

# THE CHURCH AND ITS CEREMONIES

*"Upon this Rock I will build My Church;  
and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."*  
(Matthew 16:18; RV)

For The Glory of God  
To Honour His Son  
To Comfort His People

1 Corinthians 10:31; John 5:23;  
John 17:17; Philippians 2:9-11;  
Revelation 5:13; 15:3,4;  
Romans 15:4.

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## Preface

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In these days of wars and rumours of wars, of distress of nations with perplexity, a condition of affairs more or less constant during ages past, the thoughtful person asks himself, 'What part has God in men's affairs?' The purpose of this small volume is not to answer this question in its political significance, since that has already been done in 'Bible Talks for Heart and Mind'. The present objective is rather to emphasize the great work which has been going on since Pentecost, as expressed in our Lord's words to Peter, "*Upon this Rock I will build My Church*".

Regardless of the conflicts of nations, social upheavals, and changes of the map, the Lord Jesus Christ is bringing His building to completion. Shall we say that national distress and international complications have been made by Him to serve, rather than hinder, the construction of the Church, since its members are being selected from every people, nation, and tongue? In political disputes, and in the controversies which have given rise to the various sects and denominations of Christendom, one might be only slightly interested; but it is a most fascinating study to learn how the Lord is "*taking out*" the material for His own building, and the use He purposes to make of that building when finished.

The simplicity of the Lord's building, as compared with the elaborate structures reared by men, is impressive. The organization of the Church has been, and is, exceedingly simple, yet very effective in accomplishing that for which it was designed. And its two ceremonies or ordinances are likewise simple, and their meanings easily comprehensible to the sincere disciple desirous of knowing and doing his Master's will. One could spend a lifetime and not be able to

discover or invent symbols more expressive of Christian truth than those which the Lord designed and gave to the Church in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And one can spend a lifetime contemplating and participating in the arrangements and symbols which the Lord has provided, and not grow weary of them.

To those with eyes to see and ears to hear there is a reality about the building of the Church which is lacking in the greatest achievements of men. The latter are transitory; they "*perish with the using.*" But the former is enduring; it rests on a sure foundation; and happy are they who shall be found as "*living stones*" therein.

Some of the matter in the following pages was published four years ago in a book of 80 pages. This has now been revised and enlarged, and it is hoped that the result is to make the book more than ever a true reflection of the Scripture teaching on the subjects under consideration.

May these pages be the means of encouraging many readers to take the steps necessary to become members of the true Church or, if already members, to make their calling and election sure, that they may ultimately have part in the eternal glories which await the faithful.

Yours in our Mediator's service,  
E.C. and R.B. HENNINGES.  
*Melbourne, September 15, 1914*

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**Part 1**

**THE CHURCH  
AND  
ITS ORGANISATION**

# CHAPTER 1

## The Church Defined

In ancient days, God had a people; to them He communicated His will through the prophets; but more especially through Moses, the mediator and leader divinely appointed for them. Finally He sent to them His Son, saying, "*This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him*" (Matthew 17:5; 21:33-43). In these last days, since the first advent, God has a people; to them He hath spoken by His Son, the divinely appointed Leader of them, and Mediator for them and for all men (Hebrews 1:1,2; 2:1-4; 9:14,15; 1 Timothy 2:5-7).

The substance of what God communicated to His ancient people, the Jews, is contained in the writings known as the Old Covenant or Testament, comprising the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. The instruction for His people of "*the last time*" (1 John 2:18), from the first to the second advent, is found in part in the writings of the Old Covenant; the Law having a shadow of good things to come, the Prophets foretelling many things of the greatest interest to God's people of "*the last time*", besides enforcing much practical instruction, and the Psalms, besides being prophetic, inspiring the people of God to devotion, comforting them in their sorrows, and giving instruction in doctrine. The authoritative instruction for God's people of "*the last time*" is completed in the writings of the New Covenant\*, or Testament, comprising the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and the Revelation.

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\* See Diatheke, Part 3, Chapter 10.

In these writings frequent references and quotations are made to and from the Old Covenant writings, which are called "*The Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Timothy 3:15), so that the New Covenant writings are given as a commentary on and explanation of those of the Old Covenant, for the benefit of, and application to, the New Covenant people of God.

### **Descriptive Terms**

Leaving out of consideration for the present the various symbolic descriptions of the New Covenant people of God, it is seen that the appellation most applied to them in the sacred writings is 'ekklesia', translated in the King James Version 'church'. The original means, according to Strong's Concordance, 'a calling out, i.e. (concretely), a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven, or both)'.

The word is used to denote both the Church in general and the local congregations. In the latter case, it is sometimes used in the plural; in the former it is in the singular. Save for Acts 7:38, where 'ekklesia' is used to refer to "*the church in the wilderness*" (that is, the Israelitish nation), and for three occurrences (Acts 19:32,39,41), where 'ekklesia' is translated 'assembly', and refers to a popular gathering, not being a religious meeting, the word has no other New Testament application than to the Christian Church, at large or local.

The word 'assembly' occurs in James 2:2, as a translation of 'sunagoge', which means 'an assemblage of persons; especially a Jewish synagogue (the meeting or the place); by analogy a Christian church'. The word 'congregation' occurs in Acts 13:43, as a translation of 'sunagoge'.



The phrase "*robbers of churches*" (Acts 19:37) is a translation of 'hierosulos', which means, 'temple despoiler'. The word 'ekklesia' does not appear in this verse, nor does it ever refer to a building, as the English word 'church' is sometimes made to do. This rather frequent usage of the English word 'church' depreciates its value as a translation of 'ekklesia'. In fact, the word 'church', at its best, is not a very exact translation of 'ekklesia'; wherefore some Christians have sought to transfer the word 'ekklesia' to the English language.

As for ourselves, we are not favourably disposed to this practice, because the word has already been adapted to our language for 'ecclesiastical' purposes. We shall therefore retain the word 'church', asking the student to bear in mind that it is used not with reference to edifices, but rather with reference to the whole company of Christian believers; and sometimes with reference to local congregations of such believers. These are the 'called out' ones, called out of the world by the Gospel, and called to membership in the Church.

In addition to the name 'Church', the writer of the Acts calls the believers "*any of this way*"; literally, 'the way' (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4.). The term 'Christian' was first applied at Antioch, and, though it may have been invented by the Gentiles, the apostles subsequently recognized and used it (Acts 11: 26; 1 Peter 4:16). The term 'disciple', or learner, also used in Acts, was used by our Lord to designate those who took up the cross to follow in His footsteps (Acts 9:25; Luke 14:2 7). The Lord also applied the terms 'brother', 'sister' and 'mother' to those who did the will of God (Matthew 12: 47-50), and in Hebrews 2:11 we read that "*He is not ashamed to call them brethren*". Any or all of these terms may properly be used to-day to designate the members of the 'Church' or 'called-out' ones.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Church Built by Jesus Christ

The first occurrence of the word "church" is in that much disputed passage in Matthew's Gospel.

*"Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He saith unto them, 'But who say ye that I am?' And Simon Peter answered, and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered, and said unto him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter [literally, 'a little stone'], and upon this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it'." (Matthew 16:13-18; RV).*

This is a most instructive portion. It tells us:

(1) **Who** is building the Church - Jesus, "***I will build My church***".

(2) **The time** of building the church - future from the time of saying, "***I will build***", thus stating the same truth as is found in Matthew 11:11, and 1 Peter 1:10-12; namely, that the Ancients, who obtained a good report through faith, were not to become members of the church of Jesus Christ, which He would build. This was not because of unworthiness in them, as compared with us, but because they were not living in the time when membership in the church is possible. Rewards were promised them for their faith and obedience, but of a different sort from those promised to the church\* (Hebrews 11:39,40).

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\* See 'Bible Talks', chapter 6, 'Some Better Thing for Us'.

(3) The **foundation** on which the church of Jesus is built, not on Peter the "*little stone*", but on Peter's great Rock confession of Jesus as "*the Christ, the Son of the living God*". These eight words are very easily uttered, and sometimes thoughtlessly, we fear, by those who do not realise all that is implied in them concerning:

(a) what is to be believed about Jesus; and

(b) what is to be done by those who acknowledge Him as their Lord.

(4) Whose the church is, for Jesus said; "*I will build My church*".

Thus are a number of important points made plain in the few words of our Lord that followed Peter's enthusiastic confession.

### **Things to be Believed**

The whole of the New Testament is devoted to expounding the things that have to be believed about Jesus by those who would be acceptable. Some of the fundamentals that must be believed, explanatory of those mentioned in Matthew 16:18, also the necessity of believing them, and of keeping them in memory, are thus stated by the Apostle -

*"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 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."* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

It must also be believed that He who gave Himself for our sins is the one and only Mediator between God and all the ransomed, and that He is now officiating as Mediator on behalf of those who accept His services, and on behalf of God toward the repentant sinner. No man cometh unto God but by Him, for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (1 Timothy 2:4-7; John 14:16). The truth concerning Jesus as the Mediator between God and all men is of such importance that, after stating it, the Apostle solemnly affirmed that he was appointed to teach this very thing to the Gentiles (1 Timothy 2:7).

Many more truths about Jesus, "*the Christ, the Son of the living God*", are revealed in the New Covenant Writings, and all of them have to be believed by him who would be a member of the church. None of us is authorised to say that any of these things is so unimportant that one may use his own pleasure as to whether he will believe it or not.

### **Things to be Done**

Some of the things necessary to be done, which are implied in the confession of Matthew 16:18, are clearly stated elsewhere.

*"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.'"* (Matthew 16:24,25).

*"In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; **but faith which worketh by love.**"* (Galatians 5:6).

*"Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him." (Titus 1:13,16).*

Moses, the leader of the Jewish people, had not only to be believed in; he was also to be obeyed, and severe penalties waited on disobedience to him. He said that Christ should be a prophet like to himself, who must needs be obeyed in all that he should say, and the disobedient soul should be cut off from among the people (Acts 3:22-26). The Son of God is that Prophet, who, seated with the Father in His throne (Hebrews 1: 3; Revelation 3:21), now speaks from heaven, and it is for us who hear to give the more earnest heed, and to carefully obey (Hebrews 2:1-3; 12:18-29).

Thus is shown the necessity of works in harmony with the faith, as a demonstration that the faith is alive. All of this, both faith and works, is implied in the "*good confession*" that Jesus is "*the Christ, the Son of the living God*", which confession is the foundation upon which the church is built.

### **Beginning to Build the Church**

The great work of building the church had its proper beginning on the day of Pentecost. On that day, after the descent of the Spirit, the Apostle Peter made the first use of the 'keys' promised him by our Lord (Matthew 16:19), in opening the 'door', and pointing to the Jews the 'way' to the Kingdom of heaven. He preached Jesus to them, and the conclusion to which he led them was the acknowledgment that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was, by divine appointment, and by the manifestation of the divine power in raising Him from the dead, both Lord and Christ.

*"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36).*

Three thousand souls gladly heard the word that day, and were added to the nucleus of believers who had been waiting in the upper room; and from then on -

*"The Lord added together day by day those that were being saved."* (Acts 2:47; R.V. margin).

This shows that, whatever the instrumentalities, the Lord Himself is actively interested in carrying on the work of building His church on the good foundation.

### **Conditions of Membership**

Faith and obedience are the conditions of membership in the church of Jesus; faith in Him as the Way of approach to God (John 14:6; Hebrews 10:20), and obedience to Him as the raised-up Prophet (Acts 3:26), the Mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15), the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 5:9,10), the King on God's holy hill (Psalm 2:1-7; Acts 4:25-27; 13:33; Hebrews 5:5; Colossians 1:13), and the Captain of Salvation (Hebrews 2:10). These conditions were made known to the Jews on the day of Pentecost and subsequently, and they were invited to become reconciled to God, and candidates for the most stupendous honour ever offered to any of God's creatures; viz., joint heir-ship with His Son (Romans 8:17.). This is denominated *"the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus"*, and it is limited to the present age, which for that reason we call the High Calling age (Philippians 3:14). It was not made known as a calling before the High Calling age (Hebrews 11:39,40; 1 Peter 1:4,5, 10-12; Matthew 11:11), and at the end of this age the door of entrance into this wonderful favour will be forever closed (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:10-12).

The invitation was extended to the Jews when the time came, in harmony with the promise made at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:5,6; Romans 9:4,5). Unfortunately for them, the

Jews were by no means ready to avail themselves of the advantages put within their reach. They crucified Jesus, who first made known to them this great salvation (Hebrews 2:3); they despised the apostles who followed Him with the same message (Acts 5:17,18), and they persecuted their own flesh and blood who believed the Truth (Acts 8:1-3). For this reason the apostles, having fulfilled their obligation by going "*to the Jews first*" (Romans 1:16), and having been scornfully, often violently, rejected by them, turned to the Gentiles with their message concerning the High Calling, and the promise of becoming joint heirs with Jesus (Acts 13:45-47; 22:20-22). This admittance of the Gentiles into the grand privileges originally limited to Jews, is called the "*mystery*".

## CHAPTER 3

### The "Mystery"

This "*mystery*" is not a piece of mysticism, which requires one to have a high-strung, nervous temperament in order to 'feel' and appreciate it; neither is it a peculiar teaching which, though not capable of being stated in words of Scripture, must nevertheless be received, under penalty of 'blindness', 'outer darkness', 'hell torments', or what not of punishment for those who reject the unscriptural and inexplicable.

The "*mystery*" of which the Apostle wrote was simply this: that whereas the divine purpose, of permitting believing Gentiles to become fellow heirs with believing Jews of the grand promises, had been concealed from ages and generations, it was now, since the sending of Peter with the 'key', to the house of Cornelius, so that the 'door' into the Kingdom might thus be 'opened' to the Gentiles, **revealed** unto the apostles and prophets by the Spirit; **hence it is no longer a mystery.**

Here are Paul's words -

*"For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery, ... which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is **now revealed** unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." (Ephesians 3:1-9).*



The Apostle's zeal to discharge his duty, no less than the necessity for the establishing of his character in holiness, brought him much persecution for Christ's sake and the gospel's. This suffering for God's people he took joyfully, realising it as an opportunity to *"fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church"* (Colossians 1:24).

The Apostle was not saying that Jesus had left behind unfulfilled some afflictions destined for Himself, and then passed on to Paul and others to accomplish for Him in their flesh. Neither was the Apostle intimating that He who *"tasted death for every man"* had not, after all, done so, but had left some of this *"behind"* for the apostles and others to do.

Were the former true, our Lord Jesus must have come short of learning the valuable lessons which the Father desired to teach Him. Were the latter a fact, then the *"Ransom for all"* was not given by the man Christ Jesus, but remains to be given by others.

In writing of filling up *"that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church"*, the Apostle was not saying something mysterious; he was referring only to the fact that the Lord had said of him, *"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"*. At the time of writing to the Colossians, Paul had endured a portion of these sufferings for Christ's name, and he tells them that he rejoices in these sufferings or afflictions and in those which are *"behind"* or which still remain for him to endure. These afflictions were largely brought upon him by his zeal in carrying out his great commission to Jews, Gentiles and kings (Colossians 1:25).

This is all plain and simple, and easy to be understood: it is not mysterious. Moreover, it is not the "mystery". The church, as a class, is not the "mystery"; the high calling, as such, is not the "mystery". As already seen, the opportunity to enter the kingdom had been promised to the Jews, and it was expected by them, though they did not realise how they were to enter in. The "mystery", as stated by Paul, was the fact that Gentiles were to be allowed to become fellow-heirs (with Jews) of the Kingdom honours.

His words to the Colossians are in perfect agreement with those to the Ephesians before quoted. Addressing the church at Colosse, composed mostly of Gentiles, he said: -

*"... The Gospel which ye have heard, ... whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, **but now is made manifest** to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ among you [marginal reading 'among' instead of 'in', being the same word as 'among' the Gentiles], the hope of glory."* (Colossians 1:23-27; 2: 2; 4:3,4).

Addressing another congregation, composed mostly of Gentiles, the Apostle showed, in harmony with the above cited statements to the Ephesians and Colossians, that the "mystery" was nothing more nor less than the fact that Gentiles were to be admitted to the privileges of the High Calling -

*"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."* (Romans 11:25).

*"Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, **but now is made manifest**, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.**" (Romans 16:25,26; see also Ephesians 6:19).*

The members of the Church have the special blessing of Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith ( Ephesians 3:17). This is the privilege of all the faithful, but it is not the "mystery" referred to in the above quoted passages. The "mystery" was the preaching of "*Christ among you*" Gentiles, instead of merely among the Jews, with the invitation to become His joint heirs.

The word "*mystery*" is once used to denote God's great purpose to gather together all things under Christ, the accomplishment of which purpose occupies two entire ages, the present High Calling age and the coming Kingdom age, the two ages combined being called "*the dispensation of the fullness of the times*" (Ephesians 1:9,10).

## CHAPTER 4

### **The Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed**

The word 'Messiah' is an Anglicized form of a Hebrew word, 'Mashiyach'. 'Christ' is an Anglicized form of a Greek word, 'Christos'. 'Anointed' is an Anglicized form of an old French word, which was derived from the Latin. These words are the same in their meanings, and the definition of 'Mashiyach' as given in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, answers for all. It means 'Anointed; usually a consecrated person (as a king, priest, or saint); specially the Messiah'.

In the Old Testament, the word 'Mashiyach' with its cognates, is of frequent occurrence. They are nearly always translated 'anointed', or 'anointing', and are by no means exclusive in their application. The verb is not only used prophetically of Jesus (Psalm 45:7; Isaiah 61:1); it is also used to describe the anointing of the kings and priests of Israel (1 Samuel 15:7; Leviticus 6:20), as well as of the tabernacle and its furniture, the altar and its vessels, and the wafers used in some of the sacrifices (Exodus 29:2; Leviticus 8:10).

The noun 'Mashiyach', Messiah, is an appellation of:  
Jesus, the Son of God (Psalm 2:2; Daniel 9:25,26);  
Cyrus, a heathen king (Isaiah 45:1);  
The kings of Israel (1 Samuel 2:10,35; 12: 3,5);  
The priests of Israel (Leviticus 4:3,5,16);  
The people of Israel (1 Chronicles 16:19-22;  
Psalm 105:13-15).

In the New Testament, the word 'Christ' is applied once to the people of Israel in Egypt (Hebrews 11:26), once to the Christian church (1 Corinthians 12:12); and a few times to false Christs (Matthew 24:5, and other places). Nearly all other occurrences of the word are in combination, to form such phrases as "*Jesus Christ*", or "*our Lord Jesus Christ*", or "*Christ Jesus*", or, if the word "*Christ*" be used without the others, it is in such a connection as to leave no doubt that it refers to Jesus personally.

The identity of "*Christ*" with "*Messiah*", and the special application of both to Jesus, are indicated in the words of Andrew to Peter -

*"He first findeth his own brother, Simon, and saith unto him, 'We have found the Messiah', which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus."* (John 1:40-42).

On the day of Pentecost, and subsequently, the inspired eloquence of apostles and evangelists, and the writings of the Gospels, were directed toward one end; to convince hearers and readers that **Jesus is the Christ**.

*"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."* (Acts 2:36).

*"And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ."* (Acts 18:5).

*"For he [Apollos] mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ."* (Acts 18:28).

*"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).*

So full was the 'Son of Thunder' (John) of this theme, that he wrote; *"Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" (1 John 2:22).* But, on the other hand; *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1).*

The anointing of the Lord Jesus as the Messiah took place at His baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove, and a voice from heaven said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"*. In this manner He was made known to John the Baptist as the One who should come after him, and Who should be the One of whom the prophets wrote (Matthew 3:16,17; John 1:29-34). But in a larger sense He was anointed at His resurrection, for it was then that all power in heaven and on earth was given unto Him, and that His priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, a priest on a throne, began (Matthew 28:18; Romans 1:4; Philippians 2:9-11; Ephesians 1:20-22; Hebrews 5:5-10; 7:15-25).

To believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed, means more than merely to give mental assent as to a matter that means nothing in particular to us. We might express our belief that a king reigns in Italy; but as this fact does not enter into our experience, the reign of a king in Italy is a matter of little or no moment to us.

But to acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed of God, means that we admit that God has placed Jesus in such a position of power that He has the right to demand our obedience. Entering thus into our experience, this fact is of the greatest moment, because it means that a new manner of

life begins in us from the time we make the acknowledgment that Jesus is God's Anointed. That is why John said that whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

God does not ask us to elect His Son as the Christ. He Himself has set the Son as Anointed King on the "*holy hill*". Our part is to recognize and acknowledge this grand fact, and for our own good to live in obedience to God's appointed King (Psalm 2; Colossians 1:13).

## CHAPTER 5

### The Anointed Body

*"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." (1 Corinthians 12:12).*

In this chapter, the Apostle is telling of the diversities of gifts of the anointing Spirit, enjoyed by the church on earth. To illustrate his teaching, he symbolises the church on earth, in the enjoyment of these gifts, by a human body complete, having many members with varied functions: feet, hands, hearing, smelling, seeing, etc.

As in the human body the various members have duties to perform for the benefit of other members, so in the Spirit-anointed church on earth, the various members have gifts and abilities that are to be used for the benefit of the other members.

Some of these privileges may be of a humble kind, nevertheless they have their place, and the humble, inconspicuous duties are necessary to be performed by some members for the good of others, and for the benefit of the whole body. These services are mutual and reciprocatory; for example, if the hand is to grasp something that is beyond reach, the feet carry the hand along until it can reach the object. On other occasions, the hands care for the feet, doing for them what they could not do for themselves.

So the members of the church on earth labour on behalf of each other, and enter sympathetically into each other's joys and sorrows.



The likeness of the human body would represent the condition of the church on earth at any time during the High Calling age. The Apostle is not likening the church on earth to a headless body, the Head being in heaven, for he specially mentions the seeing, hearing and smelling functions, which are located in the head, as being performed by the members on earth, by means of their various abilities and gifts.

Neither is the Apostle desiring to illustrate a relationship between Jesus and the Church, by supposing Him to be represented by the head of a human body, the apostles by the shoulders, and so on, until at the end of the age only the 'feet' are in evidence. Isaiah 52:7 is sometimes quoted as proof of this, but the true meaning of the prophecy is shown by Paul's application of it in Romans 10:15, where he gives 'feet' a very literal application to the feet of the early disciples who carried the Gospel message.

That the Lord Jesus, the Christ, is not included in the illustration of 1 Corinthians 12, of the Spirit-anointed body, should be evident from verse 21; *"And the eye cannot say unto the hand, 'I have no need of thee:' nor again, the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you' "*.

It cannot for a moment be supposed that the relationship of our Lord Jesus to the church is illustrated by the relationship of the head of a human body to the other members of the human body. Would any of us be so foolhardy as to suppose that our Lord Jesus could not get along without us, just as the human head cannot get along without the human feet? We do read in Colossians 2:10 that we are *"complete in Him"*, but by nothing are we given leave to suppose that He is complete in us, and incomplete without us.

## **One Body in Christ**

The distinction between the church as a complete body, including head, hands, feet etc., and our Lord Jesus Christ as a complete personality, is made plain in Romans 12:5; "*So we, being many, are **one body in Christ**, and every one members one of another*". That is, all the members of the body, singly and collectively, are in Jesus Christ, by reason of their faith in Him, and their acknowledgment of Him as their Lord.

