miraculous, they create a dispensation within the Church age called "*The Apostolic Age,*" to which all these phenomena are limited. The same is true of the doctrines of the Church and of Sanctification.

It is the combination of these doctrines that is unique to us, though we wish it were not!

GRACE

All Christians accept Grace as an important word, but as a doctrine, it is scarcely known. Of all our doctrines, this one is central. All others are built upon it, as a house is built on a foundation. Any other doctrine, separated from this one, is greatly distorted.

FAITH VS. WORKS

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Romans 3:28.

Scripture could be multiplied to the effect that men are saved by faith, apart from works. This scripture is a summary statement of all of them as well as a summary of Paul's argument here. It is clear and to the point. If one believes that the scriptures do not self-contradict, as we do, then any scripture that would seem to say something else must be misunderstood. It should be re-examined in its context. Obscure passages must be understood in the light of plain scriptures and not the other way around. A person is saved by his faith in Christ and not by anything he does or does not do. If a believer could be lost by doing or not doing anything, that would be to retain salvation by works. How can we finish what we cannot start?

"Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

Galatians 3:3.

The Galatians had received the Gospel and were saved by faith. Paul had not taught them anything about

keeping the Law. The judaizers who followed Paul did not deny their faith, but claimed it was incomplete without the law.

Paul's argument is that their conversion was by faith alone. The keeping of the law is by the efforts of flesh. How can flesh perfect, or complete, a work of the Spirit? That this has to do with sanctification is clear. The words "*made perfect*" mean completed, or fulfilled. We are sanctified by faith apart from works.

"And the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth them shall live in them." Galatians 3:12.

*"And if by Grace, then it is no more works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, Then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work."
Romans 11:6.*

That the keeping of the law and its requirements is works for righteousness should be obvious. The above scriptures also plainly so state. Further, "*the law is not of faith.*" Could one keep the law, he would not need faith. But even under the law men were justified by faith (Habakkuk 2:4). The law was given to show the need for faith. It cannot be both ways! It cannot be both faith and works. Clearly faith excludes works for righteousness.

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION

We hold predestination, election and foreknowledge to be part of the doctrine of Grace. The scriptural definitions are: Predestination has to do with the future, God's plan for His children; foreknowledge has to do with the past, God from eternity past knew His children; election is His choosing and calling them.

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."
Romans 8:29.

That all knowledge is eternally present with God, all evangelicals affirm, but God's plans are worked out in the context of time. This scripture does not say that some are predestinated to be saved. It says that from eternity past God foreknew His children and made plans for them. These plans are here summed up in this, *"to be conformed to the image of His Son."* All the Christian life is the working of the Holy Spirit to bring about this conformity. It is often said that for God to know is to predetermine. This does not follow. This and other scriptures distinguish between these two words.

"Having predestinated us to the adoption of children," **Ephesians 1:5.**

"In Whom we have an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own Will," **Ephesians 1:11.**

Here are the other two scriptures where the word *"predestinated"* is used. As in Romans, we are here told that the rights of sonship and heirship are assured to all God's children by His eternal purpose. Being dependent only on His purpose, the fulfillment of these promises is not in any way dependent on us.

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,

through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ," I Peter 1:2.

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him," Ephesians 1:4.

To "*elect*" means to call out of, to select, to choose. God is sovereign and chooses whom He will. This the scriptures make plain. It is clear, though, from the above scripture, that His foreknowledge, not His sovereignty is the basis of His choice.

The Holy Spirit separates (sanctifies) first provisionally; then in our lifetime, in the call of the Gospel, He applies the Blood of Christ. This is individual. Being "*chosen in Him*" is collective. It is in Christ that we are the elect. The purpose of election is "*that we should be holy and without blemish before Him.*" Thus, election reaches from eternity past to our lifetime and on to eternity future.

ETERNAL SECURITY

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," Acts 16:31.

Here is a statement of how we are saved. It is clear and without qualification. If there were any other requirements to be saved they should have been added here. There are many other scriptures to this same effect and none has any qualification whatever. All scriptures produced to show that believers can be lost must be made to harmonize with this or the scriptures self-contradict.

This we do not believe. It is not difficult to harmonize them with this plain statement because their contexts clearly show they are talking about other things.

It is believers who are saved and they are saved by believing. Nothing more is required. That everyone who gives an intellectual assent to Christianity is not saved is evident, for the scripture reads, "*Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ.*" This belief is both trust and commitment. These are they who will "*never perish.*"

*"That whosoever believeth in Him
should not perish, but have
everlasting life." John 3:16.*

Here we have our Lord's promise that believers will never be lost. He says this is because of His purpose. He put no qualification whatsoever to this promise. It is completely unconditional.

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you,
he that heareth My word and
believeth on Him that sent me,
hath everlasting life, and shall
not come into condemnation; but
is passed from death unto life."
John 5:24.*

Again we have the words of the Lord, without any qualification. He says that for believers, eternal life is a present possession. Ours is a "*know so*" salvation. He plainly denies the possibility of their ever being lost. Passage from death unto life is both past and permanent.

GRACIOUSNESS

*"Let the Word of Christ dwell in
you richly in all wisdom;
teaching and admonishing one*

*another in psalms and hymns and
spiritual songs, singing with
grace in your hearts to the Lord."
Colossians 3:16.*

The Grace of God concerns not only what He has done for us, but also what He is doing in us. It is the indwelling Word of Christ that makes us gracious. The more richly it dwells within, the more gracious we become. Inner character is changed by this Grace in our hearts and thanksgiving and praise are on our lips.