The same thought is expressed in Galatians 3:28; "*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***".

In the same way, we read; "*Your life is hid with **Christ in God***" (Colossians 3:3). This does not mean that we are a part of God, and that He cannot fully exist without us, but that our life and safety are in God's hands, because we are believers in Jesus, accepting His mediatorial work.

The conclusion is, therefore, that while the church is a Spirit-anointed body (1 John 2:20,27; 2 Corinthians 1:21), dignified with the title, 'Christ' (1 Corinthians 12:12,27), this fact does not put it on anything like a level with Jesus, as though He cannot say, 'I have no need of you'. The church is no more entitled thus to exalt itself than is the Jewish nation entitled to consider itself as being on a similar level with the Messiah, because the title 'Messiah' is applied to them (1 Chronicles 16:19-22; Psalm 105:13-15). The church is no more entitled thus to exalt itself than will be the believers of the future age, who will also have the anointing of the Spirit poured out upon them, but who will, nevertheless, be in a position lower than that of the church.

## **"The Church which is His Body"**

If the headship of Jesus over the church is not illustrated by the relation of the human head to the other members of the human body, in what sense is He the 'Head' over the 'body'?

This question is fully answered by the Apostle in Ephesians -

*"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body ... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of His body. [The remainder of verse 30 is omitted from the Sinaitic, Vatican 1209, and Alexandrine MSS.] For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* (Ephesians 5:23-32).

The head-ship of Christ over the church is thus seen to be illustrated by the marriage relation; that is, He gave Himself for it, and He loves and cherishes it, just as a man who loves a woman sacrifices himself for her, and takes care of her as though she were a part of himself. The husband is not a bodyless head, nor is the wife a headless body. The husband and wife are two separate individuals, each with a head and a body. So Christ Jesus is an individual (not a head only), and the Church is represented as another complete individual (not as a body only). But just as husband and wife, though two individuals, live and work in unity, so Christ and the Church are one. This oneness is also referred to in John 17:21; *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us"*.

That Christ as the Head of the Church is represented as a complete individual, and not as attached to a headless body, is also shown in Ephesians 4:11-16, and Colossians 2:19, where *"the whole body"*, the church, *"maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love"* -

*"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."* (Ephesians 4:15,16).

*"And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."* (Colossians 2:11).

The church must here be regarded as a 'whole body', with the Lord as Head in the sense of Leader, or Captain (Hebrews 2:10). The reason why Jesus cannot here be regarded as related to the church in the way that the human head is related to the human body, is because when a human body grows, all the members, including the head, grow proportionately. But Jesus, the 'Head' of the church, is not growing in spiritual stature, though the 'whole body' is thus growing.

Therefore we see again that the relationship of human head to human body is not the Scriptural method of illustrating the relationship of Christ, the 'Head', to the church, the body'. The headship of Jesus over the church is abundantly and beautifully illustrated, not only by the marriage relation, and by the Captain's position, already referred to, but also by the parables of Master and servants, Shepherd and sheep,\* and so on.

Each of these illustrations teaches a lesson peculiar to itself, not as well illustrated by the other figures; the student should, therefore, be careful not to confuse them in his mind, or he might get the idea that a sheep is a soldier, or that a wife is a servant, which, of course, she is not.

If some should still be inclined to think that our Lord's headship over the church, His 'body', as mentioned in Ephesians 1:22,23 and Colossians 1:18, is illustrated by the head of a physical body, such are requested to consider that Jesus is also "*the head of all principality and power*" (Colossians 2:10). Is His headship over these illustrated by a head on a physical body, which could not exist without the body to sustain it? The same question applies to 1 Corinthians 11:3.

He who fills "*all in all*" is God (Ephesians 1:23; 4:6; 1 Corinthians 15:28), and all His fullness dwells in Jesus (Colossians 2:9). The Apostle's words in Ephesians 1:23, "*the fullness of him that filleth all in all*", are therefore not to be understood as referring to the church as the completion of Jesus, but rather to Jesus as the one in whom the fullness of God dwells.

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\* For an explanation of these Parables,  
please see the book, 'The Parables of Our Lord'.

## CHAPTER 6

### Sectarianism

Already in apostolic times, the carnal, worldly spirit of sectarianism began to invade the church, causing strife and divisions. Two kinds of division are mentioned in Scripture as occurring or likely to occur among the members of the church: one for the truth's sake (Matthew 10:32-39), the other gendered by sectarian feeling, but without a basis in truth.

The first mentioned, for the truth's sake, is a necessity at times; and when the necessity arises, one should, without hesitation, step out on the important truth that may be involved, trusting in the Lord for grace meekly to maintain his stand. The other, gendered by sectarian feeling, is always blameworthy.

Sectarian divisions always centre round human personalities, the Lord being in the meantime left very much out of consideration. It was so in the Apostles' time, and it is the same to-day -

*"Now, this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-5).*

There are two sorts of sectarians, the reactionaries, and the progressives.

The reactionaries are those whose faith has crystallised round the teachings of some deceased leader and teacher, or some general councils. To their minds, the teaching of the leader, whose memory they thus desire to honour, is the sum total of all that can be learned of the divine will here below, and they have nothing to do except to follow the path which he or they have outlined for them. There is little or nothing for them to learn.

The progressive sectarians are those who are by no means averse to learning. In fact, they expect to learn. But their affections are set upon some living leader, male or female, and they have no notion of learning anything except through the instrumentality of their recognised leader. These view with the greatest suspicion any teaching not emanating from their source of light and leading, or not coming through the one channel of blessing that they recognise.

For these sectarians, the standard of proof is less the Word of the Lord than the word of their leader; and anything that an 'outsider' may show them in God's Word avails nothing. But anything shown them by the leader to whom they are devoted may or may not be capable of substantiation by God's Word; it is, nevertheless, accepted with the greatest eagerness. Not to accept what flows to them through the 'channel' would be disloyalty and lack of love. To their minds, the message is true because it comes from the leader they recognise.

Sectarianism is a lazy sort of Christian existence, not worthy of the honoured name of Protestantism, because it shirks the idea of individual responsibility that lies at the basis of all true Protestantism, and substitutes for it the follow-my-leader idea of the Papacy. There are at this date several small bodies of progressive sectarians.

Every sect had its start as a 'progressive'. Such of the 'progressive' sects as have survived the death of their leaders have eventually become 'reactionary' sects.

All sectarianism is idolatry. The reactionaries are, in a manner of speaking, ancestor worshippers. The progressives, whether they admit it or not, are, by their voluntary humility and worshipping of angels (messengers), which seem to themselves most commendable on account of the self-abnegation implied in their not presuming to criticise, in danger of being deprived of the prize of their high calling, because they do not hold the Head, but have put another into that place in their affections and loyalty which our Lord desires reserved for Himself (Colossians 2:18,19).

No doubt, the Lord's people, the church, are to give due honour to those teachers who make full proof of their ministry, as loyal servants of God, and expounders of His Word (Hebrews 13:17); but this proper deference is not the sectarian idolatry reprov'd by the Apostle in his letter to the Corinthians. If an inspired Apostle would not tolerate being set up as a sectarian idol, much less should an uninspired teacher in the present day tolerate, not to say encourage, the same disposition in his or her followers. "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*", were the Apostle's words; no Christian of to-day dare aspire to more than this in the way of leadership (1 Corinthians 11:1).

If sects were to be avoided in apostolic days, the same course is appropriate to the church of the present day. God's people should stand aloof from sects and from everything sectarian. They should give no sympathy or support to any sect, whether of the 'reactionary' or of the 'progressive' sort. Membership in or association with a sect is by no means necessary to Christian fellowship; much less is it a guarantee that one belongs to the "*Church of the First-born, which are*



*written in heaven*" (Hebrews 12:23). The Church of Jesus, which he has been rearing on the good foundation, existed and flourished long before any of the sects and denominations of the present day came into existence. From this it is evident that the sects were not necessary for the spiritual up-building of the saints in the early days. If not necessary for them, but rather detrimental to their spiritual interests (1 Corinthians 3:1-3), neither are they necessary or beneficial to God's people of the present time; therefore the call, "*Come out from among them*" (2 Corinthians 6:16-18; Revelation 18:4).

Regard for one's spiritual interests, as well as faithfulness to the Lord who calls, requires that this command be heeded, and obeyed, as soon as heard. All forms of sectarianism, great and small, ancient and modern, reactionary and progressive, are now being shaken to their very foundations, and shall presently "*pass away with a great noise*" (Hebrews 12:26-29; 2 Peter 3:10-14). The Christian who wishes to avoid the catastrophe that will shortly overwhelm sectarianism will be well advised to flee from this idolatry, and stand clear before the crash comes.

But here the query arises, Is not the Church an organization and does not organization imply sects? To which we answer, Yes, the Church is an organization; but, no, it is not a sect in the modern sense of that word, meaning a section of a whole. The Church is a 'whole', a 'whole body', as the Apostle expresses it. It is not a piece cut off a sect already existing, but a new building, built upon an entirely different foundation from that upon which the Jewish nation (its immediate predecessor) was built. As already shown, the Lord began to build the Church at Pentecost, and He is still building it, as an institution entirely separate from and independent of the organizations of men.

The manner of the building we shall endeavour to show; but before doing so will present a few thoughts on the goodness of God and His gracious purposes concerning the human race in general and the Church in particular.

## CHAPTER 7

### God's Interest in Men

*"Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning." (James 1:1 7).*

*"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9: 15).*

*"The Father of Lights", from Whom comes every good gift and every perfect gift, has been very liberal to His human creatures. Even though they have not always been mindful of His generosity, He has continued to give them many benefits. He has given rain and fruitful seasons to the unjust as well as to the just, filling their hearts with food and gladness, for which even those who knew God have not at all times been thankful to Him.*

Besides these temporal mercies, which are granted to all, He has given His dear Son to be the adequate sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, the sacrifice which can really take away sins. And He has promised that to those who obey His Son He will grant the gift of eternal life through Him. Besides this, He has promised a new heavens and a new earth, a new order of things on this planet, in which righteousness will be the prevailing influence, so that the time will come when God's will shall be done on earth even as in heaven (Acts 17:28,29; 14:15-17; Matthew 5:45; Romans 1:21; Hebrews 10:10; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 5:9; 7:25; 2 Peter 3:13; Matthew 6:10).

It is a great error to suppose, as some have done, that the God of heaven has no interest in the human race except to condemn and punish them. True, He did cause the sentence of death passed upon the original sinner in Eden to descend to all of his posterity, thus condemning all on account of one man's sin (Romans 5:12); but He did this in order that He might economically provide for the salvation of all through the obedience and sacrifice of another one (Romans 5:18,19).

Had each of us been tested separately in the manner of the testing of Adam and Eve, we cannot doubt that we must have gone wrong as they did. To have tried each individual, or couple, separately would have meant taking much time and pains merely to demonstrate a foregone conclusion; and if arrangements were to be made for the salvation of all these separate and individual sinners, there must have been as many Redeemers sacrificed as there had been penalties pronounced. But God's way is best; He anticipated the foregone conclusion of so many separate tests by causing every one of us to be included in the original condemnation, by being born under it and its effects, in order that by one sacrifice the redemption of all of us might be accomplished and the way to His favour opened.

All this is God's own plan, and by it and the measures for its accomplishment, He has shown the extent of His interest in our race. He so loved the whole world as to give for us His only begotten Son, "*the unspeakable gift*" (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 9:15). The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men has appeared; His blessings are shed upon believers abundantly through Jesus Christ, so that we are justified by God's grace through faith in Christ's blood, and by the same divine favour are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7; Romans 5:1,2; Ephesians 1:7).

## **The Extent of the Grace of God**

Moreover, God's arrangements for the publication of the opportunity for salvation are complete, though at the present time their adequacy is not very apparent. Vast multitudes die daily without hearing the good news concerning the salvation in Christ; other multitudes died before His efficacious sacrifice had been offered, and, of course, they did not hear of it. But God has graciously caused it to be revealed in His Word that He has not overlooked these multitudes who died in helpless ignorance of the only Name through which it is possible to be saved (Acts 4:12); who therefore could not believe in Him of whom they had not heard; who could not call upon Him in whom they were not able (on account of their ignorance) to believe; who therefore have not been saved; because salvation is only for those who call upon the name of the Lord (Romans 10:13,14).

But, as before stated, God's arrangements are complete, and His purpose in respect of those who have died without a thorough knowledge of the truth is clearly outlined in His Word. When brought back from death, "*the land of the enemy*", in which is "*no work, nor device, nor knowledge*" (Jeremiah 31:15-17; Ecclesiastes 9: 4-6,10), these shall be enlightened; for Christ died for them as much as for us (John 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:4-7).

God loved them so much that He sent His Son to die for them (John 3:16); Christ loved them (and us) so much that He willingly came down to earth, was made "*a little lower than the angels*", and **by the grace of God** tasted death "*for every man*", **for every one of us** (Hebrews 2:9). Can anyone show cause why those who have died in ignorance of the only Name, and therefore unsaved, should not be fully enlightened on the subject of salvation in due time? Why, God loves even those nations that sought (often successfully) to seduce Israel into the worship of Baal, and whom He

commanded Israel in those days to destroy with the sword (which they did not always do); for He says that if after they are brought back, they will show themselves diligent to learn the Lord's ways, as they formerly were diligent to mislead God's people, they shall be built up in the midst of God's people; but if they will not obey they shall be utterly destroyed (Jeremiah 12:14-17).

Let this statement of God's purpose in respect of those nations whom He commanded in the ancient days to be destroyed because their iniquity had come to the full, and who would ultimately have fallen into decay on account of their wickedness, vindicate His character of love and justice. It is a complete answer to those who accuse the Almighty of cruelty toward those ancient peoples whom He caused to be summarily removed in war, instead of allowing them to degrade themselves still more, thus to have made salvation more difficult for them when it shall be offered to them under conditions of enlightenment after the veil of death shall be swallowed up and they shall be brought back (Isaiah 25:6-9.) When all the circumstances are considered, it must be apparent that their summary destruction was not cruelty on God's part, but kindness.

### **Why not Now?**

The fact that the affairs of the world have been going on in much the same way for thousands of years, with no very striking manifestation (that is, not striking to the casually careless observer) that such things as have been briefly outlined above are included in the divine purpose, is no proof that they will not be done. The Almighty is Master in the Universe, and what He has arranged will be done, each detail in its proper season. It is not for God to be limited, but for men to cultivate a wider vista than that bounded by the parish pump and the village green.

Instead of restricting the grace of God to their own day and generation, it is for men to take the wide and spacious view, the scriptural panorama, of the majestic progress of the divine purpose through the ages. Instead of attempting to crib, cabin and confine the dealings of the Infinite with man into the man's limited measure of time this side of the grave, it is for men to recognize that the Almighty is not to be thus bound, and that since it is His purpose to deal with some of them after they come back from death, they must needs accept it so, and bow to His will.

Still, it seems a not unreasonable question to ask, Why has God appointed to enlighten most men and offer them salvation after they shall be raised from death? Why does He not enlighten all now, and have done with it?

### **Enlightenment Necessary**

The way that God has adopted gives a present experience with sin and imperfection which should be useful to those who will be enlightened after their resurrection without then having to wrestle with the deceptions of the adversary, which will be restrained for a thousand years. They should be helped, by contrasting their experiences before death and after resurrection, to choose the path of obedience and to forsake sin.

The present experience, however, is a severe one, and not all have had or are to have it to the same extent, for a tremendous percentage of the race dies before reaching years of accountability. When these children come back "*from the land of the enemy*", death (Jeremiah 31:15-17), the Kingdom of God will be ruling in the earth; righteousness will be the order of the day, and the resurrected children will have what would appear to be the very great advantage of growing up under the influence of that Kingdom, being trained in right habits which will not afterwards, at the cost of much pain and trouble, need to be broken.

## The Sons of God

As a matter of fact, certain other features of the divine purpose have been under way up to the present, and the Scripture plainly tells us that the administration of the blessing of general enlightenment is deferred until the accomplishment of these details. During the ages before Pentecost, there were some who obtained a good report through their faith, and died without having received that which was promised them. They will be great ones 'Princes' (Psalm 45:16) in the earth during the Thousand Years of the Kingdom Age. Since the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the invitation has been proclaimed that those who believe in Jesus should follow in His steps, and should suffer with Him, with a view to becoming His joint heirs in glory, and to be manifested with Him in His glory at His second coming (Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:12; Romans 8:14-18; Colossians 3:4).

The blessing of the groaning creation as a whole is deferred until the manifestation in glory of the sons of God, those who have suffered with their Redeemer, Mediator and High Priest. When these sons of God and joint heirs with Christ shall be changed into His likeness (1 John 3:1,2) and made partakers of His glory, honour and immortality (1 Corinthians 15:49,50,53,54), there will be no further delay of the general blessing, but forthwith death shall begin to be swallowed up victoriously, and those that are in the dark prison shall begin to show themselves, that they may partake of the "*feast of fat things*" prepared for them in the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:54; Isaiah 25:6-9; Romans 8:19-21; Isaiah 49:9-12). The fact that the joint heirs with Jesus, a people for God's name (Acts 15:14), had to be taken out from the nations is **the** reason why God does not enlighten all men and offer salvation to them in this life, for this is not to be done until the joint heirs are taken out and glorified.



## **The High Calling**

The joint heirs will be more than princes; they will be kings and priests, and shall reign with Christ the Thousand Years, taking part in the dispensing of the blessings during that time. They will not, however, ever share the Lord's position as Mediator. That office, based upon the sacrifice of Himself as a ransom for all, and for the sins of the whole world, is His exclusively. The joint heirs will then, as now, point the world to Him who alone is Mediator, that through Him they may be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:19,20).

Extraordinary honours are reserved for the overcoming Church, and many of God's creatures, both heavenly and earthly, have taken a lively interest in their calling. The angels desire to look into these things, but they are not for them; rather, the angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who are to inherit the greatest of all blessings. The holy prophets who, under inspiration, spoke beforehand of these things enquired and searched diligently into the meanings of their inspired utterances; but they were told that these wonders were not for them (2 Peter 1 21; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Hebrews 1:13,14; Matthew 18: 6,10).

Even John the Baptist, most honoured of the prophets, being neither 'bridegroom' nor 'bride' but a 'friend', occupies a less distinguished position than the least important member of the glorious Kingdom (Matthew 11:11; John 3:29-31). This high position as joint-heirs in the Kingdom is reserved for those who follow in the Lord's footsteps, who suffer with Him by reason of faithfulness to God and the truth, and who will receive their reward when He comes to establish the Kingdom as a political power in the earth. In the meantime they are living in a hostile world, and it is written that whoever would live godly shall suffer persecution.

But they are not left without aids in running this great race. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is deeply interested in them, and He has provided for their every need. He loves and cherishes the Church. He established the Church upon a sure foundation, so that the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Organization of the Church**

When God took the children of Jacob to be His chosen people, He arranged not only for their deliverance from Egypt and their transport to the promised land, but also for Leaders through whom this great movement should be effected. He also gave a Law for their instruction down to the minutest details of their daily life, and provided a system of judges as well as a priesthood to remind them of their duties and to assist them in carrying them out. Chief of all was Moses, the Mediator of their Covenant, through whom their Law was promulgated.

The Lord has been no less careful of the needs of His New Covenant People. He provided them a Leader and Mediator, Christ Jesus, who is also their Redeemer, their Law Giver, their Intercessor or Advocate, their High Priest and their King. Through the risen Lord the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples at Pentecost, which should remain with the Church as a guide into all truth and a revealer of things to come (John 14:26; 16:13), and which should dwell in them as an energising power (Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:4-14).

But He did more than this. The people called out of darkness to light were called to associate together and to build one another up on their most holy faith, and He regulated the manner of their association together. When He began to build the Church He did it according to a definite plan. He did it by using the disciples whom He had specially selected, trained and instructed, and whom He continued to instruct after His departure from them.

Therefore, whatever organization can be recognized in the early church as divinely directed, and not mere experiments on the part of undisciplined and inexperienced disciples, is the organization which should have been perpetuated to the present day.

### **"Gifts unto Men"**

In addition to the Gift of the Holy Spirit, with which were associated in that day certain special gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8-11), He gave other gifts, which are thus specified by the Apostle;

*"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. ... And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:8-12).*

These "gifts" from the Lord to His Church are intended to be profitable to the saints in respect of both knowledge and character. The body of Christ is to be edified or built up in love, and is to be established in true knowledge (Ephesians 4:14,16). These specially designated persons would assist the saints to the knowledge; but every saint needs for himself to receive the knowledge after proving it to be good, and needs to obey it, in order that by obedience to the truth his soul may be purified unto unfeigned love of the brethren. If any be a hearer only, he is self-deceived. He gave the "gifts unto men" mentioned in this text, that they might grow up into mature and steadfast Christians, being no more as babes tossed about with every doctrinal windstorm (Ephesians 4:14).

*"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17).*

*"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* (James 1:21,22.)

*"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."* (1 Peter 1:22). [Sinaitic, Vatican 1209 and Alexandrine MSS omit 'through the Spirit' from this verse.]

The "*gifts*", then, are given to the Church by the Lord, that the Church might be helped by them to make its calling and election sure, that the saints might be over-comers in the conflict they are engaged in, and that the work of the ministry, that is, the service, or extension of the Gospel message, might be carried on in an orderly and effective manner.

Let us now consider these "*gifts*" in detail, and how, under the Lord's directions, they built up an organization of Christian Believers.

## CHAPTER 9

### The "Gifts"

*"And HE gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."* (Ephesians 4:11; RV). [In the Greek text, 'HE' is emphatic.]

These are the "*gifts*" that the Lord gave to His Church for their instruction in the true doctrine, that they be not "*tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine*", and for their up-building in the character of true and sincere love for the brotherhood in Christ. It behoves us to consider them attentively, so that we understand the Lord's purpose, and cooperate with Him, and not be found fighting against him.

#### **Apostles**

The word 'apostle' means 'one who is sent'. Next to the Lord Jesus, the Head, the Twelve Apostles are the great ones in the Church. With the exception of Paul, the apostles were associated with the Lord before His crucifixion, being then also called His disciples. In those days they had a measure of power given to them to work miracles (Matthew 10:8), but they were not alone in the enjoyment of this power, for it was conferred upon other seventy as well (Luke 10:1,9).

It was not until after our Lord had risen from the dead and ascended up on high that He gave the apostles as "*gifts*" to the Church, and then they entered upon the unique position and work reserved for them and not to be occupied by others.

It was our Lord's work to ratify the New Covenant by the shedding of His precious blood on Calvary (Matthew 26:28); but it was given to "*the twelve Apostles of the Lamb*"\* to have their names written in the twelve foundations of the Holy City, so that no one can enter the New Jerusalem (that is, the New Covenant), or become a citizen thereof, either now or in the Kingdom age, without seeing their honoured names and giving attention to their teachings as he enters any of the gates and progresses along the 144 'cubits' of the passage through the walls (Revelation 21:14; Galatians 4:24-26).

We have not the benefit of the personal presence of the apostles with us now, but we have their authoritative, Spirit-inspired words to guide us, and to these we constantly refer as the basis and authority for the teachings we give out. The twelve sent ones of the Lamb are placed by divine decree in their position of authority; the Church had nothing to do with that (Galatians 1:1); the Church has to recognize the twelve in the position in which God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ have placed them as "*gifts*" for the instruction and edification of the body of Christ.