*"Let your speech be always with
grace, seasoned with salt, that ye
may know how ye ought to answer
every man." Colossians 4:6.*

This inner graciousness expresses itself in gracious behavior. Gracious speech comes from the abundance of a heart filled with grace. It is seasoned in that it is fitting to both speaker and hearer and it is appropriate to the situation. Gracious speech comes from a gracious life.

*"But He giveth more grace.
Wherefore He saith, God resisteth
the proud, but giveth grace to the
humble." James 4:6.*

Here we see the qualities of a gracious character: humility, graciousness, and mutual submission. None of these qualities is native to human nature, but are the marks of God's grace worked into our lives. To hold the doctrine of Grace and be ungracious is a self-contradiction.

PENTECOST

This study does not attempt to cover all the doctrines concerning the Holy Spirit which we hold in common with all Evangelical Christians, but only those doctrines that bear on Pentecostal teaching.

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

There is one doctrine that is greatly misunderstood by Pentecostals and Holiness groups as well. This concerns the "*Baptism of (or by) the Holy Spirit.*" The criticisms of Fundamentalists on this point are correct, that the fullness of the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit are not the same.

THE PROPHECY

"John answered, saying unto them all, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire.'" Luke 3:16.

John's baptism was a declaration of repentance. It had much in common with Jewish practice, especially the baptism of proselytes. It was not his practice of baptizing that startled the Jews, but his preaching. As John baptized with water, he said Jesus would baptize with the Spirit. This Jesus did not do during His ministry before the cross. He continued John's practice of baptizing. Paul later explained the Christian meaning of water baptism.

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1:5.

This verse shows that Spirit baptism was after this time, the time of Jesus' ascension. The second chapter of Acts describes that event.

THE FULFILLMENT

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4.

In this description of what Jesus promised in Acts 1:5, we see three distinguishing phenomena: wind, fire, and languages. This is the only scripture account of wind and fire. In the four other accounts in The Acts where persons received the Spirit, there was the phenomenon of "tongues," or languages, but not fire or wind. In two accounts, Acts 10:44 and 19:6, it is said that they "*spake with tongues.*" In the other two, Acts 8:17 and 9:17, it is, without, doubt strongly implied. "*Tongues*" is the sign of being filled with the Spirit (Acts 10:44) and the wind and fire were the signs of the Baptism.

THE CHURCH

*"For by one Spirit were we all
baptized into one Body, whether
Jews or Gentiles, whether bond
or free, and have all been made
to drink into one Spirit."
I Corinthians 12:13.*

This scripture tells us that the Baptism in (or with) the Spirit is not many events, but one. The King James version says, "*are baptized.*" The Greek and all other English versions correctly say "*were baptized.*" This puts the Baptism with the Spirit in the past. The third thing this verse tells us is that the baptism has to do with the Body, the Church. The Baptism of the Spirit was the formation of the Church on the day of Pentecost. All we who are members were baptized at that time.

THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT ***The Initial Experience***

There are only five descriptions of believers being filled with the Spirit given in the scriptures. They are all in the Book of Acts: 2:4; 8:15-17; 9:17; 10:44; and 19:6. In all five accounts "*tongues*" are either stated or implied. In each case, it was believers who were filled with the Spirit, not baptized. In each case, the experience followed conversion. In Acts 10:44 it is expressly said that tongues-speaking was the sign of receiving the Spirit. There is no other pattern given. There is no indication anywhere in the New Testament that this would be changed. This is the character of the Church Age.

A Continuing Life

By the examples given, such as Acts 4:8, one of the results of being filled with the Spirit is effective witness to the Gospel. Another result, as in Acts 13:9, is Spirit-filled miracle working. In Ephesians 5:18, saints

who had been filled with the Spirit are enjoined to be filled with the Spirit. This does not mean that a believer may lose the gift of the Spirit, but that the Spirit-filled life is progressive.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." I Corinthians 12:1.

*"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."
I Corinthians 12:4.*

Another very misunderstood subject is "*spiritual gifts*." In I Corinthians 12:1 the word for gifts is in italics, being supplied by the translators. It is not in the original. In the Greek, the word "*spiritual*" is in the plural: "*now concerning spirituals*." This, of course, does not make sense in English though it is good Greek. We might say, "*now concerning things of the Spirit*." The point is these are not gifts in the sense of presents, wrapped up and given to someone.

In I Corinthians 12:4, and all other places where the word "*gifts*" is used, it is the word which we have in English, "*charisma*," and is in the plural. Therefore, we might say "*now concerning spiritual graces*." These graces are abilities given to persons to benefit the Body. It is the Body of the Church that is gifted, as we would say "*a gifted musician*." These abilities are the ways the Spirit "*manifests*" Himself in our midst (I Corinthians 12:7). However I Corinthians 14:32 makes it plain that these abilities are subject to the control of the endowed individual.

These graces, or abilities, are nine: wisdom, knowledge, faith, discerning of spirits, healings, miracles, prophecy, tongues and interpretation of tongues. (I Corinthians 12:8-10). The first four here listed are quiet gifts. The next two are spectacular gifts, and the last three are vocal gifts.

These are not some natural and some supernatural abilities. They are all endowments of the Spirit. Wisdom

and knowledge are as supernatural as healing and miracles.

There is not even the slightest hint or expectation in the New Testament that these phenomena would cease at any time in this Church Age. A fair reading of the New Testament will impress the expectation that they would continue until the Lord's return. Indeed, there has scarcely been a time when these phenomena were not manifested among some group of believers. The scripture discusses these gifts as common occurrences and as the norm of Christian experience. They still are!

THE PURPOSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE ***The Evidence of the Spirit's Fullness***

*"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 10:45-46.*

It was the "speaking with tongues" by "the Gentiles" that convinced these Jews that the Gentiles also had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. That was the only thing that convinced them. Thus, tongues-speaking is the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. It is the only evidence the scripture gives.

The Sign of the Spirit's Presence

"In the Law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all this they will not hear

Me, saith the Lord. Wherefore, tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." I Corinthians 14:21-22.

Paul here quotes Isaiah 28:11. Isaiah, in turn, was commenting on Deuteronomy 28:49. For Moses, the men of other tongues were foreigners who would punish Israel's waywardness. For Isaiah, they were the Babylonians. In either case, their tormentors would speak an "unknown" language.

Paul does not say that the experience of speaking in the Spirit is the fulfillment of these prophecies. They had been fulfilled for over six hundred years. He draws a parallel. Just as a language unknown to the Jews was a sign to their unbelief that this was God's judgment, just so now, "tongues" are a sign to unbelievers. This was so in Acts 2 and has often been the case since. Tongues are a sign of the presence of God among His people.

Spirit Imparted Power

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." Acts 1:8.

The third purpose of this experience is the impartation of Divine Power. Here Jesus said the Spirit would empower them to be effective witnesses. In Acts 3:12, Peter declares it is the power to do the miraculous.

The Necessity of the Experience

"And being assembled together with them, (He) commanded them that they should not depart from

Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me.
Acts 1:4.

Here Jesus promised the Spirit to His apostles. Ten days later, they and one hundred eight others were "*filled with the Spirit.*"

"For the promise is unto you (Jews) and to your children, and to all that are afar off (Gentiles), even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39.

Here, as clearly as can be said, this gift as it had been seen and experienced in this chapter, is promised to all "*the called.*" If this does not mean all of the Church Age, language means nothing!

This experience is needed because it was promised by the Lord and His apostles. It is needed for power to evangelize (Acts 1:8). It is needed for power to bear sufferings. (Acts 9:16-17). It is needed for power in prayer (Romans 8:26-27).

PAUL'S GOSPEL

Paul's Apostleship

The apostleship of Paul is unique. Peter and the others of the twelve had a common apostleship. They were commissioned at the same time (Matthew 10); they are called "*the twelve*" (Matthew 26:20), "*the apostles of the Lamb*" (Revelation 21:14) and as their reward they shall "*sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" (Matthew 19:28). None of this is said of the Apostle Paul.

Paul's Commission

"But the Lord said unto him (Ananias), Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake." Acts 9:15-16.

This passage (Acts 9:15-16) is the account, not only of Paul's conversion experience, but also of his commission as an apostle. The word "*apostle*" is not here used, but the word "*chosen*" and his commission to bear Christ's Name and his consequent sufferings, together with his later references to the experience (Acts 22 & 26) show this is so.

The word "*apostle*" means a personally commissioned representative. This is why Paul says in I Corinthians 9:1, "*Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*" He was commissioned, not by Jesus during His

earthly ministry as were the twelve, but by the risen Lord. He also received his revelation of the Gospel from the risen Lord. (I Corinthians 11:23).

*"Truly the signs of an apostle
were wrought among you in all
patience, and wonders, and
mighty deeds." II Corinthians
12:12.*

Here in chapter eleven, verses 22 through 28, Paul presents his credentials as an apostle. They are: unusually miraculous works, signs and wonders, his Jewishness and his great sufferings. Remarkably, one of his credentials is his patience!

Nor was all this subjective. Ananias was witness to his commission (Acts 9) and he calls the Corinthians themselves as his witnesses concerning the results of his apostleship.

Peter & Paul

During the Council of Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15, Peter accepted Paul's apostolic ministry, saying that his own experience in taking the Gospel to the Gentiles justified Paul's ministry among the Gentiles. Later, Paul publicly rebuked Peter for compromising the Gospel (Galatians 2:7-8). If Peter refused Paul's rebuke, it is not recorded. What he wrote in his own letter would indicate that he accepted the reproof. Peter and Paul are clearly equals.

*"Even as our beloved brother
Paul also according to the wisdom
given unto him hath written unto
you; as also in all his epistles,
speaking in them of these things;
in which are some things hard to*

be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." II Peter 3:15-16.

Peter not only accepted the legitimacy of Paul's ministry and apostleship, but also his message. Even if one could not fully comprehend Paul, his writings are scripture and are to be so respected!

Paul's Dispensation

"For if I do this thing (preaching the Gospel) willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation is committed unto me." I Corinthians 9:17.

There are several meanings of the word "dispensation." The meaning here, and also in Eph. 3:2 and Col. 1:25, is responsibility - stewardship. In Ephesians he says this stewardship and responsibility of his apostleship are for the Gentiles. Further, in Galatians 2:1-10 Paul says the twelve apostles and elders of Jerusalem agreed that Peter's apostleship was to the Jews while Paul's was to the Gentiles. Of course, Peter preached to Gentiles and Paul preached to Jews, but their apostleships and the success of their ministries were in the spheres of their callings; Peter to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles.