The ability to work miracles and to speak by inspiration did not particularly distinguish the "*Apostles of the Lamb*" from other believers in their times, because others had those supernatural powers more or less.

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\* It is fully recognized that others than the twelve are called apostle, as Barnabas and Epaphroditus. But it is to be carefully noted that these were not 'Apostles of the Lamb'. Epaphroditus was 'your apostle' (Philippians 2:25; RV margin); that is, the 'one sent' by the church at Philippi to visit Paul. Barnabas was 'one sent' from Antioch (Acts 13:2,3). Paul was also for a time 'one sent' from Antioch, besides being at all times an apostle ('one sent') of the Lamb (Acts 14:14; 26:15-17).

The manifestation of supernatural power which **differentiated the Apostles** from other believers was in their ability, by the laying on of their hands, to **bestow miracle working powers** upon other believers in Jesus. Though all believers in those days were favoured with miraculous ability in one or more directions, such as healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues and so on., they could not impart these abilities to other believers newly entering into the faith. It required one of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb to do this (Acts 8:14-20; 19:6).

This limitation (of power to **confer** miracle working abilities) to the twelve Apostles of the Lamb explains how the miraculous abilities gradually passed away from the Church after the death of the apostles (1 Corinthians 13:8), and also shows why the claim to possess such abilities by people in this day should be rejected at once.

It is to be noted also, that the twelve Apostles of the Lamb were not chosen or elected by each other, neither by vote nor by lot.\* Neither did they elect the Lord Jesus to be their leader. He was the Christ by divine, not by human, appointment, and their relation to Him as apostles was ordered by Himself. *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."* (John 15:16; 6:27; 10:36).

## **Prophets**

These are the public expounders or orators. A prophet spoke to edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3). Sometimes they were seers, or foretellers, also, but not necessarily so.

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\* Concerning the election of Matthias by lot (Acts 1:15-26), and God's disapproval of this attempt of the disciples to select one of their number, see 'Advocate' November 1912.



In the times immediately after Pentecost, the prophets often spoke by inspiration for the benefit of believers (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:22,29-32); but since the miraculous abilities passed away from the Church, the prophets have only that knowledge that is derived from the written Word, which the Holy Spirit assists them, as it assists all believers, to understand, and which they, as prophets, are able to explain connectedly and lucidly before the congregation of believers for the instruction and edification of all, which is the purpose of the Lord in giving them as "*gifts*" to the Church. Prophets may be of either gender (1 Corinthians 11:4,5; Acts 21:9; Romans 16:12).

### **Evangelists**

These are the carriers of the good tidings into new country, among people who have not heard it before. They are "*gifts*" to the Church for the purpose of attracting new believers to the Faith which they preach. Though some will be more conspicuous than others in the work of evangelization, yet every believer may be an evangelist, both byword and by his or her consistent life.

When severe persecution came upon the Church at Jerusalem and scattered all the members except the apostles, we are told that "*they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word*" (Acts 8:4). Sometimes the evangelist preaches to practically a whole city (Acts 8:5,6); sometimes to one person (verse 35); sometimes with great success, as Philip at Samaria; and sometimes with but little result, as Paul at Athens (Acts 17:32-34). Women as well as men are eligible to engage in evangelistic work (Acts 21:9; Philippians 4:3).

In the early days, and indeed for many centuries, the work of evangelization was mostly done by means of the spoken word. Now we have the additional means of the printed

word, which can be effectively used to disseminate the knowledge of the good news, and those who might never be able to speak for five minutes to a concourse of strangers can now carry the message from house to house by means of books and tracts. A great door of opportunity is thus open to all who can arrange to take the time for it.

### **Pastors and Teachers**

These are Christ's "*gifts*" to His people for the purpose of assisting the members of His body individually and in small groups, their work being more intimate than that of those who discourse to assemblies. A pastor is a shepherd, and as the shepherds in Palestine knew their sheep by name, so should the pastor of the Lord's sheep know them individually, and be able to give individual assistance where required in knowledge or in character building.

A teacher must needs have much of the Holy Spirit as well as a good knowledge of the truth to be imparted to others; for the teacher has to deal with points that might never be brought up in a large assembly. The teacher must be able to take the learner's standpoint, and lead him thence to the right position. Few can do it.

Apostles Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers; these are the "*gifts*" of the Lord which He gave to His people when he ascended up on high. The number of the Apostles of the Lamb was limited to twelve; no limit is fixed for the others. One individual might exercise himself in several of these capacities for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Paul did much evangelizing, also much exhorting or comforting and confirming of the brethren, which was more especially the work of the prophet (Acts 20:1-11). When he stayed long enough at a place, Paul also did the work of pastor and teacher, edifying the saints privately, from house to house (Acts 18:11; 20:20).

Judas and Silas were prophets, and when they visited Antioch with the apostolic letter from Jerusalem, they exhorted and confirmed in the faith the Gentiles in Antioch who had become believers. But Silas also did the work of an evangelist in company with Paul, travelling with him and Timothy through Macedonia (Acts 15:32,40; 16:1-12). Timothy was prophet, teacher, pastor and evangelist, to exhort, instruct, and reprove, and to carry the Gospel into new parts (1 Timothy 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 4:1-5). And Titus was the same (Titus 2:15). Priscilla and Aquila (the ancient MSS. and RV put the names in this order) were teachers to expound the way of the Lord more perfectly to Apollos, the eloquent evangelist, and to the Church in their house (Acts 18:24-26; Romans 16:3-5). The New Testament is most interesting and instructive in its references to the activities of the early Church.

## CHAPTER 10

### Members Set in the Body as God Pleases

*"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" (1 Corinthians 12:28,29).*

Of Aaron we are told that he honoured not himself to be high priest, but was called of God to that office. *"So also", says the Apostle, "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."* (Hebrews 5:4-6; John 6:27; 10:36).

We have seen that the apostles did not constitute themselves such, nor were they authorised to add to their number; their Lord Himself called those whom He desired to have as His apostles (John 15:16). It is perhaps by way of allusion to the Lord's order in this particular that Paul says of himself that he was *"an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father"* (Galatians 1:1); and again that he was *"an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God"* (Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1).

Men could not make the Messiah; they were to recognise Him whom God had sealed (John 6:27). Neither could men make an apostle of the Lamb; but they could and should recognise in that capacity those whom the Lord set in that position in the body.

But if God, or Jesus Christ by the will of God, set the twelve Apostles of the Lamb in their position, it is equally a fact, according to 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11,

that the prophets and teachers have been 'set' in the body by the same divine power and authority. The prophets and teachers have not been called and set in their places by audible words or miraculous demonstrations, as were the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, but by the quieter operation of the divine Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8), working as it will, and to be recognised by those concerned.

The same principle, precisely, has been followed by the Lord in respect of the 'bishops' (leaders of congregations) and 'deacons' and 'deaconesses' (assistants to the bishop or overseer of each congregation). These are referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as "*governments*" and "*helps*" set in the Church according to the divine pleasure.

### **False Apostles and Prophets**

The fact that God has given His Son to be Head over the Church which is His body (Ephesians 1:22), and that He has set in the Church apostles, prophets and so on, according to His own counsel, has not prevented false apostles, false prophets, and even false Christs, from arising, who have deceived many unwary ones, or such as were not right with God (2 Corinthians 11:13; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18; Matthew 24:4,5; Revelation 2:2). Satan has ever been busy to counterfeit, and if possible to counteract, the work of God in order to beguile God's people from their simplicity, as Eve was beguiled in Eden. To serve his ends he has transformed Himself into an angel of light, and His servants into ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:3,14-15).

In pursuit of their purpose, these falsifiers deceitfully promise 'liberty' to those whom they would dupe. True liberty is a precious possession of God's people; liberty from sin and from the Mosaic law, and liberty to do right; but the saints do well also to remember that they are servants, bondslaves of the Lord Jesus Christ, servants of God unto righteousness, servants of each other.

The false prophets exalt liberty above its proper place, and emphasise it as though it were the principal thing to be sought and maintained, thus driving out of the minds of those being deceived the thoughts they should have about other things of great value to the Christian. *"They speak great swelling words of vanity. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the bond servants of corruption"* (2 Peter 2:18,19). Liberty is good; it is excellent; it is necessary; but there are several sorts of liberty, and the saint of God must inspect closely to see of what sort the liberty is that is being promised him, lest he fall into a worse bondage than that which binds him to God and His people. Examine the prophesyings that come your way; prove them, and hold fast only that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:20,21; 1 John 4:1).

## CHAPTER 11

### How has God Set the Members?

If God has not interfered to prevent the uprising of those who claim to be teachers of truth but are not, how has His Spirit operated to set in their proper position in the body those members whom He would use for the instruction in doctrine and edification in love of the membership as a whole? The attentive contemplation of the divine operation in this matter brings to view one of the most striking and beautiful examples given us of a consistent following of a principle through all stages of the work of disseminating the truth.

1. In the first place, the knowledge of God's purpose was possessed by no one save God Himself. The plan was of His own devising, without consultation with anyone.

*"Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?"* (Isaiah 40:13,14; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 2:16).

2. The Father communicated the information to the Son. But not all the knowledge was given the Son at the time of His first advent to earth; for He admitted before his crucifixion, and again after His resurrection, that certain items were still retained by the Father in His own power (Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7).

After His ascension, He being then the *"Lamb as it had been slain"* (Revelation 5:6), the Son was able to take the seven-sealed book from the Father and open the seals thereof (Revelation 5:3-7). This was probably the time when the Father gave the Son the items which had not before been made known to Him (Revelation 1:1).

*"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth."* (John 5:19,20).

3. It was the duty of the Son to pass the word on further. In discharge of this duty, He *committed* the truth to the twelve Apostles. Though He preached publicly, He favoured the apostles with special explanations and revelations, Paul being particularly abundant in revelations -

*"I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." "Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."* (John 17:8; 12:49,50; Matthew 13:11; 1 Corinthians 15:14; Galatians 1:11,12; Ephesians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 12:7).

The apostles recognised that the Gospel was a trust **committed** unto them, and they so wrote of it -

*"According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was **committed** to my trust."* (1 Timothy 1:11; 1 Corinthians 9:17; Titus 1:3; Galatians 2:7).

4. The apostles not only preached the Gospel, but sought out certain ones younger than themselves to whom they committed the Gospel trust in their turn -



*"O Timothy, keep **that which is committed to thy trust**, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith." "Hold fast the form of sound words, **which thou hast heard of me**, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was **committed** unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."* (1 Timothy 6:20,21; 2 Timothy 1:13,14).

As the apostles travelled about preaching the Gospel committed to them, and believers increased in numbers in the various cities, the apostles appointed elders in every congregation, thus instituting the "*governments*" and "*helps*" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28 (Acts 14:23; RV). Not only did the apostles do this themselves, but they also commanded those younger brethren of the next generation, to whom they had committed the Gospel trust, to do the same, and gave them instructions how to do it (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-15). It will be observed that verses 14 and 15 show that Paul gave Timothy the detailed information concerning the bishops, male and female (verse 2), the deacons (verse 8), and the deaconesses (verse 11) for his guidance in appointing them. These are the "*governments*" and "*helps*" already referred to. If these "*elders*" rule well, they are to be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the word and doctrine (1 Timothy 5:17).

5. Finally, Timothy, to whom Paul had committed the Gospel trust which he had received from the Master, was himself charged with the duty of looking out faithful men, who would be able to teach others, and to whom he could pass on the trust, committing to them what had been entrusted to him. But he was not to lay approving hands suddenly on any one (1 Timothy 5:22; 3:6,10).

*"The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* (2 Timothy 2:2).

### **"Presbyters," or Elders**

The term 'elder' seems to be a general one, referring to the older and more established members, and includes both bishops and deacons, male and female. Hence, a bishop or a pastor is always an elder, but an elder is not necessarily a bishop or pastor. Peter, who was an apostle, called himself an elder; but, while there were many others entitled to the name 'elder', there were only eleven other 'apostles' (1 Peter 5:1; 2 John 1; Titus 1:5; 2:1-3; Acts 20:28).

Titus under the apostle Paul's instructions ordained (or appointed) 'elders', which would include bishops (or overseers) and deacons, in every city of Crete.

The word 'elder', used as an adjective, is from the Greek 'presbuteros', the comparative of 'presbus' (elderly). It means 'older'. As a noun it means a senior. It was used of members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, and of other leading men among the Jews (Luke 7:3). And it is properly used of the older, established, and more experienced of the Christian believers, whether holding special office or not, as well as of those in office, such as bishops or deacons. In Acts 2:17 (rendered "*old men*") it refers to those older persons among the Jews, 'fathers and mothers in Israel', who, on receiving the Holy Spirit, should "*dream dreams*".

The use of 'presbuteros' as covering male and female believers is well illustrated in 1 Timothy 5:1., the word 'women', though not occurring in the original, being indicated by the feminine form of the word; just as 'men' is indicated in verse 1 by the masculine form of the word. Timothy was not to rebuke a female elder, but to entreat or

exhort her as a mother, just as he was not to rebuke a male elder, but to entreat or exhort him as a father.

In Titus 2:2,3, the words translated "*aged men*" and "*aged women*" are 'presbutes' and 'presbutis', the latter being the feminine form of 'presbutes'. These were not necessarily the oldest men and women in the church according to years, but the oldest in knowledge of the truth and Christian experience. As a rule these would seldom be young in years. They were to set a good example to and otherwise instruct the younger believers.

Paul uses this word 'presbutes' in Philemon 9, but Westcott and Hort suspect a corruption in the reading. A related word, 'presbeuo', meaning a 'senior', by implication to act 'as a representative', and figuratively 'as a preacher', is translated 'ambassador' in Ephesians 6:20; "*the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds*". It is probable that his intention in Philemon 9 was also to describe himself as 'an ambassador and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ'.

Another related word is 'presbuterion', which is defined by Strong's Concordance as being 'the neuter of a presumed derivative of presbuteros'. It is translated "*elders*" in Luke 22:66; "*elders of the people*", as distinct from the chief priests and the scribes; "*estate of the elders*" in Acts 22:5; "*presbytery*" in 1 Timothy 4:14. These are its only occurrences; and the only occurrence of the word 'presbytery' in the English Bible; being bodily transferred and not translated. As the Apostle Paul calls Timothy "*my own son in the faith*", or "*my true-born child*" (RV) in the faith, and writes to him, "*that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands*", it is evident that 'presbytery' in 1 Timothy 4:14 refers to Paul himself, and instead of being merely transferred should be translated 'the old man', being the Apostle's intimation of his own advancing years.

Some time since a controversy arose in America in connection with church union, and it was suggested that each denomination might contribute its best features to a new 'union' organization. A representative of the Presbyterian Church then admitted that the board of elders or presbyters, which is a distinctive feature of that denomination, could be dispensed with, on the ground that it was not a divinely prescribed institution of church government, but only one which the church had adopted as a convenience.

Members of various denominations consider themselves at liberty to devise any method of government which suits their convenience or the wishes of the majority, and claim 'common sense' as their guide. No doubt this attitude largely accounts for the influential positions given to moneyed men, irrespective of their spirituality, for 'common sense' always exalts wealth. And those churches which take all control away from the preacher, and vest it in a 'board', need not be surprised to find the board 'calling' preachers who will preach to suit themselves.

The preachers of the truth in the early church were not so selected, nor so bound. They preached what the apostles taught them, to rich and poor the same gospel of humility and meekness. James even goes so far as to warn the church not to fawn upon the rich ones coming into their assemblies because in all probability those rich will lead them into bondage (James 2:1-9).

The Apostle did not intend to raise unreasonable prejudice against the rich - nor do we - but it is well for all Christians to keep in mind the Apostle's words; "*Hath not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?*".

*"For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. .... He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."* (1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

### **The Teaching Office Passed On**

Thus the Scripture instruction concerning the manner of passing on the Gospel truth carries us from the heavenly Father, its author, down to the second generation beyond the apostles. The Father chose the Son, and **committed** the words to Him. The Son chose the apostles by the will of His Father, and **committed** the words to them. The apostles, following the same principle, chose certain of the believers, locally and at large, according to characteristics described in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9, and **committed** the sound words to them, instructing these in their turn to **commit** the message to faithful ones for the benefit of others.

This was the program to be followed throughout the age, and it had been well for the Church had she adhered to it. But no; as the Apostle Paul predicted, so it came to pass. Some of the teachers and leaders forgot that they were to be 'guides' to God's people (Hebrews 13:17; margin), and sought to be lords over His heritage (1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-30). Some of the taught became restive and impatient under even the mildest 'guidance', they got 'itching ears', and would not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, and contrary to the advice of the Apostle James, they erected 'to themselves' **heaps** of teachers, who would turn them away from the truth unto fables (2 Timothy 4:3,4; James 3:1).

Doubtless it is this fact of the Church going wrong in the matter of teachers that has made it necessary for the Lord providentially to raise up from time to time during the age special men like the Reformers, who would make a fresh

start, coming away from the errors in which the Church had become involved, and again looking out faithful men to whom the truth could be entrusted.

That the Father must have made the very best choice when He chose to commit the message to His Son our Lord, will not be questioned; nor will any doubts arise as to the wisdom of the Son in choosing whom He did for His apostles.

Beyond that, it seems feasible and reasonable to believe that the apostles, having been specially inspired, would make the best choice of those to whom the Gospel should be further committed, and that those who had been taught by the apostles, and had enjoyed their confidence, would be best equipped to follow the instructions laid down in 1 Timothy 3 and 2 Timothy 2:2; from generation to generation.

And as any one gave out the message, those who heard it would be expected to consider it well, to prove all things, and to hold fast the good. Even the apostolic preaching was thus scrutinised, and those who searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so were commended for their diligence. Being persuaded of the truth, the believers would then wish to do all in their power to carry it further.

Noting their zeal for the service, the ones best equipped in the truth would take pleasure in assisting them to bear a part, whether as evangelist, pastor, teacher or prophet, as seemed suitable; and so our Lord Himself would in this manner, His Word instructing, His Spirit leading, and His Providence overruling, continue His gifts to the Church. *"HE gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."* (Ephesians 4:7-15).

Thus, notwithstanding all the changes which have befallen God's people during the past 1900 years, has the Lord Jesus been building His Church, building it successfully. The rise of false teachers, and the consequent falling away of many from the faith, or vice versa, causes more or less confusion, and much grief to the true defenders of the faith. The thirst for power by elders and bishops, the introduction of ecclesiastical trappings, the compromising with sin and worldliness, have resulted in the development of great religious organizations which are far from the simple organization which the Lord instituted at the beginning through the Apostles.

But it is not too late for Christians living to-day to return to the former simplicity, and to become, in the Lord's hands, fresh agencies for the spread of the truth of the Gospel.

### **Present Privileges**

The "*espoused virgin*" (2 Corinthians 11:2) that is to be the "*bride*" has the privilege now of "*making herself ready*" (Revelation 19:7). There is much 'making ready' (Matthew 5:48; Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:3) to be done by and in each member of the church ( Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; 2:14; Hebrews 10:22); but at the last, as at the beginning and all through our Christian course, we shall have to trust in the work of Jesus, finished at Calvary, for justification and acceptance. Nevertheless, the sincerity of our profession is demonstrated by our activity in the work of making ready ourselves, and assisting others to do the same, by example, by precept, by exhortation, by warning, by reproof, by rebuke, if by any means we might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. He desires to see success attend the work of the Spirit in writing His law on our hearts and minds (2 Corinthians 3:3,8,9,18; Romans 12:2), the imperfect body of flesh being also quickened or energized as much as possible in God's service (Romans 8:11).

The full use of all the above mentioned privileges entails suffering upon the faithful. It was so in the experience of the apostles, and it is so at the present time. The suffering is partly self-inflicted, by denying one's self, and taking up the cross daily; it is partly heaven-inflicted, by means of disciplines and corrections sent for the benefit of every son whom God receives, as an evidence of His love; it is partly earth-inflicted, by means of persecution on the part of those who oppose the church and the truth for which she stands as a pillar (1 Timothy 3:15).

The Believer is to be neither surprised nor dismayed at the sometimes severe evidences of divine love and satanic hatred. In the former case, he is to remember that the experiences will work together for his good if he be rightly exercised thereby -

*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28).*

*"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12:11).*

In the latter case, he is to rely on the promise that -

*"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

In every case, the Christian, however sorely pressed, is to remember the gracious promise -



*"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12).*

And as he willingly seeks opportunities for self-denial in the service of the Master, Who did so much for him, and having found such opportunities, as he gladly and cheerfully spends and is spent in the service of the Lord on behalf of the other members, to make them ready, the Christian is to be sustained by the glorious hope expressed by our Lord in reply to a question on this very point -

*"Then answered Peter and said unto Him, 'Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?' And Jesus said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.'" (Matthew 19:27-29).*

A very curious misunderstanding has gained a place in the minds of many Christians, causing them to believe that it is their duty and privilege in the present age to make the world ready for the coming of God's Kingdom. Some even go as far as to think that the church should reign here and now in the political, social and commercial affairs of the present evil world. Their effort to accomplish this has brought upon Christendom the doom of rejection from God's favour, because instead of being willing to suffer with Christ, they have sought to reign without Him, and have forgotten the necessary work of 'making ready' that must be done before the church can reign with the Lord (Revelation 3:14-22).

## **Future Prospects**

The suffering of the church is not to endure forever, neither as individuals nor as a class. After the fires of discipline, self-denial, and persecution shall have purged out the unfit ones from the body, and also the dross of pride, self-will, and so on, from the over-comers, the church shall be exalted to the promised position in the throne with her Lord, at His second advent. But how necessary the fires, in order that she may be prepared, collectively and individually, for the high position.

**The** Lord and the church will not reign with overbearing arrogance, to oppress and cast down the people; the absolute authority vested in Jesus (Matthew 28:18; Romans 14:9) is to be used for the blessing of all the people, which will include the destruction of the wilfully wicked who will persist in being so after they shall have been fully enlightened. This is the grand work of blessing in which the glorified church is to have part.

The blessing then, as now, will be given through the extension of the New Covenant mercies to those nations, living and dead, who had not previously had the opportunity of hearing of them. This wider extension of the New Covenant is shown under the symbol of the *"New Jerusalem, the "Holy City" -*

*"Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And the nations shall walk by the light thereof; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."* (Revelation 21:2,9,10,24 [according to Sinaitic and Alexandrine MSS], 26).

For these grand times, now so near at hand, let us devoutly pray; "*Thy Kingdom Come*".

**Part 2**

**THE DOCTRINE**

**of**

**BAPTISMS**

## CHAPTER 1

### "The Doctrine of Baptisms"

Many and great and fierce, leading often to bitterness of feeling and sometimes to persecution and bloodshed, have been the controversies raging round the subject of Baptisms, called by the Apostle Paul one of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6:1,2). Some of the questions raised in these bitter controversies have been: What is Baptism? Is it an outward ceremony or an inward experience, or both? What is the proper method of performing the rite? Who are eligible as candidates for baptism? Is it a privilege or an obligation? What good effect follows the performance of the ceremony of baptism? What evil result attends the neglect to perform the ceremony of baptism?