In Ephesians 3:2, Paul says he was a steward of the mysteries of God. He tells of seven mysteries that summarize his Gospel. They are:

- The mystery of Israel's blindness (Rom. 11:25)
- The hidden mystery (Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:9)
- The blessed hope (I Cor. 15:51-52)
- The Church (Eph. 5:32)

The mystery of God (or godliness) (Col.2:2; I Tim.3:16)
The mystery of iniquity (II Thess. 2:7)
The mystery of the faith (I Tim. 3:9)

PAUL'S MINISTRY
To the Gentiles

*"And He said unto me, Depart:
for I will send thee far hence unto
the Gentiles." Acts 22:21.*

In this chapter, Paul gives his defense to his countrymen. He tells of an experience in the temple years before when the Lord specifically commissioned him to go to the Gentiles. In verse eighteen, the Lord had told him the Jews would not accept him. This chapter shows the violence of their rejection. In Romans 15:18-21 Paul summarizes his ministry to the Gentiles and how he was received. His letters to the churches confirm his success in evangelizing the Gentiles.

To the Church

*"Who now rejoice in my sufferings
for you, and fill up that which is
behind of the afflictions of Christ
in my flesh for His Body's sake,
which is the Church: whereof I
am made a minister, according to
the dispensation of God which is
given to me for you, to fulfill the
Word of God; even the mystery
which hath been hid from ages
and generations, but is now made
manifest." Col. 1:24-26.*

Here Paul says he received from God a
stewardship (Dispensation) which included many

sufferings for Christ. The Lord had told Ananias (Acts 9:16) that He would show Paul how great things he must suffer for Christ's sake. Paul was anxious to fulfill, or complete, all these sufferings, which he said was cause for his rejoicing.

This stewardship made him a minister of the Gospel (vs. 23) and a minister of the Church (vs. 25). It was his responsibility to "*fulfill the Word of God*" by fully proclaiming the mystery revealed to him, without which the Gospel was not complete. No other writer of scripture makes such a claim. This alone makes the Pauline message of paramount importance!

For Us Today

Since the Word of God is our "*sole rule for faith and practice*," Paul's apostleship and Gospel extend to us and to the end of this age of the Church. All scripture must be understood in the light of Paul's revelation.

PAUL'S SPECIAL REVELATION *Paul's Claim*

Peter (II Pet. 3:15-16) speaks of the wisdom given to Paul. He acknowledges some of Paul's teaching is difficult, but says that to misconstrue his Gospel is to wrest the scriptures.

The Scriptural Evidence

Of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, thirteen bear Paul's name. This is nearly one-half of its documents and twenty-five percent of its pages. Twenty-seven percent of its pages were written by Luke, Paul's disciple. The history of the Church shows that all sound doctrine is Pauline.

THE BRIDE

John's Vision

*"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
Revelation 19:7-9.*

This scene comes near the close of John's revelation. The plagues are now spent, the victories are won and evil is vanquished. Matthew 24 & 25 is another account of this time. This event will occur before the King *"sits on the throne of His glory"* (Matt. 25:31). This is the consummation of the age. It is clearly future.

The marriage of the Lamb and His Bride occurs at this time. Marriage, the closest of unions, implies maturity and fellowship. The phrase *"righteousness of saints"* is plural in the original. Modern versions read *"righteous acts of saints."* This shows that the Bride represents a group of people, that this is a qualified people, and that it was the lives of these saints on earth that qualified them. This is the vision of the Apostle John.

Paul's Espousal

"Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly; and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one

husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." II Corinthians 11:1-3.

Paul says he had espoused the Corinthians to Christ as a bride to a husband. He did not say that he had espoused the Church to Christ, but individuals. This chapter makes it clear that it is Paul's preaching and doctrine that espoused them to Christ.

He expressed concern that this engagement might be broken. Again, it is as individuals that this would or would not occur. The seduction of Eve to sin by the serpent was an illustration of how this could happen.

His fear was that they would be "*corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*" unto "*another gospel.*" This would involve disaffection in both doctrine and practice. The Galatians were corrupted doctrinally. The Corinthians were corrupted by carnality. Both denied the headship of Christ.

A Personal Experience

*"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first (pre-eminent) love."
Revelation 2:4.*

Paul espoused persons, not the Church. He addressed them as individuals, though collectively. In the above passage, the pronouns are singular. The espousal to Christ comes to the heart when the Spirit makes the truth real to you! Defection is also personal and a matter of the heart. Now is the time when the wedding garment, the "*fine linen, clean and white*" is made. Any bridehood is a matter of the heart and this is no exception. As our love for Christ grows we are changed from glory to glory (II Cor. 3:18).

Other Figures

"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. 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 (disqualified)."

I Corinthians 9:24-27.

Here Paul presents the same teaching using figures from athletics. The purpose of the Christian life is to gain a prize, a crown. Just as athletes must discipline their lives, so must we. Just as they can be disqualified, so can we. It is not that we can be disqualified from eternal life, but from the prize, the crown of Christian living. Let the Olympic runner, boxer, or wrestler teach us about the purpose of Christian living.

*"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 (gain) Christ."
Philippians 3:7-8.*

Now the figure is from commerce, gains and losses. Paul had made a balance sheet of his life. The things that were formerly credits are now debits and the things that were formerly debits are now credits. The only gain that is worth our life is Christ; to be found in His righteousness, to come to know Him, to experience the fellowship of His sufferings, to be made conformable unto His death to attain to "a better resurrection." All else is worse than a wasted life.

*"The Spirit Itself beareth witness
with our spirit, that we are the
children of God; and if children,
then heirs; Heirs of God, and
joint-heirs with Christ; if so be
that we suffer with Him, that we
may be also glorified together."
Romans 8:16-17.*

This is an illustration from law. The New Testament declares that believers are children of God. Children are heirs of their parents, and believers are heirs of God. We can be joint-heirs with Christ. Not all believers will be joint-heirs with Him. This should be self-evident from the text and from life.