The divergence of views on these questions has been astonishingly wide, ranging from the teaching of regeneration by the ceremony of baptism, and of unbaptised infants writhing in torment, through the gamut to the total denial of obligation to observe baptism as a rite. The variations of practice have been correspondingly great. Some baptise infants (in extreme cases even the unborn), others baptise only those who have come to years of discretion on confession of faith in Christ; still others baptise not at all.

Surely, not all of these widely differing beliefs and practices can be right. Some are certain to be wrong. How can we acquire the knowledge of the divine will on this subject? In no other way than by giving attention to the divine word, and this we all, as workmen that do not wish to be ashamed, must try to do, asking grace for guidance and help in every time of need.

Our belief is that some of the confusion on this subject has arisen from lack of attention to the letter 's' at the end of the word 'baptisms' in Hebrews 6:2. This letter gives the effect of plurality, showing that there is more than one baptism included in the fundamental doctrines of Christ. It shall, therefore, be our purpose to inquire for these baptisms, and to seek to rightly divide the Word on this fundamental, therefore important, subject.

They comprise:

1. Baptism into Moses;
2. Washings under the Law;
3. John's Baptism;
4. Baptism into Jesus Christ;
5. Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

### **Definitions of Baptise and Baptism**

The English word 'baptise' throughout the New Testament is transferred (not translated) from the Greek language. It is derived from the primitive verb 'bapto', which is defined in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance as meaning 'to overwhelm; i.e., cover wholly with a fluid'. The transitive verb 'whelm' is defined by the Standard Dictionary as meaning 'to cover with water or other fluid; to submerge'.

The primitive verb 'bapto' occurs three times in the New Testament (Luke 16:24; John 13:26; Revelation 19:13); in the King James Version it is translated 'dip' or 'dipped' in each case.

The verb 'baptizo', derived from 'bapto', occurs many times in the New Testament. It is twice rendered 'wash' (Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38), and all other times it is merely transferred, with no attempt at translation in the King James Version, which uses the word 'baptise'.

The nouns 'baptisma' and 'baptismos' occur frequently in the New Testament. In Mark 7:4,8, and Hebrews 9:10, 'baptismos' is rendered 'washing'; other times it and 'baptisma' are transferred, without translation, the KJV using the word 'baptism'.

'Baptistes' also occurs in the New Testament. It is transferred without translation, and becomes the English word 'Baptist', being the title of John, the forerunner of Jesus.

From the above it is easy to see that nothing short of complete covering of the candidate by the baptismal medium, whether that be water or something else, can satisfy the requirements of the Scriptures.

This being so, it is at once realised that any method of administering baptism, as an outward form, which does not satisfy the requirement of Scripture, is really not an administration of baptism at all. Let each one candidly ask himself, Can a few drops of water poured or sprinkled upon my head completely cover me? Only one answer is possible.

### **The First Baptism**

The baptism mentioned in Scripture as first in occurrence was that of the entire nation of Israel: -

*"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Corinthians 10:1,2).*

As the people passed through the Red Sea, there was a wall of water on either side of them, and the cloud was above them, so that, in a manner of speaking, they were completely covered by the water.

But it is manifest that although water, the sea and the cloud, was the baptismal medium, there was some idea expressed beyond that of merely being covered by water; namely, they *"were all baptised unto [literally into] Moses"*. The baptism of the whole nation was therefore a method of expressing their willingness to follow Moses, and this devotion to Moses, rather, to God through Moses, was the reality, of which the being covered by the sea and the cloud was a symbol (Exodus 14:31).

It was also a representation of God's acceptance of them, inasmuch as He carried them safely through the sea, and ultimately raised them out of it. If it be asked, What was the real baptismal medium which the cloud and the sea symbolized? Let us say, The will of God, to which the Israelites completely gave themselves up. In this they were 'whelmed' or submerged (Psalm 106:8-12).

### **"Divers Washings"**

Besides the collective baptism above described, sundry ceremonial washings of clothing and bathings of the person were commanded to the Jewish people. An illustration of these commands is found in Numbers 19:7; *"Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water"*.

These commandments are referred to in Hebrews 9:10 as *"divers washings"*, and in Mark 7:4 the excessive zeal of the Pharisees for ceremonial 'washing' is referred to. The Greek word used in Mark and Hebrews is 'baptismos', and the evident thought is the covering of the person with water for cleansing purposes, or the dipping of clothing and utensils into water for the same purpose. The New Testament fulfilment of these types is referred to in Ephesians 5:26; *"the washing of water by the Word"*.



## CHAPTER 2

### The Baptism of John

A short time before the beginning of our Saviour's ministry appeared the most honoured of all the prophets, the greatest who had risen up to that time, because honoured with the privilege of baptizing and announcing the Messiah (Matthew 11:7-11; John 1:31-34). He came to bear witness of Christ, the True Light, Who was shortly to come after him (John 1:6-8). This prophet, John the Baptist, came with words of reproof and exhortations to repentance to the then people of God, Israel after the flesh. Additionally, he performed a rite which had been performed by none before him, which distinguished him from all the prophets, his predecessors, and which procured for him his title, 'The Baptist,' or 'Baptiser', or, as some versions courageously translate (not transfer) the word, John 'the Immerser'.

John's baptism differed from that historic event in the Red Sea: that was a collective covering with the waters of the sea and the cloud; John's baptism was an individual matter; that was evidently a symbol of devotion to God, such as they were later to express at Mt. Sinai, when they said, "*All that the Lord hath spoken will we do*"; John's baptism also signified devotion to God, but it had in it a further meaning, harmonious with his message to a people who had broken their covenant. As he exhorted them to repent (literally, 'reform'), such did his Baptism signify, as he said, "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance*".

Need it be remarked that the immersion into water of those who reformed under John's preaching was but a **symbol** of their reformation, and of their reinstatement into

the original position? The immersion was not itself the reformation, nor were the waters of Jordan a cleansing stream to carry away the sins to the Dead Sea.

### **Limitations of John's Baptism**

John's message was from God to the Jewish people. His ministry was confined to that people exclusively. This being so, it is not difficult to apprehend that the significance of reformation and reinstatement attaching to his baptism is similarly limited. They had been baptized, as a people, in the Red Sea, in symbol of consecrated devotion to God. Had they maintained the devoted attitude of heart, John's exhortation to them to reform, and his baptism in symbol thereof, would not have been required.

John's baptism did not represent the beginning of a life of devotion to God; it represented the reformation of a life already devoted in word and profession, though not always in deed and in truth. John's baptism was not intended for any outside the Jewish covenant relation; it pertained to the reformation of a life already covenanted to God, but gone out of the right way, and desiring to return. It thus made ready the people to receive the Messiah, for whom the way was being prepared, and whom John announced (Luke 1:16,17; Malachi 3:1).

John baptized no one in his own name. He always made it clear that though he performed the ceremony, they should direct their minds to the One who would come after ((John 1:22-27; 3:28). The Apostle Paul refers to John's loyalty in this respect;

*"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 Jesus Christ.**"* (Acts 19:4).

During the latter part of John's ministry the Lord's disciples also performed baptisms, evidently assisting in John's reformatory work, and continuing it after he was cast into prison. They also directed attention to Jesus as the Messiah (John 3:22-26; 4:1,2).

## CHAPTER 3

### Jesus Baptized at Jordan

*"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?' And Jesus answering, said unto him, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he suffered Him." (Matthew 3:13-15).*

The question will at once occur to the student, Since Jesus was without sin, why did He come to be baptized by John, whose baptism signified reformation of life. The same thought must have been in John's mind, when he said, *"I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest thou to me?"*

Our Saviour recognised the point, and admitted that He did not come to John's baptism as a confessor of personal transgressions, when He said, *"Suffer it to be so now"*. Nevertheless, He was, through His mother, a member of the Jewish nation, and, as such, He would recognise the righteousness of John's reproof of the nation and his call to the people to reform. Recognising John's mission as heaven authorised, our Lord, as a loyal Jew, would, of course, associate Himself with it; no doubt this is why He said, in reply to John's remonstrance, *"Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"*. Without confessing or admitting personal sin, our Lord thus allied Himself with God's message to His people.

#### **Significance of Jesus' Baptism**

But there was undoubtedly a further significance in our Lord's baptism. He was not, at His baptism, symbolising **reformation** of His life; neither was He symbolising the

**beginning** of a life of devotion to God, for from his earliest years His chief interest was His Father's business (Luke 3:49-52). The significance of Jesus' Baptism lay deeper than this; for **He was superseding Moses as the Leader of God's people**, being recognised and proclaimed in this capacity by John the Baptist after the Immersion when the Holy Spirit came upon him (John 1:29-36; 3:26-31).

The will of God concerning our Lord Jesus and His followers differed from His will concerning Moses and his followers. Moses led the Israelites to Sinai and the Law Covenant, to the promised land and the enjoyment of material benefits. The Lord Jesus leads His people to the New Covenant and to better promises than those of the Law. Our Lord's baptism, therefore, signified His acceptance of the office of Leader of God's New Covenant people, and His complete devotion to the will of God as it had been written in the volume of the book (the Scriptures); "*Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God*" (Hebrews 10:7; John 7:28,29). And the promised land to which He looked forward was not Canaan, but the inheritance of the throne of the Lord, eternal glory in the heavens, and the ruler-ship of earth, being the heir of David's throne (Luke 1:32,33; Philippians 2:8-11; Revelation 3:21; Acts 2:32-36).

### **Two Aspects of Christ's Sufferings**

God's will concerning His beloved Son was two-fold: first, that He should give His life a ransom for all men, a perfect offering for the sins of the world (1 Timothy 2:4-6; 1 John 2:2), and, second, that from the time of His formal devotion to God at His baptism in the Jordan until His death on the cross He should learn obedience by the things He suffered, demonstrating His willingness to bear reproach for righteousness' sake, overcoming temptations, enduring much contradiction of sinners against Himself, social ostracism and revilings (Romans 15:3; Hebrews 5:7,8; 12:3,4).

It is absolutely necessary that both these aspects of our Lord's sufferings be borne in mind, and that they be clearly distinguished the one from the other, if we are to avoid confusion and very serious error.

The Apostle Paul differentiates the two aspects of our Lord's sufferings, calling the first, **death for sins** (1 Corinthians 15:3), and the second, **death to Sin** (Romans 6:10). **He "died for our sins"**, Himself being perfect and absolutely free from sins; and **He died to Sin** (Sin personified as a taskmaster) by refusing to acknowledge Sin as his Master, but always bowing to and fulfilling the will of God (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:26; Philippians 2:8; John 8:29; Matthew 20:28; 26:53,54).

Some time after our Lord's baptism in water, and after He had fulfilled a considerable portion of the self-denial and suffering which devotion to God entailed, He spoke of a baptism still to be accomplished -

*"I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?"* (Luke 12:50).

Undoubtedly He referred in these words to the further and more severe sufferings with which He would be overwhelmed in the last months of His ministry, and the death which would end it. Compare Mark 10:38,39. Ancient manuscripts omit from Matthew 20:22 the words *"and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with"*, but as they occur in Mark, they will be considered under Believer's Baptism.

### **The Cup of Affliction**

On three occasions our Lord used *"the cup"* as a symbol of the afflictions which faithfulness to God constrained Him to endure. He accepted all as from His Heavenly Father's hand -

*"And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith He unto them, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with Me.' And He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let **this cup** pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt'."* (Matthew 26:37-39).

*"The **cup** which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"* (John 18:11).

*"Can ye drink of the **cup** that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"* (Mark 10:38).

In these words our Lord distinctly identifies His tribulations with His Baptism, and His 'cup' of affliction with both. The 'cup' of affliction was poured for Jesus by the Father. 'Drinking' it represented the faithfulness of the Son even unto the death of the Cross, enduring reproaches for the Father's sake. This is the martyr aspect of Jesus' death. This 'cup' has no connection with the cup used in the Last Supper, of which our Lord Jesus did not partake. What that 'cup' means will be considered in Part 3 of this volume.

### **Baptism after Pentecost**

That baptism was to be a feature of the Christian religion is indicated by our Lord's command to the disciples just before His ascension -

*"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 age'."* (Matthew 28:18-20).

The first preaching of the Gospel was to Jews, to whom it was restricted for some time after the descent of the Holy Spirit. Until the determined time of special favour to the Jews was ended by sending the Gospel to Cornelius and other Gentiles, the symbolic significance of baptism to the Jews who became believers in Jesus was the same as it had been to those who believed on Him before Pentecost, namely, reformation from their covenant-breaking sins, and remission of their sins, as it is written -

*"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. ... Then Peter said unto them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost'." (Acts 2:5,38).*

With the exception of the case of Saul of Tarsus (also a Jew), the above is the only recorded occasion, after the descent of the Spirit, on which baptism was commanded as having the significance of reformation and remission of sins (Acts 22:16). A distinction begins now to be made between baptism with the meaning attached to it in connection with John's mission and baptism and its meaning as applied to Believers in Jesus, subsequent to finishing the confirmation of the New Covenant with Israelites indeed during the week of years (7 years) (Daniel 9:24-27).\*

### **John Decreases, Jesus Increases**

Apollos, *"an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures"*, went to Ephesus. He was a Jew, fervent in spirit, and he taught diligently the things of the Lord. But he had his deficiencies. What they may have been is not fully disclosed. Only one detail is mentioned, namely, he was not

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\*For detailed explanation of Daniel's prophecy of the 'Seventy Weeks', please see 'The New Covenant Advocate', Sept., 1914.



clearly instructed on the subject of baptism, because he knew *"only the baptism of John"*. That is to say, his idea of the import of baptism was incorrect, inasmuch as he knew only the significance of baptism as John taught it; i.e., repentance from covenant-breaking sins. This was no question of outward form; it was one of inward significance. Nor was it a question of distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers, for the converts made by Apollos at Ephesus were from the synagogue (Acts 18:24-28). As above stated, we believe that the difference was due to the fact that the Jewish age was ended, that a New Age was begun, and that a New Leader was to be followed, namely, Jesus, instead of Moses (John 1:17).

When Paul went to Ephesus, he found the converts of Apollos, and learned that they had not received the Holy Spirit. His question to them discloses the importance of having in mind the right significance of baptism, for he asked them -

*"Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, 'Unto John's baptism'." (Acts 19:1-3).*

Paul then explained to them the difference, showing that John's baptism was temporary, being merely a sign of reformation from their national sins of covenant breaking, and a preparation of them to follow the new Leader, Jesus, who was to come after John. John had fulfilled his mission, and had passed off the scene, giving place to Jesus, who was to supersede, not only John, but Moses, their great Leader and Law-giver. These are Paul's words -

*"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. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19:4,5).*

## CHAPTER 4.

### Baptism into Jesus Christ

After the passing away of the temporary significance of baptism attached to it by John's mission, the original significance of baptism, devotion to God in following the appointed Leader, as illustrated in the collective baptism of the Jewish nation in the Red Sea, re-appears as the true significance of the baptism of the believer in Jesus.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, exhorted Jewish covenant breakers to be baptized as a sign of reformation and remission of sins. The time of special favour to the Jews having expired, the same Peter in his epistle some years later, defines the significance of Christian baptism as applicable to both Jewish and Gentile believers, for He hath made *"in himself of twain one new man"* (Ephesians 2:15), and shows that it means devotion to God, including devotion to Jesus Christ whom God has sent. Baptism signifies -

*"Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God."* (1 Peter 3:21).

The answer of a good conscience enlightened by the Gospel is to accept Jesus Christ as the Leader, and to follow in His steps.

Paul's writings have also been used of the Spirit to define baptism in precisely the same manner as does Peter, though using different words -

*"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead*

*to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ.***" (Romans 6:1-3).

The Apostle's meaning is clear when we read the last two verses of the preceding chapter. The Law entered, he says, that sin might abound; that is, the Law by its restrictions made many transactions sin which were not previously considered by the Israelites to be sin (Romans 7:7-13). But having by the Law caused offences to abound, the Lord now makes Grace to abound still more, inasmuch as by His favour in Christ Jesus the condemnation of the Law can be done away. But, because Grace is bounteous, there is no liberty to continue sinning. If one be liberated from the Law and from the dominion of Sin, he is not necessarily rid of all restraint, for now, "*Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*".

He then reminds the Believers to whom He is writing that when they became Believers they had been **baptized into Jesus Christ**. Consequently, though free from Moses, once their Leader whom they must obey, they are now under a new Leader, Jesus Christ, and bound to obey Him, consequently must not by sinning take unfair advantage of the reign of Grace or Favour.

In regard to Gentiles, they also were called upon to repent, but not from transgressions against the Mosaic Law, for they were never under it. God, having placed His Son in the position of Lord and Judge, now calls on all men everywhere to repent of all their foolish and sinful thoughts, words and deeds (Acts 17:30; 18:17-20,26,27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). They are called upon to accept Jesus as the propitiation for their sins, and by Him to be reconciled to God, and also to take up their cross daily to follow in His footsteps of obedience and devotion to God, being baptized into Jesus Christ. In Christ both Jew and Gentile are on the same footing (Ephesians 2:11-18; Colossians 1:20-22).

The Apostle explains further that those who were immersed into Jesus Christ, taking upon themselves the obligation to obey Him, were thereby immersed into His death -

*"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death."* (Romans 6:3,4).

He then proceeds to show that the death of Jesus Christ here referred to is not only the death to His own will which culminated on the cross, but the death to the Taskmaster Sin, who would fain have gained the victory over Him, but never succeeded in the slightest degree. He was faithful and obedient to the Father, even unto death. Our case is different in one respect at least. Sin did once rule over us. But if we are now fully devoted to Christ, we are to reckon ourselves as dead to Sin. This death to self and sin is a necessary preliminary to the new life of righteousness -

*"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."* (Romans 6:4).

The newness of life begun in one who is begotten of God (1 John 5:1) is so different from the old manner of life that it is referred to as a resurrection from the dead experienced here and now by the Believer in Jesus (Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 3:1,2).

The grace of God does not cease with present experiences of a *"newness of life"*, or new way of living; it goes on, so that he who is faithful unto death has the promise of joint heir-ship with Jesus -

*"For if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection." (Romans 6:5; RV).*

### **Our "Old Man" Crucified**

Our old, sinful tendencies must be continually regarded as dead. The apostle Paul said he kept his body under; hence no longer active in the service of Sin -

*"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of Sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to Sin; for He that hath died is justified from Sin." (Romans 6:6,7; RV; Galatians 2:20).*

It is important here to note that our "old man" was crucified "with" Him, not in Him, nor as a part of Him. Our crucifixion with Jesus is in order that we might no longer be in bondage to Sin, the great taskmaster and slave, driver, who has the whole race, except those who have in this manner died, under his thrall. When we 'died' to Sin, we were justly released from all obligation to Sin, the slaveholder, under whom we had been sold.

'Justified from Sin' does not mean that every member of the human family who dies is thereby justified to everlasting life; for the penalty against sin was not 'dying', but everlasting death. Neither does it mean that each one who dies pays his own penalty; were that so, Christ's death for us had been unnecessary. *"He that hath died is justified from Sin"* means that whereas we were all in the hands of that tyrant, we are justly free from him when we 'die' to him, and become alive to God and righteousness -

*"For in that He [Jesus] died, He died unto Sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6: 10,11).*

Was Jesus ever under the dominion of Sin, the Taskmaster, as we have been under him? No! Jesus was never the slave of Sin. But our Lord came into the 'enemy's country' when He became flesh: He came into this evil world. Sin sought to entice Him, and to enslave Him. But Sin was unsuccessful, and Jesus was victorious. His devotion to God was complete, so that, notwithstanding the persecutions and the contradictions of sinners against Himself, Sin never got a victory over Him; Self was completely dead. This was the death of martyrdom; the reward was that He was raised by the Father to glory, honour and the throne.

If Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus during the High Calling age die to Sin and Self, they are assured of a similar reward, not on account of merit of their own, but because Christ, who shows them the way, has also, by His own death, made atonement for them unto God, having made peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20).

*"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. 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? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of Sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from Sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Romans 6:12-18).*

Being made alive, from the death state of trespasses and sins, by the grace of God through faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8), Sin the tyrant having no more claim over us

because we have died to him, we should not yield ourselves to obey the lusts of Sin, which remain in our flesh, or are set before us by others, but should now yield ourselves in full devotion to God, as those who are alive from the dead. His servants we are whom we obey, whether God or Sin.

The student will have noticed that in quoting from Romans 6, we have invariably begun 'Sin' with a capital letter. This has been done in order that the evident thought of the chapter, that Sin is personified as a possible master over us, God being the other possible Master, might be emphasized. This thought is present in the entire passage, which extends from Romans 5:21 to 8:4, and the student is requested to read it through with this in mind. The contrast between God and Sin, as two masters, ourselves as servants, and what the servants of these masters get for their service is vividly portrayed in the following words -

*"But now, being made free from Sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of Sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Romans 6:22,23).

That the baptism of the Believer into Jesus Christ signifies devotion to God, in following Jesus even into the death of Self to the service of Sin, and the yielding of the body in service to God, is thus clearly taught us by the Apostle Paul.

Connected with Peter's declaration of what baptism is, and what it is not, is his further explanation - *"Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from Sin; that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."* (1 Peter 4:1,2; Philippians 2:5).

## **The Answer of a Good Conscience**

This is the *"answer of a good conscience toward God"*, for if we have been bought with a price, it is only reasonable that we should present ourselves in loving devotion to Him who loved us and bought us.

*"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them; and rose again."* (2 Corinthians 5:14,15). *"I beseech you, therefore, brethren [Saints, already devoted, and endued with God's Spirit Romans 1:6-8; 8:15-17], by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* (Romans 12:1).

Another passage which explains the baptismal symbol, showing that the real immersion is an act of faith, and (in harmony with Peter) that it is the answer of a good conscience, is Colossians 2:12 -

*"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."*

As the Believer goes on in this life of devotion to God, the words of the Lord Jesus come to him with peculiar force-

*"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* (Luke 9:23).

*"Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"* (Mark 10:38).



The footsteps of Jesus in which we must do our best to walk are thus set out before us by the apostle Peter -

*"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously." (1 Peter 2:21-23).*

The 'cup' of sorrow, ignominy and suffering, which the Heavenly Father pours for us, shall we not drink it? Are not we willing to be baptized, overwhelmed, with trouble, persecution, reviling, perhaps a martyr's death? We may be 'willing', but are we 'able' (Matthew 20:22)? Yes, by His grace we are able, because the victory over sin and self and the world is not by the might of the flesh, but by the power of faith (Romans 8:31-39).

*"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 4:4-6; 5:4).*

*"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." (Romans 8:37).*

## CHAPTER 5

### The Form of Baptism

As far as the meaning of the Greek word is concerned, it can be satisfied in two ways:

- (1) by pouring over the candidate enough water to cover him; or
- (2) by immersing him into the water, and so covering him.

The sprinkling or pouring of a handful of water on the candidate's head is altogether out of the question, because that would not completely cover him.

If pouring a large quantity of water over the candidate, or immersing the candidate would satisfy the requirements of the Greek word, are we left at liberty to choose either method? By no means, for we have still to consider that the Apostle has described Baptism as a death and resurrection. This must decide for us. It is manifest that pouring a quantity of water over the candidate cannot possibly represent death and resurrection. But the immersion of the candidate into the water, and so covering him, and the subsequent raising of him out of the water, do most beautifully picture to the candidate, to the administrator, and to all sympathetic spectators, the death to Sin, the life of devotion to God, and the hope of the future glorious resurrection to share Christ's nature and throne.

#### **Not Triple Immersion**

The candidate should not be plunged three times into the water. Only one death is to be represented, not three; therefore the candidate should be plunged only once beneath the water.

*"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* is not to command a separate immersion into each name, but rather to show that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit all agree in authorizing the Baptism.

The baptismal form of words in vogue in Apostolic times has not been handed down to us. From this it may be understood that a formula was not considered to be of the highest importance. In the Acts of the Apostles, it is several times related that believers were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but no intimation is given of the form of words used (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:4,5). It is therefore left to the judgment of each administrator to use such words as are appropriate to the occasion. The following form, embodying the thoughts expressed in Matthew 28:18 and Romans 6:3 is recommended -

'Brother (or Sister) - (Christian name), in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I immerse thee into Jesus Christ, to obey Him, and follow in His footsteps.'

### **Importance of Right Ideas in Observing the Baptismal Ceremony**

A ceremonial action has significance and value in proportion as the ideas behind it are correct. One might dive beneath the water and emerge from it again as a swimmer, but such immersion would be totally without significance or value as a Christian ceremony. A believer in Jesus might be immersed in water with incorrect ideas as to the meaning of the ceremony, and so fail properly to represent to himself and to others that which baptism in water is intended to represent, namely, devotion to God in following His Son's footsteps. Such an instance was that in Ephesus already referred to. When Paul found these brethren, he said to them -

*" 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' And they said, 'Unto John's baptism'. Then, said Paul, 'John verily baptised 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.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19: 1-5).*

Doubtless this incident is narrated for the consideration and benefit of those who have been immersed in water with incorrect ideas in mind. To such we commend it.

### **Who should be Immersed**

Only believers in Jesus, whatever their age, in whom has begun the new life of devotion to God, are proper candidates for the Christian ceremony of immersion, because only such can properly be symbolizing the inward reality of which the ceremony is the outward illustration and testimony. Only believers were immersed in the days of the Apostles, and only disciples were to be immersed, according to the Lord's command in Matthew 28:19.

This being so, it follows that the practice of infant sprinkling is wholly without Scriptural warrant. Not only is the sprinkling wrong from the standpoint of the meaning of the original words, and also because it cannot possibly represent death and resurrection; but the practice of presenting infants for baptism, even if they be immersed, is wrong, because an infant cannot be a believer in Jesus, in whom the new life of devotion to God, by following the footsteps of Jesus, has been begun. The exercise of faith is necessary to the beginning of this new life, and an infant cannot exercise faith; therefore an infant cannot be a candidate for the ceremony of Christian immersion. Moreover, the New Testament furnishes neither precept nor example favouring the baptism of infants.

## **Circumcision**

Some have thought that the practice of circumcision of infants enjoined upon the Jews was the precursor of the ceremony of sprinkling of infants practised by many Christians. The impropriety of this thought is manifest. Only the male infants of the Jews are circumcised; which could not be said to foreshadow a ceremony to be practised upon Christian infants of both sexes. Besides, it should always be remembered that Jewish rites did not foreshadow Christian rites. Jewish rites foreshadowed Christian realities.

Jewish circumcision of males typified the Christian reality of "*circumcision of the heart*"; i.e., 'the putting off of the body of the flesh. For the purpose of viewing the fulfilment of this Jewish type in its Christian reality, all believers in Jesus, whether they be male or female, are called "*sons of God*" (Romans 2:29; Colossians 2:11, according to Sinaitic, Vatican and Alexandrian MSS., which omit 'of the sins'; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 John 3:1-3).

## **"Suffer Little Children"**

*"Then were brought unto Him children, that He might lay His hands on them, and pray; but the disciples rebuked them. Jesus, however, said, 'Permit the children, and do not forbid them, to come unto me; for of such as these is the kingdom of the heavens'. And laying His hands on them, He went from thence."* (Matthew 19:13-15; Rotherham).

These are the words that are mainly relied on to justify the practice of infant sprinkling. Undoubtedly our Lord loved the little ones; still, He did not say they should be sprinkled, nor did He say that they should be in the Kingdom of heaven. He did say that **such as these** would constitute the kingdom of heaven, and He made it clear that the point of comparison was in the humility required of those who would enter the Kingdom (Matthew 18:1-6).

As for the little children who die, we are not told in God's word that they pass into heaven. How could they, if the heavenly glory is reserved for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto the salvation that is to be revealed (1 Peter 1:3-5)? The Scriptures tell us plainly where the little ones are who have passed away. Thank God, they are not in pain, but they are sleeping; waiting for the resurrection day to call them forth to the blessing prepared for the families of the earth.

Let us hear the Word of Inspiration on this subject, and let us submit to it, even though it be contrary to what we may have believed and to what we might, if left to our own wisdom, prefer to believe. God knows best, and He says -

*"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord: 'Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded', saith the Lord; 'and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end', said the Lord, 'that thy children shall come again to their own border'."* (Jeremiah 31:15-17).

### **"Baptism doth also now Save Us"**

The question is often asked, Is baptism necessary to salvation? On the authority of God's Word, we may without hesitation say, Yes; baptism is essential to salvation. But let it be clearly understood that not the outward form is here meant, but the Inward Reality, as the Apostle says -

*"The long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 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."* (1 Peter 3:20,21).

A self-evident and very curious mistranslation occurs in verse 20; for it is certain that the eight souls in the ark were not saved 'by water'. Rather, they were saved by the ark **from** the water. The translators evidently thought that the waters of the flood were the likeness to Baptism, and therefore they made the error in translating the clause which literally is rendered 'were carried safely through water'. The being buried in the ark was the type of which the baptism which now saves us is the 'figure'. This is another curious mistranslation, for the word translated 'figure' is 'antitupon', which has been transferred to the English language as 'antitype'. The Apostle was speaking of baptism, not as a type or 'figure', but as 'antitype', or reality.

The question is now seen to be, Was the Apostle speaking of the baptismal ceremony, or of the baptismal reality, when he said "*Baptism doth also now save us*"? Evidently he spoke of the reality, for he said; "*Baptism doth also now save us ... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*".

The baptismal ceremony illustrates the death to Sin and resurrection to a new life of the candidate, in the likeness of that of Jesus Christ, his Lord, and his Leader in the life of devotion to God. The ceremony neither kills the candidate nor raises him from death; it only plunges him beneath the water, and raises him again from the water. But the real baptism plunges the believer into devotion to God unto death, in humble imitation of Jesus, with the assurance that -

*"If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."* (2 Timothy 2:11,12).

The baptism which saves "*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*", and which is essential to salvation, is thus seen to be the real baptism into Christ, into His death, which gives the thus baptized one the promise of a glorious resurrection because Jesus was raised from the dead.

### **"Born of Water and of the Spirit"**

*"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."* (John 3:3-7).

An extremely literal interpretation of a part of this passage has caused some to think, contrary to the Scriptures hereinbefore considered, that baptism as a ceremony is a saving ordinance. These words were addressed to Nicodemus, 'master of Israel'. He had, of course, been familiar with John's message, and knew that his baptism signified reformation of life. Nicodemus must also have known that many of the Pharisees who came to John's baptism were not really reforming their lives, because they did not accept Jesus, whom John introduced to them as the Messiah (John 7:46-52). He would therefore understand perfectly that the ceremony practised by John would not insure entrance into the Kingdom; only the real reformation from covenant breaking sins could do that.

Nicodemus was disposed to put a very literal construction upon the Saviour's words, as recorded in John 3:3. To get him out of this mistake, our Lord referred to John's baptism. Jesus knew that Nicodemus could not make a mistake there, but would see that the reformation of life was alluded to, under the expression 'born of water'. If Nicodemus could extract this very potent meaning from our Lord's words, how much more should Christians.



Entrance into the Kingdom of God, joint heir-ship with Christ, is to be granted only to those who have experienced the baptismal reality, and who have been born of the Spirit. Our Lord here uses the words "*born of the Spirit*" to convey the thought of being made a spirit being, which the footstep followers of Jesus shall become when changed into the likeness of their Lord.\* Although the "*new birth*" is frequently used in Scripture to represent present Christian experience, our Lord's words in John 3:6 indicate that He meant change of bodily substance as well as of mind conditions, for He said -

*"That which is born of the flesh is **flesh**; and that which is born of the Spirit is **spirit**."*

Evidently, then, "*born of water*" in this passage signifies to experience the baptismal reality, and "*born of the Spirit*" to experience the change from human to spiritual conditions, when the footstep followers of Jesus shall be made like Him, and shall "*see Him as He is*" (John 3:1-3).

### **"Baptised for the Dead"**

*"Else what will they do, who are being immersed in behalf of the dead? If not at all are the dead to be raised, why are they even immersed in their behalf? Why are we also running into peril every hour? Day by day am I dying, yea! by the boasting of you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord? If, in human fashion, I fought with wild beasts in Ephesus, what to me the profit? If the dead are not to be raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die'." (1 Corinthians 15:29-32; Rotherham.)*

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\*For further comments, see 'Bible Talks', pages 195, 307 and 315.

Some who consider the baptismal ceremony a saving ordinance have extracted from the above words of the Apostle the thought that a Believer may be baptized as a proxy for one who has died unbaptized, and that thus the salvation of the unbaptized dead may be assured.

Such a view of this passage could be taken only by those who mistakenly believe that every person dying unbaptized is forever lost. The Bible teaches no such doctrine, for billions who have died unbaptized have never so much as heard of Jesus or of His command to believe and be baptized. Since the Lord purposes enlightening them in the Kingdom age, it is not possible that the Apostle would endorse such an unnecessary proceeding as baptism by proxy.

But the Scriptures recognize two other classes of 'dead' ones than those in the tombs; namely, (1) the "*dead in trespasses and sins*" (Ephesians 2:1), which includes all mankind except Believers, and (2) those who, after becoming Believers, become "*dead to Sin*", as explained on pages 86-90. The Apostles were "*dying daily*", and "*in jeopardy every hour*" on behalf of these two classes, to bring the first class to the knowledge of the truth and to repentance and salvation, and to build up and strengthen the second class. Looked at in this way, the baptism for the dead would refer not to baptism in water, but to that which baptism signified; that is, laying down their lives in God's service. Such service on the Apostle's part would, however, be no permanent benefit were this life to end all, since the person served would soon die.

The following is another view which may be taken of his words -

Two reasons for submitting to the baptismal reality are mentioned in this passage; (1) "*in their behalf*", and (2) "*to me the profit*". By the second, the Apostle refers to the hope of resurrection with Christ, to share His glory and His throne.

By the first reason "*in their behalf*", the Apostle refers to (a) his labours on behalf of the Church (Colossians 1:24-29), which would be fruitless if they were not to be raised from the dead; and (b) to the prospect of himself and others, submitted to the baptismal reality, being members of the Bride of Christ, which, in the age to come, will, with the Spirit, extend to all the dead, small and great, the invitation to take the "*water of life*" freely. This expectation would also be fruitless, and suffering to gain the honour worse than useless, if the dead were not to be raised Revelation 20:12; 22:1,2,17).

Thus during his lifetime did the Apostle fulfil his ministry of the New Covenant, while looking forward to a more extended service of the same Covenant in the Kingdom age.

But there is another view of Paul's words concerning baptism on behalf of the dead, which commends itself to our minds, as follows.\*

It will be observed that the Apostle says: "*What will **they** do*", "*Why are we running into peril*", as though to say that there were certain heathen in that day who claimed to baptize on behalf of dead persons; but as for himself, while he made

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\*For this interpretation we are indebted to our friend, R.T., who also calls attention to the contrasted use of 'they' and 'ye' in 1 Thessalonians 5:3; and 'they' and 'us' in 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8.

no such claim, he was daily running into peril and losing his life for the sake of others. But if the dead were not to be raised, both the heathen and the Christian might adopt the pagan motto, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die'.

He then goes on - *"Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not"*. Do not fancy that this life is all, for there is another life, there is to be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. Make the most of present opportunities for salvation, because, though results now appear meagre, in the resurrection they will be more manifest.

### **Is the Ceremony Necessary?**

While it would be obviously wrong to attach to a ceremony the same weight as to the reality which it represents, the observance of the baptismal ceremony is not to be slighted, because our Master commanded it, Who said -

*"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."* (John 15:14).

The Jewish religion was ceremonial to the last degree; by contrast, the Christian religion is simplicity itself, for our Lord instituted but two ceremonial observances for His followers: the Memorial Supper and Baptism.

The Memorial Emblems represent the Propitiatory aspect of His death, and the Supper represents how all believers partake of the benefits of His death.

*"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." "And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves." "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for you."* (John 6:53; Luke 22:17,20).

The baptismal ceremony, as already explained, represents the martyr aspect of our Lord's death, in devotion to the will of His Father. It also represents the privilege extended to believers in Him of following in His footsteps of self-denial and humility, even unto death, in the hope of sharing His resurrection glory.

Both these ceremonies are to be observed by all the faithful in Christ Jesus, as soon as they discern the requirements of our Master in respect thereto.

Doubtless the New Covenant provisions of mercy to our shortcomings operates towards God's people in these matters, so that if a believer in Jesus really does not discern his privilege and duty in regard to the Memorial Supper and Baptism in water, the Lord will not require of him more than he sees. But as soon as the believer is enlightened on these subjects, his responsibility is begun, and disrespect to the Master's commands may bring disaster. Certainly -

*"That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."* (Luke 12:47,48).

It is conceivable that some Christians who have experienced the blessed Realities illustrated by the Memorial Supper and Immersion in water, have never discerned their privilege and duty of remembering Him in the one and following Him in the other. Should that have been the case (and the Lord alone can tell), it is not to be supposed that the Lord would require of them more than they saw; it is not to

be supposed that ignorance of the ceremonies would deprive such believers of the blessings of the realities, if they remained faithful unto death.

On the other hand, it is conceivable that some who have been very attentive to the ceremonies have fallen away from the realities; it cannot be supposed that their attention to the ceremonies will insure their entrance into heavenly glory.

The believer, enlightened on the subject of baptism, and endeavouring to faithfully follow in the footsteps of Jesus, should lose no time, but should take the first opportunity of submitting himself to this ordinance of the Lord, not by way of joining some sect, but by way of obeying the Master. He should not invite the Lord's displeasure by neglecting the opportunity to do this.

### **"These Signs shall Follow"**

In the foregoing, we have taken no notice of Mark 16:16-18. The last chapter of Mark, verses 9-20, is wanting from the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., the oldest copies of the New Testament now available in the Greek language; therefore the authenticity of the passage is exceedingly doubtful, and nearly all modern commentators and versions omit it from consideration. [See Revised Version note on this passage.]

## CHAPTER 6

### "Baptised with the Holy Spirit"

Here is exhibited the other method of baptism, namely., that of completely covering the individual by pouring upon him that with which he is to be baptized.

*"And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will **pour out** in those days of my Spirit." (Acts 2:18).*

*"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath **shed forth** this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2:33).*

*"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit **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 Spirit." (Acts 10:44,45).*

*"And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit **fell on** them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord how that He said, ... ye shall be **baptized** with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 11:15,16).*

*"According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He **shed on us** abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." (Titus 3:5,6).*

The sending of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is thus described by the figure of "pouring out"; and as those who

received the Spirit were completely covered by it, they were described as "*baptized*" with or in the Holy Spirit.

It is by this baptism with the Holy Spirit that the believer is introduced into the body of Christ, the true Church. Some of the sects of Christendom claim that the baptism with water introduces one into the church. It may be that water baptism is by them made the door of entrance into their various sects; but it is a comfort to realize that the sectarian bodies of Christendom are not, separately or together, the Church which our Lord Himself is building. Hence, man-made rules for admission into these sects mean nothing to the Lord's Church. That entrance into the true Church is not by water, but by the Holy Spirit Baptism which is given to every believer when he takes the attitude of our Saviour in giving up His own will "*to do thy will, O God*" (Hebrews 10:9), is shown by the Apostle's language -

*"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."* (1 Corinthians 12:13).

The permanent presence of the Comforter is also said to be in the Believer, regenerating him, renewing his mind, and bringing forth the 'fruit': "*love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control*" (Galatians 5:22,23). We have received, not the spirit of bondage to fear, but the Spirit of adoption. It is the Spirit of love, and power, and of a sound mind (Romans 8:15; 2 Timothy 1:7). It quickens the body in God's service (Romans 8:11).

May that gracious, comforting Presence be with all who read these pages, covering and overflowing them with and in the will of God, so that self-will may be taken from them and they be prepared for the inheritance of the Kingdom.



## **Conclusion**

We have considered the several baptisms mentioned in Scripture, and have endeavoured, we hope with some success, to place before the student the doctrine or teaching of Scripture concerning these baptisms. May the word of Truth be a power in the heart and mind of each reader, enabling him to submit himself willingly to the experiences of the 'one Baptism', into Christ, and thus to put on Christ, not only as Lord, but also in character. Then shall he eventually be also in the likeness of His glorious Person (Ephesians 4:5; Galatians 3:27).

**Part 3**

**THE  
LORD'S  
SUPPER**

## CHAPTER 1

### **“In Remembrance of Me”**

Having considered the Scripture teaching concerning the Church and the Doctrine of Baptisms, it is now our duty to consider the other ceremony or rite instituted by our Lord, to be observed by His people; namely, The Lord's Supper.

Viewed merely as a ceremony, this institution is the simplest possible, a morsel of unleavened bread and a swallow of wine for each participant being the only requirements. The feast was instituted quietly, at a table covered with the remains of a Jewish Passover feast, in the upper room of a dwelling in Jerusalem, and its simplicity offers the greatest possible contrast to the elaborate religious ceremonies of eating and drinking practised by the heathen, those ordained under the Mosaic law, and those corruptions of the original simplicity subsequently introduced, and to this day in vogue, in an apostate Christianity.

The accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper are contained in Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; and Luke 22:17-20. Besides these, the Apostle Paul, who was not a believer in Jesus when the Supper was instituted, received a special revelation concerning it, which is recorded in 1 Corinthians 11:23-30; and he gives some illuminating comments on it in 1 Corinthians 5:7,8; 10:16,17.

From these portions of Scripture chiefly must be gathered the information necessary to an intelligent observance of the feast, in respect of its significance, the time when it should be observed, and who should participate therein. For it is obvious that without proper attention to these details, the

Lord's Supper is degraded to the position of a valueless formality, which neither honours the Saviour nor benefits the communicant.

### **Significance of the Supper**

From the references above mentioned, it is ascertained that the significance of the Lord's Supper is as a memorial of Him, particularly of His death (1 Corinthians 11:24-26; Luke 22:19). In the celebration of it, three specific facts are exhibited:

- (1) Jesus as the sacrificial Victim;
- (2) The participation of the communicant in the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice by 'eating' His 'flesh' and 'drinking' His 'blood'; and
- (3) The sympathy thus established and maintained between God, at whose altar the Victim was offered, and the believer, who in faith thus 'eats' and 'drinks' before God (Mark 14:22-24; 1 Corinthians 10:17,18).

### **Showing His Death**

Leading events in the lives of great personages, particularly birthday anniversaries, are celebrated by their admirers. But there is probably no arrangement for the annual celebration of the death of any of the world's great ones.

Our Lord was not of the world; and in nothing was this great fact more strikingly manifest than in the institution of the Memorial Supper. It was not to be a celebration of His birth; nor is the celebration of that great event at all enjoined in the Scripture. The Memorial feast was not to commemorate His baptism, nor His victory over the temptation in the wilderness, nor the first of His miracles, nor the last of them, nor any of them; neither was it to celebrate the anniversary of the Sermon on the Mount, nor

any other of His discourses, nor yet the time when He silenced the Pharisees, so that after that no man dared to ask Him any questions. In fact, the exact dates of all the above incidents are shrouded in uncertainty, as though not intended to be celebrated. Yet matters like these are precisely what the world would celebrate in its heroes. But the simple feast which our Lord instituted passed by all the conspicuous events in His life and ministry, and attached itself to what is, after all, the greatest event in all history, namely, His death.

No doubt His resurrection from the dead, as the divine testimony of the acceptance of His sacrifice, was a wonderful event. Nevertheless, even that has not been distinguished by a divine command to memorialise it. The only event in our Lord's experience marked out for celebration is His death, and this is to be remembered and shown forth in the eating and drinking of the bread and wine of the Memorial Supper.

*"This do in remembrance of Me." "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (1 Corinthians 11:24,26).*

As the Memorial Supper was instituted on the night in which the Lord partook of the Passover with His disciples, consideration of the Jewish Passover, its meaning, time of observance and so on, will greatly assist to an understanding of the meaning of the Memorial Supper, the correct time for its observance, and other important details. Let us therefore proceed to this.

## CHAPTER 2

### **The Lamb and THE LAMB**

According to the progress of events in the divine program, the time came when God would deliver Israel, His afflicted people, from Egypt the oppressor. Jacob and his little company had come down to Egypt in peace, and had been hospitably received by the Pharaoh of that time for the sake of Joseph, the honoured Prime Minister, whose God-given wisdom and prudent dealings had brought Egypt through seven years of drought and famine. A district had been assigned to Jacob and his people for a dwelling place, and all seemed well with them.

After a time there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. Observing the rapid increase in the numbers of the children of Israel, and filled with a fear of what might happen, this ruler devised measures by which he hoped to check the increase of the Israelites and to retain them as a subservient race. He put them to laborious work, and from time to time increased his demands. He issued an edict commanding all the male infants of the Israelites to be killed at birth. Notwithstanding all these hardships, the people continued to increase. But they groaned under the oppression, and their cry ascended to heaven at the time which God had arranged in His great purpose for their emigration from Egypt. Therefore He came down to deliver them.

#### **God's Judgment upon Egypt**

The Lord God would not deliver His afflicted people without executing great and well deserved judgments upon their Egyptian oppressors (Genesis 15:14). Accordingly there was raised up to the throne a Pharaoh of particularly

hard heart, that he might be, on the Egyptian side, the instrument through whom the punishment should come upon his nation (Exodus 9:16; Romans 9:17). How this hard-hearted man resisted the will of God, and made his heart yet harder after each manifestation of mercy, is well known, and all may read about it in Exodus, chapters 7 to 14, inclusive, where the plagues sent upon Egypt are described. Such determination as this Pharaoh manifested is really marvellous, and, rightly directed, would accomplish wonders in the service of a good cause.

### **The Passover**

The last of the plagues visited upon Egypt before the departure of the children of Israel was the slaying of the firstborn, and this was made the occasion of a great national festival, divinely instituted and to be continuously observed by the Jews on its annual recurrence (Exodus 12:14). This festival was also to have a significance of great value to Christians, as were all the arrangements and many of the experiences of the Jewish people (1 Corinthians 10:1-11; Hebrews 10:1).

The festival was called 'Passover', because the destroying angel, smiting the firstborn of Egypt, would 'pass over' the houses of those Israelites who would obediently observe the divine commands given them for this occasion, and would not smite them (Exodus 12:12,13).

On the tenth day of the month which was to be henceforth regarded by them as the first month of the year, each Israelitish family in Egypt was to take up a lamb or kid of the first year (Exodus 12:1-5).