*"Nay, in all things we are more
than conquerors through Him that*

loved us." Romans 8:37.

Here the figure is military: Christians can be the conquerors! This is the same word sometimes translated "*overcomers*". Every conceivable adverse circumstance of life is listed, but we can be "*more than conquerors*". Not every believer achieves this kind of victorious living, but he can! This is the life He has given us to live.

All these circumstances of life, the bride, the athlete, the business man, the heir, the general, all show in different ways what God wants us to attain unto by living for Him here and now.

SANCTIFICATION

Paul's doctrine of sanctification clearly expounds both theory and practice. It is very different from modern theologies, but unlike them, it works!

TWO HEADS ***The Two Adams***

"And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam is a quickening Spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is the Lord from heaven."

I Corinthians 15:45-47.

Paul contrasts two persons, Adam and Christ, whom he calls the last Adam. The last Adam was the progenitor of a new spiritual race, a "new creation." Adam's race is that which is born of the flesh. The new creation is that which is born of the Spirit, "born again."

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Romans 5:19.

Adam's sin made all his descendants sinners. While this is not at all a popular doctrine, it is thoroughly scriptural. Common experience and observation should be enough to convince, even apart from scripture.

Just as Adam's sin made all the sons of Adam

sinner, just so the obedience of Christ unto death has made all the sons of God righteous. There are two creations, of which Adam and Christ are the heads.

Two Corporate Men

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him." Romans 6:6.

"For to make in Himself of twain one new man." Ephesians 2:15b.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:22,24.

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man." Colossians 3:9-11.

A basic concept of the Apostle Paul is "*the old man*" and the "*the new man*." Notice that none of the scriptures uses the term "*my old (or new) man*." While every believer possesses the natures of both, these are collective terms, not individual. There is only one old man (the old creation, or all that we were in Adam); there is only one new man (the new creation, or all that we are in Christ).

The references in Ephesians and Colossians tell us to put off the old man and put on the new man. These are as garments (habits) that are two different ways of living. The old man is the lifestyle of the first, sinful creation. The new man is the lifestyle of the new creation. For the Christian, this is as simple, and as effective, as changing

clothes. Other verses are: II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15.

Two Identifications

We saw in Romans 5:19 that as sons of Adam we were sinners. We were identified with him in sin. The result of this is a sinful life. But we are now identified with Christ and His righteousness. The result is a righteous life.

*"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. **Romans 6:3,8.**"*

The reason we are now identified with Christ and no longer with Adam is because we, by faith, are identified with Him in His death. In that He died for us, we died with Him. As He now lives, we too, live in Him.

TWO REALMS Their Natures

*"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."
Ephesians 5:8.*

There are two realms of existence which Paul here contrasts as light and darkness. Formerly we lived in the realm of darkness. Now, in Christ, we live in the realm of light. This is a strong contrast, but is very descriptive of the difference between the believer and the unbeliever.

"For if by one man's offense death

reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." Romans 5:17.

Now the two realms are contrasted as being death and life. Those apart from Christ are "*dead in trespasses and sins*" (Ephesians 2:1). They live in death. Those to whom Christ has given life live in the realm of life. They "*shall never die*" John 11:26.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:21.

These two realms are darkness and light, death and life, and here they are presented to us as sin and grace. Darkness and death are, of course, caused by sin. Men are sinners because they are born in sin and live in sin. All who are in Christ are in the realm of grace. It is by grace we are saved, and it is by grace we live. It is nothing of us and all of grace.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." Romans 8:5.

Finally, these two realms are flesh and Spirit. The flesh is darkness, sinful, death; the Spirit is life, light and grace. Unbelievers are after the flesh, while believers are after the Spirit. Believers may "*walk after the flesh,*" but they are not after the flesh. Since we are after the Spirit, we must also walk after the Spirit.

THEIR SUBJECTS

*"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: For ye are not under the Law, but under grace." **Romans 6:12-14.***

These two realms of existence are dominions, each with a sovereign and vassals. Sin is the sovereign of the evil realm and all the lost are vassals. They do what sin would have them do; they can do nothing else. God is the Sovereign of the realm of Life and His vassals obey Him. They have no obligation to their former sovereign, sin.

*"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" **Romans 6:16.***

The figure here is master and slaves, and is more than just a figure, for this is a reality that every Christian experiences. As sinners, we were the slaves of sin. Whatever sin commanded, we did. Now we have a new master, righteousness, and we obey him. We have no obligation to our former master, but we can serve him if we choose. If we yield to sin, we again enslave ourselves

to sin. But we can yield to righteousness and obey it.

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the Body of Christ; That ye should be married to another, even Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Romans 7:4.

In the analogy of marriage we see that our death with Christ severed all our old ties and obligations. We are free to be united with the risen Christ to live a new and fruitful life.

TWO NATURES ***Flesh and Spirit***

*"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."
Romans 8:6.*

The sinner has but one mind, the carnal mind. The Christian has two minds; one that he inherited from Adam and one from his heavenly Father. Paul has as much to say about the mind as he says about the heart. He means by the mind, the will, the purpose of life. The carnal mind is the will of the flesh; The spiritual mind is the will of the Spirit. The flesh and the Spirit are the natures of "*the old man*" and "*the new man*" within the Christian.

That there is a struggle within such a divided personality should not be surprising. This struggle must be resolved before there can be peace.

"For the good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do." Romans 7:19.