This lamb or kid was to be kept until the fourteenth day of the month, and on that day, "*between the two evenings*", the animal was to be slain \* (Exodus 12:6; margin;).

The blood of the slain animal was to be sprinkled beside and over the door of the house within which it would be eaten. The flesh was to be roasted, and the children of Israel, with loins girded, staff in hand, and shoes on their feet, were to eat it in haste and with bitter herbs. Nothing of it was to be allowed to remain until the morning; and any that did remain was to be burnt with fire (Exodus 12:7-11).

Lastly, none of them, neither firstborn nor other, was to go outside the door of his house until the morning, by which, judging from what afterward transpired, it is understood that very early morning was meant, perhaps just immediately after the destroying angel had passed over (Exodus 12:22,31,34,36,39).

In connection with the Passover there was to be a week in which nothing leavened should be eaten. Every crumb of leaven was to be removed from their houses on Nisan 14 (Exodus 12:15-20).

### **Alterations in the Service**

After the Israelites came into the promised land, and God had indicated the place which He would choose to put His name there, some of the details of the Passover observance were altered by divine direction; the subsequent observances being in the nature of memorials of the original Passover and deliverance.

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\* The command to "*kill it in the evening*" (margin, 'between the two evenings') was understood by the Jews to mean at any time after the sun began to decline, that is, at any time after noon (Exodus 12:6; Deuteronomy 16:5,6; Exodus 12:29,31,33,34; Numbers 33:3).



In Egypt on that first occasion, the Passover lambs had to be killed by the several heads of the families on their own premises; after the Israelites came into their own land they were not to kill the lambs at any other place than the tabernacle or temple (Deuteronomy 16:2,5-7).

In Egypt, the lamb had to be taken up on the tenth day of the month and kept until the fourteenth by the family that was to eat it. This could not be done after the Israelites entered Canaan, and began to observe the command that all the lambs for the Passover should be killed at Jerusalem, and the feast observed there; accordingly, no mention of this detail is made in the Palestine observances (Deuteronomy 16:16).

In Egypt, the blood of the slain Passover lamb was to be sprinkled over the doorposts of their residences, as a sign to the destroying angel, and they were not to leave their houses on that night before the destroyer had passed over; after they came into their own land, and all the lambs had to be killed at the one place, it is manifest that the blood could not be sprinkled on the doorposts all over the country; neither was it necessary, for no destroying angel was passing over the land. For the same reason, it would not be necessary for the Israelites in Palestine to observe the precaution about not leaving their houses. Accordingly, it is understood that it was about midnight when the Lord and the Apostles left the house, after having for the last time eaten the Passover together.

In Egypt, the Passover Supper was eaten in haste, in anticipation of the hurried departure which took place (Exodus 12:11). But the subsequent observances in Palestine were memorials of the great deliverance from the destroyer and from Egypt. As there was no anticipation of a hurried departure from Palestine, provision was made for a

more leisurely observance of the Supper, including an explanation of the meaning of this service, by the head of the family in answer to a question from the children (Exodus 12:24-28). The central point was always the same, whether in the original observance or in the subsequent memorials: praise and gratitude to God for the wonderful deliverance (Exodus 12:42). And, as we shall see, the stated time for the service remained the same as at the first ordered.

### **"Christ Our Passover"**

The Jewish Passover was typical, as were all their authorised festivals and sacrifices. The antitype, to which the typical Passover lamb pointed, was Christ Jesus. *"For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us"* (1 Corinthians 5:7). And as the Israelite had to memorialise his passing over, as the date came round from year to year, so is the Christian commanded to memorialise the Lord's death.

As the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon the lintels of the houses preserved from the destroying angel, while the flesh provided food for the family fleeing from Pharaoh, so the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon the hearts of believers would save them from the destroyer which God sends against His enemies, while the nourishment received from partaking of the Lord Jesus as a personal Saviour gives strength to flee from Sin and Death, from whose power they desire to escape.

And as in later times God's acceptance of the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on the altar, and of the fat burned as a savoury offering, indicated God's remembrance of His participation in the original deliverance, while the yearly repetition of the feast of Passover kept alive in the minds of the children of Israel how much they were dependent upon God, so now God looks continually upon the offering of His

Son, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; and so His disciples, thus protected, delight to meet together to commemorate their deliverance and honour their Deliverer, the true Lamb, sacrificed for them.

The Christian has the realities which the Law and its observances represented. The Jew had the roast lamb and bitter herbs. The Christian has the flesh of the antitypical Lamb, whereof he eats by faith, to strengthen him for the journey through this wilderness of sin, and to give him everlasting life (John 6:53-57). The Christian, as he makes his way through the present evil world, has also the bitter herbs of affliction. These cause him to relish more thoroughly the flesh of his Lamb. Thus are the facts of Christian experience typified by the lamb and bitter herbs of the Jewish Passover. Every true believer in Jesus has these experiences more or less every day.

The unleavened bread was called the "*bread of affliction*," because it reminded the children of Israel of their hasty departure from Egypt, the bread being not risen in the troughs (Deuteronomy 16:3). In the New Testament, leaven is used as a symbol of false doctrine and corruption (Matthew 16:6-12; 1 Corinthians 5:8); while the use of unleavened bread to represent the Saviour teaches that He was holy, pure, and without sin or sinful tendencies (Hebrews 7:26; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Memorial of our Lord's death was instituted by Himself just after He and the apostles had for the last time celebrated the Jewish Passover according to the rites of the law. That supper being concluded, the Master -

*"Took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And he took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they*

*all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is My blood of the New Testament [Covenant], which is shed for many."* (Mark 14:22-24; See also Matthew 26:26; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23).

### **The Passover in Palestine**

The following account of the Passover observance as kept by the Jews in the later years of their national life will be of interest at this point:\*

The lambs were all slain, as other sacrifices, in the Court of the priests. It was a great work to kill and dress so many as were necessary for the occasion, and required a considerable part of the afternoon of the 14th day for its execution. The Evening Sacrifice accordingly, on that day, was offered before the middle of the afternoon, and the rest of the day, from that time to the end of it, was occupied altogether with this preparation for the passover.

Though only one person of each family or society [group] entered into the court with the lamb that belonged to it, it needs not to be remarked, that it was still impossible for all these to go in at once. They were accordingly divided into three large companies, which were admitted one at a time in succession. When one of these companies had entered the gates were closed, and immediately the owners of the lambs, or those who brought them in, began to assist each other in killing them, taking off their skins, and removing the entrails and fat. The blood was handed to the priests, to be sprinkled on the altar and poured out at its bottom, and the common portions of fat to be burned upon its top; these standing all along in rows from the slaughtering places to the altar, and passing the articles from one to another continually to where it [the altar] stood.

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\*Extract from 'Biblical Antiquities',  
published by the American Sunday-School Union.

'Meanwhile, the Levites sang over, once, twice, or three times, the 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th Psalms. These were denominated, when taken together, the Hallel, or hymn of praise, and sometimes the Lesser Hallel, to distinguish it from another that was in use, styled the Greater Hallel.

'As soon as the first company had their work done, they went out, and the second took their place, going over the same business in the same style: so in their turn the third one filled the court; after which it was all washed over with water, as we may well suppose it needed to be, after such an immense slaughter (2 Chronicles 35:1-19).

'The lambs thus butchered were carried away to the several houses where they were to be eaten, and immediately made ready for roasting, by being thrust through from one end to the other, by a wooden spit or stake, and so placed before a large fire. According to the commandment, each was allowed to be thus exposed till it was roasted in a perfectly thorough manner. Soon after it became dark, that is, with the commencement of the 15th day, the passover-table was spread, and surrounded by its little company, in all the houses of Jerusalem.

'The supper commenced with the ceremony of drinking a small cup of wine mingled with water, after having given thanks over it to God the Giver of all blessings. Everyone had a separate cup poured out, but only one uttered the thanksgiving in the name of all. This was the **first cup**. Then followed the **washing of hands**, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, accompanied with another short form of thanksgiving to God. The table, having been till this time unfurnished, was now supplied with its provisions, viz., the cakes of unleavened bread, the bitter salad, the lamb roasted whole, with its legs, heart, liver, etc., and, besides,

some other meat prepared from the flesh of common peace-offerings, that had been presented during the day, and a dish of thick sauce, composed of dates, figs, raisins, vinegar, etc.

The table thus furnished, the leading person, and all the rest after him, took a small quantity of the salad, with another thanksgiving, and ate it. After which, immediately, all the dishes were removed from the table, and a second cup of wine placed before each of the company, as at first. This strange way of beginning the meal was designed to excite the curiosity of the children, that they might be led to inquire what it meant, according to what is said in Exodus 12:26.

When the inquiry was made (for if there was no child present, the wife or some other person brought it forward), the person who presided began, and told how their fathers had all been servants in Egypt, and how with many signs and wonders the Lord had redeemed them from their cruel bondage, and brought them forth from the place of their oppression, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

As he concluded the interesting story of Jehovah's mercies, the dishes that had been removed were again placed upon the table; whereupon he said, **This is the Passover which we eat, because that the Lord passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt;** and then holding up the salad, and after it the unleavened bread, he stated their design, namely, that the one represented the **bitterness** of the Egyptian bondage, and the other the **sudden** redemption which the Lord wrought on their behalf, when He smote the first-born of their oppressors, so that they urged the people to depart without delay.

Then he repeated the 113th and 114th Psalms, and closed with this prayer, 'Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, King Everlasting! who hast redeemed us, and redeemed our

fathers out of Egypt, and brought us to this night to eat unleavened bread and bitter herbs,' which being uttered, all the company drank the wine that had been standing for some time before them. This was the **second cup**.

'Another washing of the hands now took place, when the person who presided, taking up the unleavened bread, brake one of the cakes in two, again gave thanks to God, and then, with the rest, began to eat; each first making use of a piece of the bread, with some of the salad, and the thick sauce, then partaking of the peace-offering meat, and last of all of the paschal lamb, with a separate thanksgiving still pronounced before each dish. Everyone was required to eat at least as much of the lamb as was equal to the size of an olive.

'The meal thus over, they all washed again, according to the usage of common meals, and then united in drinking another cup of wine and water. This was the **third cup**, and was called, by way of distinction, "**the cup of blessing**", because while it stood before them ready to be drunk, the leader was accustomed to return thanks over it in a particular manner, for the blessings of the sacred supper, and for all the goodness of the Lord.

There was yet another cup made ready a little time after, just before the company rose from the table. It was denominated the cup of the Hallel; because it was the custom to repeat, in connection with it, the principal part of the hymn of Lesser Hallel: for as it was begun by the rehearsal of its first two Psalms, the 113th and 114th, over the second cup (as we have seen), so it was now finished by being carried on through the following four. In all common cases this **fourth cup** closed the celebration of the feast. It was held to be a duty absolutely incumbent upon all who took part in the supper, men or women, old or young, rich or poor, to make use of all the four cups that have been mentioned.

In the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:15-20), mention is made of two different cups, which appear to have been the last two of the four that have now been noticed. Having given thanks over the third one, and refused to drink it himself, our Saviour took some of the bread that was left of the feast, and gave thanks, and brake it, in representation of his body,\* and then made use of the **cup after supper** or the fourth one, to represent, in like manner, the shedding of his blood, after which, as Matthew tells us, they sang a hymn, and so finished the solemn [ceremonial]. Others, however, suppose that the third cup was the one which was used in the appointment of this holy sacrament; because they think it clear, from its being said that **while they were eating** Jesus took bread and brake it for this purpose, that it must have been done **before** the use of that [third] cup, and not **after** it, as the other opinion presumes.'

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\*The bread was broken, but our Lord's body was not broken; the word 'broken' in 1 Corinthians 11:24; KJV, does not occur in the three most ancient Greek manuscripts. The breaking of the bread and passing some to each represented, however, how the benefits of the death of Christ are extended to each believer.



## CHAPTER 3

### Eating the Sacrifice

Ministering to the Corinthian congregation, most of whom had been called out of heathen idolatry, the great Apostle had occasion to instruct and exhort them on many subjects. This is not surprising, when it is remembered that Corinth was one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the time, and that the people there were very free and easy in their ideas. This habit of laxity in thought and conduct was not readily discarded by the Believers in Jesus, and the consequence was that some very serious matters had to be dealt with. Not only had sectarianism intruded itself, but some had even gone so far as to deny the resurrection hope. Fortunately, the Apostle's first letter to these brethren was happily blessed of the Lord to their help in the right way, so that, in sending his second letter to them, he could rejoice with them, and could commend their zeal in correcting some of the wrongs he had pointed out (2 Corinthians 2:1-11).

One of the exhortations addressed to these saints was "*Flee from idolatry*" (1 Corinthians 10:14). From the context, it appears that there was a question among them as to the propriety of eating meat that had been offered to idols, and which was afterwards, according to custom, sold to the general public. They might "*eat everything which is sold in the market, asking no questions on account of conscience*" (1 Corinthians 10:25; Diaglott); they might, at the house of an unbeliever, eat whatever was set before them, asking no question on account of conscience (verse 27).

*"Meat will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better."* (1 Corinthians 8:4-8; RV).

But to sit at meat in the temple of the idol was another thing, and that they should not do (1 Corinthians 8:10); they should "*Flee from idolatry*". Or, if anyone should say to them at an unbeliever's house that the meat now placed before them was an idol sacrifice, the Christians should not eat it on account of the conscience of him who gave the information (1 Corinthians 10:28,29).

### **The Idol Sacrifice**

Those who sat at meat in the temples of the idols, partaking of the sacrifices there offered, were considered as thereby identifying themselves with the service and cause of the idols. The Christian, however great his appreciation of liberty, could not with impunity eat in the idol's temple. In the first place, he would be doing himself no spiritual good by it. In the second place, his conduct, coming to the knowledge of other brethren, might embolden them to do similarly, contrary to their conscience and so sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience, he would be sinning against Christ, who died for all. Is it surprising that the Apostle exhorted the brethren to "*Flee from idolatry*"?

Further, on this subject, the Apostle explained that although the idol in itself was nothing, there was a power behind it, namely, that of the demons -

*"What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons."* (1 Corinthians 10:19,20).

For one to be associated in fellowship with demons would exclude him from fellowship with God. "*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye cannot be partaker of the Lord's table and of the table of demons."* (1 Corinthians 10:21).

Why is this? Would the partaking of idol meat make the God of Heaven jealous? (1 Corinthians 10:22; Exodus 34:14,15). Even so. We should gain nothing by tempting the Lord, He being so much stronger than we; -

*"Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."* (1 Corinthians 10:9; Exodus 20:3-6).

Then, quoting one of their own proverbs, *"All things are lawful for me"*, which possibly had been used in defence of the wrong practice, the Apostle replies, *"All things are not beneficial" ... "All things do not edify"* (1 Corinthians 10:23). The intimation is that such a course as indicated in the Corinthian proverb would be selfish, not dictated by love of the brethren and desire to advance their special interests, and so the exhortation concludes -

*"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth",* or good (1 Corinthians 10:24).

If one do not bear in mind the spiritual welfare of the brethren, for whom Christ died, he is not in sympathy with God and the Lord Jesus, consequently cannot have fellowship with them. In this manner, God's jealousy being aroused against the inconsiderate one, the Corinthian believer, selfishly using his liberty to eat meat in the idol temple, would exclude himself from fellowship with the Lord.

But in eating the idol sacrifice, neither priest, devotee nor outsider supposed that he was becoming a part of the sacrifice of which he was eating. Rather the sacrifice was being appropriated by the eater, to nourish and sustain him.

## **The Jewish Sacrifice**

In the Jewish worship, those who brought sacrifices to the Lord's altar frequently ate a portion there. Nearly all sacrifices were so arranged that a portion of the animal was devoted to the priest, as well as some to the Lord, to be burnt upon the altar. For priest and worshipper to eat the sacrifice meant that they were in sympathy with the act of worship being performed; it meant that they were in sympathy with God, who had ordained that manner of worship; it also meant that they were in sympathy with each other in these things.

The lesson in the Apostle's allusion to Jewish worship was the same as in the allusion to the idol worship in this: that in both cases fellowship with the cause there represented is implied by the eating (Leviticus 7:15; Deuteronomy 12:20; 14:22-27; 15:19,20; Numbers 18:9).

But in neither case did the eating and drinking constitute the eater a portion of the sacrifice. Rather, in both cases, the sacrifice was appropriated to the benefit of the eater.

## **The Christian Sacrifice**

In the Christian worship there is also a ceremony of eating and drinking. The quantity of food and drink partaken of is insignificant, merely a morsel and a swallow, so that sustenance of physical life does not come into consideration.

The significance of the Christian act of worship in eating and drinking is in no sense physical: it is wholly spiritual; and the spiritual benefit is not derived from the bread and wine partaken of, but from the sacrifice of our blessed Redeemer, **represented**, as He said, by the bread and the wine (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-29).

The Apostle's mention of this form of Christian worship in connection with similar forms of idolatrous and Jewish worship served not only to emphasize the differences between theirs and ours, but also to give him the opportunity to point to the one lesson to be drawn from all three of the forms.

As the eating of meat in the idol's temple associated the eater with the idol's cause and with all other sympathisers with the same; as the eating of the sacrifices offered on Jewish altars associated the eater with the cause there represented, and with all other sympathisers with that cause; so the eating and drinking of the emblems of bread and wine, 'the Lord's table', associate those who there participate in sincerity with the cause there represented, and with all those who sympathise therewith. Thus is brought home to the mind of the participants the fact that the many who partake of that one loaf are one body, *because* they 'all partake of the one loaf'. The lesson derived from the Lord's table is that of communion and fellowship, with God and with each other.

### **The Eater is not the Sacrifice**

It has been thought by some that the Apostle's language in 1 Corinthians 10:16,17 might bear the construction that the communicant at the Lord's Table is represented as a part of the 'loaf'. But the teaching is rather that Jesus Christ is the loaf, and that the communicant is a member of the body of Believers, because he partakes of Jesus Christ, the loaf (verse 17; RV, margin). In other words, because the 'loaf' is in the communicant, he is a member of the one body, or association, of Believers, the basis of their unity and fellowship being that they all partake of the benefits of the one sacrifice which He offered "*once for all*". Consequently, neither the Believer, nor his sufferings, are memorialised in the bread and wine of the Lord's Table, but Jesus only.

The idol worshipper did not reckon himself part of the sacrifice of which he ate. The Jew did not consider himself part of the offering which he brought. Neither was he a part of it, nor was the priest who ate a portion part of that sacrifice, nor was God part of the sacrifice because a portion was consumed on His altar. But the worshipper was brought into fellowship with God and with His priest, because all had, in a manner of speaking, partaken together.

By the same rule, the Christian, partaking of the emblems of our Lord's perfect body, and shed blood, is not authorised to consider himself as also represented in the bread and wine. These emblems stand for the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ only, and the believer is constantly, by the exercise of faith, to appropriate the benefits of His sacrifice to himself, for his soul's health and the up-building of his spiritual strength.

*"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." (John 6:53,57).*

May we ever be partaking of the Lord's Table (Hebrews 13:10), and as we thus partake, and realise our fellowship with the Lord and with all who worship Him in spirit and in truth, may we be built up spiritually, and may we also flee from all forms of idolatry!

## CHAPTER 4

### When should the Lord's Supper be Observed?

Many Christians think that the Lord's Supper may be observed as frequently as one may find convenient or desirable, whether weekly, monthly, or quarterly, and at any convenient hour of the day; and they give as their Scriptural authority, 1 Corinthians 11:26 -

*"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."*

They suppose the words, "*as often as ye eat*", to mean, eat as often as ye please. This is not, however, the correct meaning to give to the Apostle's words. Rather, the words, 'as often as', are equivalent to 'each time'. As often as we celebrate King George's birthday, we show his position as reigning monarch, but we do not celebrate his birthday every month, or every week, or every day. His birthday is observed yearly, on the recurrence of the date of his birth. Throughout the year he is honoured in other ways.

So with remembering our Lord: The Memorial of His death is rightly celebrated annually on its recurring date; and, as often as we observe it, we acknowledge His death on the cross on our behalf, and 'show' to others our appreciation of it, and our allegiance to Him and His cause. Throughout the year the fact of His death is remembered and honoured in the hearts and on the lips of His people; but on its anniversary a **special** Memorial service is held, according to His command.

## **Breaking Bread from House to House**

The passages chiefly relied on by those who believe the Lord's Supper should be observed weekly, on Sunday mornings, are Acts 2:42,46 and Acts 20:7. It is assumed that to "*break bread*" means to partake of the Memorial bread, but a comparison of other passages in which the breaking of bread is referred to shows that the phrase was a customary form of speech, and means nothing more nor less than to partake of an ordinary meal. The early Christians, having no other meeting places, met "*from house to house*"; and since many of them at that time had sold all their goods and depended upon brethren with homes for entertainment, they divided their time between the various homes.

Thus we read; "*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*"

*"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 2:42,46).

If "*breaking bread from house to house*" means partaking of the Lord's Supper, support is given to the idea that the Supper may be partaken of not only weekly, but daily; and not only daily, but several times per day. Indeed, we have known of earnest Christians living in solitary places partaking daily of bread and wine, under the impression that they were thus honouring the Lord by celebrating the Memorial Supper. In their cases their devotion cannot be denied, but the words of the Apostle concerning the Jews apply, "*They have a zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge*" (Romans 10:2).

It will be observed that in Acts 2:4-6, 'eat their meat' is put as a variant of 'breaking bread', both 'bread' and



'meat' meaning necessary daily food. The Lord, after his resurrection, asked the disciples, "*Have ye any meat?*" And the 'meat' which He served them consisted of fish and bread (John 21:5-9,12,13.). On this occasion the Lord took bread and gave to them as part of the 'meat' - 'and fish likewise'. On another occasion the two disciples with whom He walked from Emmaus invited him to tarry with them. And "*as he sat at meat with them*" he took bread and gave to them. This occasion was "*toward evening*", or late in the afternoon. The time at the seaside was early morning. In both cases there was breaking of bread, but in neither case is there mention of wine, without which no 'Memorial Supper' would be possible. The same is true concerning the gatherings from house to house mentioned in Acts 2.

### **Breaking Bread on the First Day of the Week**

*"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread."* (Acts 20:7).

It should be noted that the meeting mentioned in Acts 20:7 took place at night, that is to say, Saturday night; being the beginning of the first day of the week. The fact that the meeting took place at night appears in verses 7 and 11, and it is good evidence that the disciples had not come together on the Sunday morning for the purpose of 'breaking bread'. It seems the Apostle Paul was on a tour of the churches, and on this occasion addressed their usual assembly. After restoring the young man who fell from the loft, the Apostle partook of a midnight meal, after which he talked until 'break of day'. Therefore he departed on a journey early on the Sunday morning (verse 11).

It is evident, then, that those who take Acts 20:7 as authority for observing the Lord's Supper weekly, on Sunday mornings, are astray on every item; for the passage refers neither to the Lord's Supper nor to Sunday morning, as may easily be seen.

## **The Love Feast**

The early Church adopted the custom of assembling on the first day of the week, now known as Sunday. It would also appear that they ate together on these occasions what was known among themselves as a "*love feast*" (Jude 12). Something of this kind **may** be referred to as "*breaking of bread*" in Acts 2:42, since the expression is inserted between two religious exercises. This, however, was not a solemn commemoration with bread and wine of our Lord's death; it was a joyful calling to mind of the new hope to which they had been begotten by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and the fact that He was made known to them in the breaking of bread (Luke 24:30,31,41-43; 1 Peter 1:3).