This is the common experience of all Christians, but it is not a pleasant one. The flesh and the Spirit struggle within. One must become dominant. When the flesh becomes dominant, the result is a carnal Christian who never realizes his spiritual potential. When the Spirit becomes dominant, there is a spiritual life that can mature in Christian living. How is this done? Hear the apostle: *"Who shall deliver me from the body of his death? I thank God through Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 7:24-25). But what are the mechanics?

Resolving the Struggle

"Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:11.

We "reckon" (count, consider) ourselves to be dead with Christ. This is practice. God says we died with Christ: We count it so. He says that as Christ died for sin, so we died to sin. We agree with Him that this is so.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Romans 6:13.

This is the other half- "yield." We do not yield (give in) to sin, but we yield to God. There is a struggle within. To whom we give in (yield) determines the

outcome. The secret is comprised of two important words - "*reckon*" and "*yield*."

The Life of Victory

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5:25.

The Spirit is the realm in which all Christians live. Since this is so, it is inconsistent for a Christian not to "*walk in the Spirit*." The word "*live*" means this is the life we have. The word "*walk*" means our manner of life, our lifestyle. If one's living is not consistent with his life, he is miserable and defeated. Consistent living produces joy. To be led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14) means mature Christian living.

THREE CLASSES OF MEN

I Corinthians 2:14-3:3 ***The Natural Man***

The truth of this passage is grasped by very few Christians. Most theologies do not even consider it, but it is fundamental to Pauline teaching. Only these distinctions explain the spiritual conditions we see among Christians.

The natural man is the unregenerate son of Adam. He may or may not be religious, but he is not spiritual. He does not "*receive*" spiritual things. It is not that he does not know what we are saying, he will not receive it. He considers it foolish. In the very nature of things he cannot know (experience) "*the things of the Spirit of God*" because he is not spiritual.

The Spiritual Man

This is a person who is born of the Spirit of God and lives in the Spiritual realm. He is in a position to discriminate *between "all things"*, but others do not understand him. Because he has the mind of Christ he can enter into spiritual thinking foreign to others.

The Carnal Man

This kind of person is of two classes. The first is said to be carnal because, although he is born of the Spirit, he has not yet learned to live and think like a spiritual person. He is like a babe that has not yet matured.

In the second use of the word "*carnal*," the form is slightly different. It means someone who should be mature, but is not. He has had opportunity to become spiritual, but has not grown spiritually. This is willful. He is a Christian, but he lives like a worldling. Christians today would say he had never really become saved, but Paul does not say this. He charges the Corinthians with willful carnality, but addresses them as Christians.

Sanctification is a continuing experience for the spiritual. Sanctification has not been realized in the living of the carnal Christian.

DISPENSATIONALISM

There are two basic approaches to the scriptures: covenant theology and dispensationalism. The first is the view that all of the saints of all the ages are "*The Church*," beginning with Adam. The term, "*The Jewish Church*" is used of the pre-Christian times. It is held that there are only two basic covenants between God and man: the covenant of works with Adam in the garden, and the covenant of grace with Adam after the fall, which endures until now. This position is either post-millennial or amillennial, holding that the present order will continue until "*the end of time*" when "*the general judgment*" will occur. This system leaves no room for a restored Israel in the future.

Dispensationalism, however, holds that God has dealt with humankind in different ways in different ages of time. It takes seriously Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 for a future of faith for Israel. It recognizes a fundamental difference between the Law and the Gospel.

The scriptures are divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New makes the former Old (Hebrews 8:13).

There is a fundamental difference between the Law and the Gospel (John 1:17). Thus we have two ages, or dispensations.

The Law was of fairly recent time in man's history. Moses, who gave the Law, lived about 1500 B. C. Thus the age, or dispensation, of the Law lasted about 1500 years. What of the ages before Moses?

God's relationship with Abraham was not based on the Law; it was not yet given. The covenant with Abraham was based on Promise (Genesis 12:1).

Before Abraham, God's dealings with men were based on His covenant with Noah. His dealings with the antediluvians were based on the covenant of Genesis 3. The only relationship man can have with God, according

to the Bible, is covenantal and all God's dealings with man are by Grace.

Romans eleven, as well as many other passages and prophecies, foretell the restoration of Israel in faith in Christ. This will be after the Church Age (Acts 15:13-18; Romans 11:25-29). This age of Israel's restoration is the millennium.

This is the dispensational view and it profoundly affects one's understanding of the scriptures.

THE CHURCH

The Church and The Kingdom Jesus' Proclamation

*"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand-"
Matt. 4:17*

The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus of Nazareth as Israel's King. When He began His preaching ministry, His theme was *"The Kingdom of Heaven."* The constantly recurring phrase is *"that it might be fulfilled."* Jesus was proclaiming what the whole Old Testament foretold. His ministry was one of fulfilling what was promised in the Old Testament. He was not preaching concerning the Church because that had not yet been revealed. (Ephesians 3:1-13)

*"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. And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."
Matt 10:5-7.*

"But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. 15:24.

Jesus pre-resurrection ministry and that of His disciples was only to the Jews and concerned a nation and a kingdom. The Church was not revealed until later; it is

a people from all nations and is a fellowship in Christ.

The Apostolic Affirmation

"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first (for the first time) did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will set it up-" Acts 5:13-16. (quoting Amos 9:11-12)

This chapter shows that Peter's preaching to the house of Cornelius was the first time God had "visited" the Gentiles with the Gospel. He, James and others affirmed that the ministry of Paul and Barnabas was a further "visitation" of God to the Gentiles. In the scriptures, God's visitations are times of either judgment or blessing. This "visiting" the Gentiles is the Age of the Church.