Says the Apostle, correcting the Corinthian brethren, who appear to have thus early fallen into the error that their weekly gathering and love feast was a celebration of the Lord's Supper -

*"When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper."* (1 Corinthians 11:20).

## **A Yearly Memorial**

To the Eleven, trained like other Jews to the annual celebration of fasts and feasts, in commemoration of great events in their history, no other thought would present itself, in connection with the Memorial instituted by the Lord Jesus, than that of a yearly celebration, each time the date of its institution came round. The three great festivals at which all the males were commanded to appear before the Lord were the Passover, or feast of unleavened bread, Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, and the day of Atonement, which was followed by the feast of tabernacles or booths. All these had been appointed by God.

Following out the same general principle, the Jews set apart other days for yearly observance. Four fasts were established during the Captivity, and continued to be observed in all subsequent times (Jeremiah 52:6,7,12,13; 51:1-4; 52:4). The feast of Purim was kept in memory of the deliverance of the Jews under Mordecai and Esther, and the feast of Dedication was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus, as a memorial of the new dedication of the temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes.

The very fact that our Lord instituted the Memorial "*the same night in which He was betrayed*", being Passover night, would indicate His wish that a ceremonial to remember His death should be observed on that night and no other. And this thought is, we believe, very much emphasised by the Apostle. After stating that the frequent meetings of the church were not for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper, as above quoted (1 Corinthians 11:20), he reminds them of the revelation he had received on this subject -

*"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."* (1 Corinthians 11:23).

It seems clear that the intention was that the Memorial Supper for our Lord should be observed annually on the anniversary of its institution; that is to say, the "*night in which He was betrayed*", which, according to the Jewish style, was the beginning of the day on which He died.

## CHAPTER 5

### When did Christ Die?

If the Lord's Supper is to be observed annually, on the anniversary of its institution, the question as to the date of Christ's death is one of great interest and importance. Fortunately, the question is fairly easy of solution, when one bears in mind that the Jewish Passover date was fixed according to the Jewish calendar, the method of which has come down to us, and that our Lord's death is recorded as having taken place at a certain time in relation to the Passover.

The following are the most important observances of the Passover mentioned in the Scriptures, as cited in Smith's Bible Dictionary:

1. The first Passover in Egypt (Exodus 12);
2. The first kept in the desert (Numbers 9);
3. That celebrated by Joshua at Gilgal (Joshua 5);
4. That which Hezekiah observed on the occasion of his restoring the national worship (2 Chronicles 30). This Passover was not held till the second month, the proper time for the 'Little Passover';
5. The Passover of Josiah in the eighteenth year of his reign (2Chronicles 35);
6. That celebrated by Ezra after the return from Babylon (Ezra 6);
7. The last Passover of our Lord's life.

Attention is drawn to these to show that whatever other details of the Passover service the Lord may have altered after the Israelites were established in Palestine, the time for

the killing of the Passover lambs always remained as at the first, on the fourteenth day of Nisan (the first month), "*between the two evenings*" (Exodus 12:6); the time for eating the Passover also remaining unchanged, viz., after sunset, and consequently on the 15th Nisan. The account of Josiah's great Passover observance is particularly explicit-

*"And they [the Levites] roasted the Passover with fire according to the ordinance. ... And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were busied in offering of burnt offering and the fat **until night**; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron."* (2 Chronicles 35:13,14).

This shows that during the daylight hours of Nisan 14 the priests were too busy to take time to prepare Passover lambs for themselves; therefore the Levites prepared for them. But as Nisan 14 closed at nightfall, and a new day began there, it is evident that the Passover sacrifices which were killed in the closing hours of Nisan 14 could not have been eaten until the night with which Nisan 15 began.

Reference to the account of the original Passover, in Egypt, shows that that supper was eaten on Nisan 15. It was eaten at night, the people having their sandals on their feet, and standing with staves in hand. At midnight the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain, and Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night and commanded them to lead out the children of Israel (Exodus 12:29-33,41,42,51). Their departure was prompt, because "*the people took their dough before it was leavened*" (verses 34 and 39).

As the date begins with sunset, it is clear that the Israelites ate the Passover and made the first stage of their journey all on the same date. According to Numbers 33:3, this date

was "*the fifteenth day of the first month*", for then the people departed from Rameses. Thus we have another corroboration of the fact that although the lambs were killed in the closing hours of the fourteenth of Nisan, they were not eaten until after the sunset which began Nisan 15.

It is clear, from the accounts of the first three Gospels, that our Lord was alive on the first day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed, and that He ate the Passover with His disciples just before instituting the Memorial of His own death (Mathew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7,8). The disciples, following the Master's directions, made ready the Passover at the place appointed, and when the even, or night, was come, He and they ate it together. The record in John 13:1 is not out of harmony with this, because "*before the feast of the Passover*" does not say how long before, and just before the eating of the supper would seem to be required by the context.

This shows that our Lord did not die on Nisan 14. As was their wont, the Lord and the disciples had spent the night either at Bethany, with Lazarus and his sisters, or in a garden in the Mount of Olives (Luke 21:37; John 12:1,36; Mark 11:1,11,12,19; 13:3; 14:3). It was therefore not till the morning of the 14th that the disciples asked the Lord where they should prepare the Passover.\*

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\*It must always be remembered that the Jewish day began at sundown, and was therefore different from the modern style, which begins the day at midnight. Instead of saying, 'day and night', as is our custom, the Jews said, 'night and day', because the night portion of the twenty-four hours came first (Genesis 1:5; compare Luke 2:37; Acts 26:7, margin; 1 Timothy 5:5).

## **The Lord's Last Passover**

After receiving the direction from the Lord, the disciples had to go into the city, meet the man, follow him to the house, deliver the message, take the furnished room which had been 'prepared' by the removal of all leaven from it, and then make ready the Passover, the lamb for which could not be obtained at the Temple until 3 p.m., or later, and after that must be carried to the room and roasted whole, without a bone being broken (Exodus 12:46).

In view of all this, it was simply impossible that our Lord should have even eaten the Passover on Nisan 14, and much less could He have been crucified on that date as well.\* Not only so, but our Lord, being a Jew, and required to obey the Law, one cannot entertain the suggestion made by some that He would in His last hours transgress the commandment by observing the Passover a day earlier than the prescribed time. But He could eat the Passover after night had fallen, being the beginning of Nisan 15, and be crucified before another night came round. And so it was done, as shown in the diagram on page 169.

John 18:28 is sometimes thought to be contradictory of the definite statements of the first three Gospels, but it harmonizes with them, if it be understood in a general way,

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\* If we estimate the number of Jewish males who assembled in our Lord's day at Jerusalem for the annual Passover service at only 400,000, and reckon one lamb to each group of thirteen (the number that partook in the 'upper room'), the total number of lambs required to be slain at the temple would be more than 30,000. This would readily account for the fact that the slaying, though begun early in the afternoon, would continue until close upon sundown, and that those Jews last served could not possibly partake of the Passover lamb on the 14th Nisan when the lamb was killed.

as intimating that the reluctance of the Jews to enter Pilate's judgment hall was in order that they might go on with their observance of the Passover Feast, without being interrupted and marred by the defilement that would be occasioned by their entry into the judgment hall.

Had they been defiled only for one day of the eight days of the feast, their observance of the feast would have been incorrect, and they would perhaps have considered themselves under the necessity of observing the so-called 'Little Passover' in the second month, which they would naturally be reluctant to do because it would make them conspicuous in a rather unfavourable light (Numbers 9:6-13).

If John 18:28 be not taken in this general manner, there would seem to be no way to harmonize the various Gospel accounts of the Lord's last days, and no violence is done to John's words by so understanding them.

John 19:14 is sometimes mentioned as though it were contrary to the accounts of the first three Gospels, because it is thought that 'preparation of the Passover' must mean the day before the time to eat the Passover lamb. But this is not the necessary thought, nor is it even the idea expressed by John. In 19:31 it is shown that it was the day before the weekly Sabbath which occurred during the Passover week that was meant. This Sabbath was a 'high day', because it happened to be on this occasion not only the weekly Sabbath, but also the day on which the wave-sheaf had to be offered. Mark 15:42 supports this view -

*"And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath."*

Moreover, while the day before the weekly Sabbath was sometimes called the 'preparation', there was no specification



of a day before the Passover, or other festival, as a day of 'preparation' (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31).

### **"Three Days and Three Nights"**

*"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* (Matthew 12:40).

This Scripture is generally understood to refer to our Lord's death and resurrection. Many have been the questions raised concerning it in the endeavour to ascertain how our Saviour could have lain in the tomb seventy-two hours. If He was crucified on Friday and was raised again on Sunday, the first day of the week, how could He have been dead even for **parts** of three separate days and nights? In order to solve this difficulty, some believe that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, and others, thinking that seventy-two hours must be accounted for, assert that Jesus must have been crucified on Wednesday.

But this 'difficulty' is only apparent; it is not real. It vanishes at once when it is considered that Jesus was not raised on the fourth day after His crucifixion, nor at the last moment completing seventy-two hours, but, on the **third day**. Moreover, He was raised very early on the third day, before the women came with the spices; and they came before daylight had properly begun (Luke 24:1; Matthew 28:1). That He was to be raised on the **third day** is shown by many Scriptures, such as Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 27:64; Luke 24:7,21,46; Acts 10:40; and 1 Corinthians 15:4.

A beautiful parallel use of 'third day' is found in Exodus 19:10,11,14-16, in reading which it should be remembered that Moses' descent from the mountain (verse 14) to sanctify the people was the second descent in the one day (verses 3, 7, 8, 10), and that it therefore occurred

near the end of daylight hours, let us suppose, not earlier than the middle of the afternoon -

*"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day. ... And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; ... and it came to pass on the **third day in the morning**, that there were thunders and lightnings."*

The day on which Moses descended from the mount was day one, though there were but two or three hours of it remaining when he issued the command to the people; the next day, complete, was day two; and the manifestation of God's glory came on day three "*in the morning*", while the day was still young. So our Saviour died near the close of day one, remained dead the whole of day two, and was raised by the power of the Father 'in the morning' of day three.

The fact is that "*three days and three nights*" is an idiomatic expression, which requires neither seventy-two hours nor even each of three specific days and three specific nights (in whole or in part) to be accounted for.

That three days was quite usually understood among the Jews to expire at any time on the third day after a statement or an event, the day of the statement or event being the first day of the three, no matter at what hour of the first day the event may have occurred, may be seen from Genesis 42:17,18; 1 Kings 12:5,12; 2 Chronicles 10:5,12; Esther 4:16; 5:1; Matthew 27:63,64. The references in Esther, Matthew and Chronicles are particularly explicit.

The same usage is followed in modern police courts. An offender sentenced for three days is confined the remainder of the day of the sentence, all the following day, and released early on the third day.

The point emphasized by the expression "*three days and three nights*" is the continuity of the time our Lord was "*in the heart of the earth*". He did not come and go. He was in the grave from His crucifixion till His resurrection on the "*third day*".

Since our Saviour was raised on Sunday, the first day of the week, it follows that Sunday was the "*third day*" so often referred to in the New Testament. If Sunday was the third day, Saturday was the second day, and Friday was the first of the three days. Thus were the three days and nights fulfilled, quite agreeably to other Scriptural uses of similar expressions, the hour in the first day when our Lord died and the hour in the third day when He was raised not entering into the calculation. Each of the three days was touched by the time during which our Lord lay dead, though that were but thirty-nine hours or less, from three o'clock Friday afternoon until before dawn on Sunday morning.

### **Type and Antitype**

Some have thought that because our Saviour was the antitype of the Passover lamb, He should die on Nisan 14. But this does not at all follow. Our Lord was doubtless the antitype of the Passover lamb, which was killed on the **fourteenth day of the first month**; but He was also the antitype of the Day of Atonement sacrifices, which were offered on the **tenth day of the seventh month**. Not only so, but He was the antitype of the Covenant sacrifices, over which the Law Covenant was originally entered into between God and the children of Israel, the exact date of which is not stated in Scripture (1 Corinthians 5:7; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10: 4-12; 9:18-21; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2).

His one sacrifice was the antitype of all these, but He did not die at the three different dates of these typical sacrifices.

No Scripture says that He must have died as a sacrifice on the date on which the typical lambs were to be slain, and the evidence, as above cited, shows that His sacrifice took place on the day following the killing of the typical lambs.

Nevertheless, some insist that it is appropriate to remember our Lord's death on Nisan 14, the date on which the typical lambs were slain. To such we would propose the question - The lamb, or **The Lamb**; which? Nisan 14 if one desires to celebrate the death of the Jewish lamb; but Nisan 15 if one desires to remember the death of **The Lamb Christ Jesus**.

### **The Night of the Lord to be Observed**

Our Lord's particularity in observing the Passover, not only on the proper day, according to the Law, but also at the specified time of day, is worthy of notice. The disciples were sent out early in the daylight hours of the fourteenth Nisan to make all ready, but the Lord did not go to the appointed place until the 'even' or 'evening' -

*"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve." (Matthew 26:20). "And in the evening he cometh with the twelve." (Mark 14:17). "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him." (Luke 22:14).*

Immediately after the sop was given him, Judas went out, and the record adds, *"and it was night"* (John 13:30; Matthew 26:31). The very name 'Supper' indicates that the meal was partaken of at night (Luke 22:20; John 13:2; 1 Corinthians 11:20).

Thus it is seen that the Jews in our Lord's day observed the Passover Supper on the fifteenth Nisan, exactly in accord with the hour at which it was observed sixteen centuries

before, just prior to the flight of the Israelites from Egypt. The command given to Moses was, "*And they shall eat the flesh in that night*" (Exodus 12:7), and the Lord said further that in **the same night** on which they partook of the lamb, eating it in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, he would pass through the land of Egypt, and slay the firstborn, whether of Egypt or of Israel, where the blood was not sprinkled on the doors (verses 10 and 11).

It is recorded that the angel of the Lord passed through at **midnight** (verse 29), that Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron **at night** (verse 31); and, without loss of time and without waiting for day, the children of Israel were thrust out (verse 33).

*"It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that **night** of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations."* (Exodus 12:42).

### **The Full Moon**

But how could a vast army, including helpless old people and stumbling children, march out of Egypt in the dark? some one may ask. But was it dark? Did the Ruler of the heavens, the God of light, make no better preparation for His people than to send them out in confusion in the dark?

The fifteenth Nisan was the night when the moon shone clear and full, making the night only a shade less bright than the day. In Egypt the moon shines brighter than in the more temperate regions. He gave them also the pillar of fire (Exodus 13:20-22).

In Gethsemane the same full moon looked down upon the Lord, our sacrificial Lamb, who was offered on the cross but a few hours later for our deliverance from a greater bondage than that of Egypt; and the same full moon looks down upon us now when we observe His death by celebrating the Memorial which He left us in remembrance of Him.

The Rabbis say that the Passover must occur on that one night of the month in which there is not a moment of darkness. So those who trust in the Lord Jesus, our Sacrifice and Leader out of bondage, walk in marvellous light. Jesus is the "*Light of the World*", turning even the darkness of night into the brightness of day (Matthew 4:14-16).

And of the New Jerusalem, representing the New Covenant arrangements, it is written, There is no need of the sun or the moon, for the glory of God and the Lamb are the light of it. There is no night there (Revelation 21:23-25).

## CHAPTER 6

### How the Date is Determined

For a detailed description of the Jewish method of determining the Passover date each year, the reader is referred to 'The New Covenant Advocate', March, 1912, under the heading, 'The Jewish Calendar'. Suffice it here to say that the Law required an offering of the first-fruits of harvest on the 16th Nisan (Leviticus 2:14; 23:10,11). This would be the third day of the Passover 'week', if we count the week as eight days, and include the day on which the lambs were killed. The first-fruits were offered on the day immediately following that on which the Passover was eaten. Travellers in Palestine report that the barley is ripe in the warmer parts of the country in the first days of April. And as Jerusalem, the centre of the divine worship according to the Law, was situated in the southern (and warmer) part of Palestine, we may take it that the Lord's intention was to have the Passover celebrated at such a time as would permit of the offering of first-fruits at Jerusalem early in April; the time being further restricted and emphasized by the fact that the Passover night must always occur at the full of the moon.

Although the months were reckoned according to the moon, the Jews had, nevertheless, the solar year. There is, in reality, no such thing as a 'lunar' year, the moon being the regulator of months only. The sun is the guardian of the year. Hence, as the twelve months or lunations did not equal one circuit of the earth around the sun, the Jews introduced an intercalary month about every three years. Thus the first month of the year would always be kept in its right place relative to the other months, and also and particularly relative to the barley harvest.

The date of the Christians' Memorial, which our Lord instituted on the night of the 15th Nisan, and which He said should be celebrated thereafter in remembrance of Himself, is found in the same way; or, rather, the finding of the Jewish Passover date gives us the proper Memorial date. Every Christian, with a little practice, is able to calculate the date, or it may be learned from any almanac which gives the dates of the Jewish fasts and festivals.



## CHAPTER 7

### The Popish Substitute for the Lord's Supper

Those who hear for the first time of an annual observance of the Lord's Supper, we exhort to study the subject carefully. Some on first hearing of it are delighted, and see at once its appropriateness. Others wonder why, if the Lord designed an annual observance, it has so long been lost sight of by the great religious bodies of our day.

As to that, we can only point back to the Papacy as the first great corrupter of the simplicity of the Gospel, for she substituted for the simple Memorial which the Lord enjoined the elaborate daily communion, or sacrifice of the Mass, including transubstantiation, by which she claims to change the simple elements of bread and wine into the veritable body and blood of the Lord Jesus, to be sacrificed afresh thousands of times daily, when the multitudes of priests in various parts of the world offer the sacrifice of the mass.

Each time a mass is said for the 'repose of a soul', in commemoration of saints and martyrs, or in connection with other church festivities, Christ is sacrificed. What a mockery! What blasphemy!

Yet Protestants, while repudiating the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, and accepting the scriptural position that the bread and wine are **emblems**, or **symbols**, of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, have failed to recover the original simplicity in respect of the proper time for the celebration.

Romanists give the bread to the people, and reserve the wine for the priests, thus disregarding our Lord's command that both bread and wine should be partaken of by each

believer. Protestants serve both kinds to believers, but under restrictions not imposed by the Bible; as, for example, the emblems are served, as a rule, only to members of the denomination (sometimes only to members of the particular congregation) which is holding the service, whereas the Scriptures show participation in the Supper to be the privilege of all truly sincere Christians.

That the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper cannot be His veritable body and blood is clear after a moment's thought. The bread and wine which He took in His hand were the same sort of materials as the bread and wine on the tables of thousands of devout Jews. When instituting the Memorial He was present with the disciples, in His own body, and with the blood (which is the life) coursing through His veins. The bread and wine could not therefore by any means have been His real self. And if the bread and wine with which He instituted the Memorial were only emblematic of His body and blood, then any subsequent bread and wine used in the service, in order to be in accord with His own institution, would likewise need to be only unleavened bread and wine. To pretend to change their substance would be to vitiate the ceremonial.

### **Changing Times and Laws**

Of the 'Man of Sin', the Papacy, it was foretold that he should "*wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws*". The 'Papal millennium', by which the thousand years of Christ's triumphant reign was misused by Rome to signify what Protestants call the 'dark ages', is a striking fulfilment of this prophecy.

Another instance of Papacy's attempted change of times which God had otherwise arranged was in reference to the celebration of the anniversary of our Lord's death. No command to the contrary having been given, the early

disciples would understand that the yearly remembrance be held on the same night on which the Memorial had been instituted to take the place of the Passover; namely, the 15th day of the month Nisan. But the Papacy, unwilling to be associated to this extent with Judaism, formulated another method of reckoning the time. The Council of Nicea (AD 325) decreed that 'Easter' should always be kept on a Sunday, the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox; Good Friday being regulated accordingly. The Scriptural method, as already shown, is to celebrate the Memorial on the 15th day of Nisan, irrespective of the day of the week on which it falls.

The appearance of the word 'Easter' in Acts 12:4 can be accounted for only on the ground that the KJV translators were still under Romish influence, for the word so rendered is 'pascha', meaning 'Passover'. It is translated 'Passover' in all modern versions, and obviously corresponds to the 'days of unleavened bread' mentioned in verse 3.

The Scriptures recognize no such day as 'Easter', that term being an adaptation of the name of the Saxon goddess 'Eostre'. When the Church of Rome rose to power, she endeavoured to bring all the pagan tribes into the Church by concessions to their superstitions and idolatrous rites, such as the use of images, Easter eggs, vestments\*, and so on. The so-called 'saints' days" were made to correspond with the ancient festivals of the gods. As the Pagans were accustomed to worship many gods and goddesses, they readily accepted the new names which the Church applied to the ancient images and rites, especially as it was in their interest to acknowledge peaceably the new religion.

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\* See 2 Kings 10:22.

The Saxon goddess Eostre is said to correspond with the Babylonian goddess, Astarte or Ashtaroth, or Queen of Heaven, whose worship was introduced into Britain by the Druids many centuries before Christ. In other words, Easter is a Christianised form of Baal-worship, Ashtaroth (Venus) being the feminine god usually associated with Baal, the sun god.

To thousands of Christians who celebrate 'Easter' the heathen origin of the festival and of the forty days' fast preceding it will come as a surprise, for their thoughts may be only of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and of their joy in the promises associated with His present glory and power. But when the scriptural method of reckoning and observing the Memorial Supper is recognised, and when the appropriateness of celebrating it not on the Romish 'Good Friday', but on the date the Lord indicated is understood, a clear cut division is inevitable. We cannot have fellowship with the table of the Lord and the table of demons (1 Corinthians 10:21). To "*come out of her, my people*", means to come away from her practices and teaching as well as from her organisation.

## CHAPTER 8

### The Communicants and the Emblems

Did our Lord partake of the Memorials of His own death? is a question often asked. We understand from the Biblical account that He partook of the bread and wine served in connection with the Jewish Passover Supper. He did not take of either bread or wine when He instituted the Memorial Supper.

#### Our Lord did not Partake

The Lord said the cup represented His blood "*shed for you*", and the bread represented His body given in behalf of the disciples. It was appropriate that those who were to receive benefit from the sacrifice of his body and blood should partake of the representative emblems. But our Lord Himself could not be said to eat His own flesh or drink his own blood; rather, He gave up His all as a sacrifice for others that **they** might eat and drink.

In order to make it clear that He Himself should take no part in the Memorial about to be instituted, except that of Master of ceremonies, the Lord took a cup from the table, and gave thanks, and said, "*Take this, and **divide it among yourselves:** for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come*". (Concerning the various cups which it was the custom to drink at the Passover, see page 122.)

By thus passing this cup to the disciples alone, He marked a definite line of division between the Passover supper which He had as a Jew partaken of with them and the New Ceremonial which He was appointing (Luke 22:17,18).

Matthew and Mark do not mention this pre-memorial cup, but they include our Lord's statement in their accounts, as though it were spoken of the Memorial cup. In either case, He did not partake of the cup.\*

### **"Drink Ye It"**

When the Lord at the last Supper said, "*Drink ye all of it*" (Matthew 26:27), did He mean, drink all the wine, and leave none, or, all of you disciples drink of it?