It is after this time of visitation that He will "return" to build again the tabernacle of David. This can mean nothing else than the national restoration of Israel in Christ. The Kingdom and the Church are not the same, nor is the age of the Church the same as the age of the Kingdom of God. This latter will be "afterward."

The Mystery of the Church

"Whereof (the Church) I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the

*Word of God; even the mystery
which hath been hid from ages
and from generations, but is now
made manifest to His saints."
Col. 1:25-26.*

The Church was a mystery hidden from past ages. It was not foretold in the Old Testament, and with but one exception (Matt. 16:18 and parallel passages in the other Gospels) the Church is not mentioned by Jesus during His public ministry. The Church was formed in the Acts and its doctrines were revealed to Paul; Peter affirmed this (II Peter 3:15-16). It is Paul's doctrine that fulfills, that is completes, the Word of God.

THE BODY OF CHRIST
Our Corporate Union

*"For as the body is one, and hath
many members, and all the
members of that one body, being
many, are one body; so also is
Christ. Now ye are the Body of
Christ, and members in
particular." I Cor. 12:12,27.*

This passage, I Corinthians 12:12 to 27, uses the analogy of the human body to show our relationship to Christ and to each other. The concept of "*corporate*" union has become an important principle of law and business.

Just as the head of the body directs the body in all its functions and activities, and the head of a corporation does the same for a corporation, so Christ is the Head of the Church and directs its functions and activities. As the members of a body are distinct, yet one with each other, so are all we who are "*in Christ.*"

All this means that the Church is not an

ecclesiastical structure, but an organism. Only apostolic authority was general in the New Testament; all other offices were local. Paul's apostolic authority is still general in the Church through the scriptures.

The Headship of Christ

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1:22-23.

Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church. This is by the appointment of God. This place has not been delegated to any other. There is no *"vicar of Christ on earth."* A vicar has authority in the absence of another. But Christ is not absent! He is always present among as few as two or three. (Matthew 18:20)

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." I Cor. 12:4,11.

This passage, I Corinthians 12:4 to 11, lists the nine gifts of the Spirit as He manifests Himself in our midst. There are other ways in which He works, convicting sinners, etc. Christ is the Head of the Church and directs it through the Spirit. We live in the Spirit and we walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:25) By the Spirit the body functions.

Christ, not men, directs His Church. He does this by the Spirit. To be sure, the Spirit works through men, the offices Christ placed in the Church; but these offices

are local. There is no hierarchy; there is no episcopate; there is no general conference. The Church is not an organization that operates; it is an organism that functions. Thus church membership is not only unnecessary, but harmful.

One New Man

*"For to make in Himself of twain
(Jew and Gentile) one new man.
Eph. 2:15.*

This chapter has for its subject the reconciliation, in Christ, of Jews and Gentiles and the uniting of them into One New Man. This new man is the Church, the New Creation, the Body of Christ. In this union, those so different are made one.

Not only are all those who are *"in Christ"* made one, they are individually made new persons. (II Cor. 5:17) This newness is both collective and personal.

THE CHURCH & THE BRIDE

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam is a quickening Spirit." I Corinthians 15:45.

The Type

Paul contrasts Adam and Christ, the Second Adam, and develops parallels and types. In the account of Adam's *"deep sleep"* we have a picture, or type, of the mystical Christ. As a rib was taken from Adam to make a bride, so from the Body of Christ, the Church, is a small company being separated and built into the Bride of Christ. This separation is not exclusive; any Christian

can qualify. Not all will.

The Psalm

The forty-fifth Psalm is a prophetic picture of the Bridegroom and the Bride. The speaker is God (compare vs.1 & vs.17). Christ is the King (compare vs. 6-7 with Heb. 1:8-9). The queen must forget her own people and her father's house. There are many kings' daughters, but only one queen. Her clothing is of wrought gold (compare Rev. 19:8).

THE CHURCH & THE RESURRECTION ***Two Accounts of the Coming of The Lord***

"And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." Zech. 14:4.

In this fourteenth chapter, Zechariah describes "the Day of the Lord" (vs. 1); the coming of God in judgment. The events of this passage have not yet occurred. In that day His feet shall stand on Olivet.

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:9-11.

Our Lord promised that He would come again and that at His coming He would come in power and glory to judge the nations. At His ascension, two angels said that He would return as He went, in a cloud, returning to the Mount of Olives. These two passages (Zech. 14:4 and Acts 1:11) describe the same event.

"For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
I Thess. 4:15-17.

This, too, is a prophetic description of the coming of the Lord, but in no way corresponds with Zech. 14:4 and Acts 1:9-11. Two different events are described. The latter two passages tell of His coming to judge the world; the Thessalonians passage concerns His coming for the Church.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for

*the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." **Rev. 20:4-6***

The first resurrection is of all the just unto life. This includes those who were raised at Jesus' resurrection and all who are later raised to life. The second resurrection is to the second death.

The Order of the Resurrection

*"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." **I Corinthians 15:22-23.***

*"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
I Corinthians 15:51-52.*

In I Thessalonians 4:13-18, we have the manner of the resurrection and translation and how it will occur. In I Corinthians fifteen, we have the order of the resurrection. There will be saints living when the dead are raised, and they will be changed (translated to immortality). There will be an "order" in the resurrection. First, there will be the "special" resurrection Paul sought to attain unto. These are they who are "kept from that hour of temptation" (Rev. 3:10). Later, the rest of the Church will be taken "out of great tribulation" (Rev.7:14).