By attaching the former meaning to our Lord's words, a portion of Christendom has made the claim that only the clergy were to drink of the wine of the Eucharist; that they were to drink it all, and leave none for the lay members of the church; the latter to be served with bread only. But it is foreign to all our Lord's teaching to make such a division between the bread and the wine, and between the lay members and the clergy. Every sincere Believer is a member of the Church which Christ founded, and entitled to participate in its privileges.

That our Lord's words meant that **all the disciples were to drink** of the cup is shown by Mark's version of His words;

*"And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: **and they all drank of it.**"* The Diaglott translation reads "*And they all drank out of it.*" (Mark 14:23).

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\* 1 Corinthians 11:25, 'When He had supped', does not contradict this. The word 'supped' refers to the eating or supping of the Passover supper. The Lord could not consistently represent Himself as drinking His own blood. He distinctly says that blood was shed for others, not for Himself.

It is as necessary for all disciples to 'drink His blood' as to 'eat His flesh', for 'flesh and blood' is a term descriptive of human nature. The two terms together represent the Lord's whole being, which He gave for the life of the world. He said;

*"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, **and** drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."* (John 6:53,54).

This will be true of all who become disciples of Jesus, whether in the present High Calling age or in the Kingdom age of the future. In the physical life both food and drink are necessary to sustenance; one can live longer without food than without drink, but both are necessary to continued existence. So in the spiritual life: the Believer must continually 'eat' and 'drink'; that is, he must continually appropriate to Himself the benefits of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who gave Himself a ransom for all; he must recognise that his life depends upon so doing.

### **Who should Observe the Memorial Supper?**

The natural and proper answer to this question is: Whoever in sincerity recognises Jesus as his Passover sacrifice, slain for him to provide spiritual food for his journey out of 'Egypt', the bondage of Sin and Death; whoever recognises Jesus as the One Offering and Propitiation for his sins and for those of the whole world; whoever recognises the blood of Jesus as the blood of the New Covenant ratified on his behalf; whoever recognises the Man Christ Jesus as the Ransom for all, and as therefore the Mediator between God and all men, including himself; whoever is seeking to live consistently with these professions, is competent to observe the Memorial Supper, and should do so on each recurring anniversary.

It is a personal and individual matter; each must for himself recognise and acknowledge Jesus as the sacrificed Victim for the sealing of the New Covenant, for his benefit, before he can properly be in a position to celebrate the Memorial Supper, even as our Saviour said, when instituting the feast, *"This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, which is shed for you"* (Luke 22:20).

In harmony with this is the Apostle's admonition, showing that responsibility rests upon each individual, to judge as to his own worthiness or fitness -

*"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."* (1 Corinthians 11:28-31).

The Lord's body is to be discerned, in order to eat and drink worthily; that is, the communicant must appreciate the fact that the emblems of bread and wine represent the body and blood of the Man Christ Jesus. Any who does not so recognize the symbolic significance of the emblems is said to eat and drink 'damnation', or condemnation, to himself. Only those are counted as delivered from condemnation who truly believe in Jesus.

Unworthy eating and drinking at the Lord's Supper would be participation contrary to the explanation and intention of the Supper, as set forth by the Lord and the Apostle. So to eat and drink would be to profane the sacred things, and to demonstrate that the Lord Jesus Christ was not truly discerned as the One whose body (flesh and blood) is partaken of. By partaking of the emblems without true faith



in Him whom the emblems represent, the unworthy partaker emphasizes his own state of condemnation, and his unfitness for fellowship with the believers.

If possible, the communicant should, of course, meet to celebrate the Anniversary of our Lord's death with others of like precious faith, and join in a regular order of service, with appropriate Scripture readings, prayers and hymns. If this be not feasible, let him seek out a quiet place where he can have an hour to himself, shut in from the world, and let him there meditate upon the goodness of God, the love of Jesus, and the value of the precious sacrifice. Let him offer thanks for the bread, representing the body of Jesus, offered for him, and let him eat thereof in remembrance of the Lord. Then let him give thanks for the cup representing the Blood of the New Covenant, shed for him, for the remission of his sins, and let him drink in memory of the Saviour's love. Let him sing a hymn of praise to God, and then go forth, still meditating upon the great things accomplished at Calvary, and upon the pain suffered by the Saviour -

*"Who loved **me**, and gave himself for **me**" (Galatians 2:20).*

### **The Emblems**

As already stated, these should conform to those used by the Lord in instituting the Memorial; namely, unleavened bread and wine. Concerning the unleavened bread, there can be no question as to the desirability of using bread made without leaven or yeast. It can be procured wherever there are Jews, for they regularly bake the 'matzos', or unleavened cakes, for their own use at Passover, and as a rule they are willing to sell or present a portion to Christians desiring it.

In regard to the wine, while recognising and freely admitting that the wine in use in Palestine 1900 years ago, at the Passover season, being six months after the vintage, must

have been fermented, since it does not appear that the people in those times were acquainted with the art of preserving grape juice unfermented, we accept Luke 22:18 as allowing some latitude in the matter. Our Lord used the expression, "*fruit of the vine*"; therefore, we have adopted the use of unfermented grape juice, it being (equally with fermented wine) the 'fruit' or product of the vine.

### **"Let Us Keep the Feast"**

Following the first day of the Passover, upon which the lamb was killed, came seven days of rejoicing, the unleavened bread being eaten by the Jews during those days. To this the Apostle refers in 1 Corinthians 5:8 -

*"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*

This shows how the entire life of the Christian, after partaking of Jesus, the antitypical Lamb, should be purged of malice, wickedness, and hypocrisy; not for seven days merely, but for always, the seven signifying, as it frequently does, completeness (Luke 12:1; Matthew 16:6-12; 2 Corinthians 7:1). It is a time of rejoicing for a greater deliverance experienced by us than that of the children of Israel from Egypt.

### **"Till He Come"**

From the reading of 1 Corinthians 11:26, it appears that the observance of the Supper, "*in remembrance of Me*", is not to be kept up after He comes; and the question inevitably occurs, If these are the days of the presence ('parousia') of the Son of Man, is it not even now appropriate that the observance of the Supper 'in remembrance' should cease? To this we would suggest that 'in remembrance' implies separation from Him we love, and that as long as His

prospective joint-heirs are separate from Him, the Supper 'in remembrance' is appropriate to be observed. Whenever they are joined with Him in the kingdom, 'remembrance' observances will cease. *"Till He Come"* should therefore be understood as including the joining to Himself of the faithful footstep followers, as He said -

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and receive you unto Myself**; that where I am, there ye may be also."* (John 14:3).

Then there will be no more solemn Suppers in remembrance of His death; but He and they will drink together the 'new wine' of the Kingdom joys (Luke 22:18).

Let us ever have in grateful remembrance the love of God and of Christ for a lost world; and as these thoughts are specially before us at the Memorial season, let them incite us all, who recognize what has been done for us, to greater devotion to God's service, and to the service of our blessed Redeemer, Mediator, Sin Offering, and Intercessor or Advocate, Whose memory we revere.

## CHAPTER 9

### Is "Feet Washing" an Ordinance?

From the fact that our Lord washed the disciples' feet, some Christians have incorporated a formal washing of feet into the Memorial Service. Just preceding the passing of the emblems of bread and wine, the male brethren wash one another's feet, and the female brethren do likewise among themselves. Among some of the smaller sects of Christendom it is considered the duty of the 'elder' to humble himself by washing the feet of his brethren, while his wife or some other sister performs the same office for the sisters. But as in these instances each member has already washed his or her own feet before coming to the ceremony, there is no correspondence whatever between what they do and what our Master did, because His disciples' feet were in reality travel-stained and in need of cleansing (John 13:4-17).

Says Smith's Bible Dictionary concerning the washing of hands and feet as practised by the patriarchs and later on by the Israelites:

'As knives and forks were dispensed with in eating, it was absolutely necessary that the hand, which was thrust into the common dish, should be scrupulously clean; and again, as sandals were ineffectual against the dust and heat of an Eastern climate, washing the feet on entering a house was an act both of respect to the company and of refreshment to the traveller. The former of these usages was transformed by the Pharisees of the New Testament age into a matter of ritual observance (Mark 7:3), and special rules were laid down as to the times and manner of its performance. Washing the feet did not rise to the dignity of a ritual observance, except in connection with the services of the sanctuary

(Exodus 30:19,21). It held a high place, however, among the rites of hospitality. Immediately that a guest presented himself at the tent door, it was usual to offer the necessary materials for washing the feet (Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; Judges 19:21). It was a yet more complimentary act, betokening equally humility and affection, if the host actually performed the office for his guest (1 Samuel 25:41; Luke 7:38,44; John 13:5-14; 1 Timothy 5:10). Such a token of hospitality is still occasionally exhibited in the East.'

In this year of grace 1914 any act of hospitality or kindness would correspond to the ancient custom of feet-washing. Whatever we can do to comfort and refresh the brethren, either spiritually or by ministering to their bodily ease, is a duty as well as a privilege, in which all true saints love to share.

### **A Lesson in Love and Humility**

Our Lord's action in washing the feet of His disciples indicated that He considered them His guests, and it manifested both His love and His humility. But His reason for thus washing their feet is shown in John 13:15; *"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you"*. What Jesus did was to constitute Himself a servant to minister to their comfort and well-being, and this is what each disciple should do toward his fellow disciples. As our Lord said on another occasion, *"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant"* (Matthew 20:25-27). Some would be willing to lay down their lives in a large and spectacular manner, but not everyone is willing to lay down his life for the brethren in the performance of humiliating tasks.

**As I have loved you** is the standard of love set by the blessed Master for our imitation (John 13:34,35; 15:12-17). This does not involve the ceremonious washing of feet in a climate where not required, and on occasions artificially

arranged for, but it does involve the daily performance of acts of kindness, humility and love for the comfort and encouragement of fellow pilgrims in the narrow way (1 Timothy 5:10).

The Memorial Supper is not, however, an occasion for celebrating our duties to one another; it is an occasion for forgetting the petty affairs of life in the absorbing thought our Lord's great sacrifice on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world; it is a time also for the giving of grateful thanks for the forgiveness extended to us under the New Covenant which He ratified with His blood.

As usual, impetuous Peter caused an interruption and digression which was not only out of order then, but has since beclouded the meaning of our Lord's act (John 13:6-11). Hence it was necessary for the Lord (verse 12) to bring the minds of the disciples back again from Peter to Himself; "*Know ye what I have done unto you?*" The conversation with Peter is therefore altogether aside from the lesson of humility and service the Lord intended to convey by the feet washing. Nevertheless His answers to Peter are illuminating on another subject.

### **The Bath of Regeneration**

Peter first objected to being washed at all, and then he wanted not only his feet washed, but also his hands and his head. Jesus replied, "*He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit*". The Sinaitic, the most ancient Greek MS., omits the words 'save' and 'his feet', and reads, "*He that is washed needeth not to wash but is clean every whit*". The Lord then goes on to say that all the disciples, except Judas, were clean, and therefore did not need cleansing in the way Peter evidently meant it. Having made the good confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, having forsaken all to follow Him, and

having been taught and disciplined by Him, they were clean in God's sight. The Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins, by reason of the sacrifice for sins which He was about to offer, and the disciples had been the recipients of that forgiveness. It was not therefore necessary for Jesus to wash their feet to cleanse them, nor yet their hands or their heads (Matthew 9: 2-6).

Two different Greek words are used in this passage, both translated 'wash'. 'Louo' ('washed', verse 10) is a primitive verb meaning to bathe; that is, to bathe the whole person; whereas 'nipto' ('wash', verses 5, 6, 8 (twice), 10, and 14; 'washed', verses 12 and 14), means to wet a part only. This distinction is observed by other New Testament writers; the idea in Hebrews 10:22; Revelation 1:5; Ephesians 5:26 and Titus 3:5 being a complete bath. The unwashed can have no part nor lot with Jesus. But those who have acknowledged themselves to be sinners, and who have accepted forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb, may consider themselves as no longer defiled, but **clean**. The forgiveness which God gives is absolute, and may be accepted with implicit faith Ephesians 4:32; Romans 8:1; 5:1; Acts 13:38,39; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17).

But in our daily intercourse with fellow men, and in our thoughts and words, we are prone to err, and therefore need to maintain our position as cleansed and accepted children of God by daily confession of our transgressions. When we do this, *"God is faithful and just to forgive us"*. Jesus is the Propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world. He is not only our Mediator to reconcile us to God in the first instance, but when we believers confess our subsequent sins He is also our Advocate or Intercessor, that His blood may be applied and each transgression cleansed away; *"the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (John 1:7-10; 2:1,2; Hebrews 6:20; 7:25).

## **The Feet Washing and the Sop**

As the Lord and the disciples sat around the table and partook of the lamb and herbs and bread, they no doubt asked and answered questions according to the custom (Exodus 12:26,27), dwelling upon the marvellous way in which the Lord had delivered His people from the land of Egypt, and giving praise to God for their preservation as members of that chosen race.

While the Passover supper was in progress, or during one of the intervals, the Lord rose from the table and performed this service which none of the disciples had thought of doing (John 13:4-16). Having been abroad since early morning, their feet were weary and travel-stained, so He became their servant, to minister to their comfort, and to enable them the better to endure the weary watching which He knew was before them, when they should go out to the Garden and the betrayal. To wash the feet of travellers or guests was the duty of the servants of the household, yet none of the disciples constituted himself a servant to wash the Master's feet. Strange omission, for which they would doubtless afterward often reproach themselves.

Resuming His seat at the table (John 13:12), the Master impressed upon the disciples the privilege of mutual service; *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet"*. As the meal proceeded, Jesus became troubled in spirit. He knew that one of the disciples should betray Him, but it was difficult to speak of; and yet He wished them to recognise the telling of it in advance as another evidence of His Messiah-ship (verses 18-21).

The announcement came as a shock and a surprise, and they began to say, *"Lord, is it I?" "Lord, is it I?"* (Matthew 26:21,22). None but Judas could imagine such a



thing of himself or of his fellow disciples, and he, notwithstanding that he had for some time been planning to deliver Him into the hands of the chief priests, likewise affected surprise, and said, "*Master, is it I?*"

And the Lord gave them a sign, "*He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me*". Thus Judas was exposed before them all as the traitor, and realising the awkwardness of his position and the contempt of his fellow disciples, he immediately went out and completed his evil bargain with his Master's enemies (Matthew 26:23; Mark 14:20; John 13:26-30). When Judas had gone, the Lord gave the disciples the new commandment (as if in comment on Judas' perfidy), that they should love one another (John 13:31-35). Judas did not recommend himself as a disciple of the Lord, for he had not love in his heart even for his holy Master. It is only by manifestation of the humble and loving spirit of the Lord Jesus that men can recognise a true disciple (John 13:35).

The Passover supper appears to have been concluded without the company of Judas; and then with the faithful eleven our blessed Lord instituted the Memorial of Himself, imposing it upon his disciples as superseding the Passover supper, which, with other features of the Law Covenant, was shortly to be nailed to His cross (Colossians 2:14).

## CHAPTER 10

### Diatheke: Old Covenant; New Covenant

The application usually given in the New Testament to the sacred writings is 'he graphe' or 'ai graphai', sometimes 'ta hiera a grammata'. In the writings of Paul, however, frequent reference is made to the difference between what he calls 'he palaia diatheke' and 'he kaina diatheke' (2 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 9), and though in these passages the reference is obviously not so much to any written documents, as to the covenant, the promise, the engagement of God with His people under the old and the new dispensation, yet as that was the object of a **written** revelation, the term designating it may very legitimately be extended to designate the documents in which it is announced.

The Apostle himself appears to have had this in mind when, in writing to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 3:14), he speaks of the **reading** of the old covenant, an expression which necessarily conveys the conception of a written document; so that if we have not direct inspired authority for this usage of the word, we have the nearest possible approximation to such authority.

The word 'diatheke' having two meanings, that of a 'testament' and that of a 'covenant', it has been a controversy of long standing, in which of these senses it must be taken when applied to designate the collected body of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures. The only proper mode of determining this controversy appears to be to inquire in what sense the word is used by the sacred writers themselves, and especially by Paul, from whose use of it the appropriation of

it to the purpose in question is derived. Now in regard to this point, it is admitted on all hands, that the almost unvarying sense attached to it in the Scriptures is that of 'covenant'.

In the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles there is only one instance, respecting which the mass of interpreters are not agreed in attaching to the word the same meaning. That occurs Hebrews 9:15-17, where the apostle is speaking of the necessity of the death of the 'diathemenos', in order to the validity of the 'diatheke'. In the common version, the former of these words is translated 'Testator' and the latter 'Testament'; but as they may also be translated 'the appointed victim' and 'covenant', the question is, which of these is to be preferred? Dr. Macknight has followed the latter rendering, and the reasons which he has assigned for this appear perfectly satisfactory.

1. In what sense could the law of Moses be called a testament, which is a disposition of benefits to a person, which he may either accept or refuse as he pleases, seeing its obligations were **imperative** upon all who lived under it?

2. How was the Mosaic Law, if a testament, established by the death of the testator?

3. If the gospel dispensation, as Christ's testament, was confirmed by his death, was it not as a testament or will rendered null and void by his resurrection? If a testator after being dead revive again, does his will continue in force?

4. What connection have the office of a mediator and the sprinkling of blood here mentioned, with the making of a will, or what is meant by transgressions of the former will, to atone for which the maker of the new will died? Do not all these things relate to a 'covenant', and not to a 'testament'?

And, in fine, if Christ died merely that his will might have effect, his death cannot be regarded as having been the **procuring cause** of the blessings there offered to His people; whereas if we regard the apostle as speaking here of **covenants**, we are taught to view our Lord as the great sacrifice by which the covenant was confirmed. On these grounds, Macknight appears to me to argue conclusively in favour of the rendering which he gives to this passage.

The Romish Church has all along strenuously defended the rendering by 'Testament' as tending to favour her doctrine concerning the cup in the Eucharist being the pledge of Christ's legacy to his priests.

The conclusion to which these considerations lead is, that the proper meaning of 'diatheke', as applied to the collected books of Scripture, is 'Covenant'. \*

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\* Extract from lecture by Rev. Lindsay Alexander, M.A.  
Edinburgh, 1841.

## CHAPTER 11

### The New Covenant and its Mediator

The preceding explanation of the meaning of the Greek word 'diatheke' makes it clear that in the Scriptures its significance is 'Covenant'. The English word 'covenant' means 'agreement' or 'contract', and exactly expresses the thought contained in the numerous Scripture passages in which the Greek 'diatheke' or its corresponding Hebrew word 'beriyth' occurs. The latter is defined by Strong's Concordance as meaning, 'a compact (because made by passing between pieces of flesh), being derived from the primitive root 'barah' (in the sense of cutting)'.

Men have entered into covenants or compacts with God, when invited by Him to do so. Two conspicuous examples are: (1) the Covenant with Abraham concerning the land, wherein God promised that Abraham's seed should after four hundred years return to Canaan, and (2) the Covenant made with the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Both these covenants were formally ratified over the bodies of slain animals, the blood of the animals being the "*blood of the covenant*" (Genesis 15:8-21; Exodus 24:6-8; Hebrews 9:18-21). In both these covenants the human participants willingly entered into the compact, Abraham because he wished a sign or pledge from God concerning the inheritance of the land (Genesis 15:8), and the Israelites because they were in their better moments, glad to be out of the bondage of Egypt, and because they looked forward to inheriting the land promised centuries before to Abraham. They looked to God to fulfil His promise, and were willing to be obedient to His commands as a necessary condition of His guidance and care (Exodus 19:7,8; 24:3).

Moses was the Mediator of the Law Covenant; that is, the 'go-between', the one who went back and forth between God and the people, arranging with the people the terms of the Covenant which God proposed to make, and returning their answers to God.

When therefore our Lord said to the disciples, "*This is **my blood** of the Covenant,\* which is shed for many for the remission of sins*" (Matthew 26:28); "*This is **my blood** of the New Covenant, which is shed for many*" (Mark 14:24); "*This cup is the New Covenant in **my blood** which is shed for you*" (Luke 22:20), His reference was undoubtedly to the ancient custom of entering into a covenant over the slain body of a victim, whose blood, as in the case of the Law Covenant, would be sprinkled upon the parties to the Covenant. Indeed, the Apostles Paul and Peter were some years later inspired to write of the Mosaic Covenant and its ratification as a type of the New Covenant ratified by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:15-20; 1 Peter 1:2). Hebrews 9:16,17 may therefore be rendered -

*"For where a covenant is, the death of the covenant-victim is necessary to come in, for a covenant is steadfast over dead victims, since it is of no force at all when the covenant-victim is still alive."* (See Young's translation, Revised Version margin, and so on.)

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\* Ancient Greek manuscripts omit the word 'New' from this passage, but it is found in Mark 14:24, and Luke 22:20. Even so, the blood of Jesus would necessarily be the blood of a New Covenant, and not of any covenant then in existence, since those previous covenants had already been ratified with blood (the blood of animals).

The New Covenant is an agreement or compact which God is ready to enter into with anyone who will do so over the slain body of the New-Covenant-Victim, the man Jesus; but the negotiations must be carried on through the New Covenant Mediator, the glorified Lord Jesus.

No man can now come direct to God, any more than the Jews could do so at Sinai. Repentant sinners desirous of receiving the benefits of the New Covenant must come in the appointed way. Jesus said, *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* (John 14:6).

Only on this basis can reconciliation be effected between God and the sinner, for the New Covenant provides for the forgiveness of sins, which are the chief barrier between God and men. It provides also for the development in the heart and mind of the believer of a character of righteousness and holiness. And through it the repentant believer is accepted as a son of God (2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Romans 5:1-10; Hebrews 8:10-12; 9:14,15; 10:16-22).

### **The Only Mediator**

The Lord Jesus is sole Mediator of the New Covenant, for God appointed Him alone to that position, and He took up the duties of that high office when He was raised from the dead and set down at God's right hand (Hebrews 10:12-14). The One who gave the Ransom, who shed the ratifying blood, is the same who is now Mediator (1 Timothy 2:4-6).

And this office will never be shared by others, not even by those who will be joint-heirs in the administration of the affairs of the Kingdom age; for He alone was able to give the satisfactory offering for sin, and that offering was the body of His flesh, which hung on the cross. He died *"once*

*for all*", the just for the unjust, the holy and innocent victim for a world of condemned sinners \* (Hebrews 10:5-10; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:3).

With these thoughts in mind concerning the Covenants and the Covenant Victim, and concerning our blessed Saviour as the Victim whose blood ratified the New Covenant, the annual Memorial service, or Lord's Supper, can be more intelligently observed than without these explanations. And how can we find words with which to express our gratitude to Him for willingly laying down His life, and to our Heavenly Father for giving His beloved Son? Let us honour Him by faithfully keeping and perpetuating the Memorial Service which He enjoined upon us, and by living lives consistent with the holy Name we profess.

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\* As to how the offering of one life, even though perfect and sinless, could be a satisfactory offering for the sins of an entire race, please see 'The New Covenant Advocate', May, 1914, p.26; July, 1914, p.67.