The Special Resurrection

*"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." **Matthew 27:50-53.***

*"Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. **Hebrews 11:35.***

This Hebrews passage explains the mysterious passage in Matthew about those who were resurrected with Jesus. They had attained a better, earlier resurrection. This was a special resurrection for saints of

the Old Testament.

"If by any means I might attain unto the (out) resurrection of the dead." Philippians 3:11.

The apostle is here stating the purpose of his life; *"that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, that I may know Him, that I might attain to the resurrection of the dead."*

Nowhere else does Paul speak of the resurrection as an attainment. As a believer he would be resurrected. He had no fear of losing his salvation.

The Greek word for "*resurrection*" has the preposition "*ek*" -out of- prefixed here. This is the only place where this occurs. Paul wanted to attain to a special resurrection, prior in time to others, like those Old Testament saints who had attained to a "*better resurrection.*" This out-resurrection and translation (of the Bride) is the "*better resurrection*" of the New Testament.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Its Head

"And He (Christ) is the Head of the Body, the Church." Col. 1:18.

That Christ is the Head of the Church all Christians affirm. For most, however, He is like a constitutional monarch who has no real power, that being delegated to prime ministers. There are no human vicars of Christ. He is the Head of the Church in fact and directs it through the Holy Spirit, the "*Other Comforter.*"

Its Offices

"And He gave some, apostles;

and others, prophets; and others evangelists; and others, pastor-teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Eph. 4:11-12.

Christ directs the Church by the Spirit, but the Spirit works through persons. This passage lists four offices that Christ gave to the Church for "*the ministry.*"

The words "*some*" in our version translates two different words of the original. The original words have no counterpart in our language and cannot be exactly translated. They are "*differentiating particles.*" The best, perhaps, that we can do is to use "*some*" and "*others.*" This separates apostles from the other three offices.

By definition, "*apostle*" means one directly and personally commissioned. This is why Paul, when defending his apostleship, said "*Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*" (I Cor. 9:1) Thus there are no apostles today. Nor need there be: the authority of the apostles is still present in the scripture.

The other three offices are more or less local and function in the Church today. In addition, elders and deacons are appointed by these to care for local needs.

Its Function

The Church is not political and when it has become a political force or tool it has become spiritually weak. Nor is it a business, though it has business that must be handled well. When the methods of business are applied to the Church it fails to do what it was formed to do.

The Church is a family and only as it functions as a family can it really manifest God's love, bring souls to new birth and bring saints to maturity. This is the purpose of the Church.

OUR CORPORATE WORSHIP

The Apostolic Worship Service

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrines and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers." Acts 2:42.

There is no basis in the New Testament for a liturgy, or order of worship. This verse, however, tells us what apostolic worship was like. Doctrine, the teaching of the faith was an important part of it. Belief must have content and it is important to know what we believe and why. (Luke 1:1-4)

Fellowship is essential to the Christian community and by definition it is based on that which we hold in common. In fellowship we find mutual support, both spiritually and socially.

Communion, breaking of bread, has always been central to Christian worship, though often greatly distorted. It is at once a proclamation of faith, an acknowledging of fellowship with others, and adoration of our Lord. It is "open" to all believers.

Prayer is very personal, as when Jesus went apart to pray, but also it is corporate. There are many forms of public prayer and all are needed to meet the needs of Christians.

Apostolic Practice

"How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying.

1 Cor. 14:26.

It is readily apparent from this verse that apostolic worship services were informal and the whole congregation participated. There were no performers and audience; no standardized ritual. Participation was both general and varied.

There was singing. Song has always been a part of worship that is spiritual, while musical performance has been part of formalism.

Doctrine, teaching the faith, was regular and not confined to a single preacher. Tongues-speaking with interpretation was common and "*revelation*," imparting of truth, also came from more than one person.

All this pictures a dynamic fellowship rather than an institutionalized service.

Apostolic Doctrine

"There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" Eph. 4:4-6.

Though not a comprehensive statement of doctrine, these seven summarize the apostle's teaching and unity is emphasized. Each is directly related to both doctrine and Christian living.

The one body states the unity of all believers. Not only is this a doctrine, it should affect our mutual relations. One Spirit is the Holy Spirit Who is the life-breath of the Body.

Ours is a common hope and wherever and under whatever circumstances Christians meet it is the basis for fellowship.

Our loyalty is not to churches or cultures, but to

the same Lord. The faith is the same for all time and every culture. The one baptism is the baptism of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:13) which makes us one, and it is the same Father Who is over all.

THE NAME OF JESUS

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name." Phil. 2:9.

For the Christian, the Name of Jesus is *"The Name above every name."* To that Name alone we bow; to Him we give our allegiance and heart.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus." Col. 3:17.

This admonition is all-inclusive. Everything is to be done in His Name. Thus, among other things, we gather to worship in His Name (Matt. 18:20); we pray in His Name (John 16:23-26); and in like manner, we baptize in His Name.

Some suppose we are not Trinitarian because we baptize in Jesus' Name. We most strongly affirm that we are Trinitarian in the historic meaning of the term.

There are five passages, all in the Book of Acts (2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16), that tell us about apostolic practice in baptizing. In each case it is *"in the Name of the Lord."* Never did they baptize in the Name of the trinity.

The so-called *"great commission"* was never followed in apostolic practice. It is our view that Matthew 28:19 is prophecy concerning the time of the Kingdom, when Jewish evangelists will affirm the Trinity so long denied by that people. The Great Commission for the Church is found in Acts 1:8.

printed in 2004
by
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